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The original quintet of Brother Sleeze, now all in their 40s, are, from left, Steve Talnose (guitar), Jim Fazzino (lead guitar), Mitch Milone (bass), Aaron Schwartz (drums) and Greg Rose (acoustic guitar).

Portland Band Reunites for Show

by Michael McCoy

People looking for some original Portland Sleeze next weekend need look no further than Manchester's Hungry Tiger.

For the first time in six years, the five original members of Portland cover band Brother Sleeze will play live. This is part of about four hours of music slated for the Hungry Tiger, located at 120 Charter Oak St., Manchester, on Saturday, Sept. 19. It kicks off at 7:15 p.m.

The vague traces of the band actually date back about 30 years, when Steve Talnose and Aaron Schwartz, both then living in Portland, became bowling league buddies as pre-teens. They lost touch, but found themselves living in the same dorm several years later at Eastern Connecticut State University. "Starting a band was just always a dream we had," Schwartz said. But they never acted.

Until 2001, that is.

Talnose and Schwartz remained good friends ever since their college days, and both ended up living in Portland after graduation. In 2001, shortly after Talnose started guitar lessons, the duo decided to make a move. But, unless you're The White Stripes or The Black Keys, a guitar player and drummer isn't going to cut it. So, they enlisted the help of Talnose's dentist, Mitch Milone, to play bass, as well as Talnose's softball buddy Greg Rose to play 12-string acoustic guitar. (Though the responsibility is largely shared, Rose is also the primary lead vocalist.) Finally, Jim Fazzino, a friend of Schwartz's

coworker, rounded out the quintet, playing lead guitar.

With the exception of Fazzino, then of Middletown now of Cromwell, all original members are from Portland.

Eventually the band, made of laymen by day, rockers by night, took them their separate ways. In 2003, Talnose took a job in Atlanta, where he lives today. The following year, Rose exited, opting to play solo (though Schwartz sometimes accompanies Rose on bongos). In 2005, Milone and Fazzino, called it quits as well, leaving Schwartz as the only original member. However, when someone left, they would be replaced. So, despite several years of shifting, there was never a hole in the band.

Today's lineup includes Michael Gallacher on percussion, Bryan Johnson on rhythm guitar, Matt Simmons on lead guitar, Joann Talbot on lead vocals, and, of course, Schwartz on the skins.

Schwartz did not seem sour after all his other original bandmates left the scene. "It's a huge personal commitment; it really is," he said sharing his understanding of life getting in the way. Furthermore, he said no one ever left as a result of discord, and he and the other three Portlanders remain good friends. "Besides, it's all about having fun."

Some months ago, Rose got the itch to reunite the band for a show and learned that it

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Concerns Emerge Over Hebron Town Manager Plan

by Sarah McCoy

The Hebron Board of Selectmen last week heard concerns from a barrage of residents at their first workshop to address how the town will move forward with the town manager position.

In March, Jared Clark stepped down from the town's top administrative post. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) appointed Director of Public Works Andy Tierney as Interim Town Manager, with the assistance of Town Planner Mike O'Leary and Executive Assistant Donna Lanza. Six months later, the search for a new town manager has been suspended as the BOS consider whether or not to make the team approach a more permanent set-up for Hebron.

At the outset of the workshop last Thursday, Sept. 3, BOS Chair Jeff Watt listed the board's topics for concern if the town were to take a triumverate approach to town leadership. These concerns include being in-line with the town's charter, job descriptions, financial responsibilities, grant writing, strategic planning, the relationship with the local and RHAM boards of education, how grievances would be handled, and the town's budget process.

The BOS tackled just the first topic at last week's workshop, as about a dozen residents raised concerns about the set-up.

Harvey Desruisseaux, a member of the current Charter Revision Commission (CRC) as

well as a former member of the commission that developed the charter the town currently uses, voiced his concern that the current proposal is in violation of the town's charter. "Nowhere, nowhere in this charter does it provide for what you are offering up for a permanent form of government," he said.

The Board of Selectmen did get an opinion from the town's attorney, Don Holtman, on the matter. Holtman wrote that he "can find no realistic way" that three people can serve as town manager. However, he went on to say that if one person was named as town manager that the other two members of the team could be named as deputy or assistant town managers – pursuant to section 703 in the town's charter.

Watt stated that if the BOS were to move forward with the team management approach that one individual, likely Tierney, would be named as the town manager to satisfy the charter regulations.

Desruisseaux, as well as CRC members Dave Morrison and Karen Strid, expressed disappointment in the interpretation of the charter. Both Desruisseaux and Morrison stated that section 703 deals with the possible appointment of other administrative officers (i.e. assistant town clerk, assistant tax collector, etc.) and is not intended as a means for the Town Manager to share his or her duties.

"I'm sure you can tweak or seek ways to circumvent the charter," Desruisseaux said. "But the intent is there. A lot of heart, effort and time went into that document not to have it picked apart."

Resident Ray Purtell stated that he, also, doesn't believe that this set-up is in accordance with the town's charter. "The charter doesn't make provisions for what is being presented because what it does is takes those responsibilities that are vested in one person and, it appears, to farm them out in a series of positions," he said.

Purtell added that the issue at hand isn't about Tierney, Lanza and O'Leary but rather the "form of governance that the townspeople decided on years ago."

It wasn't only the form of government that residents voiced concern over, but also the amount of work placed on employees. "We have three excellent employees who give 110 percent, always have," Strid said. "By them taking on another third of a position, something is going to suffer."

Strid proposed that the BOS conduct a survey to understand how town employees feel about the set-up in a "discreet" and "anonymous" manner.

Financial Administrator Elaine Griffin spoke last Thursday to say that many town employees

are concerned about a possible "domino effect" that this proposal may have on everyone. She said that "disgruntled" might be too strong of a word but "concerned" was an accurate description of the mood at the Town Office Building.

Another town employee, Director of Finance Jim Day, spoke up last Thursday. Day said he sees "a few problems with this form of government." These problems, he listed, include developing a long-term vision for the town, a possible delay in the day-to-day operations of the town as well as internal controls for the finances of the town.

Day added that his job is to "safeguard the assets of the town," but that job is made difficult when department heads responsible for large budgets are also part of the town manager team who create the budget.

While the overwhelming amount of comments were against the proposal, a few members of the public stood up in favor of the new set-up. "You have three highly-qualified people. Each one, with the right initials behind their last name, could run the town on their own," Hebron resident John Soderberg said. "The system is working fine."

Another resident Steve Croxford stood up, threw his arms out to the side and asked, "Why

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just so happened Talnose would be in the area this month on business. That was obviously the most rigid scheduling issue, but coordinating a viable night between about 15 people (the Sleeze members and the other acts playing at the Hungry Tiger) is no easy task. Eventually, the Sept. 19 date was set.

Schwartz also seemed upbeat about Saturday night's location. "The Hungry Tiger over the years has always been a great venue," he said, estimating they have played the spot four times previously.

So far, the entire original lineup has only practiced together since, about a month ago, when Talnose was in town. The rest of the band has practiced several times since.

The night begins at 7:15 p.m., with an acoustic show featuring just Rose and Talnose. The rest of the night is sort of a stroll through pop music. The original members of Brother Sleeze will play next, sticking to classic rock from acts like Credence Clearwater Revival and Steve Miller Band. Next up is The Factor, featuring Greg Rose, which will stick to '80s music. Then, Rose will end his stage time with Rosie, composed of Rose and his two sons, who will primarily play '90s alternative rock.

Somewhere around 10 p.m., the current Brother Sleeze lineup will close out the night, playing a little of everything from the 60s to the present.

Cover charge is \$7.

Town Plan cont. from Front Page

would you not want them? All I'll been hearing is what a great job these three have been doing. Why not keep it going?"

Throughout the meeting the members of the BOS reiterated that no decision on the matter has been made. Watt did say that he hopes the board can make a decision in October and proceed from there.

Prior to suspending the search for a single town manager, the BOS had received over 70 applications for the position, which a search committee had narrowed down to 10-15 qualified candidates. Members of the BOS stated on Thursday that many of these candidates were from out of state or didn't have a strong knowl-

edge of Hebron. "We have three people who know the town really well," Watt said last Thursday. "They understand not only what the town needs but what the Board of Selectmen needs and what the town employees need to make it all work."

Watt stated that it was a recognition of how well the interim set-up has worked that led the BOS to consider the team approach on a more permanent basis.

The selectmen have not yet scheduled their next workshop date. However, they will hold a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, Sept. 17, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St.

MacDonald Road in Colchester Purchase Criticized, Restarted

by Katy Nally

The process to acquire open land on MacDonald Road was completely restarted at last week's meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS), because First Selectman Linda Hodge did not follow the proper procedure for purchasing the land back in June.

At a special town meeting on June 30, Hodge announced the purchase of the 31-acre parcel without getting the consent of the Board of Finance (BOF) and the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). This violates an ordinance that was passed in 2003, which outlines how open space land should be purchased.

According to the ordinance, the first step is a recommendation from the conservation commission for a parcel of land to be used for "open space." Then the BOS approves the recommendation and forwards it to the PZC and the BOF. Then a final action is taken by the selectmen.

Hodge planned on purchasing the 31 acres for \$182,500, with \$140,000 coming from the town and \$42,500 from the Colchester Land Trust. The \$140,000 came from two accounts designated for land purchases: the open space account and the land acquisition account. She said she checked the town charter and followed the protocol for purchasing land, which states that a special town meeting must be held and residents must be notified. "Frankly it didn't dawn on any of us to check the ordinances," she said.

A notice for the special town meeting was published in the *Norwich Bulletin* on June 23 and the meeting was held the following week on June 30. The selectmen approved the purchase of the land, according to the minutes.

Bruce Hayn, chairman of the BOF, said Hodge needs to "do her homework" and look

at the ordinances. He said she "just doesn't want to follow procedures." But Hodge said she did not intentionally go around the finance board. BOF members "forget that I've only been here a year and a half," she said. "They assume that I know things. I've never bought land before, so I asked the lawyer and I read the town charter and I checked with a variety of informed people." Hodge said she asked Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove if there was enough money in the two accounts to purchase the land. She admitted, however, that she did not outright ask Cosgrove if she was allowed to purchase it.

According to e-mails from June sent between the selectmen and the BOF, selectman Rosemary Coyle and Hayn asked Hodge if she planned on presenting the purchase to the BOF,

and Hodge replied that it wasn't necessary because the funds were in accounts already earmarked for land purchases. But Hayn said Hodge was just trying to cut out the board of finance, so that she could "get this approved fast."

Hayn said after "his own investigation" he noticed the steps for buying this land were not followed. On Aug. 31 he notified the selectmen and Cosgrove via e-mail, and the process was restarted as a result. Hodge said Wednesday she was "kind of surprised that he brought it up two months" after the June 30 town meeting.

The proposed purchase has been re-recommended by the Conservation Commission and has been forwarded by the BOS to the PZC and the BOF for approval, Hodge said.

East Hampton Residents Approve Water Source Acquisition

by Michael McCoy

If East Hampton is thinking of one thing right now, it's water. If you don't believe that, ask the nearly 400 people who turned out to Wednesday night's town meeting.

All three resolutions before the voters passed Wednesday – this included, most notably, the acquisition of a water source, which passed by a margin of more than 3-1.

But that's not to say the meeting was without controversy.

Shortly after the meeting started, someone stood up to ask moderator Red McKinney why the town was pursuing a water system in this fashion. (The propriety of spending money on the source and what it suggests about a full water system has consistently been a bone of contention within the Town Council.) McKinney replied that Wednesday's vote was "about a water source, not a water system," McKinney said.

McKinney also added, "We all have roots here, some short, some long," and commissioned all present to be respectful of everyone else.

He then welcomed comments, but said, "Please don't ask mechanical questions about a water system that is not even designed yet."

Town Council Chair Melissa Engel made the motion to have all votes for the rest of the meeting be made by standing affirmation (where residents stand to vote, while four tellers come around to count). Despite a suggestion by resident Mary Ann Dostaler that secret paper ballots be used instead, the citizens present voted 264-114 for the voting method. (Standing affirmation was used for the vote on standing affirmation, since the "ayes" and "nays" were too close for McKinney to call.)

The first resolution, read by council member Thom Cordeiro, concerned spending \$9,225 for a drainage easement for Flanders Road improvements. As the "ayes" rose, McKinney got consensus from the room that the positive votes were overwhelming enough to forego the count.

Next, Engel read the resolution for the Greer

property vote, which involved the purchase of 10.3 acres behind Cobalt Market, for the purpose of building a water treatment plant. This component came to \$220,000.

Immediately after Engel's reading of the resolution, Cordeiro said, "All we're trying to do is prepare for the future of East Hampton." He called the expenditures analogous to saving for a child's college tuition. "You don't know if that kid's going to go to college," he said, but figured most parents try to put money away nonetheless.

"We would fall short, greatly short, if we said 'no' tonight," said Planning and Zoning Commission Vice Chairman Rowland Rux, explaining that it would deny their children the opportunity to vote on a water system in the future.

At this point, resident Chris Burt asked McKinney to "move the question." After a convincing amount of "ayes" concurred, McKinney did, and the resolution passed 270-113.

The final, and largest resolution, read by Town Council member John Tuttle involved spending \$790,500 to secure a permanent easement at 49 Oakum Dock Rd. The 4.57 acres, owned by St. Clements Marina, would provide the sought-after water source that would give the town over 900,000 gallons a day.

"This is a rock solid, fundamental acquisition for us; it's a slam dunk," Tuttle said after reading the resolution. "Twenty years from now we're gonna look back at this night and say we're all geniuses."

Burt then said again, "I say we move the question." To this, citizen and vocal opponent of the purchase John Hines turned around and yelled, "You move out the door."

McKinney opted to let comment continue. Paul Peszynski said the evening reminded him of a Norman Rockwell painting, and said there was a rejected water system vote in 1965, which involved 90 percent state funding. He said, he voted for it, but it failed. Peszynski said, "I would hate to see our kids and grandkids sitting here 45 years from now" still trying to get

water.

Ed Jackowitz, owner of American Distilling, said he's been in town for 35 years, and over that time his wells have deteriorated. He said his business has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on water treatment. Jackowitz figured that if the resolution were rejected, Portland would waste no time making an offer. "I think Father Doherty could sell them tomorrow for double the price." (Doherty is the founding trustee of St. Clements.)

Town Council member Scott Minnick said, "I feel for the people that need a water system – not want, but need." But, he said, "I don't think East Hampton should be in the water business." To this end, he figured the town "has already spoken." (In 2007, a water system was rejected at referendum by a vote of 1,997-1,463.) According to Minnick, the council members in favor of pursuing the water system were effectively saying, "We don't want to take 'no' for an answer, because we *really* want this system."

Burt once again called for McKinney to move the question, which he did. The resolution passed 268-79.

The water source has "been a lot of work for a lot of people for a lot of years," Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe said. He said though stimulus money is drying up, the town would begin looking for other state and federal funding sources for a future water system. "We really do have a debt of gratitude to Father Doherty and St. Clements."

Tuttle, the councilman most directly involved in this pursuit for the past couple of years, said he felt "this is a real win for the town." When asked after the meeting if he was confident of an affirmative vote, he said, "I felt so strongly about it, I must admit, I had some anxiety." Tuttle said he was happy with the turnout and pleased that a "vocal minority" did not result in the resolutions' rejection.

That minority seems to refer to, among others, Chatham Party council members Scott

Minnick and Sue Weintraub. "Tonight, clearly, this was staged," Minnick said after the vote, figuring Burt's calls to move the question were purposefully made to extinguish opposition comment. (Indeed, both times the call was granted Chatham Party members were in line to speak next.) The council members in favor of the acquisition "knew they had the votes," he added. "This town meeting catered to the people who already have the greater voice in town."

"It's not about health and public safety," Minnick said, instead proposing that the water system is an attempt to court development.

Similarly, Weintraub after the meeting repeated the old adage that town meetings are apt to pass, and referenda are prone to failure. "The government has failed the people on this," she said, identifying her major concerns as overtaxation and unchecked development.

Conversely, Engel said after the vote, "This is a victory for our good friend Bob Heidel." Heidel spent decades working toward a water system in town even up to his death this past July. "He'd be very happy today," she added. Heidel's widow, Audrey, was present and had more than enough hugs to go around for many town officials.

It seems only John Hanson rivals Heidel in time spent on pursuing water in East Hampton. After the meeting, Hanson, quick-witted though slow to theatrics, said, "After 40 years, our work came to an agreement with the townspeople." He compared the pursuit of a water system to building a house, starting with a footing, then a foundation, then the structure itself. "We now have a footing for the water system," he said.

McKinney, no stranger to serving as moderator, said after the meeting that the impassioned tone of the evening was conformist with past town meetings. However, he remained cool, calling the event, "just people expressing their views," and added, "Everybody behaved themselves."

Time Again for Brownstone Festival in Portland

by Michael McCoy

Residents will come together this weekend, as Portland holds its fifth annual Brownstone Festival.

Since its inception in 2005, the festival has always been held in conjunction with Family Day, put together by Youth Services since 1997. The whole day will officially run from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The day's events span much of the town, but the meat of the Brownstone Festival takes place at the Portland Quarrylands, otherwise known as the town's riverfront park. Festival chairman Jeanne Dilworth said the biggest new addition this year, is the exhibition by Jack Dillon and Bill Barrows, which will showcase artifacts and historical records from the town's quarry heyday. In a similar spirit, the Portland Historical Society will also be at the riverfront this year, as opposed to setting up shop at their Main Street museum.

Another notable addition will be space. The Brownstone Quorum has been busy this last year clearing the property. According to Dilworth, there is now a solid of five cleared acres to be enjoyed by all.

Festivities at the riverfront kick off at 2 p.m. The biggest draw, the free picnic, starts one hour later. Each year, the quorum feeds all festivals attendees at no cost. This year's meal boasts hamburgers, hot dogs, potato chips, salad and

brownies, with water and soda to drink. Among those flipping burgers will be Brownstone Quorum president Jim Tripp.

All the food is supplied by Tri-Town at a low cost to the quorum.

At 4 p.m., the Meshomasic Hiking Club will host a hike, and will also be on hand for the afternoon promoting their Cans for Land program. The club collects cans, exchanges them for money, and uses the money to buy small private parcels in the Meshomasic Forest as they become available.

In addition, the Cub Scouts will run old-fashioned games, and jack-of-all-trades Dave Kuzminski, along with students from his Connecticut Valley School of Music and Dance, will provide the afternoon's live soundtrack.

Other riverfront booths will include the Pumpkin Growers Association, senior readers, Brownstone Arts and the Middletown Power Squadron, who will be teaching boat safety, appropriate since Dilworth said she was confident the land would be home to a boat launch before long.

During the day, the Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park (now in its fourth year) will host demonstrations and competitions.

Festival events spread throughout the town Saturday include tours of historic Trinity

Church on Main Street, a Crafters' Market at Stor-U-Yourself, and tag sales by both the Democrats (Waverly Avenue) and the Republicans (the American Legion). Way up Main Street, the Cellar Savers Fire Museum will also be open, and will hand out free fire hats.

So, while activities are more centrally located this year, the day is still somewhat fragmented geographically. To account for this, Jeff Kelsey will once again run hayrides from Brownstone Intermediate School to the park.

As for Family Day, its activities start at 11 a.m. The Portland Senior Center on Waverly Avenue will actually host a breakfast before the event, from 8-10 a.m., and then at 11, the center will host flower shows, as well as free flower arranging classes for kids.

Most of Family Day, however, is stationed on the Town Green in front of the senior center, as well as the adjacent parking lot just off of Main Street. Most enticing to kids will undoubtedly be the face painting, games and inflatables, which run one or two tickets. (Tickets will be on sale at four for a dollar.) In honor of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department's new ladder truck (which will be on display), Youth Services Director Mary Pont, said they decided to make the inflatables correspond. So, the slide will be a fire truck, while the bounce

will be a Dalmatian.

Kids should also be on the lookout for Guida's "bovine divine" mascot, the Supercow

The rest of the grounds will include booths and displays from over 30 organizations, like Dr. John Mormile, who will once again hand out bike helmets to children, the Senior Reader Program, Mary Ellen Nocera's Monarch butterfly exhibit, and Double "G" Alpaca Farm. (Though the alpacas will not make it, to the occasion, their wool will.)

In the library, the Friends of the Portland Library will run a book sale.

Pont also is excited about launching the initiative "Don't Sit on Your Asset." Representatives from the Youth Action Council will man a booth, encouraging attendees to fill out a survey. The idea is that, the survey reveals strengths and weaknesses that people can use to find out how to best plug into the community.

A map outlining all activities for both the Brownstone Festival and Family Day is available at www.portlandct.com.

"My hope is that we have a glorious sunny day," said Pont, a blessing Family Day has usually received. But have no fear: rain or shine, the Brownstone Festival will proceed as scheduled.

Andover CMT Results Bring Mixed News

by Sarah McCoy

There's both good news and not-so-good news when it comes to Andover Elementary School's 2009 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) results.

The CMTs are administered each spring to students in third through sixth grade for math, reading, writing and, for fifth grade only, science.

The good news is that, for the first time in over nine years, the school district met the state goals in every subject at every grade level. Additionally, looking at the scores for cohort to cohort (meaning third grade scores in 2006 compared to those same students in fourth grade in 2007, etc.) to seven of the possible nine areas saw growth.

What isn't so positive is that scores, overall, have gone down in seven of the possible 13 areas. This includes a drop in fourth grade writing scores by over 15 percentage points and fifth grade reading by 11 percentage points.

Districts measure success on the CMTs based on the percentage of students who achieve the state's goal.

In Andover, 75 percent of third grade students met goal in math, 62.5 percent in reading, 69.2 percent in math; 69.8 percent of fourth-graders achieved goal level in math, 76.7 percent in reading and 65.1 percent in writing; 81.6 percent of fifth grade students met the state goal in math, 69.4 percent in reading, 77.6 percent in writing and 61.2 percent in science; 88.9 percent of sixth grade students achieved state goal in math, 86.7 percent in reading and 84.4 percent in writing.

In most cases, these scores are good enough to put AES in the middle of the pack for Educational Reference Group C (ERG-C). These groups are put together by the State Department of Education to allow school officials to compare their scores with towns of similar size and economic make-up. Other towns in ERG-C include Bolton, Ellington, Hebron, Mansfield, Willington and Woodstock.

At Wednesday's Board of Education meeting Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia said that the school should really "celebrate"

the fact that state goal was achieved at every level in every subject. "Overall, I think we have a positive picture," he said.

However, Maneggia did note that while students have shown great success as they reach the later grades at AES, there is room for improvement at the lower grades. "We'd like to see scores at the third- and fourth-grade level higher," he said.

This year, the school district is providing additional reading help for students at the lower grades. This is also the first year that the kindergarten program has been extended to the whole school day. "Hopefully, when these initiatives have been in place a little longer, we will see real progress in our scores," Maneggia said Wednesday.

Andover Elementary School did meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks to

remain in accordance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In order to meet AYP standards a school district had to demonstrate at least 80 percent of students achieving proficient level on the CMTs.

The CMT test is scored into five categories: below basic, basic, proficient, goal, and advanced. Students in the top three categories are counted toward AYP progress but only those in the top two categories have met state goal.

Next year, in order to achieve AYP school districts will have to show 90 percent of students achieving proficiency. This percentage will continue to rise until 2014 when NCLB states that all students will be proficient in the test areas.

Copies of the Andover CMT results are available from school officials at AES.

Marlborough Residents Express Dismay with Sewer Project

by Katy Nally

The "final funding phase" for the 7-year-old sewer project was closed Sept. 1, First Selectman Bill Black announced at last week's Board of Selectmen's meeting.

At the Sept. 1 meeting, Black also told residents that the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) has the final say when it comes to the project and a town meeting has no authority to make changes to the plans.

The \$12.02 million project was approved in 2002 through a town referendum. According to a letter that was sent to residents at the time explaining the referendum, all Marlborough residents were going to pay \$77 per year for 20 years, and those inside the sewer district were to pay an additional \$847 per year for 20 years.

Town Planner Peter Hughes said the total cost of the project is still \$12.02 million, but the size of the sewer district has decreased by about half because, from 2002 to 2007, "there was a dramatic increase in the cost of construction." He said that, even though the size has decreased, the cost of the project has stayed the same due to "inflation and time."

With fewer people to share the total cost, the cost per person has increased. Hughes said residents inside the sewer district will pay anywhere from \$1,200 to \$1,300 per year for 20 years, and those outside will pay about \$150 to \$250 per year for 20 years. This charge does not include the cost of grinding or filling existing septic systems for those living in the district.

One week before the selectmen met, residents attended a special WPCA hearing to voice concerns about the project. At the Aug. 27 meeting, Jane Boston of 64 Pettengill Rd. asked why a similar sewer project in Bolton had lower costs

per resident than in Marlborough. Dave Wagner (who has since resigned from the WPCA for what Black described as "personal reasons,") said the Marlborough proposal receives 75 percent of the funds from a loan, to be partially paid back by residents, and 25 percent from a grant. Other similar projects receive 90 percent of the funds from a grant and 10 percent from a loan. He said the Marlborough project places a much greater burden on the homeowners.

Hughes said both the town and the residents will repay the loan over a 20-year period. He said the town will repay 60 percent of the loan through "general taxes" and residents will pay 40 percent through their benefit assessments. According to Hughes, the benefit assessment is no more than 10 percent of the difference in the value of a home from before and after the sewer hookup.

Hughes added that towns like East Haddam and Colchester have anywhere from 2,000 to 3,200 homes and businesses hooked up to the sewer system, while there are only 380 to 400 hookups in Marlborough. He reiterated his logic, saying that dividing the cost by a smaller number of people means a higher charge per person.

According to Hughes, the project has hit a number of hurdles since it was approved in 2002. The project was at a standstill from 2003 to 2006 because the Clean Water Fund, which provided the grant money, was canceled by former Gov. John Rowland. When it resumed in 2007, Hughes said the WPCA went through "a very long design phase that was extended by seven months." He said the WPCA held meetings in 2007 to notify residents that the

project's cost had increased, but only in the past six months have people been speaking out about the changes because, Hughes said, "it's time to pay." (According to the regulations, residents are to start paying the additional fees in 2009.)

Victor Battaglioli of 11 Denler Dr. stood up at the Aug. 27 WPCA meeting and said, "The referendum wouldn't have passed in the first place if these numbers were on the original proposal. I voted for that one and I wouldn't have voted for this one." Pasquale Amodeo of 92 Lake Ridge Dr. - also a member of the Board of Finance - agreed. "It's not the same project that everybody voted on in 2002," he said.

At the Sept. 1 meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS), two petitions regarding the sewer project were discussed.

David Durel, who organized both petitions, said the first asked that residents share the cost of the project equally and that no one have a benefit assessment. The second asked that connecting to the sewer line be optional, because some residents have existing septic systems in good condition.

The town's attorney, Joseph Fasi of Murtha Cullina LLP, deemed both petitions were invalid, based on a technicality. Selectman Joseph La Bella read aloud the attorney's explanation at the Sept. 1 meeting. He said the petitions went against the town's charter because they requested a town meeting be held where residents could vote on the project. He added that the WPCA has the sole authority over the project, so no changes could be made through a meeting. "It would be improper to reverse what had been accomplished by referendum

through a town meeting," La Bella said.

Black said the attorney's opinion would answer residents' questions about the project and it would show "where the responsibilities lie." He told residents, "I think you've asked a lot of questions of this board, which, more appropriately, need to go to the WPCA." Residents in attendance laughed at this advice, because at the Aug. 27 meeting of the WPCA, they were told to ask specific questions to the selectmen at the Sept. 1 BOS meeting. WPCA chairman John Murray said at the Aug. 27 meeting, "We won't know how it will be paid for until the next Board of Selectmen meeting, so let's talk about something else." But, according to Black, the "user fees and the benefit assessment... will rest with the WPCA."

Many residents said they were disappointed with the WPCA's communication throughout the entire process, and selectman Riva Clark agreed. "My personal feeling is that the communication has not been what I would have hoped for," she said at the Sept. 1 meeting.

The WPCA has made some changes after hearing comments from residents. At an Aug. 6 meeting, the WPCA extended the 90-day period in which homeowners must grind or fill their septic systems and then hookup to the sewer line. Homeowners now have 180 days to accomplish this, but some people at the Aug 27 meeting said 180 days would leave residents to grind or fill their systems in March - before the spring thaw - making it more difficult and time-consuming.

The WPCA held another meeting Thursday, after press time, to hear more comments from residents.

DeGray Celebrates Fifty Years of Fighting Fires

by Sarah McCoy

Fifty years ago Bruce DeGray and his wife, Roberta, moved to Hebron. Soon after, he joined the Amston Lake Volunteer Fire Department (ALVFD).

A half-century later, the two still live at the same house, and DeGray is still fighting fires and responding to medical calls.

Last week, Hebron Fire Chief Paul Burton recognized DeGray for his one-of-a-kind service. And it's literally one-of-a-kind, since Hebron has never had a volunteer serve in active duty for 50 consecutive years.

To DeGray, though, it doesn't feel like it's been all that long. "It's an everyday commitment to helping people," he said earlier this week. "I didn't get into this to break any records. I do it because I enjoy helping people when they need it the most."

DeGray grew up in Rocky Hill and watched his father serve in their town's fire department. "I always thought it was a neat thing so, when I got settled, I decided to join too," he said.

He has served in virtually every capacity on both the ALVFD and the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department. (The two merged into one department in 1965.)

From 1993-95, DeGray served as fire chief for the town. He was also president of the ALVFD, became an emergency medical technician (EMT), was instrumental in the building of the new Company 2 that was completed

in 2005, the forming of the town's Water Rescue Unit and the recent restoration of Hebron's original fire truck, a 1937 Ford Sanford.

"Bruce is one of our regulars," Burton said earlier this week. "He's an EMT, a firefighter, he comes to the meetings and is willing to help with whatever project needs help."

DeGray graduated from Hartford Regional Technical School, where he trained to be a carpenter. In 1959, the same year he bought a house in Hebron and joined the fire department, DeGray took a new job at Pratt and Whitney. "I didn't know a thing," he said of the position. "But they sent me to training and I was able to have a good job for 34 years as a tool, die and gauge maker."

For years, DeGray worked at Pratt, served on the fire department and raised his two children. (His son lives in Florida while his daughter remains in town.) He is grateful for his wife who always understood if he had to leave just as dinner was being served or in the middle of the night. In fact, as if firefighting wasn't enough, DeGray also volunteered with his kids at one point coaching Little League but always making sure to be there for band performances, big games or dance recitals. "Day by day everything seems to fall into place," he said earlier this week.

"Fifty years is a major accomplishment," Burton said. "The trend we see is people just

don't have the time to make a commitment for 10-15 years. Bruce is a rare person who's been doing it for 50 years."

Life hasn't slowed down that much for DeGray now. He continues to go to as many calls as he can. DeGray has also rekindled his interest past career as a carpenter, picking up odd jobs on the side. He's also at the gym three days a week, on his boat in the summer and skiing in Vermont in the winter.

DeGray said he's really never considered stopping. "As long as my health's good, I'll keep doing it," he said. "Maybe it's in your blood."

There must be something unique about the people who run into trouble when everyone else is running out. DeGray said he can still remember responding to a huge fire at Universal Food Stores in Colchester back in 1961 or dragging the hose up stairs during a second-story fire in a house on Reidy Hill Road in 1962.

"At the end of the day, I enjoy it," he said. "I wouldn't do it if I didn't like it and it just so happens that I've liked doing it for the last 50 years."

To the people who might be considering joining the fire department, or maybe those who currently serve and are considering leaving, DeGray has just one message. "When things go wrong, don't give up," he said earlier this week. "It's not a glory job but it's helping people when they need it."



Earlier this month Bruce DeGray celebrated 50 years of continuous active service with the town's volunteer Fire Department. DeGray, who volunteers as both an EMT and fire fighter, said that he continues to give of his time because he enjoys helping people.

Local Farmers Push for Adoption of Ordinance

by Katy Nally

Elizabeth Gillman-MacAlister, the owner of a Colchester dairy farm, spreads manure once a year to fertilize her fields. Last, year an official from the Department of Agriculture showed up at her Cato Corner Farm in response to complaints about the smell.

Gillman-MacAlister was not fined for the odor, but she said she was frustrated that people complain about the smell of a farm. "It would be much better if we were more welcome in town," she said.

A state ordinance that would protect farmers like Gillman-MacAlister against these types of complaints was discussed at a meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) last Thursday, Sept. 3. Joan Nichols, from the Connecticut Farm Bureau, explained that the Right-to-Farm ordinance protects farmers from complaints of odor, noise, dust, pesticides and water runoff caused by livestock and crops. The ordinance does not

protect negligent or "reckless" farmers, she said.

Even though the state Right-to-Farm ordinance was passed over 20 years ago, each town must adopt its own version so it pertains to local farming practices. Colchester's adaptation of the ordinance is wordier than the state's version and it asks farmers to report any new irrigation practices to the town's Inland Wetland Commission.

Chris Borque of Birch Pond Farm suggested that the town adopt the state's ordinance verbatim, because it would "save us the frustration." Borque said ultimately a state law would hold up in a state court, so he saw no reason to change the language of the town's ordinance. He said any differences between the town's version and the state's version of the ordinance could spell "unnecessary litigation fees" for farmers. Butch Przekopski, another Colchester

farmer, agreed. "We're getting too far involved with this," he said.

Because many of the farmers at the meeting said the changes made to the ordinance were unnecessary, Town Planner Adam Turner said he would draft a new version, more similar to the state's ordinance.

At a meeting of the Open Space Advisory Commission this week, Turner introduced his latest version of the town's ordinance, which, Gillman-MacAlister said Thursday, is written more like the state ordinance. "They are seriously trying to straighten things out—especially the town planner," she said.

Despite any changes to the language of the statute, the farmers at last week's BOS meeting said they were thankful the town was considering a Right-to-Farm ordinance. Gillman-MacAlister said the ordinance would make

operating a farm easier. She said, "Anything that makes a farm viable, will prolong the life of farms." She said she hopes more people would eventually get involved in agriculture as a result of the ordinance. In fact, one of her employees has enrolled in the University of Connecticut's agriculture program because he enjoyed working at the Cato Corner Farm, she said.

Nichols said the ordinance "sends the message to the next generation of farmers that they can stay in Connecticut. The ordinance is an effort to protect farmland." Borque said this is especially important because "the big corporate farms out west are dying...and the little farms down the road are saving us."

"This single little ordinance is the biggest help to farmers," he added. "It is very important to all of us."

School Returning Money to Andover

by Sarah McCoy

On Wednesday, Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia announced that the district would be returning money to the town, thanks to a surplus in the recently-wrapped 2008-09 fiscal year.

For the last six years, the Board of Education (BOE) has returned tens of thousands of dollars to the town at the end of each fiscal year. This year is no different, as Maneggia told BOE members that he would be cutting a check to the town in the amount of \$187,698. "We're fortunate the way things evolved," Maneggia said on Wednesday night.

He credited the surplus in the 2008-09 budget largely to a savings in the salary line item and a favorable price on heating oil. In 2007-08 the school district was forced to buy excess heating oil because of a contract they had with the oil company. That ended up working in the district's favor as Maneggia didn't need to purchase any additional oil until the tail end of the winter earlier this year.

The salary line item savings is due primarily to a six-month leave of absence by one of the school's custodians as well as the retirement of two experienced teachers who were replaced by younger teachers. The salary savings alone accounted for \$74,000 of the

\$187,000 being returned to the town.

When the town's Board of Finance was compiling its budget this spring, Maneggia had stated that he expected a surplus in his budget. Of the \$187,000, \$100,000 has already been applied to the town's current budget. The remaining amount will be placed in the town's general fund balance.

Board members praised Maneggia for his fine management and restraint in purchasing. "When you don't need it, you don't spend it," BOE Chair Jay Lindy said.

"I dare you to find a better superintendent in the state," he continued. "He puts the children, their education and taxpayers as his priorities and it shows."

School board member Danny Holtsclaw was equally impressed. He calculated that the BOE came in 4.77 percent under budget. "That's fantastic," he said Wednesday. "I'm amazed, impressed and grateful."

Maneggia was quick to deflect praise to his employees who, he stated, worked hard to control spending and sought grants wherever possible. "The truth is, I'm not depriving students," he said. "The staff has appropriate supplies and I think we're in pretty good shape."

Colchester Residents Hope to Keep Probate Court in Town

by Katy Nally

Some in town are hoping the state legislature goes with an alternate plan approved by the state's Probate Redistricting Commission last week that would keep a probate court in Colchester.

The Probate Redistricting Commission finalized plans last Friday, Sept. 4, to redistrict the state's 117 probate courts. The commission's plan reduces the number of courts to 50, creating a Glastonbury district that encompasses six towns: Glastonbury, Hebron, Marlborough, Colchester, Lebanon and East Haddam.

While the commission is bound by the state to a 50-court maximum when it redistricts, commission members recognized three areas of "geographical concern," where residents would be very far from their probate court. The commission outlined a 53-district plan that would add probate courts in Colchester, Norwalk and another in the Farmington Valley, said Probate Court Administrator Judge Paul Knierim.

The next step is approval from the General Assembly. The assembly has until mid-October to adopt either recommendation.

The 53-district plan is good news for Colchester Probate Judge Jodi Thomas, who asked the commission to consider a district of Lebanon, Bozrah, Salem and East Haddam with the probate court in Colchester. She said she was very pleased with how the commission voted on Sept. 4 and said it was a "step in the right direction." "As long as [the 53-district plan] makes sense for the people of the region, I'm happy," she said.

Thomas asked for the five-town district because she was concerned that residents from Lebanon might have to travel to the Glastonbury probate court. "I'm concerned for all citizens, but particularly the older ones," she said. Knierim said elderly people and those who

"aren't able to handle themselves" are the "primary users" of the probate courts. He said the majority of cases handled at the probate courts involve trusts, estates and mental health issues.

Selectman John Malsbenden said because many people who use the courts are unable to drive, a court in Glastonbury poses a problem with public transportation. "The way they have redistricted it leaves central eastern Connecticut pretty much in the middle of nowhere," Malsbenden said at an Aug. 31 meeting of the Democratic Town Committee. "It's a long trip for elderly people."

Knierim said the commission's "primary concern is geographical accessibility," which is why it also recommended the 53-district plan.

Thomas also said a court district of six towns might lose its local appeal. She said some residents might be intimidated by larger courts and feel obligated to obtain counsel. But Knierim said the commission was "very concerned that the probate courts remain accessible and user-friendly."

The redistricting is in response to Gov. M. Jodi Rell's request to "modernize" the probate courts, Knierim said. In recent years the probate courts have been losing money because the more lucrative cases concerning estates have decreased and cases involving children and mental health issues have increased. The consolidation is an attempt to cut costs.

If the 50-district plan is approved, probate courts in all of the *Rivereast* towns would be affected. In addition to the towns heading to Glastonbury, Andover would be part of the Manchester district, Portland and East Hampton would be part of the Middletown district and Salem would be part of the East Lyme district.

Colchester Police News

8/31: Kenneth Shuckerow, 30, of 1720 Exeter Rd., Lebanon, was charged with DUI, operation of a motor vehicle when license is suspended, failure to have device illuminated and failure to grant right of way, State Police said.

9/1: David Hibbert, 43, of 151 Lakeshore Dr., was charged with DUI and failure to keep right on curve, State Police said.

9/1: David Roux, 41, of 170 Lakeside Drive, Lebanon, was charged with DUI and not having a front license plate, State Police said.

9/2: Dean Farnsworth, 18, 1720 Exeter Rd., Lebanon, was charged with second-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

9/2: Sabrina Duffy, 19, 64 Balabar Rd., No. 409, was charged with breach of peace, interfering/resisting and refusing fingerprints, State Police said.

9/4: Shawn Brimmer, 33, of 688 West Rd., Salem, was charged with DUI and driving to endanger, State Police said.

9/5: William Nantz, 41, of 368 Westchester Rd., was charged with DUI, interfering with an officer and disobeying the signal of an officer, State Police said.

9/6: Justin Coutre, 25, of 3 Hickory Dr., Marlborough, was charged with possession of less than 4 oz. of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

9/7: Ryan Henk, 18, of 297 Old Hebron Rd., was charged with possession of less than four of marijuana and possession, State Police said.

9/8: Janelle Mooney, 26, of 191 Route 6, Apt. A, Columbia, was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

8/25: Andrew Busey, 21, of 45 Pepperbush Drive, Amston, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

Salem Police News

9/8: John Cusano, 17, of 1 North St., Norwich, was charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny and third-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

Andover Police News

9/1: Jiman Gutierrez, 28, of 4 Ann St., Willimantic, was charged with DUI, operation of a motor vehicle when license is suspended, failure to drive right, State Police said.

9/2: Matthew Andrychowski, 26, of 8 Kingsley Ave., Apt. 1, was charged with interfering with an officer, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

8/29: John Orzell, 27, who police said they had no address for, was charged with disorderly conduct and fight capable/causing minor injury, State Police said.

8/29: Danielle Zakrajsek, 21, who police said they had no address for, was charged with disorderly conduct and fight capable/causing minor injury, State Police said.

9/6: Kyle Czapliski, 19, of 6 Stony Brook Dr., Marlborough, was charged with having weapons in the vehicle, a stop sign violation and failure to have lights lit, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

8/19 — Roger Gauvin, 65, of 53 Caesar Dr., Bristol, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

8/20 — Tiffany J. Dellacamera, 21, of 27 Hotchkiss St., Middletown, was arrested for operating under suspension, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating without insurance, police said.

8/25 — Kelly Burns, 43, of 62 West High St., was involved in a one-vehicle accident at the intersection of West High and Old West High streets, police said. Burns was arrested for evading responsibility, operating without insurance and making an improper turn, police added.

8/25 — Vanessa K. Morley, 21, of 188 Lake Dr., was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and traveling too fast, police said.

8/26 — William Choma Jr., 55, of 20 Namonee Tr., was issued a ticket for having a defective windshield, police said.

8/26 — Edward House, 51, of 200 West High St., was issued a ticket for failure to drive right in a construction zone, police said.

8/26 — Jason M. Stojak, 26, of 234 White Birch Rd., was arrested for failure to obey a stop sign, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating without insurance and misuse of plates, police said.

8/28 — William J. McLaughlin, 45, of 8 Aldens Crossing, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol, improper right turn and signal device violations, police said.

8/28 — Eric R. McConnell, 29, of 8 Pine Hurst Ln., Moodus, was issued a ticket for trav-

eling fast, police said.

8/29 — Karyann Suprono, 40, of 122 Colchester Ave., was arrested for sixth-degree larceny, police said.

8/30 — John E. Marchinkowski, 42, of 126 Coles Rd., Cromwell, was arrested pursuant to three warrants. The charges are as follows: probation violation, operating under suspension, operating/towing an unregistered motor vehicle and second-degree larceny, police said.

9/1 — John Bragdon, 43, of 21 Mohawk Tr., was arrested pursuant to a warrant on charges of third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

9/1 — Patrick S. Aiello, 20, of 3 Sears Pl., was issued a ticket for failure to wear a seatbelt, police said.

9/1 — Megan E. Watrous, 20, of 3 Sears Pl., was issued a ticket for failure to wear a seatbelt, police said.

9/1 — Mark Goodman, 50, of 39 Eastham Bridge Rd., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right, police said.

9/1 — Brian Zingle, 23, of 24 Harlan Pl., was issued a ticket for using a cell phone without a hands-free device, police said.

9/2 — Nicole Romano, 20, of 62 Auburn Knoll, and Robert J., Romano, 39, same address, were arrested for third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

9/3 — Peter P. Moore, 29, of 85 North Main St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for violation of probation, police said.

9/3 — Terry Faipier Jr., 21, of 639 Westchester Rd., Colchester, was issued a ticket for speeding, police said.

Obituaries

Hebron

Richard E. Craig

Richard E. Craig of Jupiter, FL, died suddenly Wednesday, Sept. 2. He was born in Hebron in 1964.

Richard was the program director for Caron Renaissance Institute, an addiction and gambling treatment facility. He was an avid die-hard Miami Dolphins fan, an author, Navy Vet and a member of American Legion Post 164, and was training to race in the Gobi desert to raise funds for scholarship beds for The Caron Renaissance Institute for those who do not have resources for alcohol and drug treatment. Richard had many, many relatives and friends some of which he had known since kindergarten. He was a very spiritual man and hit his knees every night.

He leaves behind his wife Stephanie; his sons, Clayton and Tyler, two young men who were the light in his eyes, his parents, Robert and Sylvia of Boynton Beach, FL; his brother, Robert of East Haddam and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Visitation was Monday, Sept. 7, followed by a service, at Aycock Funeral Home in Jupiter, FL. The family requests memorial contributions be made to Run7on7.com for the Gobi March.

Richard lived each day to the fullest. His motto was “Life’s journey is not to arrive at the grave in a well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways totally worn out shouting ‘Holy Crap...What a Ride!’”

Arrangements entrusted to: Aycock Funeral Home, 1112 Military Trail, Jupiter, FL.

Marlborough

Marilyn L. Murphy

Marilyn L. Murphy, 78, formerly of Marlborough, Glastonbury, Tamaqua, PA, Chester Springs, PA, and St. Louis, MO, passed away Monday, Aug. 24, at Harrison Senior Living in Coatesville, PA. She was the loving wife of the late John T. Murphy, with whom she shared 57 years of marriage.

Born in Tamaqua, she was the daughter of the late Theodore and Naomi Danner Lower. After graduating from high school, she worked as a legal secretary before starting her family. She was a member of Trinity Church in Tamaqua. Marilyn loved painting and was a member of the “Pickering Picasso’s” and the Glastonbury Art Guild. She also enjoyed sewing, quilting and needlework, bird watching, decorating, holiday family gatherings, hot coffee, *Law & Order*, teddy bears, cooking, chocolate and her family and friends.

Mrs. Murphy is survived by her daughters, Patrice, and husband, David of Elverson, Tara and her husband, Greg of Portsmouth, RI; and by her sons, Michael and wife Susan of Hampstead, NC, and Gavin and his wife, Linda of Hebron. She is also survived by 10 grandchildren, Erica Turansky, Lauren Peterson, Matt and Nick Juselis, Brandon, Erin, Kathleen, Jake, Shannon and Dan Murphy, and great-grandchild, Nicholas Murphy.

In addition to her husband John, she is predeceased by her son, Johnny.

A memorial service and celebration of her life will take place at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 19, at the James J. Terry Funeral Home, 736 East Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA, where family and friends may call from 1-2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Southwest Indian Foundation, P.O. Box 86, 100 West Coal Ave., Gallup, NM 87301.

To send online condolences, visit www.jamesterryfuneralhome.com.

Andover

Walter G. Clark Jr.

Walter G. “Terry” Clark Jr., 63, of Andover, beloved husband of Theresa “Terry” (Bolen) Clark, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Sept. 8, at his home with his family by his side. Terry was born in Manchester Oct. 16, 1945, son of the late Walter G. Clark Sr. and the late Sedzel (Peterson) Goodman.

He resided in Andover for more than 35 years and was a lifetime member of the Andover Volunteer Fire Department. Terry was a self-employed expert cabinet maker and woodworker, and produced many quality projects until 1990 when he and his wife opened a porcelain doll studio, Reja Dolls, in Manchester, in which they shared many years working closely together every day. Most recently, he worked as a real estate agent at Welles Agency of Coventry.

Terry was a loving father and grandfather and a devoted husband. He enjoyed boating, skiing and road trips in his big purple bus. He was loved by all and will be deeply missed.

His family would like to thank the doctors, nurses and staff at UConn Health Center and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute for the compassionate care given to Terry.

In addition to his devoted wife, he is survived by his loving children, four sons, Dennis Clark and his wife, Debbi-Sue of Coventry, Christopher Clark and his wife, Lodamia of Storrs, Joshua Clark and Jordan Clark both of Andover, two daughters, Robyn Clark of Andover and Sarah Wierzbicki and her husband, Christopher of Coventry, seven loving grandchildren, Corey, Morgan, Avery, EmmaRaea, Madison, Genaro, Olivia, stepfather, A.T. Goodman, mother-in-law, Theresa Bolen, brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Tom and Linda Bolen and their families, many friends and his dog, Tucker.

He was also predeceased by his father-in-law, Henry Bolen.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Terry will be held Saturday, Sept. 12, at 10 a.m., at Church of the Holy Family Route 85, Hebron. (People attending the Funeral Mass are requested to go directly to the church.) Burial will follow in Townsend Cemetery, Andover. Family and friends may call today, Friday, Sept. 11, from 5-8 p.m., at Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105-1942.

For directions to the funeral home or to sign the online guest book, go to www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First, let’s start out with some good news: Socks is home.

In last week’s *Rivereast*, Michael McCoy had a story about an East Hampton kitten named Socks who had gone missing, apparently stolen during a home break-in.

The cat’s owner, Cheri Rivard-Lentz, was understandably devastated and, in addition to speaking with Michael for a story, also had a letter in last week’s paper.

Well, late last Thursday – after the paper had gone to press – Cheri called me with the good news: Socks had been found.

Cheri said she’d received a call that day from someone who said they’d found the cat. She called police, who went to the person’s home, retrieved her and brought her back to the police station, where Cheri identified her as her family’s precious Socks.

Aside from some flea and worm problems, Cheri said Socks was fine, although she admitted that she was pretty skittish when Cheri first got her back – which is understandable considering the kitten was not quite 12 weeks old when she disappeared, then went through who knows what for most of the next week, before police finally got her and brought her to the police station. It was surely a harrowing experience for the little kitten, and Cheri speculated Socks was “a little overwhelmed.”

But before long, Socks began getting back to normal. I spoke with Cheri earlier this week and she said the kitten is “like she was before.”

Cheri was very appreciative to everyone in East Hampton who helped out in the search for Socks, and the local businesses that let her put up fliers about Socks on their walls. In fact, Cheri said, as terrible as the burglary was, she’s also learned during the past week that “East Hampton is just a really great place to live.”

Cheri added that it was one of the fliers she put up that led to the call about Socks.

“One thing my kids learned is if you work hard enough and tried hard enough, even something that seems impossible, there’s a chance you might succeed,” Cheri said, adding later, “If I just stayed silent, and just told my closest friends and cried about it, she’d have never been found.”

But she was – and now Cheri’s family is whole again.

“I’m just so happy that she’s back, and my kids are so happy that she’s found,” Cheri said. “It just has a great ending.”

Now to something a little less pleasant. I have been absolutely appalled the past week or so by the reaction across the country to President Obama’s speech to school students. The speech was to deal with the oh-so-controversial topics of “study hard” and “stay in school.” And yet, people threw fits. Absolute fits. I was watching the news Monday night and saw a woman crying – literally *crying* – at the thought of her child being forced to watch the president of the United States speak.

What did people think big, bad Obama was going to say to their children? Florida GOP Chairman Jim Greer accused Obama of trying to “indoctrinate” children. He was quoted by CNN last week as saying that, as the father of four children he was “absolutely appalled that taxpayer dollars are being used to spread President Obama’s socialist ideology.” A parent in Texas was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying he’d rather keep his kids home from school rather than subject them to the speech, and said he didn’t want “our schools turned over to some socialist movement.”

Right. That was Obama’s plan, to spread his socialist agenda to a bunch of 12-year-olds. Do the people making these accusations realize how silly they sound?

The answer, of course, is no, and from sea to shining sea, people have been in an uproar. School superintendents across the country struggled with what to do and many – including, unfortunately, several in Connecticut – opted not to show it, some saying they’ll make a tape of the speech available for students to

borrow.

At least a tape will be available. But really, why not show it live? He’s the president of the United States. Does that mean a damn thing anymore?

More and more, the answer to that question, at least from some people in this country, seems to be “no.”

In a story in last week’s *New York Times* a Kansas City talk show host said, “I wouldn’t let my next-door neighbor talk to my kid alone; I’m sure as hell not letting Barack Obama talk to him alone.”

And that is perhaps the saddest thing about this whole flap over Obama’s back-to-school speech. When I was in school, classrooms frequently had giant posters, listing all the U.S. presidents. We were taught to respect them, both the past and the present ones, because, well, they were the president. That’s just what you did, if you were a kid in America.

But the message kids have been sent this week, through guys like Stigall and others is this: The president is an evil, evil man, and you shouldn’t even think about listening to his twisted, terrible thoughts – even if he claims they’re going to be about studying hard – as he will surely brainwash you.

Are presidents perfect? Hell no. And some do things less worthy of respect than others. But those are judgment calls us grown-ups should make. As a kid, it’s nice to have that innocent belief in something, and the president of the United States is not a bad figure to have an innocent belief in. It’s kind of sad to be seeing that shattered.

By the way, in case anyone’s wondering, Obama delivered his back-to-school speech Tuesday, and it contained such messages as, “Here in America, you write your own destiny, you make your own future” and “No one’s born being good at things; you become good at things through hard work.”

Oh, the horror. The horror.

As I’m sure you’ve been reminded at some point already, today is the eighth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. So it’s a fitting time to share a story I heard a couple of weeks ago, not long after Senator Ted Kennedy died.

Seeing as how the two flights that crashed into the World Trade Center towers were from Logan Airport in Boston, it’s not surprising there were 177 Massachusetts families that lost loved ones in the attacks. And, in the days immediately following Sept. 11, Kennedy called all 177, personally, and reached out to them, offered condolences, saw what he could do to help. Kennedy would contact all 177 of those families again each year that followed, on the anniversary of the attacks. Over the years, Kennedy even invited those families out to his home in Hyannis Port, MA.

That Kennedy personally contacted all 177 families was noteworthy enough, but that he kept on reaching out to them every year, and even invited them to his home, I found very touching, and a very kind gesture he didn’t have to make.

Look, Ted Kennedy was not a perfect man. I freely admit that. So did he, for that matter. But he did a lot of good for a lot of people – including those 9/11 families – and he truly will be missed.

I got a chuckle out of a headline I saw last week on Yahoo News. It read, “Guest: Mourners Wept at Jackson funeral.” Gee, people cried at a funeral. How shocking. Surely, there must’ve been a better headline that Yahoo could have employed. Even “Michael Jackson Funeral Coverage” would’ve worked. It would have been dry, but at least it wouldn’t have rated as highly on the “unintentional comedy” scale.

I mean, what’s next? “Man Full After Eating at Restaurant?”

See you next week.