

# RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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**Robert Burns, lying in his hospital bed earlier this week, displays his hand, which was bitten by a timber rattlesnake in Marlborough over Independence Day weekend.**

## Snakebit!

by Adam Benson

However adventurous your Independence Day weekend was, Robert Burns has it beat.

The 45-year-old Wallingford man spent much of this week in Hartford Hospital after sustaining a rattlesnake bite to his hand Sunday, July 5, at the Marlborough home of his wife Jodie's aunt.

In addition to coping with the painful after-effects of the timber rattlesnake's venom, Burns withstood several interviews with various statewide media outlets, which were drawn to the offbeat tale of his real-life wildlife encounter – Burns was only the sixth person on record to have been bitten by a venomous snake in Connecticut over the past 50 years, according to Hank Gruner, vice president of programs at the Connecticut Science Center.

Burns said Thursday morning he used to live "down in Georgia, and this wouldn't be anything down there but up here, it's the talk of the town."

The incident happened in the backyard of a house along West Road, near Rattlesnake Mountain. Burns said he went to retrieve an errant Frisbee at the tree line of the residence.

It was then, Burns said, he spotted the rattler and wanted to move it back into the trees before it had a chance to be harmed – or cause

any harm. The snake was slithering near a spot his two-year-old daughter was playing just minutes earlier.

"I just wanted him away from there," Robert said. The snake didn't seem bothered by the human activity so close to it.

"He just looked right at me. He didn't care about me, but when I got him up on the lawn I irritated him a little bit," Burns said. He said he was so close to the snake, "I could have been talking to him like one of those guys on TV."

Burns said he got the creature in a "chokehold," but wasn't prepared for the five-foot-long snake's strength. When he went to get a better grip on it, that's when the snake turned around and nicked him on the left hand.

"I knew at that point I had to catch the snake, because I knew they weren't going to believe that I got bit by a rattlesnake," Burns said, referring to paramedics. "When he hit me, he wanted to kill me real bad."

Burns said that, at first, the bite didn't hurt at all, but about an hour later when the venom made its way through his body, he was hit with the worst pain of his life. The 2007 motorcycle accident that fractured his leg in four places was nothing compared to the aftereffects of the

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## Hebron's Camp Hi Hoti Opens for Summer

by Sarah McCoy

Just three months after vandals ransacked the property, Camp Hi Hoti in Hebron opened as scheduled.

The sights and sounds of children running, laughing and enjoying the East Street camp is in stark contrast to early April, when thousands of dollars of damage was discovered on the property. Dozens of windows were smashed. Doors had been broken. A riding mower was even driven into the lake on the property.

"It was all just senseless," Hebron resident and Camp Hi Hoti Board of Directors member Ron Wenzel said. "I can't imagine who would want to do damage to a place that does such good."

It was Wenzel and his wife, Joyce, who discovered the vandalism as they were collecting sap buckets used to tap into the trees on the property for maple syrup.

Each summer Camp Hi Hoti hosts about 75 inner-city students from the greater Hartford area from first to sixth grade. For many it's a rare opportunity to meet new friends, try new activities, and experience nature. "My favorite part is hiking," 10 year-old Mutia said (no last name was provided for confidentiality reasons). "There are always cool activities that I couldn't do at home."

Mutia and her brother Yahyah have been coming to camp for the past three years. They said they look forward to it each year. Yahyah, 9, said he enjoys the field trips and playing basketball the most but admits, "whatever I'm doing that day is usually my favorite."

Just to get Camp Hi Hoti ready for campers again has been quite a journey. In toll about

\$100,000 of repairs were needed to the camp. Four buildings took the brunt of the vandalism. Unfortunately, those were four of the most used building at the camp.

While insurance covered some of the repair costs to the camp, Ford estimates that there is still another \$30,000 worth of repairs still outstanding.

After installing over 50 windows, fixing doors, replacing furniture and doing a general clean-up, the camp's lodge is open. According to Lynn Ford, executive director for the camp, the dining hall has also been opened and arts and crafts building will open on Monday. The medical station needed to be relocated for the season because repairs on that building were not able to be completed.

"But, the important thing is, the kids don't mind. They don't notice," Camp Hi Hoti Director Guyisha Rosario said. "As long as we keep them busy with activities they forget about where they can't go."

Health Director Gerald Fullworth added that the kids are concerned with more important things. "Out here, they can look up and see a hawk," he said. "And the other day we found a snake skin. These are things they don't see everyday. It's wonderful to see their excitement."

Ford said the effort to get camp open was indescribable. "I knew we had to open camp," she said. "No matter what, we needed to get back on track. I may have been called crazy a few times."

The camp received a brand new refrigerator from the Hebron Lions Club and, earlier this week, camp officials were notified that their wish list for tools and supplies to complete the



**Campers walk into the lodge at Camp Hi Hoti earlier this week. After vandals caused \$100,000 in damages earlier this spring the Hebron camp opened for the season on Monday.**

outstanding repairs will be fulfilled by Lowe's.

Ford also praised Hebron town staff, including Public Works Director and current Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney, Building Inspector Joseph Summers, and Fire Marshal Randy Blais, for their efforts in getting the camp reopened. "They bent over backwards to help and keep me sane," Ford said.

In addition to the carpentry work, completed Camp Hi Hoti officials also had a new security system installed to protect the camp in the future. The case to find the individual, or individuals, responsible for April's vandalism remains open, Ford said. Those with any information are asked to call the Hebron Resident State Trooper's office at 228-3710.

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attack, he said.

“The pain of the venom itself, that was horrible,” Burns said. “My head right down to my toes, I felt it through my whole body. It was a very weird sensation.”

Soon after the bite, Burns was rushed by ambulance to the Marlborough Medical Center and then Middlesex Hospital for an anti-venom injection, said Mark Merritt, rescue captain with the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department.

“His vital signs were all stable, and he wasn’t showing any major distress of any sort, so we had plenty of time to get him there,” said Merritt.

But for Jodie Burns, 28, and other family members, the short commute was a nightmare.

“I was very nervous. I was driving behind the ambulance and praying, ‘Oh my God, I can’t lose my husband,’” Jodie Burns said.

After doctors stabilized Burns, he was admitted at Hartford Hospital for observation by toxicologists before being discharged Wednesday afternoon.

Once the family learned Burns wouldn’t have any long-term side effects from his run-in with the rattler, they turned to humor as a coping mechanism.

“He’s a very full-of-life guy,” Jodie Burns said of her husband. “The whole thing was very nerve-wracking and after that it was like, ‘let’s bring some humor into this.’”

Still, Burns said, he was remorseful over the snake’s death – a family member decapitated it with a shovel following the confrontation – and was happy to cooperate with a state investigation into the matter.

“I had no intent on killing the snake. We were going to put him in a bucket, but I screamed after he bit me and the other people killed him,” Burns said. “I wish they hadn’t.”

Timber rattlesnakes are an endangered species in Connecticut, and killing them carries penalties including jail time and fines.

Dennis Schain, a state Department of Environmental Services spokesman, said the agency is not planning to press charges because Burns’ contact with the snake was incidental, and he was trying to move it to a safer area with a stick at the time he was bitten.

Theodora Pinou, an associate professor of biology and environmental sciences at Western Connecticut State University, said any human contact with a snake should be avoided.

She also said timber rattlers are reclusive animals that don’t go out of their way to attack people.

“If you leave them alone, you’re fine. Snakes

don’t go out looking for somebody to strike,” Pinou said. “They can tell you’re bigger than their mouth. They’re not going to just try and bite you.”

Gruner said there are only about five to seven timber rattlesnake population centers in the state, and the species numbers no more than a few thousand.

Gruner has been conducting amphibian and reptile conservation studies for 25 years, and recently worked on a snake census for the state.

Timber rattlesnakes are one of two venomous breeds in the state, along with copperheads.

And while snake-bitten humans are rare anywhere, it’s exceedingly unusual for a Connecticut resident to be injured that way, Gruner said.

“You really have to handle them or come into direct contact to get bitten by them,” he said.

Merritt said Burns’ was the first snake bite he encountered in 23 years as a paramedic in Marlborough.

But more common are sightings of snakes in the town, especially around wooded areas like West Road.

First Selectman Bill Black said several homeowners and crews working to remove downed trees on the heels of a microburst last month reported seeing a rattlesnake in the area.

“At that end of the town, that borders Glastonbury, there are rattlesnakes known to be up there,” he said.

The animals live predominantly in the extreme northwestern and central parts of the state in heavily forested areas.

“Geographically, it’s not that widespread, and the areas are pretty heavily wooded. They don’t really get into the urban fringes,” Gruner said.

Wildlife officials estimated the snake to be about 18 years old at the time of its death, and it was about five feet long.

Jodie Burns said she’s thankful the damage to her husband was minimal – although excruciating.

She said her husband’s pain medication kept him from sleeping for much of the week, and Wednesday allowed him to rest for the first time in almost four days.

“He’s sleeping really good right now,” Jodie Burns said by phone Wednesday.

As for future excursions to her aunt’s house in Marlborough?

“I’m going to chain him to the porch,” Jodie Burns said. “He’s not allowed in the backyard, and neither is my daughter.”

Jodie Burns added of her husband, “We call him Crocodile Dundee. We’re all just happy he’s OK, and he’s not going to have any permanent injuries from this.”

## From the Editor’s Desk

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

When I picked up the latest issue of *Rolling Stone* last week, I wasn’t too surprised to see the Jonas Brothers on the cover, instead of Michael Jackson.

Yes, the issue was dated July 9, but *Rolling Stone* is published biweekly, and the date on the cover is usually at least a week ahead of the date you see it in your mailbox or sometimes even in the stores. I figured the issue likely went to press a few days before Jackson’s death.

But when I opened up the magazine and came to the news stories, the words “Michael Jackson” in the headline grabbed my attention. I thought, for a second, maybe the death happened in time for them to sneak a mention of it in the issue, but not enough time for them to redesign the whole cover? (That was admittedly a stupid thought; this is the year 2009, and while the cover of *Rolling Stone* is slick-looking, I realize it’s all done on computer and a cover can be scrapped and redesigned in mere moments.) When I started reading the article, though, I quickly realized this wasn’t the case. The piece, entitled “Michael Jackson’s Troubled Comeback,” was about the tour Jackson had planned for this summer, and whether he’d actually be able to pull it off.

Reading the story was a rather surreal experience. After days of watching or reading about Jackson’s death and the globe’s reaction to it, here was a story written about Jackson as if he were still alive, which of course he was when the article was penned. It was fairly bizarre.

It was also interesting, too. *Because* Jackson was still alive when the article was written, there was no glorification of him going on; *Rolling Stone* simply told it like it was. That almost certainly wouldn’t have been the case had the issue gone to press after Jackson died. It’s sort of a nice commentary on society that, even today, after somebody famous dies, there’s almost always a period when magazines, newspapers and TV shows focus only – or at least, primarily – on the positives of the person’s life. The more negative aspects are ignored or de-emphasized, at least to a degree. This period may not last all that long, but it’s almost always there. It’s kind of nice that, in this tabloid era we live in, there’s still this whole “don’t speak ill of the dead” agreement in place, at least for a little while.

But, like I said, Jackson wasn’t dead when that *Rolling Stone* article was written. So, the article mentions not just the troubles that were already surfacing with the July tour in London (he’d already postponed the first four shows, and reports claimed Jackson was frequently a no-show at rehearsals in Los Angeles), but also the vast amount of financial trouble he was in. He’d been sued by many former employees and advisors who said he owed them money; John Landis, director of the awesome *Thriller* video I wrote about last week, had sued Jackson for royalties he said he never received; and a New Jersey concert promoter had also filed suit against Jackson, alleging he broke a contract to do a Jackson family-reunion show. The magazine also wrote that Jackson had been described as “a millionaire who spends like a billionaire.”

Like I said, reading all that stuff about Jackson a week after he died was rather strange. You’re not likely to read such warts-and-all writing about Jackson in *Rolling Stone* again, at least not anytime soon. And it certainly won’t be written in the present tense, as if Jackson were still here, ready to go on tour – or not – at any moment.

\* \* \*

If it seems like I haven’t written much about my beloved Mets lately, well, it’s because they’re a little depressing these days.

Oh, I’ll come out and say it: they stink.

It’s no secret they’ve been bit by the injury bug this year, and bad: three of their top four hitters – Jose Reyes, Carlos Beltran and Carlos Delgado – are all on the disabled list, and have been for quite some time now (and there’s really no indication when any of them will come back; the best I’ve been hearing is “after the All-Star break” for Reyes and Beltran, with Delgado even more of a question mark due to his age and the fact he underwent a hip operation in May). That’s left David Wright as the main offensive threat in the lineup, and while his batting average has been good all season, he’s suffered a severe power outage this year: he’s hit just five home

runs all season.

In fact, the Mets’ team leader in home runs this year is a guy who wasn’t even supposed to be an everyday player this season: Gary Sheffield, who has 10 round-trippers.

But the Mets need more in their lineup than Wright and the 40-year-old Sheffield. Unfortunately, their offense consists primarily these days of guys who were in the minors last season or, in some cases, earlier this season and retreads like Fernando Tatis and Alex Cora who were signed to be part-time players but, due to the swath of injuries that has befallen the Mets, have been pressed into regular duty.

Wright could use a day or two off; it’s clear just by watching him. (Sheffield has been experiencing some knee problems and *has* been getting the occasional day off; like I said, the man’s 40 years old.) However, with the majority of the starting lineup composed of not-ready-for-prime-time or not-ready-for-full-time players, manager Jerry Manuel has been forced to play him daily, to have at least *something* in there.

But lately, it hasn’t been enough. The Mets’ offensive woes reached a new level of sad Tuesday night, when the team was shut out for the second straight game. By the close of the ninth inning Tuesday, the Mets had gone 22 consecutive innings without scoring. And they had gone an almost-unfathomable 29 straight innings without an extra base hit. Think about that: 29 innings without so much as a double.

The offensive struggles could almost be expected when you consider all the stars that are out. However, you’d expect the team to at least play serviceable defense. Except it hasn’t. There have been dropped pop flies (anyone who’s watched a Mets-Yankees game this season knows whereof I speak), balls thrown from one infielder ostensibly to another but instead wind up in right field, balls bounced in the dirt, etc., etc. In a game against Milwaukee last week, the Brewers’ Ryan Braun had what some people called a “Little League home run” (no offense intended to any Little Leaguers reading this). Braun hit a double with the bases loaded. He advanced to third on the throw home, which by the way went right past the Mets’ catcher. Pitcher Johan Santana was backing up the play, and grabbed the ball and desperately threw it to third to try to get Braun. However, the ball sailed past Wright at third base all the way into left field, and Braun scored easily. He essentially had a grand slam, a rather neat trick considering the ball never left the yard. (And one of the reasons the bases were loaded to begin with was that, earlier in the inning, the Mets’ centerfielder was running to catch a fly ball when he simply *tripped and fell down*.)

Incredibly, the Mets are still in playoff contention. In fact, even after Tuesday’s loss, the Mets were still only 4 1/2 games behind the first-place Phillies (and this was despite the Phils sweeping the Mets last weekend in Philadelphia). They’re not even playing .500 baseball, but they’re only a few games removed from a playoff spot. Of course, that says more about the Mets’ competition in the National League East than it does about the Mets themselves. If the other teams continue to just tread water, and if the Mets can hang around in the race until one or two or maybe even all three of Reyes, Beltran and Delgado return, then maybe they can pull it out.

I realize there are a lot of “if”s in that sentence. But hopefully general manager Omar Minaya waits it out and forsakes any big mortgaging-the-future type trades at the deadline later this month. I’ve been burned by too many of those moves in the past. One that springs to mind is when the 2002 Mets, who also found themselves in July within spitting distance of a playoff berth despite not being a great team (one of the main differences is that this year’s squad is the way it is due to DL stints; that year’s squad was the way it was because it wasn’t assembled all that well). So they traded a bright outfield prospect for a bullpen arm.

The bottom fell out for the Mets in August of that year, and they finished the season nowhere near a playoff spot. That outfielder they dealt, though, went on to build a fairly nice little career for himself. If you ever want to see him for yourself, just turn on NESN.

His name’s Jason Bay.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

## Portland Police News

6/21 — Jessica Austin, 18, of 15 Coe Ave. Ext., was charged with using a motor vehicle without the owner’s permission, Portland Police said.

6/27 — Richard Hladky, 56, of 22 Middlesex Ave. Ext., was charged with disorderly conduct, possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and carrying/sale of dangerous weapons, police said, adding that the weapon was a knife.

7/5 — Salvatore Branciforte, 28, of 256 Middlefield St., Middletown, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.

# At 67, Portland Grandmother Gets College Diploma

by Michael McCoy

Many people have been retired for years by the time they hit 67, but Dianne DiGiandomenico just graduated from college, and her energy doesn't seem to be sapped yet.

After chipping away at it for 10 years, DiGiandomenico finally received her associate's degree June 4, from Middlesex Community College (MxCC).

Dianne Friedman grew up in Middletown and graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1960. She then went right to work as a secretary for Hartford Hospital, in the social services department. She was there for seven years.

At the time, Friedman didn't give much thought to college after graduation, and noted that few women at that time pursued that route. "I [figured I] probably wanted to get married and have children, which I did," she said.

In 1966, Friedman married John DiGiandomenico, who worked for Ollivetti Underwood Typewriting in Hartford at the time. Later that year, he was transferred to Harrisburg, PA. While there, the DiGiandomenicos had two daughters, Nicki and Kristina.

But by 1973, the DiGiandomenicos longed for their New England home, so they moved back that year, to Middletown. A year later, they bought their Portland home.

In 1997, John DiGiandomenico died of lung cancer, after a five-year fight with the disease. "We did a lot of traveling during that time," DiGiandomenico remembered. This included trips to California, New Orleans, and Italy.

When DiGiandomenico was first grieving the loss of her husband, a friend suggested she try going back to school. "I've always read a lot; I've always liked to learn," DiGiandomenico remembered thinking.

DiGiandomenico had worked for Aetna from 1983 to 1998, when she retired. In the fall of 1999, she dove into school. Her first class was in sociology, and called Marriage, the Family and Intimate Relationships, taught by Dana Wallerson. "She kept pushing me," DiGiandomenico said of her professor, whom she also called a mentor throughout her studies. "She kept saying, 'You can do it.'"

As far as specific goals, DiGiandomenico said that when she entered college in 1999, "I didn't really have any," though she knew she had an interest in criminal justice. Her daughter Nicki (now Nicki Crawford) even pointed out that her mother's high school yearbook re-

vealed she wanted to be a police officer. "I'm fascinated with criminal justice," she said. "That was my favorite."

She even went the extra mile. During one of her criminal justice classes, the professor asked how many students would be interested in doing a ride-along with a police officer, despite its not being required. Only DiGiandomenico raised her hand.

DiGiandomenico tried to squeeze in a ride-along once a month, usually during second shift (which tends to be the day's peak of crime). She was teamed up with Wayne Linares of the Middletown Police Department, who was often assigned to the city's north end. "That didn't really give me the best feeling," Crawford said, remarking on the area.

Those experiences left DiGiandomenico with strong feelings. "Police officers don't just sit around drinking coffee," she asserted. "I'm telling you that for sure. They work very hard to protect us."

On a related note, DiGiandomenico has also done volunteer work for the past five years, working with victims of domestic violence.

Semester after semester, DiGiandomenico took one class, and made the college's Dean's List most of the time.

"I loved it," she said of her studies. "I loved being with the kids." She said that in her morning classes, she rubbed elbows with a lot of young students, many still in their teens. During evening classes, however, she found herself with many contemporaries, a couple older than her.

One obstacle was actually making the commute when the weather was less than friendly. "Sometimes the roads were really slippery," DiGiandomenico said. But she would always make the trip, even when she'd have a broken ankle, broken kneecap or a broken wrist (all three of which she sustained during the time she was enrolled at MxCC).

"I've worked very hard for this diploma," she said. "I really loved just about every minute of it...almost."

"Math was by far my least favorite," she admitted, and actually saved her accounting course for this past spring, pushing it off every time registration rolled around. (A math course was a requirement for graduation.) In fact, she told her daughters in the spring, "Don't plan any party. I'm not going to make it; I'm not going to graduate."

DiGiandomenico laughs when thinking



Portland resident Dianne DiGiandomenico is shown here with Middlesex Community College President Wilfredo Nieves, shortly after receiving her diploma.

about that statement now, but at the time, she was so worried, in fact, that she stood and watched as her accounting professor graded her final. Eventually, the professor looked up and gave her a thumbs-up.

Dianne DiGiandomenico, mother of two, grandmother of four had done it.

DiGiandomenico said she never once felt discriminated against or condescended to because of her age, neither from professors or classmates. In fact, she said, "The kids looked up to me, and they were great." Often, they would even say, "I keep telling my mother she should [go back to college] too."

DiGiandomenico said the stereotype of older students returning to school taking studies more seriously than their younger counterparts is "100 percent true," and added, "I cared more; I studied more."

"I never saw anyone spend more time on homework," Crawford said.

Crawford also said she was "very excited for her" and "extremely proud" when her mother graduated. She added that she and her sister "were very encouraging to her to go as far as she could." Crawford continued.

During her enrollment at MxCC, DiGiandomenico spent a lot of time in Port-

land Library's Buck Room. "I didn't want any noise or distractions," she said, adding that she had a hard time concentrating on schoolwork at home.

"I hope I've set a good example for my grandchildren," DiGiandomenico said. "They know how much time Grandma puts into her homework."

DiGiandomenico got a nice surprise last week, when her two daughters threw her a graduation party at Elizabeth's Restaurant in Rocky Hill. The party, attended by more than 40 people, including family and friends, drew a surprise guest: Wallerson, her first professor, who came in from New York for the event.

During the past decade, DiGiandomenico has done more than just study; she's also made time to travel to places like Africa, India (twice), and most recently, Ireland. And she's not done. Next, she plans to visit Switzerland.

So, what now? "I am giving thought to going to Central [Connecticut State University]," she said, and plans to at least speak to an advisor there soon. She said that if she decides to register, she would most likely pursue a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Between family, travel, and school, once thing is for sure: "I can't just do nothing."

# Colchester Resident Hopes to Fill Industrial Park

by Adam Benson

For 20 years, much of an industrial park off Upton Road has sat vacant.

But if Colchester Carpet owner Bob Gagnon and his business partner – Tri Town Foods owner Rick Sharr – have their way, the area will soon be a bustling center of commerce.

"If it wasn't for the economy, we'd be full right now," Gagnon said from the 18,000 square-foot building at 189 Upton Rd. that marks the first phase of his ambitious plan.

Currently, the facility houses Colchester Carpet's administrative offices and shipping headquarters, but Gagnon said a daycare, doctor's office and major insurance company have all expressed interest in relocating there.

However, that's only the beginning for Platinum Park, as the complex will be named. Gagnon and Sharr purchased 10 1/2 acres, and hope to develop nearly 180,000 square feet of building space as the project unfolds.

The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) signed off on the proposal about a year ago, and the businessmen were awarded tax abatements by the Economic Development Commission that can be passed on to tenants in an effort to lure companies into the area.

With utility hook-ups, high speed Internet connections and a maintained road already in place, Gagnon is confident the complex will thrive.

"The goal right now is just to create some more traffic on the road, and other businesses will come," Gagnon said. "It's got easy access to both directions on Route 2, and I think it's in the center of a lot of action."

Gagnon said he's in talks with town officials

to install signs on either end of Upton Road alerting motorists to the new business park.

Still, in light of the sour economy and an overall slowdown in major business sectors, Gagnon said he and Sharr are prepared to wait out the tough financial times before aggressively expanding.

"This is a long-term plan," Gagnon said. "We're not going to build any more buildings until this one is full, and we'll build them as the economy allows businesses to come," Gagnon said.

With stores on Main Street and in East Hampton, Gagnon – who lives in Colchester – is aware of how important local sales tax revenue is to keeping other costs down for residents.

"Taxes are killing everyone in town, and the only way I can see to stop that is by bringing in more businesses," Gagnon said.

Sharr, a Portland resident, has stores in East Lyme, Ledyard and Marlborough and will soon be opening a fourth location in Montville. His father Ed has also played a major role in moving the project forward through the planning stages.

Gagnon said he approached First Selectman Linda Hodge months ago with an idea to relocate the town's post office onto a parcel of land at the Upton Road site. For years, residents have complained that the post office's current Main Street location poses major safety hazards for motorists and customers alike.

Though plans to relocate the post office remain in the early stages, Gagnon said he's confident the proposal will look more attractive once the business park evolves.



Colchester resident Bob Gagnon and his business partner, Tri Town Foods owner Rick Sharr, hope to fill Platinum Park, an industrial park located off Upton Road.

"The fact that it's been sitting here for 20 years with everything in place was a little risky, because nobody has done it, but hopefully it pays off in the long run," Gagnon said of the site. "For a couple of years, I've been planning to start a commercial project like this, and I looked at a lot of different towns and different areas, and I fell in love with this part of town."

The completed building boasts enough parking for 50 vehicles, and can support tractor-trailer traffic in the rear.

Gagnon said bringing Platinum Park to life

makes sense for the town.

"All over town, they're trying to approve different pieces of land for development, and this has been approved for 20 years for the exact same use, so it was a no-brainer," Gagnon said. "Taxpayers have been paying for the maintenance on that road, and nothing has been done. Taxpayers have invested a lot of money into this park over the years."

For more information about Platinum Park, call Gagnon at 860-234-6745.

# Marlborough Student Named Boys State Governor

by Adam Benson

M. Jodi Rell has company at the top.

Last month, 17-year-old Marlborough resident Christopher Langlois was nominated governor of the 68th annual Connecticut Boys State, sponsored by the American Legion.

The summer leadership program brings together a group of hand-picked high school juniors for a week-long government and civics course aimed at helping to develop in participants a working knowledge of governmental structure.

This year, Christopher joined 230 others from schools around the state for the getaway, held at Eastern Connecticut State University June 21-26. Christopher was the first RHAM High School student to be selected Boys State governor since 2002.

Participants are chosen by local American Legion posts on the strength of recommendations by local teachers and school administrators.

Christopher, who will be a senior at RHAM in the fall, said he was taken by surprise when he found out he'd be attending.

"Going into it, I didn't really have a big understanding of what it was about," Christopher said this week from his new Avalon Drive home. "I was very surprised but as soon as I started learning about the program more, I was very thankful that I was recommended."

He was joined by fellow classmates Kevin Trippell of Marlborough, Mike Wood of Andover and Jason Driscoll of Hebron. Christopher has been class president since his freshman year and is also active in band, drama and student council.

He plans on majoring in a communications field and is eyeing Hofstra University, Penn State University, Syracuse University and Ithaca College.

Fashioned after the state government's structure, Boys State members are assigned to cities and towns – named after presidents – and operate under a local government that includes either a selectman/town meeting or mayor/council format.

After being elected First Selectman of "Monroe," Christopher said, he began taking a more active role in helping to craft his national party's platform and had his name tossed into consideration for governor along with 10 others.

"I just tried to go out there and say exactly what was on my mind," Christopher said. "At that time, there were a bunch of faces in the party that showed they were top dogs, and I was kind of the dark horse going into it."

With his focus on strengthening the state's infrastructure, cutting down on crime and solving the budget crisis without dramatically raising taxes, Christopher said he found his popularity rising on the crowded primary ticket.

"You go into this thinking, 'oh, it's fictional towns and fictional problems,' but there are a lot of parallels that can be drawn from the fictional towns at Boys State to the actual ones we're encountering today," Christopher said.

While the program played out in a summer camp fashion, with daily recreation time and a talent show, the experience was no vacation. Members had to conduct municipal government work sessions, legislative public hearings, court trials and even convene as the General Assembly.

As governor, of course, Christopher wielded symbolic veto power over measures that came to his desk.

Participants also heard from several keynote speakers including state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz and Democratic state Representative Ted Graziani of Ellington.

Christopher's father Michael said, though he was disappointed to be apart from Christopher on Father's Day, he was excited at the chance Boys' State offered.

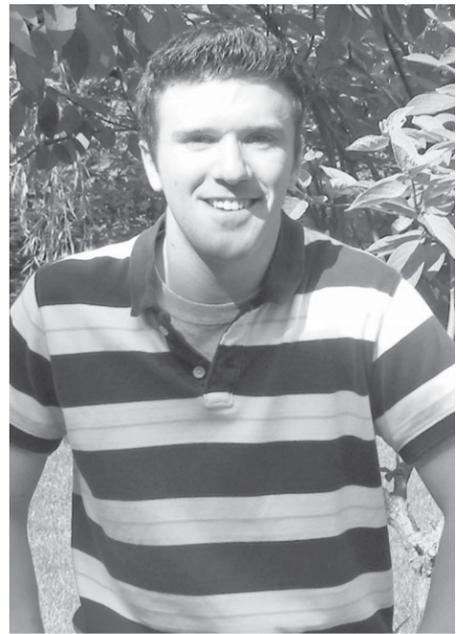
"We were moving into this [Avalon Drive] house that week where he was gone, and he was a little nervous about leaving and I didn't even know if I wanted him to go, because I needed help around here. But I said to him, 'you've got this opportunity. Go and give it your all. Don't mail it in,'" Michael said. "And boy, did he get a lot out of it."

Christopher said taking home Boys State's most prestigious title was among the highlights of his life.

"At first, it was amazement, but after that it kind of turned into a feeling of privilege and honor," he said. "I'm up there representing the best of the best of the state, and that's possibly one of the best feelings I've ever had."

In addition to being named governor, Christopher was honored with the Richard William Anderson Award, given to the participant whose "high principals and dedication to the political process has helped to advance the ideal" of government and Boys State.

Other local award winners included Kevin Trippell, who took home the local American Legion Post 162 award as the outstanding in-



Christopher Langlois

dividual in his town of "Polk" and Brian Baker of Bacon Academy in Colchester, who received the Benjamin Bamford Award for good citizenship.

Christopher will return to Boys State next year as one of its keynote speakers. But he's quickly learned the limits to the power of his office.

"I retain veto rights, even though he's the governor," Michael joked. "He's got to clean the gas grill."

## Marlboro Cemetery Gets New Gate

by Adam Benson

Marlboro Cemetery has the slow economy and a big-hearted next-door neighbor to thank for its latest addition.

After nearly 18 months of work and thousands of dollars in in-kind donations from three area companies, resident Bob Paris installed a hinged gate along the School Drive entrance to the site, which cemetery sexton Vi Schwarzmann says will help control traffic and give visitors an extra sense of comfort.

"This thing ought to last 30 years if it goes right," Paris said. "The hardware was definitely pricey."

A plumber by trade, Paris found more free time on his hands due to the sagging economy that led to a slowdown in his business. In an effort to stay busy – and as a gesture to his father who's buried there – Paris decided to give the cemetery project a go.

"At the time, I was a little slow at my job and I thought if I talked to the right people and had all these materials donated, it would be nice for the cemetery," Paris said. "It turned out pretty well."

The cemetery had been without a gated entrance for at least five years, and Paris used the old one as a model for his gift. (The old gate had been removed due to damage and age.)

Schwarzmann said she was thrilled at the idea and loves the final product.

"What he did for us was absolutely phenomenal," she said. "I was so pleased with what they did and how they did it."

Materials and manpower were donated from J R W Construction Company in Colchester, Lyon & Billard Lumber Company in East

Hampton and the Marlborough-based New England Traditions.

In addition to improving the cemetery's aesthetics, Schwarzmann said the gate will serve an important safety function as well.

Motorists routinely use the roadways through the cemetery as a shortcut between Route 66 and School Drive to avoid traffic lights along Main Street. Schwarzmann said this is particularly the case during the school year.

"We don't have a place for parking, and if a family comes in and wants to visit the grave of a loved one, anyone that's using it as a throughway, they go right over the graves," Schwarzmann said. "They don't see what they're doing because they want to get from Point A to Point B."

With the new gate in place, Schwarzmann said she plans on closing the cemetery off to traffic during peak commute times, forcing drivers to turn around and head back out onto the street.

"We've had a number of things that have been knocked down and ruined because of" people driving through the cemetery, she said. "I just don't want them to come through there when people are there to visit a loved one. I just don't need somebody to go racing through."

Schwarzmann said the roadway in the cemetery is also often used by teenagers skateboarding, and the new gate should help keep them out as well.

The gate will also help town workers maintain the site by cutting down on damage to grassy areas and curbing.



Marlboro Cemetery has a new gate, which sexton Vi Schwarzmann hopes will help control traffic. Motorists often use the cemetery roadway as a shortcut.

Schwarzmann said signs will be erected at the School Drive entrance by the end of the week, alerting drivers to the fence.

Schwarzmann said she's optimistic motorists will follow the new guidelines once they see the fence in place.

"I think that's what makes it so important

that this gate was put up. If you just leave it the way it was, you're going to find people saying, 'They don't care, why should I?'" Schwarzmann said. "The cemetery is the history of the town, and the way you're going to keep it like that is by maintaining and keeping it in good condition."

# Belltown Bids Farewell to Bob Heidel

by Michael McCoy

During his June 3 eulogy, Ken Heidel compared his father to Jimmy Stewart's George Bailey.

"My father did have a wonderful life, and his passing was peaceful," Ken Heidel said. "His time had come and he knew it. That makes it easier, but it cannot erase the terrible sense of loss that we...feel at this time."

On June 20, Robert Heidel, a longtime fixture in local politics, suffered a heart attack and was taken to Marlborough Medical Center. After several more cardiac arrests, LifeStar took him to Hartford Hospital. On July 1, just a day short of 81, he died.

Heidel was born in Pittsfield, MA, on July 2, 1928, to Marian and Henry Heidel. His family moved around some, but he came of age in the general area of his birth, and graduated from Pittsfield High School in 1946.

Heidel then attended Northeastern University, majoring in accounting. He graduated in 1951, and then spent two years in the army. Despite the Korean War, Heidel never left the states, spending the bulk of his service in Texas.

It was there that he met Audrey Shaw, who would be his bride for 50 years. The two married Feb. 1, 1958. Shortly before the wedding, Heidel took a job in San Fernando, CA. Heidel came home for the wedding, and Audrey said the honeymoon was a "trip cross-country to San Fernando."

But the Heidels did not care for the Golden State and moved to East Hampton in August of 1959, where he took a job with Star Net as a comptroller. The next year he took a job as a financial manager at Pratt & Whitney. But that was the last of the job shuffling (though he did work out of Middletown, Southington and East Hartford). Heidel retired from the company in 1992.

Audrey remembered her husband muttering, "We're not staying here," soon after arriving in East Hampton, but she said he grew to love Belltown in a short amount of time. She remembers him saying, "What's lacking here is water," which is interesting since he would be known in town later primarily for his vision of a water system.

"It's a very, very important issue," Audrey said. "This town needs water to grow."

By the early 1960s, the Heidels, along with fellow Republicans Bill and Judy Hughes, started a social group for couples among town Republicans. From that point on, he was hooked

on his town.

Longtime resident John Hansen said he knew Heidel since the couple moved to town. Hansen also served on the Water Pollution Control Authority and Water Development Task Force with Heidel. "His wealth of knowledge has now passed on to the remaining members," he said hopefully. Commenting further on Heidel's knowledge, Hansen said, "His whole brain capacity would be like an encyclopedia. That's who we're losing."

On a personal level, Hansen called him an involved family man, and a "model for an American citizen."

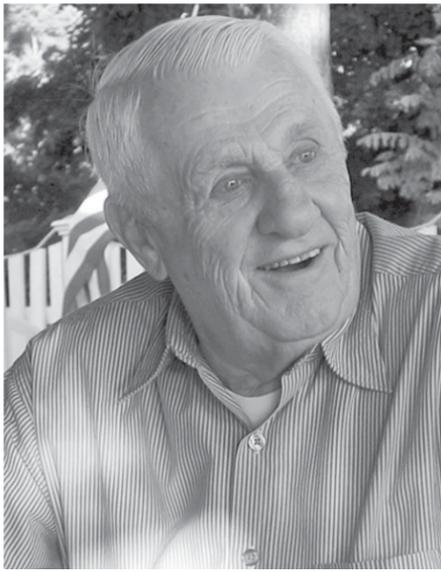
Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe recognized he only worked with Heidel since last September, but said, "His dedication and passion to the development of a public water system was just phenomenal." He added, "He was a remarkable individual who cared a great deal about this community." In fact, O'Keefe said there was "a sort of shock and awe" around Town Hall as his passing became known.

Like Hansen, O'Keefe remarked about the Heidel's authority on water, saying, "We're losing 40 to 50 years of water knowledge...He could probably tell you about every bedrock well that this town has."

Town Council Chair Melissa Engel said Heidel "knew we needed water, and he knew where we should get it from." She added, "I'm sorry that he didn't get to see [a town water system] through to fruition, but it will happen," continued Engel, suggesting his work won't be in vain.

"I blame a lot of his going downhill on the fact that the water never passed," Audrey lamented. (In 2007, a \$28.5 million proposed water system, which Heidel had worked on heavily, was shot down by voters.) "He was very, very disappointed," she said. "Despondent almost."

Still, Heidel continued to labor on the Water Development Task Force until his passing.



Robert Heidel

Alan Bergren, who was town manager in East Hampton from 1982 to 2007, said Heidel "was just a great guy to work with," and crediting him for having a "vision for the future of the community."

Heidel was also on East Hampton's former Board of Selectmen, which he also chaired for two terms.

Audrey said that in his free time, her husband was an avid golfer, as well as gardener. She noted that he had already planted his vegetable garden before he died.

Heidel was also a big lover of baseball, and, though Audrey was never quite sure why, he cheered for the Tigers, whose hometown he always pronounced *Detroit*.

"He loved people," Audrey said, adding, "He was crazy about his family." She also listed singing, reading, walking, and bike riding as loves of his. She also chuckled, "He used to like fishing, but he never caught anything."

Despite his love of the outdoors, and being active in general, unfortunately an ailment in the late 1970's slowed him up somewhat relatively early.

Engel, who, like Heidel, is very involved with the town Republicans said, "I think he was a tremendous mentor to young Republicans," counting herself among that lot. Engel said Heidel was blunt enough to put them in their place, commenting, "I've been reprimanded by Bob on more than once occasion during my little political career."

Ken Heidel noted his father's involvement with the town Republicans, and remembered him being chairman of the party in 1980. It was that year that Ronald Reagan was elected President by a landslide, and this had a definite ripple effect in East Hampton. The town switched from having a staunch Democratic landscape to having a Republican one.

Ken said his father typically voted Republican, though he wasn't "a pull-the-party-lever guy." Also, Ken said, his father was "old school"

in his traditional, conservative philosophies.

But it seems Heidel was not divisive. "He was very popular, even with Democrats," Audrey said, adding, "He got along with [out-spoken Democrat] Red McKinney beautifully."

"He didn't have anything against people," she added.

Audrey said people often would say to her, "I never voted Republican until Bob" got involved in politics.

"As a father," Ken recalled, "he took a very active role in our lives," beginning with his time as a Boy Scout leader and Little League coach.

He listed attributes like "honesty, dignity, loyalty, integrity."

"This is the way he conducted himself, and that's what he imparted to us," he said.

But his influence went beyond his own children. Ken said, upon running into high school classmates later in life, he constantly hears, "Man, everybody loved your father."

Audrey called her husband "the love of my life," and when asked what she loved about him, she sighed, "Everything."

"He had beautiful, blue eyes," she said, and remembered that when he was sick, she would say, "Come on Frankie; show me the blues."

Audrey remembered that, though he favored a shirt and tie for church, her husband was most comfortable in a sweatshirt and khakis. She'd chastise him for wearing a raggedy version of the outfit, and his defense would be that it was just for around the house. Then Audrey would sigh, "You say that; then you hop in the car and go downtown."

Funeral services were held last Friday, July 3, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, where he and Audrey attended. At the time of his passing, Heidel was treasurer of the church's council.

Heidel was then buried at Rock Landing Cemetery in Haddam Neck, and a reception at Angelico's Lakehouse Restaurant followed. This was also the location of the Heidels 50th wedding anniversary party, which their children threw for them last year.

During the nearly four calling hours last Thursday night at Spencer Funeral Home, Audrey estimated a solid 300 people showed up to say goodbye to Heidel. "This town turns out for people," she said.

And Heidel was no exception. Husband, father to four, grandfather to six, politician, coach, financial whiz, water expert, Bob Heidel always saved room in his heart for East Hampton.

## Selectmen Move to Correct Financial Oversights

by Sarah McCoy

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) last week approved two supplemental appropriations to correct financial oversights by the town's former Director of Finance.

At a meeting last Thursday, July 2, the selectmen voted unanimously in favor of a \$61,895 appropriation to make up for overspending on the Village Green road construction project. The board also recommended that a \$119,128 supplemental appropriation for the repayment of back taxes be brought to town meeting.

In the spring of 2007, the town began construction on a roadway to the Village Green district across from Ted's Supermarket. This parcel has been zoned for commercial and residential development and, by installing the roadway, town officials hoped to make the land more desirable for developers.

Hebron applied for and received two Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grants totaling \$875,000 to fund this project. However, according to current Director of Finance Jim Day, his predecessor Mike Hillsberg

failed to balance the project's cost with the general ledger, leading to an overspending of \$104,895 on the project.

Day, who began as finance director in town in February, said he noticed the overspending as he reviewed the town's accounts earlier this spring. Upon noticing the error, Day then contacted state officials in an attempt to recoup some of the grant money that had not been applied for.

Of the \$875,000 awarded in grant money, only \$832,000 had been applied for.

Day asked the state to reopen the grant from fiscal year 2005-06, to allow him to apply for the \$43,000 that the town never applied for. "Thankfully we got the state to reopen the grant so we could get that \$43,000," Day explained. "Otherwise we'd be looking at a \$104,000 supplemental [appropriation]."

Last Thursday Day was at the BOS meeting to request an appropriation to offset the overspent account. "This is unsettling," selectman Brian O'Connell said. "But, it is what it is and we have to pay the bill."

While the BOS recommended the supple-

mental appropriation last week, the Board of Finance (BOF) must also approve the expenditure. BOF liaison to the BOS Mal Leichter said that his board would discuss this issue at its next meeting. "I'm concerned that it got to this point," he said.

Day said that by balancing expenses with the general ledger at least twice a year, he hopes to avoid a situation like this in the future. "There are much greater controls on our capital projects, like the elevator and park, so I know I'm tying everything out," he said. "Management is more aware of where we stand financially for each project."

The other supplemental appropriation requested last Thursday is for repayment of back taxes and interest on a town-owned property. Day explained to the BOS that in 2003 the town purchased then-state owned land on Church Street. In that purchase agreement, the town was able to deduct the taxes owed on the property from the purchase price. This was never done and now, according to state statutes, the town must pay the \$119,128 in back taxes and interest so it can be reflected as town revenue.

"In essence we're moving the money from one pocket to another but, according to state statute, we have to do it this way," Day explained earlier this week.

He went on to say that failure to deduct the taxes from the purchase price means that Hebron overpaid for the property by \$15,000.

Because the amount is over \$100,000, the town must first hold a town meeting on this supplemental appropriation. Last Thursday, BOS Chair Jeff Watt said he would prefer to wait until the fall to hold the meeting to afford more residents the chance to attend.

Any supplemental appropriations would come from the town's undesignated fund balance. Day reported that this account currently has about 9.5 percent of the town's operating budget in it. Historically the town has kept this account around 7-7.5 percent of the town's operating budget.

The next BOF meeting will be held Thursday, July 23, at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St. An agenda for that meeting has not yet been set.

# Obituaries

## Hebron

### Clifford Wright

Clifford Wright, 91, of Hebron, died Thursday, July 2, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester. Born April 29, 1918, he was the son of the late Alphonse and Irene (O'Reilly) Wright.

He was the father of Deborah Yvonne Ungerer of Ireland, Jonathan C. Wright of Concord, MA and Amanda Michelle Ramos of Hartford.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Janet Smith, and his second wife, Barbara Schapp.

In addition to his children, he had one step-daughter, Emily Herman of New York, a stepson, the late Tom Marks; nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

In February of 1941, he joined the Army Air Corps, where he served abroad for five years during World War II, participating in the campaigns of North Africa and Italy. After returning from the war, he became an active member of the Hebron community. He was elected town selectman and served 12 years as Hebron's last trial judge before the state reorganized the judicial system into a county system. Subsequently, he served as Judge of Probate for eight years.

Mr. Wright was a 60+ year member of the Wooster Lodge No. 10 A.F. & A.M. in Colchester, Past President of the Willimantic Rotary Club and was a longtime member of the Jones-Keefe-Batson American Legion Post 95 in Hebron as well as the Willimantic Post 1724 Veterans of Foreign Wars.

He was an avid historian and genealogist. His research on Hebron houses was published and is in the Douglas Library in Hebron. In 1963, he donated to the town of Hebron the Burrows Hill Cemetery, which is located on land his family had owned for generations. He later published a list of graves located in the cemetery for people interested in genealogical research. In 1992, he donated another piece of property to the town on which stands the Burrows Hill School, circa 1725.

Clifford attended UConn and after returning from the war, he helped his uncle run a sawmill and trucking business for a few years. In 1952, he began working for the Valley Oil Co. in Willimantic, where he was branch manager until his retirement in 1972.

The family will hold a private ceremony and there will be no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Hebron Historical Society, P.O. Box 43, Hebron, CT 06248 or to the Douglas Library, 22 Main St., Hebron, CT 06248.

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

For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Ellen O. Cowen

Ellen O. Cowen, 65, of Colchester, passed away Friday evening, July 3, 2009 at Hartford Hospital. Born Nov. 1, 1943 in Fall River, MA, she was the daughter of the late Manuel and Maria (Miranda) Oliveria and she was raised as her own by Mary Cecilia Oliveria.

She married Robert Cowen on Jan. 21, 1967. Ellen retired several years ago after having worked as a bookkeeping manager for Futures Group International. She was a longtime member of the Adler-Boluck Post 6990 Colchester, V.F.W. Auxiliary. Ellen was a communicant at St. Andrew R.C. Church in Colchester where she also served with the Ladies Guild and the Legion of Mary.

She leaves behind her husband of 42 years, Robert J. Cowen; her daughter, Lt. Col. Kimberly A. Cowen and her husband Lt. Col. Damon J. Corbett, US Army, Memphis, TN; her brother, Lawrence J. Oliveria of Fall River, MA; a very special person in her life, Lois Ann Wack and her family Peter and Trever of Unionville and many extended family members and friends.

For those who knew her well, she will be remembered fondly and missed dearly for her strength of character, unwavering will and caring heart.

Friends attended calling hours Monday, July 6, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. A ceremony by members of the V.F.W. Auxiliary will be observed at 7 p.m.

The funeral assembled Tuesday at the funeral home before the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy later that morning at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, with Fr. Michael Giannitelli officiating. Committal followed in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the charity of one's choice or to the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center, 85 Retreat Ave., Hartford, CT 06102-5037.

For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## East Hampton

### Carol Gary Rioux

Carol Gary Rioux, 76, of East Hampton, former husband of Marlene Rioux, died Wednesday, July 1, at Chestelm Health and Rehabilitation in Moodus. Born Aug. 17, 1932 in Limestone ME., he was the son of the late Arthur and Delima (Michard) Rioux.

Gary proudly served his country in the Air Force during the Korean War. He was a teacher in the East Hampton School system for more than 27 years. Gary was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was a lifetime member of the East Hampton V.F.W. and the American Legion. Gary had a love of wild birds and of his favorite dog, Tasha.

He leaves to mourn his passing three sons, James Rioux and his wife, Katherine of Prospect, John Rioux of Middletown, Paul Rioux of East Hampton; a daughter, Cynthia Rioux of East Hampton; a brother, John Rioux of Massachusetts; four grandchildren, Casey and Sarah Rioux and Jeffery and Gregory Pratt.

He was predeceased by his son-in-law, Richard Pratt, a brother, Vincent Rioux, and a sister, Charlotte Doheny.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton on Wednesday, July 8. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Thursday, July 9, in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Connecticut Audubon Society, 2325 Burr St., Fairfield, CT 06824.

To leave online condolences, visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

## East Hampton

### Robert T. Rudnick

Robert T. Rudnick, 53, of East Hampton died Saturday, June 27, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Nov. 15, 1955 in Meriden, he was the son of the late William and Barbara Rudnick. He was a U.S. Navy Veteran and a member of the American Legion.

Robert is survived by his three brothers, Walter Rudnick and his wife, Robin of East Hampton, William Rudnick of East Hampton and Richard Sutterlin and his wife, Gail of Meriden; a niece, Courtney Rudnick of East Hampton, and fiancé Christine Coleman of East Hampton.

Burial with military honors was in the Connecticut State Veterans' Cemetery in Middletown Thursday, July 9. Spencer Funeral Home of East Hampton has care of arrangements.

## Portland

### Fred F. Ryznar

Fred F. Ryznar, 93, of New Hartford, formerly of Wellwyn Drive, Portland, husband of the late Antoinette (Masselli) Ryznar, died Sunday, July 5, at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington. He was born in Middletown, the son of the late John and Honorata (Novak) Ryznar.

A veteran of World War II, he served with the U.S. Army as a Sergeant with the 43rd Infantry Division, 169th B Company Medical Unit and also assisted the U.S. Marine Corps at Guadalcanal. Fred was also a recipient of the Purple Heart. Prior to his retirement, he was employed with Goodyear Manufacturing and later with C.B. Stone in Middletown.

He is survived by his son, F. Wayne Ryznar and his wife Gail of New Hartford; two grandchildren, Catherine Sutton and her husband Eric of Washington D.C., and Rebecca Ryznar of Middletown; two nieces, Eleanor Payton of Southington, and Maryann Quinn of York, ME.

He was predeceased by a brother, Joseph J. Ryznar; and a sister, Mary Mlynarski.

The funeral liturgy was held Thursday, July 9, at St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, Middletown. Burial, with Military Honors, will be held in the State Veterans Cemetery. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, Thursday before the funeral service.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Disabled American Veterans, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301.

## Marlborough

### Doris Palmer Phillips

Doris Palmer Phillips, 98, of Marlborough, widow of the late Charles R. Phillips Sr., died Monday, July 6, at Middlesex Hospital after suffering a stroke. Born Feb. 25, 1911, in Waterbury, she was the daughter of the late William and Viola (Davis) Palmer.

A World War II bride, Doris wrote daily letters to her POW husband after his B17 was shot down over Berlin on March 22, 1944. She lived in Glastonbury for 28 years where she was an executive secretary at Quality Name Plate before moving to Marlborough in 1983. Doris was an active member of the Marlborough Congregational Church and the Dorcas Society at the church. She loved traveling with friends and family in the U.S. and abroad as well as visiting her children in Florida and Oregon.

Doris is survived by four children and their spouses: Elizabeth and Thomas Goehringer of Florida, Charles Jr. and Linda Phillips of Oregon, William and Alice Phillips of Florida, and Kathleen and Jonathan Wood of Marlborough; as well as her sister-in-law Alice Palmer, 17 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

Doris' brothers, Loyal, Raymond, Rodney and Malcolm Palmer, are deceased.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Friday, July 10, from 6-8 p.m. Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 11, at 11 a.m. in Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., Marlborough. Burial will follow in the family plot in Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in her memory may be made to the Dorcas Society of Marlborough Congregational Church, P.O. Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447, Hospice at Middlesex Hospital, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457, or Disabled American Veterans (DAV), P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301.

To leave online condolences, visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

## Marlborough

### Roy M. Pettengill

Roy M. Pettengill, 84, passed away peacefully Tuesday, July 7, in Marlborough. He was the son of the late Roy B. Pettengill and Catherine (Tisch) Pettengill. Born in Marlborough Aug. 2, 1924, Roy grew up in Marlborough and graduated from East Hampton High school in 1943.

Following his schooling, he was inducted into service with the U.S. Army. He was the recipient of several medals. He proudly served our country as a Private, First Class, during World War II with Battery D, 2nd A.A.R.T.C. Battalion from Fort Eustis, VA. He participated in five European Campaigns including the invasion of Normandy (D-Day), and "Battle of the Bulge." After returning from service, Roy apprenticed as a cabinet maker/finisher under the G.I. Bill with the Mark Twain Antique, Upholstery, and Furniture Shop in Hartford. From there he worked with the Post Carpet Co. & Furniture Store.

In 1957, Roy was named vice president of Furniture Associates, Inc., a retail furniture company and showroom in Hartford. He had been with the firm since it was founded in 1953. He was also warehouse manager with Norman's Warehouse Furniture in Manchester, general manager of American Heritage Furniture Corporation in Waterbury and president of Tradition House Furniture Corporation, a wholesale furniture distributor. In addition, Roy was part-time employed with GRA Associates and Bob's Furniture in various locations for many years after his retirement.

Following the War, Roy also became engaged and married his first wife, Ruth Joyce Porter, and together raised two children, twins, a son and daughter. They previously resided in Marlborough, Manchester, and then Mansfield Center for 35 years. Roy and Ruth were married over 43 years before her passing on Oct. 4, 1993.

Roy recently celebrated his 40-year anniversary in Masonry with the Manchester Lodge No. 73, A.F.& A.M. in Manchester. He was a charter member of the American Legion in Marlborough Post 197 and a Life Member of the Veteran's of Foreign Wars in Willimantic. His hobbies included repairing and restoring old furniture and collecting antiques. He was an accomplished woodworker. He enjoyed services at the East Hampton Congregational Church on Sundays. He cherished his grandchildren. He enjoyed spending winters in Venice, Florida.

A caring husband and wonderful father, in addition to being survived by his wife of 11 years, Adeline, Roy leaves two children, Roy M. Pettengill Jr. of Storrs and Holly B. Rouleau and husband Paul of Vernon; two step-children, Bill Pasternak and his wife Mary Jane of Arizona, Linda Pasternak of Westchester; five grandchildren, Christina Pettengill and Nicholas, Mike and Alex Rouleau of Vernon, Julie Goodale and her husband Arthur (AK) of Marlborough, with great-grandchildren Hannah and Rachel. He also leaves several nieces and nephews and many good friends. Roy is survived by one sister, Dorothy Nowsch of Marlborough.

He was predeceased by two sisters, Catherine (Ginger) Kluczewicz and Anna Peterson, and a brother, Louis Pettengill.

Friends and family may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Sunday, July 12, from 6-8 p.m. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family in Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Roy's memory may be made to the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Assoc., P.O. Box 308, Marlborough, CT 06447. This association was founded by Roy's father in 1953. Or, donations may be made to your local food pantry.

