

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Dancers Present Check... Dance students Tess Currier and Gena Tatro from the Connecticut Valley Dance Center present Friends of the Portland Library President Stephanie Tatro with a check from the proceeds of their Dance Recital.

Hodge Drops Out of Colchester Race

by Michael McCoy

Two weeks after a twist ending at the Colchester Democratic caucus, November's race just got thrown another curve.

On Monday, Linda Hodge decided not to seek another term as First Selectman.

In June, Hodge's executive assistant, Mike Caplet, surprised more than a few when he announced he would compete with Hodge for the party's endorsement for First Selectman. This was two months after the Democratic Town Committee (DTC) reportedly handed Hodge a vote of no confidence.

But, just three days before the Democratic caucus, Caplet withdrew from the race. So, just before the July 28 caucus, the unopposed Hodge got the unanimous vote for the nominating committee. Then the DTC endorsed her 30-0.

But at the caucus, the Democrats at-large nominated Glenn Morron who took the party vote 36-32. Morron is a member of the Police Commission, and had publicly criticized Hodge and other selectmen for a decision they made earlier this year.

After the caucus, Hodge said she would run but was unsure whether she would force a primary or run unaffiliated. However, Hodge said Wednesday that she ruled out running unaffiliated "pretty quickly," deciding within days of the caucus to seek a primary. "I really am a Democrat at heart," she said. In a letter to the editor in this week's *Rivereast*, Hodge said her supporters collected enough signatures "to compel a primary runoff."

Hodge said Wednesday she felt backing out of the First Selectman's race might result in

"bringing some harmony back." She said "some of the key leaders [in the Democratic Party] have been instrumental in not letting me be as effective as I could be," and added that this continual butting of horns could adversely affect the town if it continued.

Hodge said that DTC Vice Chair, and chair of its nominating committee, Dorothy Mrowka knew about the coup planned by Morron's supporters at 4:30 p.m. the day of the caucus. She also alleged that DTC Chair John Malsbenden knew of the plan at 6 p.m. But, according to her, "None of them thought it fitting to let me know." The caucus began at 8:15 p.m.

Malsbenden did not return calls for comment for this story.

When asked what brought on the antagonism by her fellow Democrats, Hodge said, "I honestly don't know," but reported that it began two months into her administration, which began in November 2007. "A lot of people say a lot of things not held up by fact," she remarked. However, the one thing Hodge said she did know was, "It's not good for the town to have these ongoing battles."

Republican Town Committee Chair and First Selectman candidate Gregg Schuster said, "Ob-



Hodge

See Hodge on Page 2

New Hebron Park Set to Make Debut

by Sarah McCoy

To say that the property at 150 East St. in Hebron looks a little different than it did last year is like saying Michael Jackson looked a little different at the time of his passing than he did during his days with the Jackson 5.

Just 13 months ago the property looked like what it was – abandoned farming land. A large chicken coop stood on the property and all around was brush.

All that's gone now and what's left is a sprawling park that winds through the parcel and incorporates the natural accommodations that exist. "I wanted to create a park that happened to have athletic fields, not an athletic field complex," Parks and Recreation Director Rich Calarco explained.

Driving into Burnt Hill Park visitors can see a meadow to their left and the first of three multi-purpose fields to the right. The park is leveled meaning that fields are located at a higher elevation than the one previous. There are plantings and trees to separate the fields and a walking trail curls from one area of the park to another.

On Saturday, Aug. 15, the Town of Hebron will celebrate the grand opening of Burnt Hill

Park. On hand for the festivities will be State Senator Edith Prague and State Representative Pam Sawyer. The ceremony begins at 1 p.m. and afterwards different areas of the park will be open for family-friendly activities.

"We have a DJ, arts and crafts and plenty of games," Calarco said. "We wanted to do something to celebrate the opening of the park but also get families out playing together as the summer winds down."

Games include potato sack races, bubble gum blowing contests, balloon stomps and a turtle relay.

Also on Saturday, a section of the park will also be dedicated to local businesses, which will have booths set up to answer questions and inform visitors of their services. "It's a day to celebrate Hebron and everything that's good about the town," Calarco said.

This week, Calarco and the staff from the Parks and Recreation Department have been busy "prettifying up the place." While all the major construction is complete there are a few last minute items to tie up. Even though the Parks and Rec. crew has already planted over 3,500 trees and bushes, there is still a little bit

See Park on Page 2



Burnt Hill Park, located at 150 East St. in Hebron, will be unveiled at a grand opening celebration this Saturday.

Park cont. from Front Page

more to do. Calarco said there is also some fencing to be done and continual attention to the park's grass.

After these last few items are complete, Burnt Hill Park will open for use. Calarco expects that to be later this fall.

As enthused as he is about the new park, Calarco is hesitant to say that its opening will solve all of Hebron's field problems. "The truth is all our fields are overused," he said. "Even after we open Burnt Hill we're still going to need more."

Taxpayers needn't worry, though; Calarco isn't about to ask them for more. He just wants to highlight the amount of use Hebron fields see. "Typically our fields don't have a day off during the summer," he said. "The new park will give us some ability to rotate fields and lessen the constant wear and tear."

When the work at Burnt Hill Park comes to a close, Calarco will meet with the Board of Education to work on plans for reconfiguring

the youth fields at Hebron Elementary School. That project represents the last of the work included in the \$4.3 million bond package for the townwide park project, which taxpayers approved in 2007.

Hebron Director of Finance Jim Day said the project is slightly under that figure, but there are a few outstanding things left to take care of. "We'll be right where we expected or maybe a hair under," he said earlier this week.

Calarco believes the keys to staying within that number were the hours of work done in house by town staff and his presence at the park. "I have been here nearly every day," he said. "That's enabled me to make adjustments as we go to stay within our target number."

Earlier this week, Calarco surveyed the park. He took in the sights and undoubtedly remembered every hour of labor that went into it. "It's all been worth it," he said. "People will be out here soon and everyone will be able to enjoy this place."

Hodge cont. from Front Page

viously, I was surprised" when learning of Hodge's withdrawal from the race, and added, "I understand her decision."

As for the effect of this, Schuster acknowledged, "Certainly the dynamics of the race change a little," but said, "I'm certainly not going to change anything."

"From an outside observer," Schuster said, "it certainly appears there's some discord within the party." When asked if the events of the last few weeks have weakened the Democratic Party in Colchester, Schuster was not ready to make any such claim. Instead, he nodded to the party's historic strength in town, saying, "That's not something I'm gonna take lightly."

"As you can imagine, it was a really hard decision" to not run again, Hodge said. However, as far as Colchester is concerned, Hodge said she's not down for the count. "I'm not going away," she promised. "I plan to stay involved." She elaborated that this might mean increasing her involvement with the DTC, or landing a slot on a board or commission.

Hodge said she also plans to pursue her master's degree in public administration at UConn.

In her letter to the editor this week, Hodge vowed to "focus on the urgent work that needs to be done during the remainder of my term."

Resident Opens Toy Store in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Jan Lawrence has found the secret to staying young.

Toys. Or more specifically, toy stores.

The Hebron resident and owner of Toys 2 Wish 4 recently opened the company's third location, right here in town. "It's a fun business. It keeps you young," Lawrence said earlier this week.

Lawrence was 10 when his parents, Howard and Donna, decided to open Creative Toymaker in Bethel in 1976. Over the years the business has experienced its fair share of changes (moving to Danbury, changing its name, expanding) but things are going well now as the company opened its third location next to Ted's Supermarket. The other two locations are in Danbury and in the Fox Run Mall on Welles Street in Glastonbury.

Throughout school Lawrence worked part-time at his parent's toy store. Then, after graduating from the University of Connecticut, he took a full-time position with the intent of moving on few years later. "But I got in there and I became ensconced in the business," Lawrence said. "I've always enjoyed working with kids and it's been interesting seeing the trends and changes that toys have gone through."

One thing is for sure, Lawrence said the variety of toys available for purchase today has grown astronomically since he was a kid. "It's a challenge to keep a variety in the store," he said. Fortunately, the family-owned business has an easily accessible toy consultant. Lawrence's son, 11-year old Luciano, has grown up with the toy store. "He gives input about what we should carry and what kids are

playing with these days," Jan said. "He's a huge help."

Having lived in town for 10 years and coached little league teams during that time, Jan Lawrence was looking for a way to reach his own community. At the end of last year discussions began about opening a Hebron location and within months the family was signing a lease at 137 Main St., where Class Act Movies & More used to be located.

Currently visitors to Toys 2 Wish 4 are greeted by an array of summertime toys including bug catching kits, sandcastle tools, squirt guns and games. The store has a balance of toys along with supplies for teachers in their classroom. From flash cards to decorations Toys 2 Wish 4 is a teacher's heaven for supplies and materials.

"We realize that [traveling out of town to stores like Staples is] a long way to travel for items teachers need for their classroom," Lawrence said. "We want to fill that need in the community and we're certainly open to suggestions from our shoppers."

Even though half the store is dedicated solely to toys, don't let that fool you. There's still learning to be had. "All of our toys are designed to be open-ended and creative," Lawrence said. "We want kids to enjoy playing while not realizing they're learning."

Toys 2 Wish 4 carries Lego products in addition to arts and crafts supplies and toys for infants and toddlers. There is also an extensive puppet collection as well as classic toys, such as yo-yos, Raggedy Ann dolls, even Slinky's. Toys 2 Wish 4 also gift wraps any purchase free of charge and provides free balloons to kids.



Jan Lawrence stands in the newest location of Toys 2 Wish 4. The small family-owned business celebrated the opening of its third location in Hebron late last month, and is holding a grand opening sale next week. Everything at the store will be 20 percent off from Aug. 15-21.

Toys 2 Wish For opened its Hebron store on July 25, but will hold a grand opening sale this week. From Aug. 15-21, everything in the store will be 20 percent off.

Toys 2 Wish 4 is open Monday-Thursday

from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Friday from 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The shop can be reached at 228-3102 or via www.toy2wish4.com.

Colchester Police News

7/30- Richard Miller, 49, of 280 Norwich Ave., was charged with two counts of violating his probation, State Police said.

7/30- Joshua Manning, 21, of 58 Old Route 87, N. Franklin, was charged with third-degree burglary, second-degree criminal mischief and third degree larceny, State Police say.

7/31- Frank Prior, 48, of 256 South Rd., Marlborough, was charged with failure to drive right and DUI, State Police say.

8/1- Keith Yurewitch, 47, of 669 Old Colchester Rd. in Salem, was charged with DUI, failure to keep right and speeding, State Police say.

8/1- Matthew Faski, 22, of 28 Skyview Dr., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of heroin, State Police said.

8/2- Donald Mayo, 41, of Waunpang Rd., Westerly, RI, was charged with second-degree failure to appear and sixth degree larceny, State Police said.

8/2- Jamison Cole, 34, of 55 Renee Dr., was charged with third-degree assault, breach of peace and criminal violation of a protective order, State Police said.

8/3- Brian Gustafson, 20, of 151 Taylor Rd., was charged with possession of a weapon in a motor vehicle, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

8/3-Alexander Lami, 19, of 66 Pinebrook Rd., was charged with possession of less than

four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

8/3- Three juveniles were charged with third-degree burglary and fourth-degree criminal mischief, State Police say.

8/4- Donald Schools, 61, of 252 Norwich Ave. Apt. A, was charged with DUI, operating a motor vehicle without a license, operating an unregistered car and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, State Police said.

8/5- Royce Pince, 49, of 6 Starr Pl., East Hampton, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, operating a motor vehicle without a license, misuse of plates and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, State Police said.

8/5- Brendan Turner, 19, of 22 Dogwood Dr., East Hampton, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police say.

8/7- Gregory Fearon, 49, of 81 Kramer Rd., was charged with criminal violation of a protective order and second-degree harassment, State Police said.

8/8- Brenda Scrivani, 24, of 38 Balaban Rd. Apt. 102, was charged with DUI and plate violation, State Police said.

8/10- Charles Scott Jr., 27, of 147 Chestnut Hill Rd., was charged with DUI, failure to illuminate plates and failure to grant right of way, State Police said.

8/11- Ashley Barcomb, 25, of 83 Pleasant St., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

7/31- Richard Deleon, 22, of 605 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford, was charged with first-degree burglary, third-degree motor vehicle larceny, sixth-degree larceny, criminal violation of a restraining order and third-degree assault, State Police said.

8/4- Mariel Hautman, 18, of 15 Emily Rd., was charged with sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

8/8- Gregory Butler, 38, of 858 Tower Ave., Hartford, was charged with traveling unreasonably fast and DUI, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

8/4-David Heriot, 24, of 11 Jackman Rd., was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

Andover Police News

7/28- Michael McCarthy, 30, of 132 Falidor Dr., Manchester, was charged with fourth-degree larceny, State Police said.

7/31- Randy Foster, 28, of 33 Kingsley Dr., C2, was charged with making an improper turn and DUI, State Police said.

East Hampton Town Council Sends Water-Related Purchases to Meeting

by Michael McCoy

After citizens voted down a proposed water system in 2007, residents will next month get the chance to again weigh in on a municipal water source.

Tuesday night, the Town Council voted to send to town meeting three separate proposals, totaling \$1,019,725. Two of the three questions, and the vast majority of the \$1.01 million total, deal with municipal water, and are the result of an agreement reached two weeks ago and announced last week at a joint meeting between the Water Development Task Force and the Town Council.

The town meeting on the proposals will be held Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

The lion's share involves \$790,500 that would secure a permanent easement for 4.57 acres of land at 49 Oakum Dock Rd. The St. Clements Marina, LLC, which Fr. Edward Doherty oversees, owns the land. The easement would yield the use of three wells to the town, two of which already exist, providing a long-coveted water source to the town. The site is expected to give the town access to 900,000 gallons a day.

The easement itself would run \$673,000, but the final cost comes to \$790,500 once remediation of contaminated soil and building removal is added.

This site was designated as valuable to the town's water needs back in 1972, and negotiations with Doherty commenced in 2001.

Other options included buying the property outright, which Doherty was unwilling to pursue. The final alternative would have been seizure through eminent domain. However, that venture was estimated to cost the town at least \$2.4 million.

Also due to be considered at the town meeting is the purchase of a 10.3-acre parcel on Middle Haddam Road, located behind Cobalt Market. It is known as the Greer Property. If approved, the site would serve as a water treatment plant. That component costs \$220,000.

The third proposal to be voted on involves improvements to Flanders Road and is unrelated to water supply interests. Though the funds for the improvements themselves have been budgeted, voters must approve to spend \$9,225 for a drainage easement on the Kiely property. Once again, the funds for that are already in place, and will not result in further money being taken from the fund balance. However, residents still need to vote, since the matter involves real estate.

For the other two projects, \$555,775 will come from leftover State Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) money. The \$454,725 would come from the general fund balance.

Town Council member John Tuttle, who was present for the meeting via conference call, called the St. Clements component "a very fair price." He added, "I'm happy we're this far along in the process."

Town Council Chair Melissa Engel said the

eight-year negotiations at one point involved the town being on the hook for \$1.5 million a year.

Anticipating some resistance on the issue, council member Thom Cordeiro said, "This isn't the debate of the water system itself. We can't even go there until we have a secure water source."

In 2007, the town voted down a proposed \$28.5 million water system. Engel said it was her understanding the reason was that residents did not want to shell out that kind of money without a secure water source. Council member Scott Minnick fired back, "I find that totally wrong. That's insulting to the town."

Minnick said of the 2007 vote, "The town said 'no,' and apparently, you don't want to take 'no' for an answer." He added, "Now, you're going to just go through the back door."

He finished, "Thousands of people voted 'no.' Now you want to bring it to a town meeting in August, at the last minute." (The agenda for Tuesday's meeting had called for the meeting to be held Aug. 25.)

"Don't make this a political thing," responded Tuttle. "This is a slam dunk."

"No one's pretending that this purchase won't be for a future water system," said Engel. However, she said this vote is far from the same thing as a multimillion-dollar water system vote.

"This is just a small step in what will become a plan for the town," said Cordeiro.

Sue Weintraub seemed to feel differently. "I think we *are* putting the cart a little before the horse here," she said.

But O'Keefe said that, to the contrary, "Nobody wants to give us grant money [for a future town water system], because we don't have a water source."

Weintraub also echoed Minnick's sentiments about the date, noting vacation and back to school preparation. Instead, she thought a referendum at a later date would be better. Ultimately, the other council members agreed to delay the town meeting until September, but a possible referendum was never even discussed.

Before the vote, Cordeiro asked, "Do we need John to vote?" (Tuttle had left the conference call, as he was on vacation on a lake, and a thunderstorm was impending.) So the council got Tuttle back on the line. Resident John Heinz questioned the propriety of this, but O'Keefe assured him this was accepted practice, unless the person was being reached to make a quorum. (In this case a quorum is four, and five members were already present.)

The Flanders Road vote was approved 6-0, while the others were each approved 4-2. However, it's notable that a motion needs four votes to pass. If Tuttle was not called, it seems the latter two proposals would have not passed, despite the council voting in favor 3-2, as a minimum of four 'yes' votes is needed for a proposal to be accepted.

Portland Residents Remember George Johnson

by Michael McCoy

Portland said goodbye last week to a native son and constant volunteer.

George Johnson Jr., 73, died Friday, Aug. 7, at Hartford Hospital, after a brief bout with pancreatic cancer.

A lifelong resident of town, Johnson graduated from Portland High School in 1954. He immediately enlisted in the United States Air National Guard, in part to avoid the draft, which was sending men to Korea at the time. Johnson was not deployed, but he did spend 36 years in the Air National Guard. During most of that time, he was an analyst for the United States Property and Fiscal Office, located at the Hartford Armory.

Following Johnson's retirement in 1990, he went to work for the Portland Housing Authority for the next five years, where he was clerk of the works. He then performed the same job at the East Hartford Housing Authority until being diagnosed with cancer earlier this year.

Johnson leaves behind his wife, Carolyn, of 52 years. Carolyn is also a lifelong resident and graduated with her husband in 1954, just after they began their courtship. The couple was married on Thanksgiving Day in 1956. They had known each other since grammar school.

In fact, the class's 55th-year reunion is coming up in a matter of weeks. Carolyn said she and her husband had planned to attend.

The Johnsons originally built their home on Great Hill Road, but they eventually bought a farm on Ames Hollow Road. Part of the reason for this was the fondness Johnson had of growing up on a farm himself. (His father

owned a tobacco farm in town for years.) When the opportunity to run his own farm arose (one that dates back to the 1730s, no less) he could not pass it up. That farm became his primary hobby, as he raised sheep, chickens, ducks, and Hereford cattle. "He was a fulltime hobby farmer," Carolyn said.

Fortunately, the Johnsons' farm doesn't look to be leaving the family. "My boys have all taken an interest," Carolyn said of her three sons – Gregory, 41, Wayne, 39 and David, 37 – who plan to keep it running.

Johnson was also a connoisseur of classic cars, which may have originated with his learning to drive on a DeSoto. At one point, he owned seven DeSotos.

They also still own a Pontiac GTO, which Carolyn used to drive often. "I didn't realize what a muscle car I was buying," she laughed.

But Johnson's free time did not just go to the pursuit of personal pleasure. Johnson racked up over 50 years in the Portland Volunteer Fire Department, and was still a member when he died.

Johnson joined the fire department's Company 2 in the late 1950s. In 1963, he became a charter member of Company 3; from 1964-70, he served as 1st Lieutenant; and he was captain from 1970-75.

From 1978-84 he served as Deputy Chief under Don Kelsey, and, from 1984-88, he was Fire Chief.

"He loved to chase fire trucks," chuckled Carolyn.

Fire Chief Bob Shea said he only knew Johnson somewhat as he had taken a backseat

in the department around the time Shea came on board in 1989. But Shea said he always sees Johnson's name on the wall as past chief and that he was thought of quite highly among veteran firefighters. Shea also noted his pleasure over Johnson sitting in the reviewing stand during the department's 125th anniversary parade last June.

Johnson (along with his wife) was a charter member of the Portland Historical Society, which was founded over 30 years ago. In addition, he was at one time the town's Civil Preparedness Director.

Carolyn described her husband as "very, very friendly" and said he was very supportive of her quilting business. (She has run Carolyn's Quilting Bee out of their home since 1980.) Carolyn said her talent was a source of pride to him, of which he often boasted on her behalf.

Johnson was only diagnosed with cancer two months ago, and he took a severe turn for the worse when he suffered a heart attack about a week before his death.

"He was a big contributor to our town and involved with very many things for a lot of years," First Selectman Susan Bransfield said, remarking on how his loss will be felt by the town.

Bransfield said she knew Johnson primarily from her visits to Carolyn's Quilting Bee, where she got her quilting supplies. "I've always known him as a very pleasant man," she said.

When asked what caused them to choose to spend their entire lives in town, Carolyn responded "Just loving Portland I guess." It seems safe to say the feeling was mutual.



George Johnson

Johnson's wake will be at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main Street, from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16. The funeral service will follow immediately at 3 p.m., and the interment will follow at Center Cemetery on Bartlett Street. Directions, as well as the online guestbook, are available at www.portlandmemorialfh.net. Carolyn said well wishers are welcome to join the family for a reception at the Fire Department Co. 2 picnic grounds after the burial. The grounds are located on Indian Hill Avenue.

Box Manufacturer Will Close Portland Plant in Fall

by Michael McCoy

Smurfit-Stone, the continent's largest manufacturer of cardboard-box materials, announced last week that it will close its Portland plant later this year, potentially putting 75 people out of work.

Mike Mullin, director of media relations and public affairs for Smurfit-Stone, said, "This is part of our ongoing effort to streamline our operations and continue to improve efficiency." He said the plant will cease operations in the fall, but would not be more specific.

Mullin said the Portland plant, located at 74 Pickering St., employs 23 salaried and 70 hourly employees. The latter group is part of the steelworkers union.

According to Mullin, 75 people are expected to be affected, suggesting that the other 18 will be relocated to other facilities. "The company is in talks with employees on future opportunities."

Smurfit-Stone has about 130 facilities across North America (the closest one being in Uncasville, according to the company's website). However, when asked what other locations have shut down recently, Mullin said "We don't speak globally about closing our facilities." He also would not comment about whether laid-off workers would receive a severance package or what adverse conditions may have led to this closing.

However, a January article from the *Chicago Tribune* reported that the company, headquartered in Creve Coeur, MO and Chicago, IL, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protec-

tion.

Mullin also said he was not sure how long the plant had been in Portland. Plant Manager Roger Mort declined to comment on the topic.

Town assessor Nicole Lintereur reported that Smurfit-Stone has operated at the location since 1995. And according to Town Clerk Bernadette Dillon, the location has housed a box manufacturer since 1940. (On a side note, Dillon herself worked for the company for a decade upon graduating from high school in the 1950s.)

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said Wednesday, "It's a very sad day for Portland." Bransfield said the company did not reach out to the town before the closing was announced and said the decision was "made totally in isolation."

"They didn't indicate there was anything we could do to assist them," Bransfield said, and added that the company dropped its membership with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce last year.

Bransfield said it was her understanding that Smurfit-Stone would sell the building, and she also said a Manchester company had contacted the town offering work to the laid-off employees.

Bransfield said Economic Development Consultant Mary Dickerson has already contacted the affected employees to invite them to a resume writing class.

"Our number one concern," Bransfield said, "is to make sure the employees get the services they need."

East Hampton Police News

7/13 — Daniel Cook, 45, of 16 East High St., was issued a ticket for allowing a dog to roam and failure to redeem, East Hampton Police said.

7/29 — Anita M. Ackerman, 19, of 9 Old Coach Rd., was arrested for possession of paraphernalia, possession of marijuana, operating under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs and failure to drive right, police said.

7/31 — Robert A. Dickenson, 48, of 4 Wangonk Tr., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for fifth-degree larceny, possession of a controlled substance, use of drug paraphernalia and second-degree failure to appear, police said.

8/1 — William V. Depietro, 19, of 26 Colchester Ave., was arrested for probation violation and third-degree burglary, police said.

8/2 — Margaret Holda, 48, of 23 Daniel St., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a stop sign, police said.

8/3 — John D. Ouellette Jr., 24, of 149 Union St., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

8/3 — Joyce S. Deming, 70, of 36 North Cone Rd., was issued a ticket for failure to re-

new registration, police said.

8/3 — William Marchinkoski, 39, of 42 Cone Rd., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for third-degree larceny, police said.

8/3 — Frederick P. Ulm, 45, of 130 East High St., was arrested for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating without insurance and articles obstructing view, police said.

8/4 — Janet M. Carter, 24, of 5 Prout St., Portland, was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered vehicle, police said.

8/5 — Michael J. Murray, 52, of 56 Blue Heron Dr., was issued a ticket for failure to drive right and failure to obey a control signal, police said.

8/5 — Kelly L. McKinney, 45, of 213 Center St., Manchester, was arrested pursuant to three warrants on the following charges: third-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, violation of probation and extradition, police said.

8/5 — Jill C. Anderson, 45, of 8 North Maple St., was arrested for speeding, police said.

8/6 — Mellissa M. Swan, 27, of 19 Main St., was arrested for operating under suspension, police said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

If you're used to reading my delightful column each week, you no doubt noticed last week I didn't write it; my Andover/Hebron reporter Sarah McCoy did. That's because Sarah filled in for me as editor while I took a vacation.

Some of you might recall that, for my last vacation in March, I flew down to Alabama to visit my parents. Last week, I flew out to California to visit my brother, who relocated to Los Angeles two years ago. It was just my second trip to the City of Angels — indeed, to the Golden State as a whole — and my first visit of any great length (having previously gone there for a three-day weekend six years ago).

I had a delightful week.

Being something of a pop culture fan, I had hoped to see some celebrities, just for fun. I did see a few stars, although none were really of Brad Pitt or Halle Berry-type wattage. Among them were Robert Blake (former star of *Baretta* and, oh yes, alleged wife murderer) in a coffee shop, Kate Flannery (who plays Meredith on *The Office*) at a bar adjacent to a comedy club she performed a show at (the show, incidentally, was hysterical), and two stars of the CBS show *Cold Case*.

The *Cold Case* spottings actually came while my brother and I were taking a guided tour of the Warner Bros. studios. (No, we weren't getting particularly special treatment; for 45 bucks — well, and a plane ticket to LA, and presumably a place to stay once you're there — you too can check out the WB lot.) It was a fascinating experience; the tour guide took us through streets on the studio's back lots, right past a bunch of building facades. Not many of the facades were dressed — which is to say, decorated in any way — but the tour guide explained what the facades had, at one point in time, served as. She pointed out the facade that used to serve as the outside of County General on *ER*; the one that was the outside of the fortune teller's store from the movie *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*; and the outsides of coffee shops from *Friends* and *Gilmore Girls*, among others.

We also drove past various soundstages, the large buildings where movies and shows (or at least their interior scenes, anyway) are actually filmed. In what I thought was a nice touch from the studio, each of the soundstages was adorned with a plaque saying what movies or shows had filmed there over the years. We were even taken into one of the soundstages, the one at which the sitcom *Two and a Half Men* is shot. We sat in the bleachers overlooking the stage, which is the exact same place we'd sit in if we were actually members of the studio audience. Growing up watching sitcoms, I've always wanted to sit in a studio audience and watch one be filmed. Last Monday, on the studio tour, was the closest I've ever come.

While on the tour, we passed several trailers, and out of one of these trailers popped Thom Berry, who plays Detective Will Jeffries on *Cold Case*. He looks at us riding in the touring tram (there were probably about 10 of us in the tram) says hi and asks, "Who here watches *Cold Case*?" I clapped (as I've been a regular watcher of the show for the past few years; it's an entertaining, if rather depressing, way to wrap up the weekend. Plus, the show's star, Kathryn Morris, grew up in Windsor Locks; it's always nice supporting fellow Nutmeggers), but, alas, I was the only one. Still, the guy thanked us, and told us to keep on watching. I said I would, and off we drove. I spotted another member of the show's cast, Tracie Thomas (who plays Kat Miller on the show), walking into one of the soundstages, but she seemed to be in a hurry and didn't stop to talk to the tourists.

The studio tour was very cool, as was, of course, walking down the Hollywood Walk of Fame and seeing the footprints in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. But there were other things to do besides movie- and TV-related stuff. My brother and I walked around Hollywoodland, a development of beautiful old houses set amid a backdrop of the gorgeous Hollywood Hills. (In fact, the famous "Hollywood" sign is related to the development; the sign originally read "Hollywoodland," and was erected in 1923 as a means of promoting the development. Of course, over time the sign — which is easily spotted far away from the Hollywoodland development — came to stand for Hollywood

as a whole, and in 1949 the "land" part of the sign was removed.) We went to the beautiful L.A.-area beaches, and caught the sunset from the Santa Monica Pier; an absolutely breathtaking sight.

We even took in a Dodgers game. I had gone on the ticket-buying site stubbhub.com and snagged seats just the week before the trip, and was surprised at how affordable they were. For a little more than \$20 for each of us, my brother and I had excellent seats in the loge section, which is the second level of the four-level Dodger Stadium. While I love my Mets, there's no way they'd ever charge that little for a seat that low to the ground and close to the field.

The game was a laffer; the Dodgers embarrassed the Milwaukee Brewers by the score of 17-4. As I have never been to Fenway, this was my first time seeing Manny Ramirez play live. I was looking forward to it, as Manny's always been one of my favorite players, and he did not disappoint. Nor did the crowd's reaction to him. They love him out there (in fact, there's a big sign in left field at Dodger Stadium that says "Mannywood"). There's a ton of Manny merchandise available at the various souvenir stands, from T-shirts to even a set of fake Manny-style dreadlocks (and yes, I bought a set of the dreads).

How's the weather, you wonder? Well, it was in the 90s almost all week, but it never was uncomfortable. Since Los Angeles is a desert, there's no humidity. None. There was a freshness about the air, and in the evenings it was almost crisp. I'd take 90s and no humidity over 70s/80s and humidity any day of the week.

As for the food...well, it's a wonder that folks who live out there don't weigh 500 pounds. There are so many amazing, different places to eat. And lots of fast-food chains unique to the western U.S., and, sometimes, unique just to L.A. I ate at places like In-N-Out Burger, Jack in the Box, Del Taco, El Pollo Loco, Carl's Jr. and the aptly-named Fatburger (which I think was the very best of the fast-food places I ate at; absolutely delicious burgers and fries). True, they were all a little on the pricey side (except for El Pollo Loco, but then the food there was rather lackluster; it was sort of like a low-rent Boston Market) but it was worth it to eat at those interesting places I know I won't get a crack at in Connecticut.

So, all in all, I had a fantastic week in L.A. I flew back this past Sunday, and had a rather unfortunate experience at the airport. A very long, poorly-marked line led to me not getting up to the self-check-in counter at the airport until about half an hour before my plane departed. The "about" is crucial. The computer system that checks your luggage wouldn't let you check your luggage if your plane was leaving in less than half an hour. So I got the big "you cannot check your bags now" sign from the computer. I looked at the time. It said 6:02 a.m. My flight left at 6:30 a.m. I was close enough that if a human were manning the baggage check system and not a computer, I'd have been waved on through so I could catch my plane. But, as far as the computer was concerned, 6:02 might as well have been 6:29.

So, I was ordered to stand in another, also very long, line, and book a new flight. I noticed, as I was standing there, waiting and waiting (I waited in that line for a good hour and a half), every so often an airline employee would come and pull people out of line so that they could check in without missing their flight. Where was that employee at, say, 5:30 or 5:45? It was a question several other people in line with me (who had also seen their dreams of 6:30 flights thwarted by long lines and uncooperative computers) also asked.

I finally was able to get on a plane at 1:30 p.m., a full seven hours after I thought I'd be leaving L.A. And I got into Hartford at 12:30 a.m. Needless to say, I was a very tired man Monday morning.

However, an unpleasant airline experience wasn't about to ruin the vacation for me. I spent a wonderful week in Los Angeles, and I heartily encourage anyone reading this who hasn't been there before to try to get out there at some point. You definitely won't regret it.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

Colchester

Terri Ann Erdos

Terri Ann Erdos, 37, of Colchester and formerly of Wallingford, died unexpectedly on Tuesday, July 21. Born in Meriden on May 29, 1972, she was the daughter of Priscilla (Richard) Erdos of Wallingford and the late Joseph W. Erdos.

She was involved in the family business, T&S Landscaping of Colchester, for many years. In her spare time, she enjoyed crafts and puzzles, but found her greatest joy in her family.

In addition to her mother, she is survived by her longtime companion, Tim Charlebois; three sons, Jeffrey, Todd and Tyler Charlebois, all of Colchester; her brother, Glenn J. Erdos of Glastonbury; and several aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Friends called Tuesday, Aug. 11, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service followed. Interment was in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Genevieve J. Buske

Genevieve J. Buske, 93, died peacefully Wednesday, July 29, in Colchester. Born June 26, 1916, in Dodgeville, WI, she was a daughter of the late Albert J. and Henrietta (Arthur) Strutt, late of Ridgeway, WI.

She was predeceased by her husband, Gilbert E. Buske, her son, Carl E. Buske, her brother, Harold Strutt and two sisters, Isabel Hinkins and Marian Strutt.

She graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, WI, in dietetics, and was a dietetic intern at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago and then worked at Grandview Hospital in La Crosse, WI, before her marriage in 1940.

She later was a dietitian at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, NY, for a short time and then became a full-time homemaker. From Rochester, she moved with her family to Milwaukee, WI, then to Eau Claire, WI, Mason, MI, Lansing, MI, Richmond, IN and then to Stamford, where they lived for 38 years. In 1973, she and her husband began their own business, Buske Engineering, for which she developed and enlarged black and white photographs. In 2002, they moved to Colchester.

She is survived by her sons, Kenneth E. Buske of Benicia, CA, Norman L. Buske of Belfair, WA and Warren H. Buske of Beaverton, OR; daughter, Jean M. Stawicki of Colchester; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Burial will be private in the Countryside Union Cemetery, Chippewa County, Wisconsin.

Mrs. Buske was a member of the American Association of University Women, the Bartlett Arboretum and the Stamford Museum and Nature Center in Stamford. Memorial contributions may be made to the Educational Foundation Program of Stamford, AAUW, c/o Ms. Irene Steinman, 15 Easthill Rd., Stamford, CT 06903 or to the Gilbert E. and Genevieve J. Buske Engineering Scholarship Fund at The University of Wisconsin Foundation, 1848 University Ave., Madison, WI 53708-8860, which they started in 1984 and has provided approximately 200 scholarships to engineering students there.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Harold E. Johansmeyer Sr.

Harold E. Johansmeyer Sr., 86, of Portland, husband of Ruth (Hanna) Johansmeyer, passed away Thursday, Aug. 6. Born Oct. 10, 1922, in Bronx, NY, he was the son of Edmond G. Johansmeyer and Marie (Scheidt) Johansmeyer.

Harold was in the tank division in World War II and after his service became a carpenter and retired 1987 from New York University. He was a member of the American Legion and a member of the Pleasantville Hiawatha Lodge No. 434.

Besides his wife, Harold leaves two daughters, Elizabeth Johansmeyer of East Hampton and her companion Robert Seiferman of Portland, Karen Johansmeyer also of Portland, and one son, Harold Johansmeyer Jr. of Portland.

A funeral service was held Monday, Aug. 10, at 10:30 a.m., at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial followed in Lakeview Cemetery. Calling hours were Monday morning at the funeral home, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Second Congregational Church, P.O. Box 206, Middle Haddam, CT 06456.

Family and friends may leave a condolence message by visiting www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Elizabeth Bell Emmons

Elizabeth “Betty” Bell Emmons, 90, of Cromwell, formerly of Portland, Stamford, VT, Williamstown, MA, and Venice, FL, passed away Saturday, Aug. 8, at the Covenant Village Hospital in Cromwell.

Born June 13, 1919, in Akron, OH, daughter of the late E. Irving Bell and Gertrude Taylor Bell, she attended schools in Portland, Rutherford, NJ, and was a 1936 graduate of Portland High School. She attended Middletown Business College night school and was employed by Riverside Trust Co. in Hartford for seven years. During this time, she was a member of the Middletown Speed Basketball Team and the Red Cross Motor Corps of Middletown.

She married George A. Emmons on Dec. 5, 1942, while he was serving in the U.S. Coast Guard. After the war, she and her family moved to Jewett City, then to Preston. In 1959, Betty and her family moved to Stamford, VT, where she was an active member of the Stamford Methodist Church, the PTA, served as a 4H leader, and owned and operated the Red Mills Fabric Store in Clarksburg, MA, for 10 years. She also drove for the Red Cross for ten summers.

Her husband of 57 years, George A. Emmons, died April 29, 2000.

She is survived by her five children and spouses: George A. Emmons, Jr. of Middletown, Jacqueline Emmons Cortes of Columbia, MD, Robert Emmons of Williamstown, MA, Susan Stephenson of Bolton, and Michael Emmons of Bradenton, FL, and Scarborough, ME. She also leaves her eight grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

She was a devoted mother, grandmother, and friend and was an inspiration to us all.

Graveside funeral services will be held Saturday, Aug. 15, at 11 a.m. in Trinity Cemetery in Portland. There are no calling hours. Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in Betty’s memory may be sent to the Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., Portland, CT 06480.

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

Portland

George Victor Johnson Jr.

George Victor Johnson Jr., 73, a lifelong Portland resident, passed away Friday, Aug. 7, at Hartford Hospital after a brief illness.

He is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Carolyn Robinson Johnson. He was the son of the late George Victor Johnson Sr. and the late Bertha Turner Johnson. He leaves behind three sons: Gregory Johnson and his wife Vicky of Durham, their children Gregory, Brandon, Kaylie, and Corey, Wayne Johnson and his wife Tracy of Portland, their children Kayleigh and Avery, David Johnson of Portland, and his children David, Michael and Hannah. He also leaves two sisters, Ruth McGowan of Portland and Doris Salamon of Beaufort, SC. He will be missed by numerous nieces and nephews.

He had attended Hillyer College and had served in the Air National Guard for 36 years. He was employed at USPFO, located at the Hartford Armory. After his retirement, he worked as Clerk of the Works for the Portland Housing Authority. He also worked for the East Hartford Housing Authority. Being a friendly person, he always enjoyed talking to the residents. He was a lifetime member of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department. He served as a captain of Company 3 and later as Fire Chief. He loved the fire department having joined just after high school.

George was a charter member of the Portland Historical Society where he served as president at one time. He also served as Portland’s Civil Preparedness Director. He loved his farm, later only having chickens and ducks. For years he had collected vintage cars and was very proud of his DeSotos. But mainly, he loved spending time with his family.

His family will receive relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Sunday Aug. 16, from 1-3 p.m. Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. in the funeral home, with the Rev. Jane Hawken officiating. Interment will follow in Center Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in George’s memory may be sent to the Portland Volunteer Fire Department, Company 3, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.

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

East Hampton

Olga Hall

Olga (Boorning) Hall, 97, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, passed away Sunday, Aug. 9 at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her loving family.

Born April 24, 1912, in New York, she spent her early childhood in East Hampton, and spent most of her life in Middletown, where she graduated from Middletown High School. She was employed by Raymond Engineering in Middletown for many years until she retired in 1977. She was a member of the South Congregational Church of Middletown.

Olga was predeceased by her husband of 50 years, Kenneth E. Hall of Middletown.

She is survived by her son, Rodney Hall and his wife Marlene of Middletown; her sisters Alice and Helen Boorning of Windsor; three grandchildren, Robin Salafia and her husband John of Haddam, Lisa Pitruzzello and her husband Vincent of Portland, Robert Hall and his wife Karen of Cromwell; six great-grandchildren, Joseph and Jessica Piatti, Daniel and Gina Pitruzzello and Danielle and Devan Hall.

The family would like to thank the caring staff at Greystone Retirement Home in Portland for the attention and concern for Olga during her eight-month stay with them as well as the caring staff at Cobalt Lodge in Cobalt where Olga resided for about a month. The family would also like to offer a special thank you to the staff and volunteers at Middlesex Hospice for the wonderful care, kindness and compassion given to Olga.

At the request of the family, there will be no calling hours and funeral services will be private. Contributions in Olga’s memory may be made to Middlesex Weiss Hospice Unit, c/o Middlesex Hospital Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Amston

Josephine R. LePage

Josephine R. LePage, 69, resident of Amston and formerly of East Hartford, passed away on Aug. 10. She was born in Hartford, daughter of Joseph James and Mary (Fragale) Granato.

She graduated from Buckley High School, Class of 1958. She then wed her beloved husband of 49 years Leo P. LePage Jr. in 1960. Josephine was an avid reader, sewer and loved music. She was a foster mother of 33 babies from 1965-1975 and was president from 1970-1972 of the Hartford Policemen’s Wives Association.

She is survived by her mother Mary F. Granato, of Windsor; her husband, Leo, of Amston; her three children, Elaine Griffin and her husband Kevin of Amston, Paul LePage and his wife Laurie of Vernon and John LePage of Harpers Ferry, WV; her brother, Frank Granato and his wife Linda of Ft. Meyers, FL; a sister, Louise Tiernan, and her husband Michael of East Windsor; her beloved grandchildren Ryan, Megan, Matt, Tyler and Stephanie; and one loving great-grandchild, Joseph. She was predeceased by her father, Joseph J. Granato, in 1981.

Her family would like to extend a special thanks to the Hebron Volunteer Fire and Ambulance Association.

Relatives and friends gathered at the Newkirk & Whitney Funeral Home, 318 Burnside Ave., East Hartford today, Friday, Aug. 14, at 9:15 a.m., for the procession to St. Mary’s Catholic Church, 15 Maplewood Ave., East Hartford where a Liturgy of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. The burial followed in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield. Calling hours were Thursday, Aug. 13, from 5-8 p.m. at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in Josephine’s memory to the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 11454, Alexandria, VA, 22312. To share stories and condolences with the family, visit www.mem.com.