



Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5095 Chaplain Ron Christopher salutes during East Hampton’s Memorial Day service on Monday.

East Hampton Holds Memorial Day Ceremonies

by Michael McCoy

As always, the streets were lined with people in East Hampton Monday, as the town honored the fallen during their Memorial Day parade.

The parade stepped off at 9 a.m. from the high school, proceeding up Route 66, and eventually down Summit Street.

The East Hampton Police Honor Guard led the charge with the parade’s first display of “Old Glory.” They were followed by Grand Marshal Jarvis Barton and Parade Marshal Arthur Jacobson – both World War II veterans – who each cruised down the route in classic cars.

Next, on foot were Town Council members Tom Cordeiro, Bill Devine, Melissa Engel, Christopher Goff, John Tuttle and Sue Weintraub. Town Manager Jeff O’Keefe also was present, celebrating this occasion for the first time with the town. Police Chief Matthew Reimondo and Fire Marshall Phil Visintainer followed him.

The order of the parade was broken into four sections. Section I featured local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5095, which was well-represented as always, including a color guard/firing squad and the Color Guard Auxiliary. The VFW also had an austere float, recreating tombstones of soldiers. Section I was concluded with the East Hampton High School Band.

Next came Section II, which featured veterans in cars. Vets from World War II, Korea and Vietnam all rode in style, as did the Sons of Union Veterans Auxiliary.

Section III included members of the Connecticut 3rd Regimental Fife and Drum, the East Hampton Fire Department and Auxiliary and the VFW Cobra Post. The highlight was Anchor Lodge 112, whose members showcased the

larger-than-life American Flag.

The fourth and final section of the parade was heavy on youth, and was ushered in by the East Hampton Middle School Band. Groups like the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Brownies, Cub Scouts and YMCA Adventure Guides then followed. Perhaps most striking, however, was the rainbow sea of kids and their parents, donning T-shirts of all colors, representing East Hampton Little League.

The parade caboose was brought up by the East Hampton Ambulance Unit and Fire Apparatus.

By around 10:30 a.m., the parade had finished up in front of the Congregational Church of East Hampton, and the crowd gathered in the grove between the church and the Center Boulder Monument for the service, which was led by Charles Walton.

The service began with a medley called “Salute to Freedom” by the East Hampton High School Band. Then, speakers reminded attendees that Memorial Day was about more than leisure and barbecues.

The first of these sentiments came by way of Reverend Thomas Kennedy of the Congregational Church of East Hampton. During his invocation, he called the day “not just diversion, but painful memory.” He also prayed that citizens might be “proud, but not arrogant; loyal, but not blind; dutiful, but not slavish.”

In between the music and speakers were recitations of “In Flanders Field” and the Gettysburg Address, which were read by Andrew Briere and Reilly Price, vice president and valedictorian, respectively, of the East Hampton High School Class of 2009.

The service’s guest speaker was William
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Proposed Portland Development Draws Historians’ Ire

by Michael McCoy

Portland Town Place, a proposed mixed-use development that has been greeted with mostly positive responses, recently received some decidedly less favorable attention from members of the town’s historical society.

The development is proposed for the land in town commonly referred to as the Elmcrest property. On that site, located on the southeast corner of routes 66 and 17A, are three homes that date back to the 19th century. They are known as the John H. Sage House (or the ‘Marlborough Building’ on the site plan – which was also how Elmcrest referred to it), the Erastus Brainerd Jr. House (a.k.a. the Wagner Building) and the Hart/Jarvis House (a.k.a. the Manor Building).

The first home is a Queen Anne Victorian structure. The Brainerd home is notable for its stuccoed brownstone, as well as its Italianate style, while the Hart/Jarvis house is a Greek Revival Temple Mansion.

In May 2007, the Portland Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) granted a text amendment that would allow mixed-use development

in the general business zone. Though that change was not site-specific, Portland Town Center (the applicant for Portland Town Place) did apply for it. Planning and Land Use Administrator Deanna Rhodes said that during that process, the applicant said they would leave one of the homes (the John H. Sage House) and move the other two elsewhere on the property.

However, when the site plan came through in February, it called for the two homes that were to be moved to be demolished instead, with replicas built.

Portland Historical Society President Claire Frisbie said she found out about the site plan change in late March. Shortly before the PZC’s hearing on the proposal earlier this month, members of the historical society took a site walk at the property. At the conclusion of the May 7 hearing on the project, PZC members requested a site walk of their own, which was open to the public. The walk occurred this past Tuesday evening and was attended by about 30 people, Frisbie said, including town officials, PZC members, historical society members, state experts and residents.

Frisbie said the houses are “unusually large structures for this town” and figuring they would be more common somewhere like Middletown.

Also, she said, “The three houses all have a very strong historical presence.”

Erastus Brainerd Sr. was the co-founder of the Brainerd Quarry Company in town. In 1852, when he moved into the Hart/Jarvis Home, his son, Erastus Brainerd Jr., built his own home.

Frisbie said both the Erastus Brainerd Jr. House and the Hart/Jarvis House (which was constructed in 1829-30) are unique for being built on a Brownstone foundation.

“Because of their owners,” Frisbie said, “they have a great link to the brownstone industry in the Town of Portland.”

What’s more, the Erastus Brainerd House was designed by the prominent architect Henry Austin, whose work litters New England.

Frisbie said John H. Sage was a prominent banker in town, treasurer of the Freestone Savings Bank. He also became director of Schaller and Hall Quarry Company, another prominent Portland business. The home that would be

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Historic preservation and architectural experts check out the Erastus Brainerd Jr. House in Portland.



East Hampton held its Memorial Day parade on Monday. At left is a member of the East Hampton Middle School band, all smiles, as the group walks in the parade. At right are members of Anchor Lodge 112, who showcased a larger-than-life American Flag.

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Hornok, 56, who racked up 20 years in active duty for the U.S. Navy. His deployments included being assigned to the East Mediterranean Task Force during Operation Desert Storm.

Hornok grew up in Clifton, NJ, but has been involved with the Groton VFW Post 1673 since 1997. He is currently the Senior Vice Commander for the state VFW, as well as a chief petty officer for the U.S. Navy.

Hornok said he believed it was important to set aside Memorial Day every year. He listed

holiday weekend sales at places like Stop & Shop, Wal-Mart and Auto Zone, as well as traditions of yard sales and the Indianapolis 500, saying they “are synonymous with the holiday that we stand here to remember.”

Then, beginning with the American Revolution and ending with Operation Iraqi-Enduring Freedom, he juxtaposed the aforementioned list with one comprising all the country’s wars and the casualties suffered.

“Give them, our veterans, the support and respect they have earned,” he commissioned.



Hornok also reminded attendees that the holiday began on May 30, 1868 as Decoration Day, as per General John Logan’s General Order No. 11.

The day was perhaps no more solemn then when Walton read the names of the veterans who have passed away since last Memorial Day. Each name was followed with a “ruffle of drums” by Matt Roberts. This was immediately followed by salute by the VFW Firing Squad, “Taps & Echo,” performed by Owen Jensen and

Adam Guy, and a prayer for the deceased veterans by VFW chaplain, Ron Christopher.

VFW Auxiliary Chaplain Laura Schactner ended the ceremony with a brief benediction.

And with that, East Hampton’s ceremonies for Memorial Day 2009 came to a close, and attendees scattered, off to barbecues and other family gatherings. But the ceremonies served their purpose – reminding people that Memorial Day is about more than having a long weekend.

Development from front page

named for him was built in 1884.

Despite their history, none of these homes were ever registered as national historic landmarks, which, Frisbie said, is “one of the reasons we’re working so hard to preserve them.”

As the owner of the homes, Portland Town Center needs to be on board with such a registration process. Frisbie said that inclusion would grant the owner financial breaks, such as taxes and even potential stimulus money. However, she said the applicant has been unresponsive to invitations for discussion by the historical society.

“The incentives can easily make this worthwhile,” said Frisbie, adding that the homes are still in good condition.

The attorney for the applicant did not return a call seeking comment for this story.

Ultimately, Frisbie said of the homes slated for demolition, “They are historically and architecturally significant, and important to the town of Portland.”

Portland Town Place is a long-gestating project that has endured several name changes. In February, after much anticipation, the town received a site plan for the development, which sits on 14.89 acres. If approved, the development would include 10 buildings, which would

blend residential, office and commercial space. The commercial space would include a restaurant, Walgreens, and a 65,000 square-foot grocery store.

The May 7 PZC public hearing featured both positive and negative comments about the proposal, with most of the criticism came in the form of concern for the historical homes. Since then, Frisbie said of the developer’s attitude toward the homes, “It seems as if they’d be willing to talk.”

The PZC hearing was continued to June 4. However, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said Thursday the hearing would likely be postponed until late June or early July. The is a result of questions town specialists have concerning issues like water, sewer and traffic, and Bransfield seemed doubtful that the applicant could address these by next week’s hearing. Bransfield said she hoped Rhodes would know for certain about the continued hearing by next Monday, and directed interested residents to contact the planning department to confirm the date.

Whether the meeting is held next week or at a later date, it would take place at Brownstone Intermediate School, 314 Main St., due to a large anticipated turnout.



Colchester’s annual Memorial Day parade was held Sunday. Clockwise from top left, members of the Bacon Academy marching band walk through Main Street at the end of the parade route; members of the Bacon Academy Class M Girls’ Basketball Championship team ride in a parade float; Natalia Vernali, 2, holds a flag alongside Main Street as she watches parade marchers; and members of the Connecticut National Guard Marching Unit receive a round of applause as they walk in the parade.

Thousands Turn Out for Colchester Memorial Day Ceremonies

by Sarah McCoy

Meteorologists were calling for rain and in the early evening on Sunday the skies opened up with a heavy downpour and booming thunder. But, just two and a half hours prior, Colchester residents and visitors were treated to a nice breeze and sunny skies for the annual Memorial Day parade.

Thousands packed the parade route along Main Street and Norwich Avenue to watch scouts, athletes, town officials and, of course, veterans march. The parade kicked off with a fly-over by two military helicopters that brought most everyone to their feet.

Robert Woltag, who grew up in Colchester but now lives in Massachusetts, said the parade is something he looks forward to each year. “It hasn’t changed in all the years I’ve been coming. There are just more people,” he said. “It’s a great day to honor our veterans and to teach my kids what the day means.”

Woltag said he makes a point never to miss

the Colchester parade and enjoys watching his father, Harold, and uncle, Max Gilbert, march. Both are Korean War veterans.

The Woltags were just one of the hundreds of families who came out to this year’s celebration. Melody Vernali of Colchester sat on the side of Main St. with infant son, Evan, in her lap as the two watched her daughter, Natalia, 2, waved a flag to the parade marchers. “This is our first year coming out to the parade,” Vernali said. “It’s a fun environment and I knew [Natalia] would just love it.”

Down the street a little, Theresa and Mark Noel of Colchester took turns giving their 3-year-old daughter Amanda bites of ice cream as they waited for the parade to start. The family comes every year but this year they were there specifically to watch their son, and Amanda’s brother, Dylan march with his scout pack.

At the conclusion of the parade on-lookers filled the Colchester Green area as Veterans of

Foreign Wars (VFW) Quartermaster Chuck Savitsky emceed the Memorial Day ceremony. He introduced this year’s parade grand marshal, Joseph Burba.

Burba has served as the American Legion Post 54 commander for the past six years, but stepped down from his post after the Memorial Day ceremony. He is a World War II veteran serving in the Invasion of Sicily, the Invasion of Italy and on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day in June 1944.

Lt. Col. Scott Panagrosso, the incoming American Legion Post 54 commander, spoke Sunday at the conclusion of the parade. He described for listeners the inspiration for this year’s Memorial Day theme, “Home of the Free, Because of the Brave.”

Panagrosso didn’t limit that sentiment to just military personnel. He spoke of the individuals on United Airlines flight 93 who silently bonded together to develop a plan to take back their plane that had been hijacked as part of the ter-

rorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. “They fought all the way,” he said. “They were a just a group of people but none of them were going to let the terrorists destroy America. We are free because of those on that plane.”

Afterwards, First Selectman Linda Hodge announced the winners of this year’s parade awards. William J. Johnson Middle School was named as the Best Marching Band. Cub Scout Pack 109 won the award for Most Patriotic Float. And, Grange Post 78 won the award for Most Original Float.

Members from Girl Scout Troop 3050 escorted Colchester veterans to lay wreaths at the monuments on the green in the center of town, and the Boy Scouts offered assistance in the hoisting of the American flag. The Antique Veterans’ Rifle Squad fired shots into the air. In closing the trumpeters from Bacon Academy played taps and the parade visitors filed back to their cars to continue their Memorial Day festivities.

AP Students in Colchester to Receive Cash for High Test Scores

by Adam Benson

Starting next year, Bacon Academy students can cash in on strong Advanced Placement test scores in English, math and science.

On Tuesday, the Board of Education unanimously voted to enroll the high school in a unique program that rewards each student with \$100 for every qualifying test score of 3 points (out of five). Students will get \$200 for four points, and \$300 for five points.

“This is exactly where we need to be headed to raise the bar,” Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said.

Known as Project Opening Doors, the two-year-old partnership between the Connecticut Business and Industry Association and public school districts aims to increase student participation in AP courses and put students across the state in a better position to excel in their post-secondary careers, its chairman told board members.

“An AP course is a universal metric, so the colleges and universities know what they’re getting,” said J. Camille Vautour.

In addition to providing cash incentives to individual test-takers and their teachers (who

will get \$100 for each student that posts a qualifying score), Vautour said Project Open Doors will earmark \$525,000 to the district over the next five years to provide training, tutoring and curriculum programming in an effort to increase student interest and success rates in AP courses.

“We want to expand the number of students who are eligible, Vautour said. “Historically, AP courses were often thought of as only for the cream of the crop.”

Through the program, Vautour said educators will be able to identify non-traditional AP students as early as seventh and eighth grades, allowing them to enter high school with a strong foundation for thriving in the rigorous courses.

“We work with the staff to identify kids who are capable but perhaps not yet prepared to take AP courses,” Vautour said. “The mantra we help teachers think about is, ‘once in, never out.’”

As part of the program, all sophomores will be required to take the PSAT to help officials identify students that demonstrate potential to thrive in AP courses.

Last year, just 73 10th grade students took PSATs, said Thomas Racine, a Bacon Acad-

emy guidance counselor.

“All the AP teachers are on board with this,” Racine said. “It’s really exciting.”

Project Opening Doors came to life in September 2007, when the state was awarded a \$13.2 million grant by the National Math and Science Initiative to address the underachievement of American students in English, math and science and the lack of adequate training for math and science teachers.

Connecticut was one of six states to receive money in the initiative’s first year, and nine schools were selected to take part.

Vautour said among those, enrollment in AP courses jumped by 53 percent. The goal is to have 25 schools on board by September and tally 1,248 qualifying scores on AP tests across the state by 2015.

Board members said they were impressed by the program’s ambitious scope and attention to detail. Last year, Bacon Academy posted 57 AP qualifying scores in target areas. Vautour said he’d like to see that number quadruple within five years, with the goal to reach 150 by the

end of the 2009-10 academic year.

“I am so excited I can hardly sit in my chair,” school board member Mary Lynn Burke said Tuesday. “My personal opinion is that we not putting our kids in a position to compete globally, let alone locally, and for ones who want to, we need to do more.”

Loiselle said teachers tapped to take part in the program were carefully selected and interviewed by project staffers. She also said the district’s teachers’ union won’t block the program with arbitration, despite the bonuses some educators likely will earn.

Board of Education Chairman William Hettrick said he was attracted to the initiative’s multi-faceted approach and proven success rate in other communities.

“We’ve been working very hard on getting these AP courses. What I like about the program is not only the tutoring for the kids, but also the teacher training,” he said Wednesday. “Once again, Colchester is at the cutting edge of the state, and for [Loiselle] to push for this program is very pleasing for the board to see.”\

Portland Vocal Chords Gearing Up for 20th Spring Show

By Michael McCoy

Year after year, the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords perform to packed houses. Portland resident Joyce Ghent, who founded the group, expects this weekend’s show at Portland High School to be no different.

The performance, the Vocal Chords’ 20th spring concert, will be held Saturday, May 30, at 7:30 p.m., at the high school, located at 95 High St. The show is titled “When You Believe.”

Ghent is a registered nurse who has worked for Middlesex Hospital for over 50 years. By the late 1980s, she and another nurse had made a habit out of humming Christmas music to their patients. After seeing the effect the music had, Ghent began looking for ways to spread that joy more broadly.

So, Ghent spent about three months researching how much it would cost to hire a director and accompanist and stage concerts. “I spoke to people in the know,” said Ghent, explaining that her sources included musical directors at Yale and Wesleyan universities.

But Ghent herself was far from clueless. “I had a strong musical background,” she said. “I knew what people liked.”

Ghent wrote up a proposal, and the hospital board agreed to fund half the money, if the group raised the other half. So, the group began rehearsing with 25 members. Today, there are 90.

“We’re totally sold out at every concert,” Ghent said (don’t worry; as of press time, seats for Saturday’s show are still available). Each year, the Vocal Chords play a spring concert and Christmas concert. However, other performances have been at Foxwoods, Disney World, in front of the White House, Montreal, and at the Vatican for the Pope in 1996. During their Washington, D.C. visit in 2004, the group performed for Senators Dodd and Lieberman. Each November, the Vocal Chords also perform a hospice memorial service at Mercy High School.

In March of 2002, six months after the 9/11 attacks, the Chords put on a free concert at Middletown High School. The show consisted

exclusively of “patriotic” songs.

The majority of the group has also turned out for short-notice performances, including funerals for children of group members, as well as the service of a group member.

“You can feel the vibes form the group. It’s just amazing; it just blows me away!” Ghent said. Ghent was diagnosed with cancer three years ago. When asked if the group’s music has helped her through this ordeal, she blurted, without hesitation, “Definitely!”

“The camaraderie and the love is breathtaking,” exuded Ghent. “I don’t think I’ve ever worked with such a wonderful group of people.”

Ghent has lived in Portland since she was 3 years old, and she and her husband Paul have been married for 46 years. She has five children and 10 grandchildren. Though said admitted leading the group for the past 19 years has been hard work, she seems to have no regrets. “You give 100 [percent], you get back 200,” she said, of the group’s efforts.

Ghent said those who see a show for the first time are always impressed to say the least. She also pointed out that the performers are not paid and are not professional musicians. Most are retirees, and secretaries, teachers, firefighters and, of course, nurses, are just some of the backgrounds members come from.

Ghent said anyone is welcome to join the group, as long as they love music, enjoy singing, and are willing to make the commitment. (The Vocal Chords practice each Tuesday during its spring and fall seasons, which typically run January to May and September to December, respectively.)

Current performers come from all over the area, including Portland, East Hampton, Cheshire, Meriden, Middletown, Farmington, Haddam and Cromwell.

Ghent said people have occasionally told her, “You people are too good for this area,” to which she responds, “Oh, no we’re not! This is our community, and this is where we belong.”

The goal of the Vocal Chords “is strictly to lift spirits and heal souls with music,” Ghent said. “And believe me: it works.” However, each



The Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords will have their 20th spring concert this Saturday at Portland High School.

year, the group awards scholarships to area seniors who are going to study either nursing or music. At this weekend’s concert, the group will hand out five \$1,000 scholarships, which will bring the total to \$42,000 since it began distributing scholarships.

Ghent promised Saturday’s show will be “phenomenal” and said it is “a tribute to our past 20 years.”

Ghent asked Vocal Chords members to submit their favorite songs from past shows, and the set list for Saturday includes titles like “When the Saints Go Marching In,” “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” “Showboat,” “You Raise Me Up” and a medley of songs from Walt Disney movies.

The ensemble also published a new cookbook this year. Titled *Rhapsody of Recipes*, the

book – which is dedicated to Ghent – features 300 recipes submitted by group members, as well as their friends and family. The group has already sold 260 copies, and more will be available at the concert. Books may also be purchased by calling 347-2787. Proceeds from the sale will go toward next year’s scholarships.

Tickets for the spring concert run \$18 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students under 12. A limited number of tickets will be sold at the door, and they are also available by calling 342-3120.

“I love people, and I love seeing them happy, and there’s nothing more rewarding,” Ghent said.

She should get more of the same Saturday night.



Resident Matthew Troy watches a tiny monitor while the cast and crew film a scene from Troy’s new short movie documenting Cesar and Lowis Peters.

Hebron Resident Making Movie Documenting Peters Saga

by Sarah McCoy

Lately the name ‘Peters’ has been associated with controversy in Hebron. Resident Matt Troy, a 2004 RHAM High School graduate, hopes to change that.

Troy and a crew of 15 were in the area the past week filming a short film on the capture and rescue of Caesar and Lowis Peters. According to historical documents, in the late 1700s the Peters, free African-Americans, were nearly sold into the slave trade before their fellow Hebron residents traveled down to Norwich to save them under the guise that the Peters were wanted on trial back in Hebron.

The story is one of hope and courage. It’s not a story of a house.

For the past three years Hebron town officials have struggled to decide on a future for the Peters House, located at 150 East St. The original part of that structure may or may not have been the home of Caesar and Lowis Peters but, for Troy, it doesn’t matter. “This is a wonderful Hebron story and not enough people know about it,” he said. “What I didn’t want was to create a movie about the house. The story of Caesar and Lowis is so much richer.”

Troy, working in conjunction with the Hebron Historical Society, was able to secure \$60,000 of grant funding for his film from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism to go towards the film. While final numbers have yet to be calculated, Troy is confident he and his crew stayed within budget. “One nice thing is that we developed our budget based on last year’s gas prices,” he said. “Now that gas is half the price I think we did a good job controlling cost though not to the detriment of the film.”

In total Troy has over two hours of footage, shot over the course of seven days in Hebron and surrounding towns. In the next few months he will work closely with the film’s editor, Erica Tachoir, to develop a final product. Troy said he plans for the final film to be between 18 and 25 minutes.

Largely, filming went off without a hitch. On Sunday, May 24, the crew worked diligently on set in Bolton, only for torrential downpour to hit right before the big shot. “It was the most dramatic thing I’ve ever seen in filmmaking,” Troy said. “All of a sudden we were looking at this wall of dark clouds. Thankfully we got everything secured before the rain hit.”

As it turned out, the rain actually benefited the film later on that night, when the cast and crew set up on the Hebron Fairgrounds to film the scene where Caesar and Lowis were being transported down to Norwich. The mist that had come in with the rain painted a dramatic backdrop for the shoot. “It was epic,” Matthew Chao, sound recordist for the film, said of the shot.

Crews worked for nearly five hours to set up the shot in the mist, which will equate to only about 20 seconds of the finished product.

The short film, titled *Testimonies of a Quiet New England Town*, is scheduled to premiere Sept. 27 in the auditorium at RHAM High School, 85 Wall St.

While there is still a lot to do before the film is completed, Troy is breathing a sigh of relief now that filming has wrapped. “I think it’s better than I thought we were capable of,” he said of the film thus far.

Troy bubbled over with gratitude for all the local residents who pitched in to make filming go as smoothly as it did. “The community really embraced us,” he said. “For the most part we’re just a group of new college graduates who love making movies and the amount of support we received was incredible.”

Charles Goon, from New York, served as producer for *Testimonies*. He said he was bowled over by how much people bent over backwards to help the film crew. “It started to drizzle on Saturday and we got all worried that we didn’t have enough room under our two tents,” he said. “Within a half hour people from the area had rushed out to bring us four more tents. It was incredible.”

Perhaps no one deserves more kudos for their hard work than Troy’s mother. The Troys’ house was transformed into a hotel, hosting nearly all of the 15 crew members.

“I have a laundry list of chores to make it up to her,” Troy said. “It will be at least a week before I’m off the hook. Next time, though, I think it would be better for everyone if our budget includes a few hotel rooms.”

Jessica Troy, Troy’s sister and writer for the film, estimated that it will take Matt a little longer to repay their mom. “He’ll be saying thank you and doing chores all summer,” she said.

“That’s OK,” Troy said afterwards. “We made a movie. That’s the exciting part.”

Even though filming is complete, Troy has no intention of slowing down. He’s waiting to hear if he landed a position working on the crew of a full-length film set in New York that’s being directed by one of his professors at college.

Troy will be back in the area in the fall when he works to complete his senior thesis project. He will return with nearly the same crew to film a short movie about a paramedic who eventually has to choose between saving his life or his patient’s. With an estimated cost of \$43,000, Troy said he will be saving every penny he has as well as hunting for donations and grants to fund the project.

“I have to do it,” he said. “They’re holding my degree captive until I make this one last film.”

Marlborough Budget Vote Coming Monday

by Adam Benson

Next Monday, June 1, Marlborough taxpayers will return to the polls to vote on a proposed \$20.98 million fiscal year 2009-10 budget that includes lighter education cuts.

And First Selectman Bill Black is hoping those compromises will be enough to get the spending plan in place, bringing an end to one of the town’s most heated budget cycles ever.

“Will it pass overwhelmingly? Probably not. But I believe the Board of Finance has put together a budget that’s acceptable to both education and the general populace,” he said.

The proposed budget represents a 1.43 percent increase in spending over the current year. It also calls for the mill rate to increase by .92 mills, which translates to a tax increase of 3.56 percent.

Taxpayers shot down a proposed \$20.96 million budget by a 188-171 vote on May 11. (The budget voters will see next Monday it is actually a little higher, due to money being taken out of the town’s undesignated fund balance and put into the local Board of Education budget. However, the proposed tax increase remains the same as what was proposed at the May 11 vote.)

Monday’s vote is set for 7 p.m. in the community room at Elmer Theines-Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr. And, in addition to the slightly revised budget, voters will see some changes from the May 11 meeting.

Participants must register at the door and provide evidence they’re a taxpayer in town – a process that officials skipped during the previous town meeting, leading some residents to openly question whether the original vote was valid.

“There seemed to be a level of concern that some people had about others trying to double vote, although I don’t really believe that to be the case,” Black said. “People generally do the right thing.”

Black said town officials are prepared to once again use paper ballots during Monday’s meeting.

“A town meeting is generally a smaller audience and dependent upon the recognition of your neighbors,” he said. “It’s a much more informal process and based on a mutual knowledge of who is a taxpayer and who is not.”

In light of the tense, protracted negotiations that defined this year’s budget cycle, Black said providing paper ballots remains a likelihood – though officials are hoping the check-in will help expedite the process.

“If the majority of those in attendance want to do it on a paper ballot, we’ll be prepared for that,” Black said.

Since the May 11 budget defeat, the town boards of finance and education have scrambled to present a new plan – and one that both sides have publicly endorsed.

The new \$6.96 million education budget forced the school board to slash \$28,000 from its bottom line but allowed it to avoid reducing contributions to AHM Youth Services and preserve the district’s summer reading program.

Board of Education members bridged the gap by reducing instructional supplies by an additional \$2,000 and cutting teachers’ classroom budgets from \$300 to \$200. The district was also helped by an employee who submitted a letter of retirement to Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo – resulting in a savings next year of more than \$20,700.

The Board of Finance had initially directed the school board to cut \$48,000, but then opted to take \$20,000 from the town’s undesignated fund balance.

Black said he hoped the latest round of talks between the sides will help convince voters the new budget was crafted in the spirit of compromise.

“From a practical standpoint, we need to put in place a mill rate that supports a budget,” he said.

For details about the new budget, visit the town’s website at www.marlboroughct.net.

Colchester School Board Adds Another Half-Day Kindergarten Course

by Adam Benson

Spurred by a record number of registrations, the Board of Education Tuesday night voted to add another half-day kindergarten unit to its slate for next year.

“We certainly anticipate next year’s kindergarten class being larger than this year,” Colchester Elementary School Principal Jacqueline Somberg said.

This year, the district saw 206 children in its part-time kindergarten program. But already, 207 are signed up for next year, and officials expect that number to jump even higher by the time school starts again in September.

“We don’t know what we’re going to end up with. It’s already going over projections,” Board of Education Chairman William Hettrick said.

Currently, the district offers 10 half-day and one full-day kindergarten program with a total of 227 students. Officials said adding another part-time slot can be done at no cost to the district, because of \$315,000 in unused federal stimulus money that will cover extra costs.

Still, if registration continues to swell, it could present a problem before the calendar turns over. Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said Tuesday that adding more than one additional half-day kindergarten session would “be a budgetary problem.”

However, Hettrick said he’s confident the early planning will be enough to ward off that prospect.

“We have to plan for it financially, but we’re in good shape,” he said.

Somberg said she was glad to see so much interest in the district’s kindergarten program, and credited the early sign-ups in helping to alleviate logistical challenges.

“It allows us to look at those numbers and

begin to see where the families live, and allow us to enroll children in the morning or afternoon,” Somberg said. “We’re going to be able to get those letters out soon, and that’s going to be so important.”

Despite the influx of new children, the district has no plans to expand its full-day kindergarten because children in both programs are meeting or surpassing state-mandated learning thresholds. Somberg said Tuesday more than 75 percent of all kindergarten students this year met or exceeded benchmark standards.

“What I was afraid to do tonight was in any way say that any program is better than another, because I think we have done so much growth that we feel passionate that we’re going in the right direction,” Somberg said.

The district’s full-day kindergarten program is designed to aid children with severe learning disabilities, though officials integrate non special-education students into the mix to create an inclusive atmosphere for children.

This year, the district’s full-day kindergarten class of 20 was composed of 55 percent special education students. In 2007-08, the class of 22 was 36 percent special education.

Loiselle said special education students will continue to be given top priority in the full-day kindergarten program, despite the additional part-time offering.

“By the nature of the program, the neediest kids will be recommended, so we will always be serving those with the greatest needs,” she said.

A lottery will be held June 8 at 5 p.m. at Colchester Elementary to round out the roster for full-day kindergarten next year. The deadline to register a child for the lottery is June 5. To register and for more information, call the school at 537-0717.

East Hampton Car Dealer Keeping Family Tradition Alive

by Michael McCoy

When he opened Lake Pocotopaug Auto last fall, Ted Trudon was following in the footsteps of both his father and his grandfather.

Trudon's grandfather owned Trudon Volkswagen in Vernon, while his father owned Trudon Ford in Bristol. It was at the latter dealership that Trudon got a job at the age of 13, washing cars. By age 17, he was a salesman and eventually moved on to other dealerships, like Hoffman in his hometown of Manchester, and built a career in car sales.

For some time, Trudon, 52, had the itch to start a dealership of his own, though he never devoted his full energy to making it happen. Then, in the summer of 2007, he was looking for a house in East Hampton, as he had spent his childhood summers on Columbia Lake and was hoping to live near a lake once more. While house-hunting, he noticed a business space available for lease right on Route 66, and virtually sealed the deal immediately.

Since the 259 West High St. location had been previously used for trailer and camper sales, it was basically primed for a dealership. All Trudon had to do was get his inventory, which he retrieves at auctions, primarily in East Windsor.

"My motto is 'premium, affordable vehicles,'" Trudon said, adding that his cars are "older with high mileage" and are priced at around \$5,000. (The car list on Lake Pocotopaug Auto's website, www.lakepocotopaugauto.com, shows a range of \$3,500 to \$8,500.)

Though the exact number varies, Trudon said

he keeps around 50 cars in stock.

"Anything that leaves here is sound," Trudon promised. "I stand behind everything for 30 days, even if it doesn't come with a warranty."

While the dealership sells everything from Fords, Toyotas and Subarus to BMWs, Volkswagens and Lincolns, Trudon said he "kind of specialize in Saabs and Volvos," and said he's a Saab driver himself. He also said that one of his mechanics is a Volvo factory master certified technician.

Also working at Lake Pocotopaug Auto are Trudon's wife, Christine, and his daughter, Taylor, a student at the University of Connecticut. "The girls do administration," he said. "It's a family." Trudon also has a daughter named Alexa and two sons, Alex and Ted. The children range in age from 16 to 23.

Just this April, Trudon added a full-service garage to the dealership, along with two mechanics. Lake Pocotopaug's garage welcomes all customers, not just their dealership patrons.

Trudon said he decided to add the garage when he realized a trend in people hanging onto their cars longer, thanks to the recession. "People aren't buying anything unless they have to," Trudon figured. The garage fields all mechanical issues, "from minor to major," Trudon said. He also said serviced vehicles are all washed and vacuumed prior to pickup.

Trudon said he's "sold a lot of cars to a lot of people in town here," but added that he's drawn customers from all around the area.

Trudon reflected on what has changed over 35 years of selling cars. "The dirty guys have gone away," he said of the stereotypical slip-



Lake Pocotopaug Auto is truly a family affair. Pictured, from left, are the Trudons: Alexa, Christine, Ted and Taylor. Not shown are the Trudons' two sons, Alex and Ted.

pery used car salesman. "Those days are gone."

However, he said the ebb and flow of sales is less measurable. "There's actually no logic to it at all," he said, figuring that there is no one time of year where sales can be counted on to be heavier than another time of year.

Lake Pocotopaug Auto, located at 259 West High St. (Route 66), is open Monday through Saturday, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., or by appointment. Its sales department may be reached at 985-2427, while the phone number for service is 267-2200.



Andover held its annual Memorial Day observances this past Monday. Pictured at left is Memorial Day Committee Chairman John McCall offering a few words following the morning parade; at center are fresh American flags and wreaths that were placed at the foot of Andover's war memorial; and at right, Judah Bradley, 3, sister Audrey, 7, and brother Jeremiah, 5, waved the Stars and Stripes proudly at passing veterans while the children's mother Joyce looked on.



Andover Veterans and Residents Gather for Memorial Day

by Adam Benson

It was a festive scene in Andover Monday morning for the town's annual Memorial Day parade – but for one man, the holiday began hours earlier under a much more somber backdrop.

"At sunrise, I was at my flagpole, as is customary," said 80-year-old Ylo Anson, who served in the Army for 35 years. With a lone salute and a slow lowering of the flag from full-staff to half, Anson's tribute to his fallen comrades ushered in a day of remembrance rife with somberness and symbolism.

"The world situation is different today. It's taken on a different dimension," Anson said later in the day at the gates of Center Cemetery, where fresh American flags laid at the weather-beaten headstones of Andover's military veterans.

The town's Memorial Day parade normally attracts large crowds because it's the only townwide parade of the year, but dozens of

people like Anson make sure the meaning behind the celebration is not forgotten.

"This is for the guys now and the people that died," said Manchester resident Bill Winnie, who served in the Navy from 1961 through 1967. "It's a good thing."

Wearing a U.S. Navy ball cap, Winnie made the trip to watch his grandson – a member of the Andover Elementary School marching band – take part in Monday's festivities.

Up and down Route 316, from School Road to Hebron Road and leading to Memorial Park, hundreds of people – and patriotic pets – cheered, sang and saluted the town's veterans marching in front of them.

"We had a good representation of veterans show up, which is always nice to see happen," John McCall, the town's Memorial Day Committee chairman, said Wednesday. "I think we had a good year for our parade and our celebration."

In addition to all Andover armed forces members, Monday's parade featured an array of town, regional and local youth groups including members of Andover Little League, Andover Youth Soccer, the town's Community Emergency Response Team, the Andover Senior Center and Boy Scout and Brownie troops.

There were also performances by the RHAM High School and Middle school bands, the RHAM color guard and the Andover Volunteer Fire Department's marching unit.

"Things went pretty well," McCall said. "We had great weather. In our town, it's the only parade we have for the whole year and I know that plays a big part in the enjoyment."

The parade touched off from Andover Elementary School at 9 a.m. and ended about 30 minutes later at Memorial Park.

Girl Scout Meggan Hatch and Cub Scout Caled Smith were chosen as this year's memorial wreath bearers while the RHAM High

School Band performed the national anthem and taps.

Following the service, McCall and hundreds of people gathered along Cider Mill Road in the shadows of the town's old cemetery for a service that included a reading of the Gettysburg Address by AES sixth-grader Mary McBride. Fellow sixth-grader Carson Verona recited "In Flanders Fields," a famous World War I-era poem by Canadian John McCrae.

By 10 a.m., the town's annual service had wrapped up, but for veterans like Anson, the day would stretch at least a few hours longer, when he removed the flag in front of his home according to custom.

Anson said honoring the lives and service of his military colleagues is a part of his daily routine – minus one key feature.

"I don't feel like marching," he said. "I've done enough marching. Let somebody younger do it."



Memorial Day was celebrated with a parade and ceremony in Hebron Monday. At left are members of Veteran of Foreign Wars Post 8776 taking part in the parade, while at right, the Hebron Elementary School band participates.



Hebron Residents Remember Their Own at Memorial Day Service

by Adam Benson

Joan Tooney was a little girl when her uncle was killed during the battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. But she remembers clearly the honor the 26-year-old Marine was afforded by Hebron residents during a Decoration Day service later that year.

“It’s instant recall,” Tooney said. “I can remember very vividly as a young child when they were paying tribute to my uncle. I can see my aunt standing there.”

More than 60 years later, the event that became known in 1967 as Memorial Day still holds a special place in Tooney’s heart. Her husband Robert is a World War II veteran, while a son and several other of her uncles have also served their country.

So the eye-catching display in front of her Hebron home that featured an Army dress cap draped atop a white cross in front of a sign that said “My Son!” was meant to be more than just a temporary patriotic display.

“I don’t think that young people in school are educated about what Memorial Day means,

and I think there’s a general lack of education about it,” Tooney said. “Maybe out of the metropolitan area, we seem to have a better understanding of it.”

Under a clear sky and with temperatures hovering in the low 70s, hundreds of Hebron residents turned out for the town’s Memorial Day parade, which touched off from RHAM High School at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, May 25.

“The weather was every bit as extraordinary as the turnout. I think it was the best we’ve ever had,” said John Tuttle, commander of Hebron American Legion Post 95 and the parade’s grand marshal. “I was so grateful for the turnout and the cooperation. All the units were wonderful and the music was great.”

For all the casual conversations, family gatherings and picnic brunches that dotted the parade’s route, Tuttle and other military veterans spoke poignantly about the meaning of the day at a service in the center of town.

Hebron counts 263 deceased veterans in its

cemeteries, and Tuttle said in the history of the nation, more than 1.25 million soldiers have been killed in action.

“America has paid a dear price indeed, and so has our little town of Hebron,” Tuttle said. “For each one lost in battle, irreplaceable in and of themselves, their loss represents a family that was instantaneously and irrevocably shattered.”

Ron Winter, a Vietnam War veteran, urged those in attendance to also remember servicemen and women classified by the federal government as missing in action.

“We must all ensure that future generations know without asking that their lives and actions will never be sacrificed for political expediency,” he said. “We must ensure that no American serviceman or woman is ever left behind in another country’s prisons, abandoned by the government that sent them there.”

Monday’s service was highlighted by the ceremonial raising of the American flag. This year, the task fell to honorary grand marshal

John Meli, a World War II veteran who served with the 90th Division 3rd Army and saw action at the Battle of the Bulge.

Meli arrived back to his Lebanon home just days before the parade, following a trip to France, where he developed a respiratory ailment. Tuttle said Meli was determined to be at Monday’s ceremonies and raise the banner to the top.

“He used all his strength to raise that flag,” Tuttle said. “This guy is a wonderful testimony to his generation, because he never talks much about his service and his experience.”

And despite the pageantry on display throughout the day, Tuttle said he’s quick to remind people the reason behind it all.

“It is not just all ruffles and flourishes on this day. This is the result of lot of blood being spilled,” he said. “We don’t take a great amount of vanity in dressing up like soldiers. We’re only here for one reason, because of the guys who can’t march and never came back.”

Portland Police News

5/22-Claudia Trudell, 35, of 27 Chatham Ct., was charged with operating a motor vehicle under license suspension and seatbelt violation, Portland Police said.

Hebron Police News

5/13-Brian Kieffer, 29, of 34 Hillside Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

5/15-Joseph Lanford, 18, of 444 West St., was charged with disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, interfering with a police officer and possession of alcohol, State Police said.

5/20-Danean Petow, 42, of Glastonbury, was charged with driving while intoxicated, evading, and following too close, State Police said.

Andover Police News

5/17-Jessie Tarr, 18, of 163 Lake Rd., was charged with two counts of sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

5/24-Ryan Piscatelli, 23, of Manchester, was charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive upon the right, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

5/26-Justin Ruffino, 22, of 271 S. Main St., was charged with two counts of second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

5/12-Magdalena Maymon, 44, of West Warwick, RI, was charged with driving under the influence, State Police said.

5/14-William Marshall, 19, of Enfield, was charged with third-degree burglary and sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

5/15-Nicholas Dugan, 22, of Enfield, was charged with reckless driving and failure to maintain the proper lane, State Police said.

5/18-Roberta Spinnato, 54, of Wallingford, was charged with driving under the influence and failure to maintain the proper lane, State Police said.

5/18-James Tattersall, 36, of Plainville, was charged with engaging police in pursuit, State Police said.

5/19-Frederick Hoyle, 56, of New London, was charged with sixth-degree larceny and writing a bad check, State Police said.

5/19-Jonah Pionson, 35, of Glastonbury, was charged with interfering with police, driving under the influence, evading and driving too fast for conditions, State Police said.

5/20-Shannon Pipicelli, 33, of 331 Amston Rd., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of narcotics, State Police said.

5/22-Terry Faipier, 19, of 639 Westchester Rd., was charged with reckless driving, State Police said.

5/22-Rose Olearnich, 51, of Norwich, was

charged with driving under the influence, State Police said.

5/23-Carl Smith, 52, of Preston, was charged with violation of a restraining order, State Police said.

5/23-Helena Wilson, 42, of Moodus, was charged with failure to have a headlight, driving while intoxicated and drinking while driving, State Police said.

5/24-Richard Miller, 49, of 280 Norwich Ave., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

5/24-Marilyn Saltus, 42, of 280 Norwich Ave., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

5/24-Johnny Nieves, 38, of Waterbury, was charged with driving under a suspended license, State Police said.

5/25-Brittany Carpenter, 22, of 27 Vicki Ln., was charged with driving under the influence and failure to have a headlight, State Police said.

5/25-Adrian Pompei, 19, of Willington, was charged with possession of heroin and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

5/26-Zigmund Dziedziak, 52, of Columbia, was charged with driving under the influence and disobeying a stop sign, State Police said.

5/26-James Tedone, 46, of Cromwell, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.



Students from Kristina Frazier’s second-grade class at Andover Elementary have been exchanging letters, e-mails and even videos with Wethersfield resident Bob Layman since last September. On May 8, “Trucker Bob,” as the kids call him, stopped by the school for a face-to-face meeting with the class.

Andover Students Meet Their Pen Pal, ‘Trucker Bob’

by Sarah McCoy

Students in an Andover Elementary School second-grade class got a visit from their pen pal earlier this month.

Kristina Frazier’s class has been exchanging letters, e-mails and even videos with Wethersfield truck driver Bob Layman all year. On May 8 “Trucker Bob,” as the students call him, visited the class, giving them a tour of his truck and even bringing spare keys for the students.

Last summer, Frazier was looking for a way to get her students to practice writing. She stumbled across the Trucker Buddy program and inquired about getting partnered up with a driver. “It seemed like a good way to practice letter writing and communication skills while learning about other parts of the country,” Frazier explained.

The Trucker Buddy International program is a volunteer pen pal program where professional truck drivers can communicate their experiences to students. The program began over 15 years ago and, according to the program’s web-site, has reached more than 100,000 students.

Frazier’s class was matched with Trucker Bob, who lives in Wethersfield. Layman works for LJ Kennedy Trucking transporting building materials typically on the eastern side of the country.

Every week since September, Layman has communicated with Frazier’s class about where he’s traveled to, what his load consists of and other facets of his job.

Students would respond back, asking more questions and describing what their weeks are like. “My favorite part is learning about where he’s gone and seeing the post cards from far away,” second-grade student Maggie Veronesi said.

Not only did students get to practice their letter-writing skills but they also learned new technologies. Last fall, the class made a movie taking Trucker Bob on a tour of the school. “We

thought it would be nice for him to know where we are because we’ve been following him where he goes,” Frazier said.

Layman responded with a video of his own taken from the cab of his truck and set to the tune of John Denver’s “Take Me Home, Country Roads.” Now the 7- and 8-year-olds in Frazier’s class can’t get enough of the 38 year-old song.

Each week the students would look forward to tracking where Trucker Bob had traveled. During the course of the year he went as far as Florida; he covers thousands of miles each week. Using mapping programs from the Internet students would discuss Trucker Bob’s route and what they knew of that part of the country.

Also, one time Layman sent a photo of wind-mills used to collect energy for electricity. That photo turned into a classroom science discussion.

Students also learned about Layman’s schedule. “He can’t drive more than 11 hours a day and has to stop by 6 [p.m.],” Scott Butler, a student in Frazier’s class, reported. “And, he only gets to see his family on the weekends and sometimes he doesn’t even get that if he’s too far away.”

Layman has been driving for 25 years, though he’s only been a long-distance driver the past two years. He was a truck driver before then, but just did local routes.

Throughout the year Layman took photos of Miles, a stuffed mouse, at different parts in his trips. When he came last month Layman brought with him a matching stuffed mouse for the class. Frazier’s class named him Mr. Squeaks and he now sits at the front of the classroom, reminding students of their pen pal.

Frazier said she’s pleased that the project not only got her students writing but also gave them a better appreciation of geography and what it means to have a career. She plans to run the program again next year.

New Water Main Construction Underway in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Construction has begun for a water main to service contaminated properties in the Main Street area.

The main comes as the result of a consent order handed down by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to the owners of the two Hebron gas stations for contamination that dates back over 25 years.

According to Bill Richards, environmental analyst with the Remediation Division within the Bureau of Water Protection and Land Use at the DEP, the first contamination release was found at one of the gas stations in town in 1983. Over time there have been more releases that have necessitated the need for the water main.

In 2007, according to Richards, the DEP issued Drake Petroleum, owners of the gas stations, a unilateral remediation order for the ground water pollution that had been created. Drake Petroleum appealed the decision but reached an agreement with DEP before the matter went to the next step in the administration process.

The agreement, spelled out in a consent order, was received by town officials at the end of March. It calls for the laying of a water main to reach four properties located in the Main Street area. Hebron Town Planner Mike O’Leary said the properties are Raney Orthodontics on Wall Street, Patti Dunne’s Gymnastics on Pendleton Drive, and the Fire Department and the Hebron Center Commons strip, both on Main Street.

In addition to the hook-up to public water these four sites will also receive compensation for their water bills for the next 10 years. Drake Petroleum will be required to pay these bills, Richards reported, as a way of making amends for the inconvenience of the contamination.

O’Leary and Richards both reported that Drake Petroleum is currently providing filtration and bottled water to the properties affected by the contamination.

The consent order also calls for continued monitoring of 12 additional sites at risk for contamination in the future. However, Drake Petroleum has opted to go ahead and hook these additional properties up to the new water main in lieu of the costly testing. “What we see is the respondent taking a proactive approach to remediate the contamination,” Richards said.

These additional properties include Douglas Library and New Alliance Bank on Main Street, AHM Youth and Family Services on Pendleton Drive and businesses located in the plaza with Subway and the Greenleaf Café, also on Main Street.

Richards said gas station contaminations are fairly common in the state, and praised Drake Petroleum for its handling of the situation. “I believe all parties involved are satisfied with the agreement that’s in place,” he said. “That’s not always the case.”

In addition to the water main and hook-ups to individual properties Drake Petroleum will also be required to install four fire hydrants per the guidelines set forth by the Connecticut Water Company, who provides water service to the town.

Construction on the water main began last week. O’Leary said he expects the project to wrap up by the end of June. It is being done at no cost to the town.

Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney said last week that he’s “thrilled” to see the project getting underway. “It’s great to put the matter behind us while making sure the residents and businesses of Hebron are protected,” he said.

East Hampton Police News

5/9-Luis A. Santos, 42, of 34 East High St., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, illegal storage of narcotics, possession of controlled substance and possession of narcotics, East Hampton Police said.

5/15-Robert M. Mongiat, 52, of 6 Byron Rd., was issued a ticket for passing in a no-passing zone, police said.

5/15-Mark Rohdem 49, of 15 Hayes Rd., was issued a ticket for allowing a dog to roam, police said.

5/16-Theodore R. Tester, 50, of 172 Middle Haddam Rd., Portland, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol, police said.

5/17-Jason M. Thomas, 34, of 64 West High St., was arrested for disorderly conduct, third-degree assault, interfering/resisting an officer and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

5/17-Michelle Paquette, 17, of 8 Glenwood Rd., and Lori Lacroix, 25, of 78 Needle Tree Ln., Glastonbury, were involved in a two-car accident on Route 66 at Route 196, police said, and added that Paquette was issued a ticket for failure to obey a stop sign.

5/18-Robert Makris, 20, of 66 McDonald Rd., Colchester, and Dorothy Streich, 45, of 4A Bellevue St., were issued tickets for failure to wear a seatbelt, police said.

5/19-Daniel Mudgett, 29, of 131 Wellesville, New Milford, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for failure to appear, police said.

5/20-Eric Lafountain, 27, whose address police listed as Hartford Corrections Center, was arrested on a habeas and charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, police said.

5/20-Frank Turner, 55, of 23 Young St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for accessory to larceny, police said.

5/20-Holly Turner, 45, of 23 Young St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for sixth-degree larceny, police said.

5/21-Bruce Heller Jr., 32, of 26 Lake Blvd., Evan Rea, 22, of 63 Blue Heron Dr., and Raymond Gaylord, 25, of 2 Whittier Rd., were all issued tickets for failure to wear a seat belt, police said.

5/21-Justin Barall, 19, of 44 Emily Ln., was arrested for possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, police said.

5/22-Seth Hall, 18, of 126 Bear Swamp Rd., was issued a ticket for failure to wear a seat belt, police said.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

What a series!

I'm not a fan of interleague play (more on that later), but exciting baseball is exciting baseball, and last weekend's Mets-Red Sox series up at Fenway certainly had its share of thrills. For the Mets, the series marked the final three games of a road trip that had started thrillingly (three straight wins over the Giants) but quickly turned sour (a loss in their final game in San Francisco, followed by an embarrassing three-game sweep by the Dodgers, which included one utterly humiliating loss in which the winning run of the ballgame was voided because the runner didn't touch third when he was rounding the bag). The trip had also seen injuries really take a toll on the Mets' roster. As they limped into Boston, I wasn't quite sure what to expect, but I wasn't overly optimistic.

By Sunday, I was thinking sweep. The Mets didn't play great defense in Friday's opener. In fact, it was pretty lousy. But they had Johan Santana on the hill, and Santana didn't let the errors behind him get to him. He never lost his concentration and, while I've seen better stuff from him this season, he pitched quite well, giving up three runs – two earned – in seven innings.

Saturday's game proved to be a rather unexpected pitchers' duel, with the Mets' Mike Pelfrey taking on Boston's Josh Beckett, and the two of them turning in great performances (Pelfrey gave up two runs on six hits in seven innings, striking out six; Beckett was a little better, giving up one run – unearned – on five hits in eight innings, striking out five). Papelbon pitched the ninth with the Mets down, 2-1. He issued a leadoff walk but then struck out the next two, and it looked like the series might be even, a game apiece. Then something strange and wonderful happened.

Catcher Omir Santos hit a fly ball to deep left field. Was it high enough, and far enough, to clear the Green Monster? Well, it hit off the top of it, bounced back into the field of play, and umpires ruled it a hit — nothing more. Gary Sheffield (who'd been walked to lead off the inning) stopped at third, while Santos stopped at second. Sheffield began immediately twirling his finger in the air, indicating the ball was a home run. And the question began to circulate: was it? The replay shown on TV seemed to indicate yes, that the ball just cleared this very small rail on top of the Green Monster before coming back onto the field. And to their credit, the guys broadcasting the game for NESN (which is, of course, the Red Sox channel) also seemed convinced it was a homer. The umpires talked amongst themselves for a bit, then crew chief Joe West went down into a tunnel by the Red Sox dugout to do something they couldn't have done at this time last year – watch an instant replay.

Late last season, Major League Baseball instituted an instant replay rule. If there is a question as to whether a ball is a home run or not, the umpire staff can review video and see. It was a change I was 100 percent behind. Few things can change a game as much as a home run, particularly when the game is close (and the hit by Santos – if ruled a homer – would have turned a 2-1 deficit into a 3-2 lead). In those cases where it's not clear right away if a ball is a homer, then I believe umpires should be able to review it. Umpires aren't perfect, and sometimes, depending on where a ball is hit, it can be very difficult indeed to make a judgment call when you're watching it live and with your naked eye.

(Another note in instant replay's favor: Major League Baseball limits its use to deciding home runs. You can't use it to see if a double down the line is fair or foul, or to see if that guy sliding into home plate really did beat the tag. While those are important plays too, if you let instant replay be used for anything, baseball games could drag on for far too long. Plus, at some point you have to rely on the umpires to do their job.)

After viewing the replay, the umpires ruled that the ball was indeed a homer, so the Mets grabbed the lead, and Papelbon had a rare blown save. With the help of some sparking defense in the bottom of the ninth (including a terrific stretch by second baseman Luis Castillo to save a ball from going into the outfield – and oh yeah, he got the out too), the Mets held on to win.

It was an amazing outcome. The replay totally turned that game around. A year ago,

perhaps the Red Sox win that game. It was fascinating. While I know it wasn't the first time instant replay was used in a game, Saturday marked the first time it had been used in a game I was watching (and, I later learned, the first time it was used at Fenway Park). Which made it all the more surprising when it was used again the very next day.

Sunday's instant replay, used to determine if a potential home run hit by Kevin Youkalis was fair or foul, didn't come in the same type of situation. It was the fifth inning, and the Mets were up 5-3, and there was no one on base. Nor was the outcome the same. The replays they showed on TV were inconclusive, and indeed that's what the umpires felt too. So, lacking concrete proof that the ball was a homer, the umpires ordered it to remain a foul ball, and Youkilis went on to fly out.

That kept the Mets up 5-3, but things didn't remain that way for long. Three straight Boston hits with two out in the fifth chased Mets' starter Tim Redding. He left with the lead – albeit a slim one, at 5-4 – but the bullpen couldn't stop the bleeding and by the end of that inning the Mets were down 6-5. The bullpen then went on to have a mini-implosion, and Boston wound up winning 12-5.

So, in the end, there was no sweep, but the Mets still won the series. I'll take that.

Now, since the Mets were playing the Red Sox, that means I was able to watch all three games on TV. Typically, only one Met game a week is shown on TV in this part of the state; on Sundays, WPIX in New York carries the game, and Channel 20 here in Connecticut usually simulcasts those. But because they were playing Boston, NESN was showing the games too, so that meant Friday's and Saturday's match-ups were on TV. I took full advantage, and watched all three games.

The games marked the first time I've watched Red Sox broadcasts on NESN for an extended period of time, and I have to say, they did a good job. The play-by-play team of Don Orsillo and Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley was entertaining and informational, and didn't leave me with a desire to mute the TV. There were occasional moments when I'd wished they were paying a little more attention to the game on the field, but for the most part it was enjoyable. Plus, I discovered NESN's on-field reporter, Heidi Watney. Yowza. Unfortunately, she seemed to only be there for Friday's game; they didn't show her on Saturday. Still, she was quite the sight. You male fans in Red Sox Nation are pretty lucky.

Heidi might have been back for Sunday's game, but, like I said, Sunday's game was on Channel 20 so I watched it there, with the Mets' broadcast team of Gary Cohen and Ron Darling. Like I said, I only get to see Met broadcasts once a week, so I'm going to watch them when I can – Heidi or no Heidi.

Watching the games, I noticed just how many Mets fans were present. There were a lot of them, seemingly in all corners of the ballpark. And during the games you'd hear "Let's Go Red Sox!" chants, immediately followed by "Let's Go Mets!" chants (which weren't as loud, since there were more Red Sox fans there, it being Fenway). However, the Mets fans and the Red Sox fans did seem to agree on one thing, anyway. They'd all join together for the occasional "Yankees Suck!" chants.

Another thing I noticed was the fans' treatment of David Ortiz. Ortiz has had an awful season, and looked just dreadful this weekend. He struck out almost every time he walked up to the plate, and in fact by the end of the day Sunday his average had dipped below .200. And yet, the fans never booed him. It was quite remarkable. Perhaps they're still appreciative of all that Big Papi did in 2004 and 2007. But they never booed. Having been to many Mets games in my life, I can tell you that wouldn't have happened in New York. When the performance isn't there, the fans boo you; it doesn't matter who you are. But Ortiz, even though he looked terrible, was given a pass by the fans. It seemed pretty classy.

Now, back to the point I made wayyyy back at the beginning of this column. While I watched all three of the games, and enjoyed them, I'm not a fan of interleague play. I'll admit there was a certain novelty to it when it started in 1997, but that novelty has long since worn off, and now I just want it to go away. I believe it really does cheapen the World Series. When two teams meet for the first time

on baseball's biggest stage, it's exciting. It's the thrill of baseball's best from one league meeting baseball's best from another league. It's a little less thrilling when the two teams had just played each other a few months before.

For example, think of 2000, when the Mets played the Yankees in the Fall Classic. It would have been the first Subway Series of any kind in New York since the Giants and the Dodgers bolted for California in the '50s. Imagine the excitement. And while it was exciting – it was the World Series after all – the Mets and the Yankees had already played each other six times that season. The Mets had already competed against the Yankees' players, had already been in a jam-packed Yankee Stadium, and the same thing with the Yankees, and their

Colchester

William Francis Kaik Sr.

William Francis Kaik, Sr., 61, of Colchester and formerly of Branford, beloved husband of Donna (Hawtin) Kaik, passed away unexpectedly Friday evening, May 22, at home. Born Jan. 18, 1948 in New Haven, he was a son of Mary Evelyn (Harris) Kaik of Hamden and the late Edward S. Kaik Sr.

A 1964 graduate of North Branford High School, he enlisted in the Navy and following his honorable discharge, he attended flight school and went on to own and operate the Pioneer Gun Stock Co. in Guilford before joining Subaru of America in their sales force for 25 years before his retirement. Over the years, he enjoyed flying as well as gardening and antiquing.

In addition to his mother and his loving wife of 30 years, he is survived by two children, Beverly Mott of Rochester, NY and William F. Kaik Jr. of Monroe, NC; his sister, Valerie Andree of Rhineland, WI; a brother, Eugene Kaik of Haddam; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his father, he was predeceased by a brother, Edward S. Kaik Jr.

Friends gathered Tuesday evening, May 26, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A memorial service followed.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Lung Association, 45 Ash St., East Hartford, CT 06108-3272.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Helen Macrina

Helen Macrina, 82, of Hebron and formerly of Brockton, MA, widow of the late George J. Macrina, passed away Saturday, May 23, at the Wm. W. Backus Hospital in Norwich. Born May 17, 1927, in Stoughton, MA, she was a daughter of the late Samuel and Mary (Prodouz) Klimchuk.

On Nov. 6, 1949, she and George were married in Brockton and shared nearly 57 years of marriage before he predeceased her on Oct. 6, 2006. Over the years, Helen enjoyed cooking and baking, as well as tending to her gardens and watching the birds in her yard. Later on, she and George loved spending their winters in Florida and summers in Maine. Most importantly, she will be missed and remembered for her undying devotion to her family.

She is survived by her five children and their spouses, Jon and Kathie of Willimantic, Richard and Jody of Hebron, Jim and Ann of Marlborough, Jennifer of Hebron and Francis of Willimantic; two sisters, Virginia Beaulieu of New Hampshire and Christine Allaire of Florida; eight grandchildren, Samantha, Heather, Jonna, Matthew, Mark, Nicholas, Julieann and Tiffany; three great-grandchildren, Jered, Christopher and Allie Rose; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by two brothers, Andrew "Sonny" and Walter.

Friends called Wednesday, May 27, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service was observed that evening. Committal will be private and at the convenience of the family.

Donations in her memory may be made to the American Lung Association, 45 Ash St., East Hartford, CT 06108-3272.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

familiarity with the Yankees players and Shea Stadium. Had the two teams – and their ultra-passionate fan bases – truly been meeting each other for the first time, it would have added a whole other layer of excitement to the series.

I know I'm very much in the minority. The fans seem to love interleague play, and as long as they keep flocking to the games, Major League Baseball will see no reason to end it. But I'd rather interleague games not take place until the World Series. There are some changes Major League Baseball has made to my beloved game over the years that I've come to embrace, like the three-division, wild card format. But on interleague play I'm decidedly old-school.

See you next week.

Andover

Brenda Bendza

Brenda (Jerome) Bendza, 51, passed away Monday, May 18, in her home in Naples, FL, following a long-term battle with cerebellar degeneration.

Brenda was the daughter of Roger and Catherine Jerome of Andover, mother of Matthew Bendza of King Salmon, AK, and of Captain Christine Sulentic (US Army), and wife of James Bendza of Naples. Brenda's brother, Bruce, lives in Glastonbury, her sister, Diane, in Andover, and her brother, Michael, in Rockville. She never met anyone who did not grow to love her more every day. She was especially fond of her grandchildren, Anthony Michael Sulentic, and Gabriel Sulentic, of Savannah, GA.

Having graduated from RHAM High School, she pursued careers in health care, including residential care at the Mansfield State Training School.

She will join her father at the Andover Memorial Gardens. Her life was celebrated at the Holy Family Church in Hebron Saturday, May 23.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the charity of your choice.

East Hampton

Josephine Gondek

Josephine "Jay" (Zawisza) Gondek, 96, of East Hampton went peacefully to her eternal reward on Thursday, May 21. Josephine was the wife of the late John C. Gondek. She was also preceded in death by her son, Thomas.

She was born in Colchester in 1912, but lived most of her life in Middletown. For the golden years of her life, Jay lived in East Hampton with her loving sister, Geneveve Rankl. They were a comfort to each other with their care, compassion and devotion.

Josephine is survived by her son, John F. Gondek and his wife Patricia of Rocky Hill; her daughter in law, Pauline C. Gondek of Portland; her sisters, Frances Robinson and her husband Connie of East Hampton; Pauline Gamache of Columbia; her brother-in-law, Frank Gondek of Portland; her granddaughter, Molly Savich and her husband Christopher of Glendale, NY; her grandsons, Thomas of Portland, Michael and his wife Diane of Higganum and Matthew and his wife Julie of Portland. Babci, as she was known, leaves three great-grandchildren, Kristen, Aimee and Alex, and numerous loving nieces and nephews.

The family wishes to thank Nicole Cook and the staff at Maple View Manor as well as Hartford Hospital and the Hospice Care Team.

Funeral liturgy was held Tuesday, May 26, at St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, South Main Street, Middletown. Family and friends called at the Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, on Tuesday morning. Burial at St. John's Cemetery.

East Hampton

Phyllis Krzeminski

Phyllis B. Krzeminski, 94, of East Hampton and formerly of Maryland, widow of the late Michael J. Krzeminski, died Sunday, May 24 at Middlesex Hospital. Born May 5, 1915 in Bethel Maine, she was the daughter of the late William and Ethel Burhoe.

She is survived by her two sons, Michael Krzeminski of East Hampton, and Philip Krzeminski of Moodus; three daughters, Lezette Wise of California, Lydia Krzeminski of Ohio and Emily Court of Maryland; and five grandchildren.

Funeral services will be private at the convenience of the family.

The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements.