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Burnt Hill Park in Hebron had its grand opening last Saturday. The park, located on East Street, features Little League fields, soccer fields, a walking trail and more. For more pictures from Saturday's opening, see page 2.

Grand Opening for New Hebron Park

by Mike Thompson

Sunny skies and warm temperatures – as well as curiosity to finally see the new place – helped drive people to the premiere of Hebron's newest park last Saturday.

Burnt Hill Park, located at 150 East St., made its official debut Saturday, Aug. 15. For the town, it was an event two years, and millions of dollars, in the making. Taxpayers approved a \$4.3 million townwide park project – of which Burnt Hill is the centerpiece – at referendum in 2007.

So, it wasn't a surprise that a special grand opening was planned to open the new park. About a hundred people gathered at the pavilion for the opening ceremony, which featured an honor guard from Hebron's military veterans, comments from State Representative Pam Sawyer and even an official proclamation from Governor M. Jodi Rell.

Overlooking the 48-acre park (located on 171 acres the town acquired in 2004), Sawyer said "it takes a vision" to be able to change the land from what it was – an abandoned farm – into what she described as "this very beautiful place."

Sawyer praised residents and town staff, specifically members of the Parks and Recreation Department. While she noted a \$500,000 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant helped with the project, "in the end it was the town of Hebron that put this together."

Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeffrey Watt

also spoke, and read an official statement from Rell, in which she praised the town for remaining "committed to raising the standards of excellence." Rell also proclaimed in her statement that Aug. 15, 2009, would be "Burnt Hill Park Day in the State of Connecticut."

Sawyer returned to the microphone and presented Watt with both a Connecticut state flag and an American flag. "Both of these flags have been flown over the state capitol," Sawyer said, "and I hope they will be proudly flown over the park."

After the brief opening ceremonies, those in attendance scattered, eager to check out the park, as well as the various special Opening Day events that had been planned. Fittingly, considering the kid-friendly nature of the park, there were plenty of things for children at Saturday's opening. There was a giant inflatable slide, a dunk tank, face painting, pony rides, even a puppet show. There were also various contests for the kids, like a bubble gum-blowing contest, potato sack races, tug-of-war and more.

The park features five athletic fields, including two Little League diamonds, soccer fields and a football field. But, while additional youth sports fields are a main function of Burnt Hill Park, they are not the only function.

"Our goal is to create a park with athletic fields, so the whole family could use it," Parks

See Grand Opening on Page 2

New RHAM Special Ed Director Familiar Face

by Sarah McCoy

RHAM administration didn't have to look far for its newest director of special education services.

Eric Protulis began in the position July 1, after serving as a school psychologist for the district since 2001.

The RHAM middle and high schools serve Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

Protulis' hiring comes a year after the district hired Carl Gross to serve in the same capacity. Gross announced he was leaving earlier in the year and Protulis was one of 18 to apply for the position.

"Honestly, the lack of continuity in the department scared me," Protulis said last week. "I felt like I had something to give back and could help refocus on students success."

Protulis grew up in Michigan before moving to Connecticut when he was 12. He graduated from Stafford High School and in 1995 from the University of Hartford with a degree in psychology. During his undergraduate studies, Protulis waffled between psychology and education. Soon after finishing his Bachelor of Arts degree Protulis was informed of UHart's school psychology program. "I thought, 'This is perfect. I can bring those two worlds together,'" he said.

Protulis graduated with a master's degree in school psychology from UHart in 2000 and went to work at Plainville Middle School. During that year, Linda Crossman, who was then assistant principal at the middle school, left to

become principal of RHAM Middle School.

Protulis followed the next year.

For the last eight years, Protulis has served the student body as a school psychologist as well as an advisor for the Ski and Snowboard Club, with Student Council, and an advisory leader.

"One of the big changes I expect with my new role here is to step back from the individual counseling piece and start to look at the bigger picture," he said. "It's about integration and diminishing the barrier that exists between special education students and non-special education students."

Protulis said this philosophy is already well-entrenched within the RHAM district, a reason he felt compelled to apply for the job.

There are currently 30 co-taught classes at the high school and another four on each team in the middle school. Co-taught classes involve a mixture of special education and regular education students in a classroom with one subject teacher and one special education teacher leading the class.

This model, Protulis explained, allows for increased understanding for all students. "It takes away the stigma of special education," he explained.

In addition to overseeing these classrooms, the 20 special education teachers in the district and the Planning and Placement Team meetings, Protulis also hopes to be an available re-

source to students. "When I was in school I didn't even know there was such a thing as a school psychologist," he explained. "So I knew I couldn't be stuck in an office all day. How would students know I exist as a resource? While things will be different in this new role, I still intend to go into classes and meet with students."

RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie said he believes Protulis' hiring was the best choice for the district. "It's not that Eric's just a nice guy, although he is," Leslie said. "He's the type of person that has a commitment to doing what's best for students and the personality to pull it off."

Leslie praised Protulis' ability to work with a diverse group of people and take a leadership role in whatever he does.

Protulis lives in Glastonbury with his wife, Katie, and their two children, Nate, 7, and Ellie, 4.

After receiving 18 applicants for the director of special education position, a hiring committee narrowed the search done to five for interviews. On June 30, Protulis and one other candidate were interviewed by the Board of Education. Protulis received word from Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski later that night that he got the job.

The district conducted interviews this week for the school psychologist position vacated by Protulis.



Eric Protulis is the new director of special education services for the RHAM middle and high schools. He had been a school psychologist for the district since 2001.



Burnt Hill Park made its debut last Saturday. The opening featured something for everyone, including an inflatable water slide and a puppet show for the kids. Hay rides were also offered, taking people on tours of the 48-acre park. State Representative Pam Sawyer even stopped by. She is shown here, bottom right, presenting a legislative proclamation to Parks and Recreation Director Rich Calarco, congratulating the town for the park.

Grand Opening cont. from Front Page

and Recreation Director Rich Calarco said.

Indeed, the park features a 1.2-mile walking trail (Calarco said a goal is to eventually connect the trail at Burnt Hill all the way up to the RHAM middle and high school complex), the aforementioned pavilion/picnic area and lots of greenery. Lots of greenery. Calarco estimated staff planted about 3,500 trees and bushes, "all native plantings," he said.

There is also plenty of parking at Burnt Hill, with 198 designated parking spots, Calarco said.

As people from Hebron and surrounding towns walked around the park Saturday, they seemed quite pleased with what they saw.

Andover resident Dianne Grenier said that she and her fellow residents "are envious. We'd love to have something like this." Maybe, she joked, "when we grow up," Andover can have a park like Burnt Hill.

Looking around at the park, Grenier added, "There's a lot of community pride here."

Todd Ingves, who used to live on East Street, was visiting from Audubon, NJ, and walked through the park with his wife Danielle and

daughters Grace, 5, and Ella, 2. He said his mother, who still lives in Hebron, has been talking about the park for a long time. He said it's definitely an upgrade over "a stinky chicken coop."

"It's nice," he said. "I wish they had this when I grew up."

Hebron resident Tammy Sousa, meanwhile, walked around with her dog, a 10-month old dachshund named Oscar.

"I think the fields are unbelievable," she said. "They're beautiful."

Sousa said her son Thomas, 11, will play soccer in the fall, while her daughter Hannah, 7, will be cheerleading for youth football.

It was children like Thomas and Hannah that helped drive the desire for a place like Burnt Hill. Board of Selectmen member Brian O'Connell, a former member of both the Recreation Commission and the Open Space Land Acquisition Commission, said that in 1999 a study of town facilities revealed the town was short fields "for every recreational sport." And that was 10 years ago.

"We've planned from that point on ... that

eventually we were going to need more field space," O'Connell said.

Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Mark Stuart also noted the heavy usage the fields in town were receiving. "You'd drive through here in the springtime and you'd see every field in use," he said. He said "we've really added to the inventory" with Burnt Hill.

"I just love it," Stuart said of the park, and added that the town is considering making the grand opening celebration an annual event at the park. It would be called "Hebron Day."

Hebron resident Jardo Opocensky, who was helping flip burgers at the American Legion booth that had been set up for the event (the Legion sold burgers while the Veterans of Foreign Wars sold hot dogs; however, not too many people seemed to partake of the edibles), said the park was "fantastic."

"It's money well spent," he said. "The town has grown enough where we need something like this."

Opocensky added that he's "always been a big proponent of recreational facilities." He

said, "If you keep kids busy, they won't get into trouble."

Hebron resident Lorraine Davey said the park was "gorgeous."

"If you've got kids in soccer and baseball, this is just beautiful," Davey said, but, noting the walking trails and the pavilion, added, "This isn't just for one age group. This is for everybody. ... This is town spending at its best."

Amston resident Tia Ortiz, 10, who will be a cheerleader for RHAM youth football in the fall, said the park is "really big" and likes "that there's a lot of room to do a lot of activities."

Connor Garrity, 9, of Hebron, described the park as "awesome" and called it "one of the best parks in the whole world." Connor, who was at the park with his family, said, "We'll be coming back here for a long time."

While she said that it could use a playscape, Hebron resident Jennifer Miller was a fan of Burnt Hill Park.

"It's amazing," she said. "Absolutely beautiful." And, she added, "It's nice to know we took the land and we didn't build houses."

Colchester First Selectman Candidate Says Running Was His Idea

by Mike Thompson

The Democratic candidate for first selectman said this week he “absolutely” did not inform Democratic Town Committee (DTC) officials of his plan to seek the nomination at last month’s caucus.

In a story in last week’s *Rivereast*, First Selectman Linda Hodge alleged that, hours before the July 28 DTC caucus, both committee chairman John Malsbenden and vice chairman Dorothy Mrowka learned of the plan by supporters of Glenn Morron to try to give him the nomination. “None of them thought it fitting to let me know,” Hodge said last week.

Morron, who beat Hodge at the caucus by a vote of 36-32, said Wednesday that seeking the nomination was “something that I did on my own” and he was never approached by anyone from the DTC. When asked if he notified either Mrowka or Malsbenden ahead of time, he replied, “Absolutely not.” He admitted that he had contacted a couple of friends to let them know, and “maybe” they contacted DTC lead-



Glen Morron

ership, but he wasn’t sure.

Malsbenden said Thursday that, as far as he knew, no one in the DTC even knew Morron was interested in the nomination until the night of the caucus. As for the timetable that Hodge had alleged, Malsbenden had no comment.

Morron said that, when he went to the caucus, all he was hoping for was to get enough votes to force a primary against Hodge.

“After I heard Mike Caplet [who had previously announced he was seeking the Democratic nomination] was backing out, I felt I needed to do something because I thought the people from Colchester needed a choice,” Morron said.

But at the July caucus, Morron garnered enough votes to beat Hodge outright. “I guess there were a lot more people as unhappy with the things going on in town as I was.”

Morron thinks he would have fared “pretty well,” had a primary occurred. And there might have been one anyway; in a letter in last week’s *Rivereast*, Hodge wrote that her supporters had collected enough signatures “to compel a primary runoff.” But instead she opted to back out of the race, saying last week that she felt it might bring “some harmony back.”

Morron said Hodge’s choosing to withdraw from the race “must have been a very hard decision for her to make.” He added, “I wish her

the best in her further endeavors.”

Morron said Hodge has not contacted him since dropping out of the race.

A retired Middletown police officer, Morron, 44, said he’s running for first selectman because “I want to try and make a difference in Colchester.”

Morron is currently chairman of the town’s Police Commission. However, he said his desire to run did “absolutely not” have anything to do with a battle earlier this year between the Police Commission and the Board of Selectmen, during which the selectmen voted to remove a member of the commission, claiming the member had violated town policy by issuing a statement to the media without first clearing it through the first selectman’s office.

“I have no personal agenda,” Morron said. “I just want to bring honest government back to the town and work with the citizens.”

“The only agenda I have is to do what’s best for the town of Colchester,” he continued. “That’s my only agenda.”

If Morron wins in November, he said, “Definitely, we need to work on economic development within the town. That’s been a priority for years. We need to get a plan together and start working on that.”

Morron also said that “long-term budget plan-

ning I think is a must.”

Also, he said, “the town needs leadership to get in the direction it needs to go.” When asked what that direction is, Morron replied, “one that’s going to bring the employees back together so that everybody’s working effectively and efficiently for the towns,” making reference to arbitration earlier this year between the town and some of its labor unions.

“I think it’s imperative we mend the fences and get everyone back on the same playing field,” Morron said.

As for his chances against Republican first selectman nominee Gregg Schuster, Morron said, “I’m not a politician. I think what I bring is the perspective of your average citizen who wants to stand up and do something that’s right for Colchester.”

Morron admitted that, at the caucus in July, “Being nominated from the floor and winning kind of threw everybody off. I believe it’s a rare occasion when that happens.”

He added, though, “There’s no doubt in my mind the Democrats have come together and are behind me.”

And, Morron said, with support of the DTC, as well as family and friends, “I think I have an excellent chance” of winning this November.

East Hampton Police News

8/7 — Coty Nichols, 21, of 12 Summit St., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol, operating under suspension and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

8/7 — Laurie A. Heriot, 44, of 11 Jackman Rd., Amston, was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

8/8 — Gustavo O. Oiona, 27, of 65 Groton St., New London, was issued a ticket for traveling too fast, police said.

8/9 — Pamela Gardner, 60, of 23363 Nicholson St., Hollywood, MD, was arrested for criminal trespass, police said.

8/9 — Aaron A. Cost, 33, of 16 Clark Hill Rd., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a control signal, police said.

8/10 — Adam J. Pina, 21, of 41 Livingston St., Wethersfield, was issued a ticket for traveling too fast, police said.

8/10 — Roger W. Bernardo III, 22, of 3rd Ave., West Haven, was arrested pursuant to a court-ordered warrant for failure to drive right, operating under suspension, no insurance and second-degree failure to appear, police said.

8/10 — William F. Welton Jr., 67, of 10 Clearview Rd., Moodus, was arrested for operating under suspension, operating without insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

8/10 — David Scherp, 21, of 199 Chestnut Hill Rd., was issued a ticket for creating a pub-

lic disturbance, police said.

8/11 — Amie L. St. Amand, 27, of 30 Beverly Hgts., Middletown, was issued a ticket for failure to obey a control signal, police said.

8/11 — Paula Ann Rigazio, 57, of 4 School House Ln., Middle Haddam, was arrested for sixth-degree larceny, police said.

8/11 — Melissa Marie Knablin, 29, of 7 Robinson Rd., Rocky Hill, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for third-degree larceny and issuing a bad check, police said.

8/11 — William C. Landry, 56, of 17 Bevin Blvd., was arrested for operating under suspension and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

8/12 — Mallory B. Reynolds, 22, of 64 Barton Hill Rd., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol, police said.

8/12 — Joshua J. Hill, 18, of 11 Brookside Ct., David P. Quackenbush, 18, of 14 Blacksmith Rd., Middle Haddam, Brendan Gustafson, 18, of 7 Tiffany Ct., one 16-year-old male juvenile and one 17-year-old male juvenile were issued tickets for simple trespass, police said.

8/12 — Laurene J. Kaplnos, 64, of 6 Bellvue St., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a stop sign, police said.

8/12 — Christine M. Coleman, 56, of 10 Forest St., was issued a ticket for failure to renew her license, police said.

Portland Police News

8/11 — Corrine Molsberry-Foss, 27, of 208 Main St., was charged with second-degree breach of peace and third-degree criminal trespass, Portland Police said.

8/13 — Andrzej Cwik, 25, of 49 Ruggles Row, Plantsville, was charged with simple trespass, police said.

8/13 — Lisa Detuccio, 25, of 119 Orchard Ave., Newington, was charged with simple trespass, police said.

HES Starts Year with Interim Principal

by Mike Thompson

With school starting next Wednesday and the school system still searching for a permanent replacement for Joanne Collins, an interim principal has been installed at Hebron Elementary School (HES).

Annie Sweeney, a former elementary school teacher and principal, was appointed interim principal on July 30, Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said. HES serves kids in grades 3-6, while Gilead Hill School is for kids in pre-kindergarten through second grade.

Sweeney was an elementary school teacher in South Windsor for 23 years, and then was principal of an elementary school in Cheshire for 12 years, according to Cruz. Sweeney has been retired “for around six years,” Cruz said, and is currently a senior consultant for the organization Tomorrow’s Schools Today, LLC.

“She’s eminently qualified,” Cruz said, and added that Sweeney worked with some of the school’s staff members three years ago, on developing school improvement plans. “It seemed as a natural fit,” she said.

“She has a warm, caring personality,” Cruz added, “and I thought she would work well with staff.”

Cruz said Sweeney is being paid a per-diem rate of \$430, the same amount per day that Collins was making. She is receiving no benefits. “It’s just a flat per-diem rate,” she said.

Cruz said Sweeney has been “really instrumental” in helping the school get ready to open next week.

Board of Education Chairman Jane Dube also was pleased to have Sweeney aboard.

“She’s got a lot of experience in education and we’re fortunate she was able to step in and do this for us,” Dube said.

Collins resigned in July after five years as principal of HES to become principal of East

Haddam Elementary School. Her last day in Hebron was July 31.

Cruz said the search process for Collins’ replacement is going well, with a 12-person search committee – composed of members of the community, parents, teachers, paraprofessional, secretaries, administrators, Dube and Cruz – set to begin interviewing candidates next week.

Cruz said the committee is interviewing between six and seven “top candidates” and from there hopes to narrow it down to two or three. She said they range from people who already have principal experience to people looking to move into the position from other administrative or supervisory experience.

Cruz said the candidates are Connecticut residents, with all but one working in-state.

“Hopefully, we’ll have a principal sometime mid-September,” Cruz said, and added that Sweeney “is available to us through the end of September.”

Dube described the search process as “going well,” and added, “We have some great candidates.”

Dube said “we would really like” to get someone who’s had some administrative experience, such as an assistant principal or a department head.

The teaching staff at HES is “very young,” Dube said, with many teachers having less than eight years’ experience, so, Dube said, the board would like someone who can “provide support to the staff” and “somebody who can mentor our teachers so that we can keep the best teachers in our classrooms.”

Dube said it’s “really important for teachers” to have someone “who is going to help them improve their instructional techniques.”

The school year starts Wednesday, Aug. 26.

School Board Extends Superintendent’s Contract

by Mike Thompson

The Board of Education voted unanimously last week to extend Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz’s contract by another year.

With the extension, which was passed by a 4-0 vote at a school board meeting Thursday, Aug. 13, Cruz’s contract runs through 2012.

Cruz agreed earlier this year to forego a pay increase for the 2009-10 fiscal year, so her salary will remain at \$131,000. The contract also calls for her to receive 25 vacation days per year, five personal days and tuition reimbursement for up to \$2,000 per year, in case Cruz wants to take outside classes towards a doctorate degree.

Cruz, who has been superintendent of the Hebron school system since 2005, said she has had “a wonderful working relationship” with the school board.

“I’m just so grateful for the opportunity and the support they’ve given me and the district,” she said.

She said the Board of Education and the community value education “so much,” and said, “It’s a joy to come to work to every day.”

“We are very happy with the job she’s doing,” Dube said of Cruz. “She continues to lead us in the right direction.”

Dube said the school system has “made a lot of progress” during Cruz’s time here, and that Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) scores have

improved, in some cases as much as 10 percent.

Test scores were strong under Cruz’s predecessor, William Silver, but now, “we’ve kind of gone from good to great,” Dube said.

“We certainly stack up against some of the top of the towns in the state,” she said.

But Cruz is focused on more than just CMT scores, Dube said. “Her vision for the district is to provide every student an opportunity to reach his potential,” she said.

Dube also described Cruz as “a great consensus builder” and said, “the community is really involved in the school district.”

“She does get along well with other town officials,” Dube added. “She has an open door; she’s very approachable. Everybody agrees once she makes a decision it’s well-reasoned. She’s been a positive influence in town.”

Dube also praised Cruz for doing a “really good job” on the school budget.

“Ellie has really found a lot of ways to maximize resources,” Dube said, “and I think those initiatives are reflected” in the 1.96 percent increase from the 2008-09 budget to the current year’s budget.

Overall, Dube said of Cruz, “We’re fortunate to have her.”

Obituaries

Colchester

Gladys C. Frazer

Gladys C. Frazer, 94, of South Main Street, passed away on Wednesday, Aug. 12, at the Apple Rehabilitation Facility in Colchester. Born in Manchester on Aug. 3, 1915, she was the daughter of the late Otto and Emily (Gahrman) Graul.

Gladys was a 1933 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester. She was married to Alexander Frazer, who predeceased her in 1977. Her love of gardening led to a career in floral design at Grove Gardens in Clinton and also as a flower merchant in North Haven. In her spare time, she was an avid reader.

Gladys is survived by a cousin, Diane Breiland of East Hampton and a godson, Dominic Dragotta and his family of Earlville, MD.

A graveside service was held Tuesday, Aug. 18, in the Beaverdale Cemetery, Hamden.

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

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Dwight Barrett

Dwight Webster Barrett, 91, of Lebanon, beloved husband of Elizabeth (Kilpatrick) Barrett, passed away Thursday, Aug. 13, in Colchester after an extended convalescence. Born June 2, 1918 in Hartford, he was the son of the late Edwin and Bessie (Norton) Barrett.

Mr. Barrett was a mail carrier for many years for the Colchester Post Office. On Aug. 14, 1964, he and Betty were married at the Westchester Congregational Church, where he was an active member and served as the Superintendent of Sunday School for many years. In his spare time, he enjoyed gardening and was an avid bowler. He will be remembered fondly by his family for his jokingly sharp wit.

In addition to his loving wife of 45 years, he is survived by seven children, Pamela Barrett Valley of Oregon, Deborah Barrett Hotham of Norwich, Dwight S. Barrett of Hebron, James Barrett of Lebanon, Carol Barrett of Middletown, Webster Barrett of Quinebaug and Jeffrey Barrett of Newington; 13 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends called Sunday, Aug. 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Funeral services were observed Monday, Aug. 17, with a chapel service. Burial private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to: Hospice of Eastern CT, 34 Ledgebrook Drive, Mansfield Center, CT 06250.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Louise Mercier Johnson

Louise Mercier Johnson, 71, of Tuccitto Road, Portland, passed away Sunday, Aug. 16, in her home. She was the wife of 44 years of Robert G. Johnson. Born in South Glastonbury Jan. 5, 1938, a daughter of the late Louis and Elsie Reinken-dorff Sr, she was a longtime Portland resident. She was a member of the First Congregational Church of Portland and had taught Sunday school for 10 years.

Besides her husband Robert, she is survived by her two daughters, Cheryl Wysocki and her husband Robert and Wendy Thatcher and her husband Brian, all of Portland; her sons, Chad Johnson and his wife Andrea of Cromwell and US Marine Gunnery Sergeant Mark Johnson and his wife Shannon of Oceanside, CA; her grandchildren, Samantha and Melissa Wysocki, Catrina and Amy Johnson, Jesse and Lauren Thatcher, Blaze, Dakota, Austin and Madison Johnson; her sisters, Elsie Ouelette and her husband Roland of Bartlett, TN and Barbara Carlson of Kensington; her brother, John Mercier and his wife Linda of Wallingford; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her sister, Frances Mercier, and her brothers, Louis Mercier Jr. and Robert Mercier.

Her family will receive relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home 231 Main St., Portland, Sunday, Aug. 23, from 5-8 p.m. Funeral services will be held Monday, Aug. 24, at 10 a.m. in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home with the Rev. Jane Hawken, Pastor of the Portland Congregational Church officiating.

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

Marlborough

Evelyn Catherine Porter

Loving mother, grandmother and sister Evelyn Catherine (Pach) Porter passed away at Marlborough Healthcare on Sunday, Aug. 16, due to natural causes.

Evelyn was born in Moodus on May 23, 1923, to Frank and Joanna Pach. Her parents were first generation immigrants from Poland. Frank first moved to the United States during the First World War and, in time, saved enough money to send for his wife and first daughter to join him in Moodus. After time Frank and Joanna established Cave Hill Resort, which the family maintains until today.

Evelyn was the youngest of nine siblings including her sister, Helen Gamberale and Steven Pach, both still residing in Moodus. She was predeceased by her other siblings, including her sisters, Amelia, Anne and her brothers, John, George, Joseph and Edward.

Evelyn was married on Oct. 27, 1956, to Horace N. "tough as nails" Porter, a Navy Quartermaster. Horace and Evelyn had a loving, happy and effervescent marriage for 49 years until Horace's passing. Together they had five children, Linda, Tommy, Michael, Peter and Mary Lou. Evelyn was also a dear and loving grandmother to her 11 grandchildren, Amanda, Cheryl, Holly, Steven, Jordan, Carolyn, Sophia, Juliet, Jackson, Malina and Brianna and her great-grandchild, Wesley.

She was predeceased by her loving husband, Horace and her eldest daughter, Linda Porter White.

Evelyn loved to garden, watch for cardinals, cook, spoil her pets, dance, listen to polka, watch the Red Sox and raise her beloved children and grandchildren. Evelyn was a caregiver by nature. She gave all she had to her children and grandchildren and found joy through their happiness. She was a constant source of peace, love and kindness for those in her life. She had a glamour, grace and livelihood about her that brought pure joy to all around.

Funeral service was held Wednesday, Aug. 19, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Burial in St. Bridget's Cemetery, Moodus. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home on Wednesday, prior to the service.

Also on behalf of Evelyn's family, we would like to thank Marlborough Health Care Center and Masonicare Partners Hospice for their kindness and wonderful care.

Donations in her memory can be made to Masonicare Partners Home Health & Hospice, 111 Founders Plaza, East Hartford, CT 06108.

Marlborough

Ann Maree Erikson

Ann Maree (O'Shea) Erikson, 75, of Marlborough, passed away at her home Sunday, Aug. 9, with her family by her side. Born in Manchester, England, on May 2, 1934, she was the daughter of the late John Patrick and Ethel (Darlington) O'Shea.

She attended secondary school in England and went on to earn certification as a nursery nurse. Ann immigrated to Rye, NY, in 1955 where she worked as a nanny and later met and married John H. Erikson. After living in Texas, Georgia and Alaska, the family settled in Marlborough in 1967 where Ann remained (except for two years in Georgia with her daughter) until her death. Ann retired from the State of Connecticut in 1997 as an administrative assistant.

Ann approached her diagnosis of renal cell cancer in July 2008 as she did the many challenges in her life, with a strength and dignity that amazed all who knew her. She will be remembered most by her family as a loving and devoted sister, mother, aunt and grandmother.

Ann is survived by her five children, John Erikson and his wife Jan of Tolland; Lawrence Erikson of Marlborough; Keelin Erikson of Hartford; Julie Ann White and her husband Derrell of Alpharetta, GA; Thomas Erikson and his wife Aimee of Marlborough; a sister, Maureen Simpson and her husband Alan of Leeds, England; a sister-in-law, Sally O'Shea of Devon, England; 14 grandchildren; a great-grandchild; a niece and two nephews. She is also fondly remembered by many friends and relatives in England, Canada and Australia.

She was predeceased by her brother, John Graham O'Shea of Devon, England and former husband, John H. Erikson (November 2008) of Rye, NY.

Ann was a communicant at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 47 West High St. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held there today, Friday, Aug. 21, at 11 a.m. with the Very Rev. Charles R. LeBlanc officiating. Following the funeral, all are invited to a reception at St. Patrick Parish Center. Burial will take place at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, Franklin Commons, 106 Rte. 32, Franklin, CT 06254-1800.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Richard A. DelGiudice

Richard A. DelGiudice died peacefully at his home in Felton, DE, on Wednesday, Aug. 12, with his wife of 50 years, Joanne (Discenza) DelGiudice. Born March 15, 1938 in Hartford, he resided in Marlborough until 2007.

Before retiring in 1990 he was employed by Discenza Construction. Richard lived for his family and valued creating traditions and memories that are cherished by his children and grandchildren. He enjoyed spending time in his workshop, watching the Yankees and taking mystery rides with his wife.

He is survived by three daughters, Loretta Fisher and husband Tim of East Hampton and their children Kyle, Ben and Alex; Lorraine Hicks and husband Kenny of Coventry and their children Michelle, Michael and wife Kari, Kelsey, and Katie and great-granddaughters Tielar and Stella; Lauren Wells and husband Dave of East Haddam; their children Ashley, Mitchell and Matthew; and a brother Phil DelGiudice, Jr. of East Hartford.

A Mass will be held Saturday, Aug. 29, at 10 a.m. at Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Rt 85), Hebron. His children will participate in the American Cancer Society Relay For Life Sept. 25 and 26. Donations can be made in his memory to their team "Reason to Believe," c/o Lauren Wells, 57 Palmer Martin Rd., East Haddam, CT 06423.

Colchester

Theresa D. Churney

Theresa D. Churney, 92, beloved wife of the late John V. Churney of Colchester, passed away on Thursday, Aug. 13, at the Middlesex Hospital. She was born Dec. 17, 1916, on the Dickey Farm in Colchester, daughter of the late Joseph and Eva Pelz Dzagani. Theresa retired from Pratt & Whitney Corp.

Surviving are four sons and their wives, John and Carol of Uncasville, Ronald and Joan of Andover, Robert and Charlene, Thomas and Arlette all of Colchester; three granddaughters, Elizabeth Churney, Gwendolyn, husband Stewart Wyatt, Christine, husband Troy Thetreat; five great-grandchildren, Emma and Juliette Wyatt, Mitchell, Zachary and Nicholas Thetreat; numerous nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by five brothers, Peter, Michael, Edward, John, Stanley and a sister, Mary.

Funeral services were held Monday, Aug. 17, from the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Andrew's Church on Norwich Avenue, Colchester; burial followed in Linwood Cemetery. Visitation was held Sunday, Aug. 16, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, Theresa would have loved that any donations may be given to the CT Humane Society care of your local chapter or to the donor's choice.

Marlborough

David R. Hannon

On Tuesday, Aug. 18, David R. Hannon, 54, passed away at Marlborough Health Care Center after a brief illness. David was born in Hartford on May 10, 1955. He was the son of D. Elaine (Davy) Hannon of Marlborough and George and Susan Hannon of Naples, FL and Moodus.

He leaves behind five children: Jennifer and Peter Gerr of Sutton, MA, Jason and Vicky Hannon of Manchester, Catherine Johnson of East Hartford, Lindsay and Brian Violette of South Windsor and Daniel Hannon of Glastonbury. He had six grandchildren: Elisabeth, Andrew, Ethan and Benjamin Gerr, Aubrey Violette, and Camryn Douglas. David also leaves behind eight sisters and brothers: Patricia and her husband Don Odell, Margaret, Elizabeth, Kathleen and her husband Reed Risteen, Colleen and her friend John Young, Thomas and his partner Susan Biske, James and his friend Veronica Brillion, Mary-Catherine and her husband Steven Gauthier. Several nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles also mourn his passing.

He was predeceased by his nephew, Jonathan Redler.

Services will be private and handled by Rose Hill Funeral Homes, Inc.

In his memory, donations may be made to Marlborough Health Care Center, 85 Stage Harbor Road, Marlborough, CT, or Middlesex Hospice & Palliative Care, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Colchester

Brenda Joy Omenson

Ms. Brenda Joy (Kodym) Omenson, 68, of Colchester, passed from this life on Monday, Aug. 17. Born April 18, 1941, in New York City, she was the daughter of the late John and Rose (Soutchek) Kodym.

Brenda was a 1959 graduate of Bacon Academy and then received a degree in hairdressing and cosmetology. She was an accomplished and successful business owner for many years and retired in 2000.

Brenda was a talented artist who had a passion for art and music. Much of her time was spent with her daughters, playing the guitar or painting. She loved spending time at the ocean, especially Newport, RI. She was a loving and devoted mother, daughter and friend. A woman of deep faith, she was a faithful communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester.

She is survived by two daughters and sons-in-law, Sabrina and David Bruce of Norwich and Erika and Brian Blanchard of North Myrtle Beach, SC; her two brothers, Robert Kodym of Colchester and Richard Kodym and his wife, Patricia of Salem; two grandchildren, Heather Culpepper and Jonathon Bruce; a great grandson, Anthony Culpepper; her special friend, Alice Simkins of South Glastonbury and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends called Thursday, Aug. 20, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will assemble starting at 10 a.m. today, Friday, Aug. 21, at the funeral home before the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at 11 a.m. at St. Andrew Church with Fr. Michael Giannitelli officiating. Interment follows in the family plot in the Cemetery of St. Joseph Society, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to COPD International, 131 DW Highway No. 627, Nashua, NH 03060.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

John Martin Kelly Jr.

John Martin Kelly Jr., 67, of Muskegon, MI and Colchester, passed away Saturday, July 25. Born Aug. 27, 1941, in Bristol, he was a son of John and Evelyn "Heidi" (Block) Kelly of Colchester.

At age 15, he ran away from home and assumed the name of Owen "Chuck" Bickford. On April 29, 1961, he wed his beloved wife of 40 years, the late Sandra (Huddlestun) Bickford, and together they had five daughters who survive him, Michelle Richards, Renae Bickford, Colleen Platt, Tiffany Bickford, and Brandi Bickford, all of Muskegon, MI. In addition, he leaves seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

At the age of 62, he made a return to his parents and siblings, who also survive him: Sharron Willis of Colchester, Karolee Matecki of Lantana, FL, Patrick Kelly of Voluntown, Colleen Veard of Groton, Tara Crescentini of Berlin, Maureen Kevorkian of Colchester, Erin Masciotra of Albuquerque, NM, and Brendan Kelly of Marlborough. He also leaves numerous nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

In addition to his wife, he was predeceased by a grandson and a great-granddaughter, Autumn Rayne.

In his spare time, he was an avid ham radio operator and carried the call sign KG8CF.

A memorial liturgy will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 22, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. There are no calling hours and burial will be private.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester is assisting the family with arrangements. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Readers of my column might recall a few weeks ago when I wrote about Glastonbury resident Cindy Lattanzio, whose dog, Chandler, had gone missing. The canine, spooked by some firecrackers, had gone running off into the woods in Hebron.

Lost dog stories don't often have happy endings. But fortunately, this one does. Cindy stopped by the office last week and let us know Chandler was home. Turns out she was found Thursday, Aug. 13, on Church Street in Hebron.

Chandler was a little worse for wear, which is only natural considering how long she was gone (she had been missing since July 18); Cindy said "she had a lot of minor cuts and lost a lot of weight." But, she said, Chandler "bounced back very quickly" and today is "back to normal."

In the period between Chandler going missing and her being found, Cindy estimated she received just under a dozen calls from people who had spotted her around Hebron.

"We had so many people calling who had caught glimpses of her," Cindy said. "There were a lot of people in Hebron that were really looking out for her."

Like I said, there are so many stories of missing dogs that don't end well. This one did, and I'm more than happy to share the news with the rest of you.

* * *

Did you know today's National Spumoni Day? It's true. Thanks to the wonders of the Internet, I've discovered that nearly every single day of the year is a "food holiday." And today, Aug. 21, is National Spumoni Day. If you, like me, are perhaps not as cultured when it comes to food as you should be, you might be wondering, "What the heck is a spumoni?" Fortunately, again thanks to the Internet, I can fill you in.

Spumoni is a special Italian dessert made of layers of ice cream, whipped cream, candied fruit and nuts. I know; sounds delicious, doesn't it? Tomorrow's another winner: Aug. 22 is National Pecan Torte Day. I love just about anything that has pecans in it.

In fact, the next several days feature can't-miss-desserts: National Spongecake Day is Sunday, National Peach Pie Day is Monday and National Banana Split Day is Tuesday. However, next Wednesday is a disappointment: National Cherry Popsicle Day. Coming after all those great-sounding treats, the idea of cherry-flavored frozen water is a bit of a letdown.

* * *

There are many things about the recent health care reform debate that have annoyed

me. Among them is the rise of the fear-mongering "death panel" rumor. The rumor has been debunked by the White House and numerous media outlets, yet there are still some out there who insist on continuing to spread it. And it's a vile scare tactic.

How did this rumor even get born? There's a provision in a House bill that would allow Medicare to pay doctors for voluntary counseling sessions that address end-of-life issues. Conversation topics could include living wills, hospices, pain medications for people suffering chronic discomfort, and other issues.

That's what the provision is. It's since been twisted by some, most prominently former Republican Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, into this absurd "death panel." Palin – who popularized the "death panel" phrase – and others have said that, under the proposed health care reform, there would be a panel of federal bureaucrats who would basically decide if someone lives or dies. Republican Senator Chuck Grassley recently told a crowd of 300 it would be a government program "that determines if you're going to pull the plug on grandma."

Nothing could be further from the truth. (And nor, for that matter, is what's proposed a huge leap from what's already out there. Since 1992, the government has required hospitals to ask patients if they have a living will. If they don't, and they want one, hospitals are required then to provide assistance.) And I think people like Palin – who has said such a system would be "downright evil" – and Grassley know it is and are doing what, sadly, Republicans (on the national stage, anyway) have shown in recent years they know how to do all too well: inspire fear in people.

Republicans don't want the health care reform bill passed so they're tugging at people's basic fears for their own lives and the lives of their loved ones, through phrases such as "pulling the plug on grandma." Inspiring fear in people has, sadly, worked for Republicans in the past, so it's not surprising they're trying it again. Fortunately, this time around, in addition to Democrats blasting such statements, some Republicans are, too. Congressman Jack Kingston, a Republican from Georgia, recently appeared on *Real Time with Bill Maher* on HBO and said Palin's "death panel" comment was a "scare tactic, no question about it."

Yes, it is. It's a deplorable scare tactic, and I wish they'd drop it.

* * *

See you next week.