

# News Bulletin

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Lara Brodick and her son Calvin are shown selling maple milk at last year's Hebron Maple Festival. The two-day event returns this weekend, March 20 and 21. The *RiverEast* has a special map in the center of this week's issue, outlining the various activities at the festival. Photo by Donna McCalla.

## After Slight Delay, Maple Fest Returns

by Lindsay Fetzner

From pancakes and pudding to milk and cotton candy, it's all about the syrup this weekend. Saturday, March 20, the first day of spring, marks the (delayed) start of the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Hebron Maple Festival – a smorgasbord of events for people of all ages to celebrate and rediscover the art of maple syrup production.

Although last weekend was slated to kick-start the festival, uncooperative weather was forecasted for the area – heavy rain and strong winds with temperatures hovering in the 40s. Wayne Palmer, organizer of this year's Maple Festival and owner of Winding Brook Sugar House, said postponing the festival has only happened once, which occurred over 10 years ago, making the decision this year "very difficult."

Palmer said the key to pulling off the festival this weekend was the "decision early in the week," which was made last Wednesday. This gave people time to "put the food into freezers" and make any further changes in their schedules necessary for the weekend. Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney said about 90 percent of the festival vendors were able to accommodate the postponement, with only a few that had to cancel.

Palmer said that in addition to the weather forecast, one of the factors taken into consideration was the potential liability that holding the festival last weekend posed. "It's usually breezy

in the town center on a good day," he said. With high winds and rain, Palmer said the chance for tarps flying around and tree limbs falling was a big risk and he did not want to see this happen.

Tierney agreed with Palmer. "It was a very good call," he said.

This weekend, several tree limbs came down and there was some flooding, Tierney reported. Recalling on last week's decision, Palmer said holding the festival a week ago "would not have fit anyone."

Although Board of Selectmen (BOS) Chair Jeff Watt said the weather has never deterred anyone from celebrating this yearly tradition, it is hoped that the weather forecast for this weekend will be more cooperative. As of press time, meteorologists from [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) forecasted partly cloudy for Saturday with highs in the upper-60s. Sunday, however, there is a chance for a few showers, but temperatures will be in the upper-50s to low-60s.

Tierney said on Tuesday that the forecast is calling for "wonderful weather" for the weekend. Watt agreed. He said this week that it was a "great move" to postpone the festival and he is very excited about the "warm, sunny weather" that looks to be heading this way over the weekend. "It's always been one of the great community events," said Watt earlier last week.

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## Colchester Resident Meets Movie Star

by Katy Nally

Colchester resident Emily Puscas has been beaming all week after experiencing a once in a lifetime opportunity Monday at her school, Saint Mary's College in Indiana.

Glenn Close, one of the most recognizable film, theatrical and television actresses in the nation, acted with, and coached, Puscas and six other theatre students as part of a master class.

"To be able to say that I worked with Glenn Close once upon a time and maybe even be able to say she thought I was funny would pretty much complete my acting goals for the time being," Puscas said before the event. "Opportunities like this one are life's little gifts that add sparkle to the everyday humdrum, that secure hope in the surprises that life holds."

Puscas, 20, is a junior at Saint Mary's, majoring in French and minoring in theater and music.

Close joined the seven students through the Margaret Hill endowment, which aims to bring "recognized talent" to the college, a press release said.

As part of the three-hour master class, Puscas said she performed a scene from the school's upcoming play *The Imaginary Invalid*. Puscas' role – that is, her two roles – is a maid who also pretends to be a man.

Close was on hand to give advice to the girls about changing a character or a voice. "It would

become very clear how we could make the scene better for the audience, or funnier," Puscas said. "I feel like I had a stronger character come out of it."

Puscas and two other students acted out their roles for *The Imaginary Invalid*, and the remaining four girls performed individual monologues. These four had to audition for the opportunity to work with Close, Puscas said.

"It is very rare for a school of our size to be able to give students the opportunity to be in contact with artists of the stature of Glenn Close," Saint Mary's theatre professor Mark Abram-Copenhaver said in a press release.

"This is an opportunity that these students may never have again in their lives," Abram-Copenhaver continued. "...And then to be able to sit down with her and to ask questions about the art and business of making films, plays and television is just over the top."

Close won two Emmy Awards for Best Actress in the television show *Damages*. Puscas said she remembers her mostly from her role of Cruella Deville in *101 Dalmatians*.

After the coaching class, Close and more theatre students went to lunch. Puscas said this was her favorite part of the day because she and Close talked about growing up in Connecticut (the actress is originally from Greenwich) and had a chance to be "goofy" together. "It

See Movie Star on Page 2



Colchester resident Emily Puscas learned from one of the best Monday when she worked with actress Glenn Close through a program at her school Saint Mary's College in Indiana.

### Maple Fest cont. from Front Page

“People come from all over the state- even out of state.”

Despite the fact that most of the events were put on hold for a week, two events scheduled for last weekend did still occur. They included the Douglas Library book sale on Saturday and Sunday as well as the craft fair on Saturday at Gilead Congregational Church. Palmer said the library and the church chose to still host the events because of logistics within the individual organizations.

The schedule for this weekend is quite packed, with over 40 events taking place over the course of the two days. Four local sugar houses take part in the festival each year, including the Wenzel, Woody Acres, Winding Brook and Pierce Sugar Houses. Self-tours, demonstrations and the ins and outs of syrup productions will take place on both Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the respective houses. Maple products including syrup, which is sold all year long, will be available for purchase.

Back in the center of town, visitors to the festival can choose between tempting maple cotton candy, hot grilled maple ham and cheese sandwiches, sweet maple cookies and homemade maple cake with a dash of ice cream.

But the fun doesn't stop there. The Hebron Historical Society has joined forces to present the 21st annual historical quilt exhibition at the Old Town Hall, put on by Nathalie Peltier-Horton. The theme for this year is “Quilting for Those We Love.” Historical Society President Donna McCalla said in the past, the exhibition has offered the public “an unbelievable display” with “well over 100 quilts.” McCalla said viewing the quilts is truly a learning experience. A teacup auction will also be hosted by the historical society, where basket items will be raffled off. A bake sale offering goods all made with maple syrup from local residents will take place all weekend long. “We're really excited,” McCalla said. “We've got so much going on.”

For those who decide to attend the festival on Saturday, two of Hebron's school houses will be open to the public. Gull School House and the oldest school house in town, Burrows Hill School House, will be open for touring. From 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturday, the Old Town Pound will feature a live petting zoo with the infamous jumping goats. “People were really excited,” McCalla said about last year's attendees. “So many people came.”

A festival favorite, icy maple milk, will be on sale in front of the Old Town Hall. The milk, a concoction of whole milk, syrup and ingredients from the “secret family recipe,” has been sold for over a decade. But hurry in to get your glass of this sweet treat, as McCalla said it goes fast and “is good.”

But producing syrup isn't always as sweet as it may seem. Palmer said this year's syrup production is not off to a great start. Palmer is a bit of a veteran, as he has been in the business for approximately 12 years and his family, for four generations. For optimum production, the weather needs to lend itself to cold nights with temperatures in the 20s and warm days in the 40s with strong sun and no wind. However, Palmer said the weather cycle for this year has gotten too warm too fast and recent cold temperatures have not helped either.

Local producers are hard at work this time of year. The season begins in early February and runs until late March, spanning an average of only four to six weeks. Palmer, who was boiling syrup when reached by phone, said the amount of fuel burning this year is “tremendous.” According to the Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut, Inc., it takes between 30 and 40 gallons of maple sap to make just one gallon of pure maple syrup. This year, Palmer said the ratio, which typically is 40:1, is hovering around 60-65:1.

Despite the current syrup production conditions producers are up against, Palmer is optimistic about this weekend. “It's good to see all the enjoyment” the weekend brings to town, Palmer said, “and is a great educational event.”

Palmer said, “it brings a lot of joy to the families and I am happy that I am able to put time into it.”

The Winding Brook Sugar House will not be open during the festival. Palmer will be present in the center of town on Main Street to demonstrate the basics of backyard sugaring. Palmer said he breaks the process down to visitors and explains the how-to in “making a gallon with the kids.” Palmer said many people have returned the following year with questions, often ones directed at problems they've experienced while trying to produce the syrup. “It is a time for us to show our craft off,” he said.

Although most of the events planned for the festival are a continuation of past events, Palmer said there are some newcomers to the Maple Festival this year. An introduction to African rhythm on Sunday, sponsored by AHM Youth Services and an awareness program on the Asian Longhorned Beetle, put on by the State of Connecticut, are among the highlights. “The beetles are affecting Worcester right now and devastating everything,” Palmer said. The program is “very important” and a must-see, he said.

Other highlights for the weekend include pony rides and a bounce house at the Tae San Taekwondo Academy on Sunday. A wood turning and wood working demonstration at Country Carpenters Inc as well as an appearance from the Task – 9 search and rescue dog at Mawson Chiropractic will take place on both Saturday and Sunday as well.

If your stomach is still rumbling after enjoying a hearty pancake breakfast at RHAM High School from the Hebron Lions Club and a tall glass of sweet maple milk from the historical society, an ice cream eating contest is taking place at 1 p.m. on Saturday at Ted's Supermarket. To top it all off, the Girl Scouts will sell cookies both days at two locations - in the Subway Plaza and at Country Side Realty. The Cub Scouts will be selling s'mores outside Subway on Saturday and Sunday.

As the annual Maple Festival draws to a close Sunday afternoon and the crowds retreat out of town, Palmer said he will already be thinking about next year's festival. “It's a year-long event,” he said. “We don't take much time off.” Palmer said that before Labor Day comes around, the committee is well into planning for that year's celebration. He referred to it as bittersweet and a big undertaking, but a unique opportunity for Hebron's businesses to showcase themselves. It is a chance, Palmer said, for them to say, “this is who we are.”

### Movie Star cont. from Front Page

was kind of like a bonding moment with a famous celebrity,” Puscas said. “She was a really normal person.”

Before meeting Close, Puscas said she thought the decorated actress might be intimidating, and envisioned her to be literally larger than life. But after spending the day together, Puscas said she realized Close was simply a “sweet lady.”

Puscas even witnessed Close's own bout with nervousness, when she went on stage to speak before 1,300 people for a seminar at the college. Puscas said Close asked the theater students to sit in the front row so she would be able to see familiar faces looking back. Puscas said Close was “absolutely terrified” because she had never spoke at a college seminar. “She seemed like she knew exactly what she was doing,” Puscas said.

Saint Mary's director of media relations, Gwen O'Brien, said Close talked about the inspirations and motivations that propelled her throughout her life. She focused on the people who “whispered in her ear” and gave her direction and advice, O'Brien said.

Some of that advice fortunately spilled over

to the theater students. Puscas said she found Close's words about acting “encouraging.” She said Close advocated not being afraid to “make bold choices,” and to be true to oneself and not seek out Hollywood glory.

Puscas said she would like to act professionally at some point during her life. “After college is a good time to get into it,” she said. Acting for her builds confidence and she called it something that is “always new and exciting.”

The theater students also had the chance to give Close a tour of their campus and tag along on a press conference, Puscas said.

“By the end of the day she was calling them her girls,” O'Brien said.

When asked what she thought it would be like to meet Close, before Monday's session, Puscas said she would probably have a “toothy grin plastered across my face for at least a couple of days that will be hard to erase.” She said any of her expectations were far surpassed, adding “it was really special for me.”

Indeed, a few days later that peachy smile remains, Puscas said, because meeting Close was everything she thought it could be.

# Peszynski Family Collecting Recipes for East Hampton Cookbook

by Claire Michalewicz

Sandy Peszynski loved to cook, and her family and friends looked forward to the creations she made in her kitchen. Now, nearly three years after her death, her family is putting together a community cookbook to raise money for breast cancer research.

The Sandy Peszynski Breast Cancer Foundation, established and run by Sandy's family, has already raised about \$37,000 from the Pumpkintown Prom and other fundraisers. The Peszynski family runs the foundation out of Paul's and Sandy's Too, their longtime business.

Peszynski's daughter, Karen Clark, said she was inspired to create the cookbook after going through her mother's recipes.

“She was a phenomenal cook,” Karen said of her mother. She said she was considering making a cookbook of her mother's recipes for family and friends, but her friends encouraged her to turn it into a community project and fundraiser.

Karen included one of her personal favorite recipes: Sandy's cheesecake. Sandy would make them for the holidays and distribute them to people she knew.

So far, Karen has received about 95 recipes, sorted into several different categories. She's anticipating filling a 150-page book. She plans to put together a second volume, but she's not yet sure when.

Karen said she's surprised by the interest that people have shown in her cookbook.

“It definitely exceeds my expectations,” she said of the submissions she's received.

Members of Sandy's high school class, the East Hampton High School Class of 1960, submitted recipes, and Karen gave them their own section in the cookbook.

Sandy's husband, Paul Peszynski, said the cookbook was an appropriate tribute because cooking was one of Sandy's favorite activities. She was known for many of her recipes, Paul said, and he talked about some of his favorites,

including her spaghetti sauce.

A few weeks before she died, Paul recounted, Sandy made the sauce one last time. Paul stood beside her and wrote down what she did. Since then, he said, he's made it a few times.

“It's almost as good as hers,” Paul said of his cooking efforts, adding that he isn't much of a cook and Sandy taught him everything he knows.

Sandy loved baking, Paul said, and she would often make pies for friends and family. When she was going to Hartford Hospital and Middlesex Hospital for cancer treatments, Sandy would bring batches of homemade chocolate chip cookies for the doctors and nurses. Paul said he and Sandy grew very close to the hospital staffs, who loved the cookies.

Paul explained that his family was in an ideal situation for raising money, since his business is so well-known in the area. He said East Hampton residents had been extremely supportive of the foundation, and he had noticed a lot

of longtime customers coming into the store with their contributions.

“We're a close town,” Peszynski said. “The cookbook, I think, is going to be a big success.”

All proceeds from the Sandy Peszynski Breast Cancer Foundation go to the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center and the Hartford Hospital Partnership for Breast Care. Peszynski stressed that while many foundations use much of their funds for administrative costs, his family runs the foundation by itself to avoid overhead expenses and keep the money going toward research.

“The difference is that every dollar goes to help people in our area,” Paul said.

The cookbooks will be on sale at Paul's and Sandy's Too and Angelico's Lakehouse before Mother's Day. They will cost \$20 each.

Clark is collecting recipes through early April. Anyone who has any questions, or who wants to contribute a recipe can e-mail her at [karen@spbfc.com](mailto:karen@spbfc.com).



There was a “ghost hunt dinner” at Marlborough Tavern last Saturday night. Attendees also got to hear recordings of ghosts that had allegedly been discovered at the tavern. In the left photo, Sarah Puziak, left, and Millie Victor attended the ghost hunt dinner and listened to recordings of ghosts discovered at the Marlborough Tavern. In the right photo, Ketevan Kuprashvili gestures to the spot – and pointing out an orb – where she says ghosts of Revolutionary War soldiers have been sighted at the tavern.



## Tavern Ghost Sightings Detailed at Dinner in Marlborough

by Katy Nally

The third floor of the Marlborough Tavern was a chilly 30 degrees on Saturday, Feb. 27, when ghost hunters investigated the 270-year-old restaurant.

The investigators from the Connecticut Ghost Hunters Society (CTGHS) said the attic should have been at least as warm as the other floors (which both measured 55 degrees), if not warmer, as heat usually rises.

Maybe it was a coincidence, but much of the paranormal activity took place on the third floor that night.

CTGHS founder Mike Lamb spoke to Marlborough Tavern patrons last Saturday night, March 13, and revealed the ghost hunt findings during a dinner.

While investigating the third floor Lamb said he was temporarily blinded by a bright flash of “whitish-blue” light that lasted about two seconds. The room was dark at the time and Lamb thought perhaps the light was caused by his camera. But he soon discovered his camera was zipped tightly in his bag.

Lamb said Saturday night this type of activity has never occurred during another investigation.

“It was the only floor I felt weird on,” Lamb said.

The third floor also happens to be where prisoners traveling to New Gate Prison were locked in a holding cell as their caretakers rested.

But the bright flash was only the tip of the ghostly iceberg at the tavern. Lamb also wowed the audience with his photos and audio recordings taken the on the 27th.

Two recordings were directed at someone named “Walsh.” Lamb told diners he and his team thought the first voice said “Walsh got killed,” but the second voice was the showstopper. In a deep bellow, a scratchy recording of “Hang Walsh” came through. There were audible gasps from the approximate 45

people in the audience. “Oh my God” and “wow” circled the dining room.

Lamb and his crew of about 10 came to the tavern in February and investigated from 10 p.m.-1 a.m. They used standard digital cameras, voice recorders, electromagnetic field readers, ghost boxes, and something called a Ghostly image Projector (GiP).

The GiP involves a television and a video camera, but Lamb was hesitant to release details on how it works, because the device is not used by other Connecticut ghost hunters, he said.

Lamb displayed several freeze-frame photos of faces taken from a GiP session. “I don’t know who they are, but they were having conversations with each other,” Lamb said.

When the photos went up, Marlborough Tavern guests gestured and pointed, trying to make out faces from the greenish-grey pictures. One depicted a horse, which Lamb said was his first encounter with an animal ghost.

Later, when another electronic voice phenomenon recording was played, several people in the audience swore they heard a horse whinnying. But this was not a surprise to some diners, who had heard rumors that an employee claimed to have seen a horse’s ghost inside Marlborough Tavern.

Other regular photographs depicted orbs floating throughout the restaurant. Lamb explained orbs can represent “balls of energy” in which ghosts manifest, but other times the mark on a picture can be caused by dust or light. Lamb showed the audience what an orb caused by dust or light looked like, versus what he considered to be energy. “When it comes to orbs, a lot of people could be skeptical,” Lamb said.

In a room where patrons reported seeing Revolutionary War soldiers, Lamb and his crew showed the audience a photograph of an orb

floating above the dining tables. He showed another photograph of the same room, and the orb had moved.

Besides the third floor, Lamb and his fellow ghost hunters also recorded electronic voice phenomena in the basement. During the investigation, one CTGHS member asked out loud “Are you the previous owner?” and he received two responses. The first began with a deep laugh and “Not me” followed. The second was taken from the other side of the room and a “yes” was recorded.

Another voice from the basement was recorded as asking “What are you doing behind the wall?”

Several dinner attendees said they were impressed by the findings, but not surprised. “Many different people have heard different things,” Jim Musco of Norwich said. Musco has visited Marlborough Tavern on several occasions and said every time he sits near a particular window in the corner of the Jackson Room, and the light above his table flickers.

“I believe there is always somebody trying to break through to the other side,” Musco said.

Millie Victor of East Hartford and her daughter Sarah Puziak of Enfield said they too enjoyed the ghost dinner. Puziak said she thought the electronic voice phenomena was “convincing.”

The two women are also not strangers to the paranormal. Victor said she, and others, regularly hear 1920s music or a piano playing in her East Hartford home. “It sounds like they’re partying,” she said.

Overall, Lamb said CTGHS found “a lot” of evidence from the Marlborough Tavern investigation. He concluded the ghosts in the restaurant were classified as residual hauntings, which are spirits who relive the same moment over and over, he said. This is different from

intelligent hauntings, which come and go through different locations, according to Lamb. “They think they’re back in their own time,” he said about the tavern ghosts. “They weren’t trying to get our attention.”

According to Marlborough Tavern owner John Spellman, the first record of the building appears on a land deed from 1740. Because the tavern is positioned between Hartford and New London, Spellman said it acted as a pit stop for inmates traveling to New Gate Prison in East Granby and also as a religious haven.

“From 1740 to 2010, there have been many, many events that have happened in this building,” Spellman said. “Luckily they found a lot of stuff.”

The tavern was also the home of the Buell family, whose members were active in the military during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, CTGHS said. Mary Hall, who was Connecticut’s first woman attorney, also called the tavern home, the organization said.

CTGHS investigations aim to collect evidence of the paranormal. Lamb said he and his crew usually enter a site with the notion that the area is not haunted. He said at first, he was skeptical the Marlborough Tavern investigation would even yield any results, but he soon found out his perception was way off.

For more information about CTGHS visit [www.ConnecticutGhostHuntersSociety.com](http://www.ConnecticutGhostHuntersSociety.com). For information about the Marlborough Tavern, visit [www.theMarlboroughTavern.com](http://www.theMarlboroughTavern.com), or call 860-295-8229. The restaurant is located at 3-5 East Hampton Rd.

Other ghost hunt dinners will be held at the tavern on Saturday, March 27, April 24 and May 8. (Only tickets for the May 8 dinner are still available; all others have been sold.) Diners can choose from the regular menu or from a \$20 fixed meal.

### Portland Police Rescue Woman From River

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland Police rescued a woman from the Connecticut River after she jumped from the Arrigoni Bridge on Monday evening.

Around 6:30 p.m., passing motorists called Portland and Middletown police to report a woman discarding clothing on the bridge, Portland Police Officer Michael Fitzpatrick said.

When police arrived at the bridge, the woman had already jumped. Another officer

on the nearby railroad bridge spotted the woman swimming in the water, Fitzpatrick said.

Officers treated the woman for hypothermia until paramedics arrived. She was transported to Middlesex Hospital, Fitzpatrick said.

Fitzpatrick said the police often receive calls about people who threaten to jump, but this was the first jump on the Portland side of the river in over a year.

# Three Charged in January Assault in Marlborough

by Katy Nally

Three siblings turned themselves in to Troop K Monday, March 15, for an incident that occurred in early January and left one 20-year-old man with two skull fractures, injuries to his left arm and a damaged BMW.

Adam and Danielle Napolitano, 22 and 21, respectively, both of 121 Ogden Lord Rd., along with their brother Richard, 23, of 141 Cornwall Dr., Coventry, incurred first-degree assault and conspiracy to commit first-degree assault charges. Adam and Richard Napolitano were also charged with first-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

Matthew Remillard, 23, of 114A Ambassador Dr., Manchester, was also involved and arrested at the scene on Jan. 5. He was charged with breach of peace, first-degree criminal mischief and second-degree assault, State Police said.

According to an affidavit on file at Manchester Superior Court, Danielle Napolitano invited Remillard over to her house on Ogden Lord Road for dinner at about 8 p.m. on the night of Jan. 5.

Danielle Napolitano's ex-boyfriend said he saw Remillard's car and followed Remillard to her house, the affidavit said. According to Danielle Napolitano, her ex-boyfriend has been following her since the couple broke up last November. She said in the affidavit she is also in the process of obtaining a restraining order

against him.

When her ex-boyfriend was there, he said he asked Danielle Napolitano what she and Remillard were doing together, and soon a fistfight ensued, the affidavit said. Both Remillard and the ex-boyfriend said they punched each other.

According to the affidavit, Remillard's left eye was bruised and swollen, as well as his left hand, and there was dried blood on his left ear.

Soon the ex-boyfriend left and, according to the affidavit he said he received a text message from Danielle Napolitano asking him to return to the Ogden Lord Road home. Danielle Napolitano does not mention texting her ex-boyfriend in the affidavit and said she took a shower just after her ex-boyfriend left the house.

But, according to the ex-boyfriend's phone records, he received three text messages and sent four to Danielle Napolitano's cell phone between 8:33-8:39 p.m., the affidavit said.

The ex-boyfriend returned and said when he entered the house for a second time, he was hit in the face with a baseball bat, the affidavit said. He said Remillard was using the bat and hit him in the face and left arm, the affidavit said. He claimed both Adam and Richard Napolitano punched him in the face.

Remillard said he did not hit the ex-boyfriend with a baseball bat, but said he did punch him. He noted that he was a boxer and could throw a

"solid punch," the affidavit said.

Adam and Richard Napolitano said they were home at the time of the assault, but were uninvolved. Adam Napolitano said he "heard a scuffle" but did not "see anything," the affidavit said. Richard Napolitano said he was upstairs at the time and heard something downstairs, but was "not sure what had happened," according to the affidavit.

As the ex-boyfriend ran to his car, he said Remillard and the Napolitano brothers followed him to the driveway and Remillard began to attack his 2007 BMW, the affidavit said.

According to the ex-boyfriend, Remillard smashed the windshield and sunroof with the aluminum baseball bat, and was also trying to hit him, the affidavit said. He said Richard Napolitano was kicking and punching him on the side of his face and Adam Napolitano was pounding on the windows and car doors.

Before he left, the ex-boyfriend said Remillard demanded his cell phone and earrings and threatened his family if the police were called, the affidavit said.

Remillard said he, Adam and Richard Napolitano all hit the BMW with the bat, the affidavit said. But neither Adam nor Richard make any mention of assaulting the ex-boyfriend or damaging the car, according to the affidavit.

An officer who investigated the case counted 12 indentations on the BMW that "were clearly caused by a baseball bat," the affidavit said. The estimated cost of the damage is in excess of \$15,000, according to the affidavit.

There was also evidence of a disturbance in the front hallway of the home on Ogden Lord Road. The affidavit said there was "shattered glass and a small amount of blood on the floor." Closet doors also appeared to be damaged and off track, the affidavit said.

As a result of that night, the ex-boyfriend incurred two skull fractures, multiple fractures to his left eye socket and his left hand/wrist, the affidavit said. In total he has 100 stitches across his head from ear to ear, seven plates and 30 screws in his head and one plate and eight screws in his left hand. He also now has double vision in his left eye and no feeling in his forehead, the affidavit said.

Danielle Napolitano had a court date of Tuesday, March 16 in Manchester, and was released on a \$5,000 bond. According to the judicial website, only the conspiracy to commit first-degree assault charge is listed.

Adam and Richard Napolitano both have court dates of March 26 and were released on a bond of \$5,000 each, State Police said.

Remillard's next court date is March 23 in Manchester.

# Golden Talks School Budget with Hebron Finance Board

by Claire Michalewicz

Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden presented her plans for the Board of Education's 2010-11 budget to the Board of Finance (BOF) at a budget workshop last Friday, March 12.

Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe's proposed budget allotted the Board of Education (BOE) \$200,000 less than what they had requested. At the budget workshop, Golden outlined how the school system would handle those reductions if the town budget does not change.

"We'll look at all our staff and see what we can live without," she said.

The BOE passed a budget with a 3.88 percent increase in February, but O'Keefe has recommended only a 3.08 increase. Golden explained that the 3.88 percent increase was already a decrease in service from the current school year. The schools were losing two certified teacher positions and one paraprofessional position. Health care costs were also decreasing. To maintain the current level of service, Golden said, the budget would have to increase by 5.66 percent.

The \$200,000 reduction, Golden explained, is the equivalent of 6.35 teachers. Golden

stressed that she would not necessarily lay off that many employees, but said teachers were the best way to quantify the cuts the district would make.

"The vast majority now would have to come out of staffing, because we've nicked away at everything else," she said.

Golden said the BOE had actually reduced costs in the past few years by hiring more teachers and bringing many special education students back into the district from out-of-town facilities. The cost of increasing special education programs in East Hampton, she said, is less than the cost of tuition to outplace the students.

Still, Golden said, special education costs were an ongoing concern, since reimbursement from the state may decrease in the future. In addition, the school system is grappling with repair costs for aging facilities and increasing health care costs.

Golden assured the Board of Finance that the school system could manage without the money, though they would have to make cuts somewhere.

"There are still so many things in the works that that amount of money is not going to make or break us," she said.

Golden explained that the BOE was currently in informal talks to renegotiate the teachers' contracts. The board is also working with other unions, such as the custodians, she added. Golden stressed that she is not currently allowed to talk about the contracts.

The BOE had offered an early retirement package, but they needed 10 employees to volunteer for it for the program to work. Only four teachers had offered to take the package, Golden explained. The board wants to keep two of them, but the other two will be retiring.

"I know it's tough," said BOF member Matthew Walton. "And we're faced with a tough position, too. I can assure you I'm not sleeping at night."

BOF member Patience Anderson questioned whether the town should raise taxes to fund the full amount that the BOE wanted.

"That money that you're spending is coming from people's pockets," Anderson said. She

added that her remark was aimed at all of the town's expenditures, not just at the school system. Anderson also questioned the way that Golden had quantified the \$200,000 as 6.35 teachers, calling it "alarming."

Golden responded that she was trying to be accurate, since any potential cuts would most likely come from staff.

"Remember, I'm an optimist," Golden said. "But we need you to be patient with us."

"That's my name," Anderson responded, lifting her nameplate from the table.

Golden ended her presentation with an appeal to the BOF to consider the teachers and students before making any cuts.

"I would ask everyone to think about our teachers as people who really care about our children, and who are really grappling with this issue," Golden said.

The BOF will hold a special meeting at the high school auditorium on Tuesday, March 23, at 7:30 p.m. Board members will continue their budget deliberations and take input from the public and other town boards and committees.

# Nichols Explains Bus Safety Record to Portland BOE

by Claire Michalewicz

School bus safety dominated the discussion at the Board of Education (BOE) meeting on Tuesday evening, with representatives from Nichols Bus Company explaining their safety record to the BOE.

The week before, *The Hartford Courant* posted bus safety records on its website, and Nichols had received the third highest number of violations.

"We were very surprised by the [*Courant*] article," said Marie Nichols, speaking on behalf of the company. She explained that many of the violations were minor things, like heaters that only worked on some settings.

"I don't feel there's any major defects," Nichols said.

Ed Thompson, who is in charge of safety at the bus company, explained that the *Courant's* listing of "out of service violations" was misleading. An out-of-service violation, Thompson explained, could be a minor thing like a light bulb that needed to be changed. The bus would be listed as out of service, but the database would not explain that the bus was back in service only a few minutes later.

Nichols explained that the Department of Motor Vehicles inspects the buses once a year, and Nichols Bus Company inspected them once every 2,000 miles or every 90 days. In addition, she said, bus drivers are required to inspect the exterior of the bus every morning.

"It's actually pretty good in terms of major

violations," said BOE member Benjamin Srb. Srb said he had checked the safety records of several other bus companies, who had brake problems among their violations. Nichols' buses, he said, didn't have any violations that serious.

"If there's a way to be happy about any violation, I was happy about the violations you had," Srb continued.

BOE Chairman Christopher Phelps requested that Nichols send him copies of the bus safety reports over the past three years, so the BOE could identify ongoing issues with the buses and schedule a follow-up conversation.

"The goal is to make sure all our kids are put on safe buses," Phelps said.

Also Tuesday, the BOE voted unanimously to move the high school graduation ceremony from the Town Hall green to the Portland High School soccer field. Several members of the Class of 2010 came to the meeting to answer logistical questions about the ceremony. Class President Keenan Kelley presented a petition that over half of the senior class had signed at lunch in just one day. In the petition, students said they were willing to help set up chairs for the ceremony.

The BOE also approved three grants, including two Gildersleeve Grants for Gildersleeve School. The grants would include additional vocabulary and spelling curriculum that would make it easier for students who progress past

their grade level.

The second grant would buy Kindle e-readers for the school. The 60 Kindles would be rotated between third and fourth-grade students for guided reading exercises.

Gildersleeve Principal Eileen Katz explained that the e-readers would be important in helping students learn about technology, and that the devices have features, like a built-in dictionary, that would help beginning readers.

Katz assured the BOE that the Kindles would not replace physical books in the classroom.

"I'm still a big believer that students need that visceral experience of a written page," she said.

Some BOE members expressed their reservations about purchasing Kindles. Andrea Alfano asked Katz if there was any proof that the devices would be useful to elementary school students, and also said that she was worried about long-term costs for the district. MaryAnne Rode said that the district would probably have to buy more in the future, as parents and teachers at other schools decide that they want them for their students.

But despite reservations, the BOE approved the grant.

"The whole purpose of the Gildersleeve Grants is to fund things that help students that could not possibly come out of the Board of Education budget," Phelps said.

The BOE also approved a grant for a program called Rachel's Challenge for students at Brownstone School, the middle school and the high school. Named for Rachel Scott, who was killed in the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, the program encourages acts of kindness among students.

"There's a lot of bullying," said eighth-grade student Andrew Donahue. "We believe Rachel's Challenge will help people be kinder to each other."

The BOE also discussed the Open Choice program, which brought 12 students from Hartford to Portland schools this year. Katz and Valley View School Principal Debby Graner explained that the program had been very successful, with the Hartford students and their parents fully integrating into the community. Both principals noted that the students' academic performance had improved throughout the year.

"They're really part of the fabric of our school," Katz said.

The BOE was scheduled to vote on opening four new places for the Open Choice next year, but postponed the vote until the next meeting because BOE member Christopher Bongo was absent.

The next BOE meeting will be held Tuesday, April 6, at 7 p.m. in the high school library.

# Local Hebron Teen a Star on the Slopes

by Lindsay Fetzner

When he was just 2 years old, Tyler Wadhams tested his luck at skiing for the first time. At 9, he entered his first competition. Now, at 16, the Hebron resident is ranked number seven overall in the United States in dual moguls for athletes age 18 and under.

Tyler's mom, Donna Wadhams, said skiing has always been "a part of our life." Donna and her husband Jim met while they were skiing and described the sport as "both of our passions." After Tyler was born, Donna said, "we couldn't wait" to put a pair of skies on her son and teach him the sport. The Wadhams own property in Killington, VT, where Tyler and the family spent just about every weekend skiing. "Tyler was born in December," Donna said. "And in February, we went back up."

Tyler's uncle, Mark Schnee, said both of Tyler's parents are superb skiers and have encouraged Tyler over the years. "He is totally committed to skiing," he said. "And has been since he was very young." The Burlington resident said he attends his nephew's competitions as much as he can. Just a few weeks ago, Schnee traveled to Stratton, VT, to watch Tyler compete. "It was very exciting," he said. "Being an intermediate skier myself, I look at him and I'm amazed."

Although Tyler never enrolled in any formal training or program to learn to ski, his mother was a major source of instruction in her son's life. When Tyler turned 7, Donna became his freestyle coach for seven years in Killington. "It was neat," she said. "I was there as a mom and a coach." Tyler's family has always been a significant part of his life, especially when it comes to skiing.

"We're really just rooting him on," Schnee said. Tyler's younger brother Zachary, 13, also competes and is following in his brother's footsteps. Zachary has taken to the podium a few times in competition, Donna said, and referred to him as a "little fireball."

Tyler's first competition took place in Stratton in 2003. Since that time, Stratton has held a special place in Tyler's heart, marking the place of many of his wins. He placed seventh out of 27 in the B division at that first competition and three years later, at age 12 he won his first competition. At 13, Tyler again won at Stratton, paving the way for his continued success in the sport.

The A and B division are two classifications used to distinguish athletes in the Eastern region, Donna said. The B division typically includes athletes aged six to 17, and are further classified within those age brackets. (For example, the M5 group includes athletes aged 9 to ten, which Tyler was apart of when he placed seventh in his first competition at Stratton.) The A division is comprised of athletes aged 12 and above who have shown exceptional skill in the sport, and have moved up in rank to the B division.

At age 14, Tyler progressed to the A division, Donna said, after four years on the B division (he joined at age 9). His first year, he placed third overall at the competitions held in Stratton. "Even to be in the top 10 at age 14 was amazing," Donna said.

Tyler later went on to qualify for the Eastern Championships and for the Junior Olympics,

for athletes age 18 and under, held in Steamboat Springs, CO. So far, Tyler has competed in the Junior Olympics three times - at age 14, 15 and most recently at 16. Tyler also qualified for the 2009 Sprint US Freestyle Championships last year on the wild card at age 15, which is awarded to the highest finisher who has not qualified off of the point list.

This year, Tyler qualified to compete in the NorAm competition, which is held in both the US (Lake Placid and Killington) and in Canada every year. Twenty-five Americans are invited to participate when in the US and 20 when it's held in Canada. Competitors from Korea, Japan and Australia also took part in the event last month. When Tyler attended in Lake Placid, NY, on Jan. 29 and 30 of this year, he placed 17th overall on the first day and 28th on the second day, out of a total of 77 participants. "It was phenomenal," Donna said.

Then, in February, Tyler competed in The Killington NorAm competition. Although Tyler did not qualify on Friday, Feb. 5, he competed the next day in the dual moguls after a US Ski Team member became injured. Tyler placed 14th overall at the end of the event.

Last weekend, Tyler competed in the Freestyle Junior Olympics in Waterville Valley, NH. The top 50 single mogul skiers and top 50 dual mogul skiers qualify for the event, in addition to the combined skiers (halfpipe, slopestyle, aeriels, dual moguls and single moguls). There were also 18 male combined skiers, for a total of 68 competitors in the competition. The dual mogul event was cancelled because of heavy fog. "You couldn't see your hand in front of you," Donna said. Although Tyler was unable to compete in the duals, he was able to contend in the single moguls.

Donna explained that the US Ski Team is made up of 12 males and 12 females. The team is broken down into the A, B and C team, which consists of four females and four males each. The development team is not a part of the actual ski team, but sometimes get involved in the same competitions as the team at the NorAm level. Donna said members of the development team are working to get closer to earning a spot on the US Ski Team. Currently, Tyler is working toward a spot on the development team. "It's like a stepping stone," she said.

Tyler is currently a junior at Killington Mountain School (KMS) in Killington, VT, where both athletics and academics are given strong emphasis. He has been attending KMS for three years. "It gets pretty hectic," he said. "When you're trying to ski and go to school in the same day, it can get pretty hard."

Tyler said on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, he skies in the morning from 9-12 p.m. After lunch, he attends school from 1-5 p.m. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, Tyler attends classes from 8-12 p.m., skies from 1-4 p.m. and has workout throughout the remainder of the day for about two hours.

"It is a very grueling and committed schedule," Donna said.

From the end of August until the end of October, Tyler attends RHAM High School. From early November until April, Tyler is in Killington at KMS. On April 5, Tyler will return back to RHAM for the remainder of the



**Tyler Wadhams competed in the single qualifying run for dual moguls at the Killington NorAm competition on Feb. 6 in Killington, VT. Wadhams placed 14th in the event.**

school year.

Tyler said one of the best aspects of his skiing career thus far has been the trips he has taken with the KMS ski team. "We are just so close," he said. "And I only see them five months out of the year."

Donna and Tyler both credited teachers at RHAM and KMS for his continued success in academics. "My teachers want to make sure I am on track, or maybe even ahead," Tyler said. Donna said Tyler's teachers at both RHAM and KMS are in contact on a weekly or even daily basis.

The transition from RHAM to KMS and back in the spring can be tough, Tyler said, but he tries to keep in contact with his friends back home every now and then. "When I get back (to RHAM), it's almost as if I've never been gone." When Tyler returns to Hebron, he said he is on a strict schedule to stay in shape and stay fit for upcoming competitions. "When I am not skiing, I go to the gym and work out."

This past summer, Tyler said, he worked a summer job, which added more to his plate, already teeming with an abundance of activities. Tyler was invited to compete in the National Championships in Australia during the month of August. Unfortunately, because of finances, he was not able to attend, Donna said. But, Tyler is currently looking for sponsorships in order to attend future competitions that may be out of reach financially.

This past Thanksgiving, Tyler and three other members from the KMS went to Vail, CO, for one week to train alongside the US Ski Team. Donna said this was an incredible opportunity for Tyler to train side by side with these elite athletes. This summer, Tyler said he would like to travel to Lake Placid, NY, which is home to a water ramp facility, to practice his maneu-

vers. He also mentioned the summer glacier camp at Whistler, which was one of the sites of the recent 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

Whistler holds camp during the month of July in British Columbia, which Tyler has attended before, two years in a row. When he was age 13 and 14, he qualified his back flip, Donna said. Athletes must first qualify in the water before qualifying in the snow. "I am always shooting to be better," he said. Schnee agreed, and noted that "developmentally, he is always looking to improve."

The last competition for the 2009-10 season will be the 2010 Sprint US Freestyle Championships in Squaw Valley, CA. Single moguls will take place on March 26 and dual moguls on March 28. At Squaw Valley, the top 50 athletes in the United States are invited, some of which are from the US Ski Team. Tyler is excited for the championships and looks forward to competing. He said overall, "it has been a great season thus far."

As for the future, Tyler has his eye on Westminster, a private, liberal arts college in Salt Lake City, UT. Through the Westminster College/USSA tuition grant program, all A, B and C US Ski Team or Snowboard Team athletes who qualify attend the college tuition-free. Donna said this past year, it was proposed to include the development team in the program, which Tyler hopes to one day be a part of. The US Ski Team board of directors voted on the issue unanimously, she said. Tyler said he is also considering a school that offers an engineering program with trimesters.

During the winter months that school is not in session, Tyler said he would use the time to train. Overall, he said he wants to continue his education, while still pursuing skiing at the same time.

## Salem Police News

3/12: Travis Schubel, 25, of 25 Salem Ridge Dr., Salem, was charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree criminal mischief and fourth-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/14: At about 10 a.m., Leslie Standish, 48, of 9 Route 6, Andover, struck a utility pole, causing it to snap in half, after losing control of his 1996 Dodge 3500 when he said he tried to avoid hitting an animal in the road, according to State Police. Standish was transported to Backus Hospital via Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Department, for complaints of leg pain. He was issued an infraction for traveling too fast.

3/14: John Lankford, 26, of 248 Buckley Rd., Colchester, was charged with DUI, State Police said.

## Marlborough Police News

3/14: John Fritz, 47, and his daughter Kayla Fritz, 20, both of 18 Ruby Rd., were involved in a domestic violence dispute and both were charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

## Portland Police News

3/10: Timothy Demerchant, 27, of 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, Portland Police said.

## East Hampton Police News

3/2: James Loosemore, 47, of Cato Corner Rd., Colchester, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol, failure to drive right, operating without insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

3/4: James P. Murphy, 54, of 6 Kneeland Rd., Marlborough, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol, operating under suspension and failure to drive right, police said.

3/4: Keith Erbe, 47, of 1 Watrous St., was arrested for third-degree assault, police said.

3/4: Fiona Brown, 50, of 500 Exeter Rd., Lebanon, was arrested for operating an unregistered vehicle and operating without insurance, police said.

3/5: Luis Minchala-Guayara, 22, of 115 Linwood St., New Britain, was arrested for operating under suspension and having an improper brake light, police said.

3/6: A 17-year-old male juvenile was arrested for speeding and not having a front license plate, police said.

3/7: Kaitlen McGriff, 28, of 181 Saybrook Rd., Middletown, was arrested for speeding, police said.

3/7: Angela M. Montminy, 20, of 28 Clark Rd., Lebanon, was arrested for possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and article obstructing view from rear view mirror, police said.

3/7: John R. Forbes IV, 23, of 29 Main St., was arrested for operating under suspension, police said.

3/8: Angel L. Rios Jr., 28, of 446 West Middle Tpke., Manchester, was arrested for operating under suspension and article obstructing view, police said.

3/9: William V. Depietro IV, 19, of 26 Colchester Ave., was arrested pursuant to a court-ordered warrant on charge of failure to respond to a violation, police said.

3/9: Sean McMahan, 20, of 16 Emily Rd., Marlborough, was arrested for operating under suspension, police said.

# Three Portland Women Honored for Work in Community

by Claire Michalewicz

Transforming the Brownstone Quarries, helping cancer patients and working as an unofficial social worker – these are just some of the achievements honored at the Spirit of Portland Awards.

Residents gathered at Portland Senior Center on Sunday afternoon for the second annual awards ceremony. Marion Kollias, Sister Ida Dolan and Jeanne Dilworth were all honored for their commitment to the Portland community and their involvement in local activities.

Father John Ashe, from St. Mary Church, praised the three women for their generosity and achievements.

“They are leaders in our community,” Ashe said, listing an adjective for each letter in the word “ladies.” After “leaders” came “awesome, devoted, ideal, energetic and salty.” The last word elicited a few laughs from the audience, but Ashe was quick to explain that he meant that the three women give the community flavor.

Senior Center Director Mary Flood presented the three winners with their awards. She called Kollias “an advocate for everyone, who performs many acts of quiet kindness.”

Dolan, she said, filled the role of a social worker for the town, going above and beyond her official job teaching religious education at St. Mary’s. Finally, Flood called Dilworth a “cheerleader and a visionary,” especially with her work on the Brownstone Quorum.

State Representative Jim O’Rourke presented the three honorees with special commendations, pointing out that Portland has a higher level of volunteerism than many other towns.

“No one’s gonna get sick, or their house is gonna burn down without a spaghetti dinner,” O’Rourke said. “You’ve made Portland a better place to live.”

Flood organized the first Spirit of Portland awards last year to honor people who were

working to make the community better, but whose work might be going unnoticed. “I thought the people who do a lot of work needed to be honored,” she explained.

Flood said that as soon as last year’s award presentations were over, nominations started coming in for this year’s ceremony. This year, she said, the committee selected the honorees based on the number of nominations they received, though there were several other nominees who were also well-deserving.

Flood said that Dilworth, Dolan and Kollias were all involved in very public roles within the community, but it was often their other activities that warranted the award.

“It’s about the things that people don’t know about,” Flood said. She added that her original plan was to call the award “Unsung Heroes.”

The three honorees were all modest about their accomplishments, and said they help out in the community simply because they see things that need to be done.

Dilworth said it was her affection for Portland that inspired her civic work, including her role as president of the Brownstone Quorum and her previous role on the town’s Ethics Commission.

“We’re a community and we’re a family,” Dilworth said, “and if we can’t support each other, what else can we do?”

Portland “is the most fantastic town,” she added.

Dolan said she was humbled by the award, and added that there were others in Portland who also deserved it.

“There are a lot of unsung heroes in this community,” she said. Dolan said that she often provides advice to anyone who needs it, and has also helped people out with paying bills when they have financial difficulties.

“I’m just a connector,” Dolan said, explaining that she tries to match people who need help



Marion Kollias, Sister Ida Dolan and Jeanne Dilworth (pictured from left) were all honored for their contributions to the community at the Spirit of Portland Awards, held on March 14 at the senior center.

with those who can provide it.

Kollias was also humble, saying she was in good company with Dolan and Dilworth.

“I’m very, very honored,” said Kollias. She makes teddy bears for cancer patients, reads to children, and helps the Veterans Home in Rocky

Hill, among other activities.

Flood said she expects she’ll soon start receiving nominations for next year’s Spirit of Portland awards, which will again be bestowed in a March ceremony.

## Portland Selectmen Approve Mutual Aid Program

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland will get some extra help from Cromwell’s fire marshals under a new mutual aid program, which was unanimously approved by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) at its meeting Wednesday evening.

Fire Marshal Ray Sajdak explained how the program would work, saying that many other towns already have similar agreements in place. When one town didn’t have a fire marshal working, they could call the other town to see if any marshals were available there. Even when working in Cromwell, Portland fire marshals would be paid by the town of Portland and covered by their usual insurance.

“The coverage for Portland would be very valuable,” said Bransfield, adding that Portland would probably use the service more frequently than Cromwell.

The BOS also voted to apply for a grant with Glastonbury and East Hampton that would bring high-speed fiber optic communication lines into the three towns. Bransfield thanked Glastonbury for putting the grant together, and explained that the network would connect municipal buildings and make communication between them easier and faster.

In an annual procedure, the selectmen voted to put a list of taxpayers into the Municipal Suspense Tax Book. The book lists taxpayers who owe the town money but who are not expected to pay. The delinquent taxes added this year total \$17,279.29 for motor vehicles and \$8,228.84 for personal property.

Bransfield stressed that these taxpayers still should pay the town, but that Assessor Nicole Lintreure had recommended putting them in this book so the town does not have an unrealistic expectation of how much tax revenue it will receive.

“This always bothers me,” selectman Mark Finkelstein said of the annual update. He and Bransfield discussed hiring a private firm to collect the money, and Bransfield agreed to set

up a meeting between the selectmen and the firm.

The BOS is still looking for three community members to serve on the School Facilities Study Commission, including a member of the business community and a parent of a school-aged child. The commission will meet throughout the spring and summer to study space usage in Portland schools. Interested residents can contact Bransfield, and the BOS will choose who will serve on the commission.

Bransfield said a few town residents had contacted her about joining the commission. She said she was happy with those who had expressed interest so far, but she was still interested in hearing from more people.

The BOS also voted to apply for a \$3,000 state grant for the preservation of historic documents. Bransfield explained that the grant would make it easier to maintain older copies to town documents, since ordinances are updated frequently.

Another issue the BOS discussed was the introduction of a \$100 late fee on unpaid building permits. Bransfield said Building Official Lincoln White had suggested the idea to her, and she thought it would be a good idea to put in place before the weather got warmer and the town issues more building permits. The issue will go to a public hearing on April 7 at 7:15 p.m. at the library.

At a brief town meeting before the BOS meeting, residents voted 8-1 in favor of a resolution to appropriate \$35,000 from the capital plan to fund improvements for the municipal parking lot at 270 Main St. This money will cover half of the cost, while the two other owners of the lot will pick up the remainder.

The next BOS meeting will be held Wednesday, April 7, at 7:30 p.m., immediately after the public hearing about the proposed building permit late fee.

## O’Neill Memorial May Be in Sears Park in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

East Hampton is reconsidering its plans for the Governor Bill O’Neill Memorial Park. Though the original plans called for a new park at the corner of Route 66 and Main Street, the town is now considering building an amphitheater in memory of O’Neill in Sears Park.

The plan is still pending approval from both the state and the town, but Town Manager Jeff O’Keefe hopes to start construction this year.

O’Keefe explained that the town had applied for \$500,000 from the state to build the park. The state only granted them \$200,000, which would not be enough to buy the land.

The park building committee then decided to use the funds to build an amphitheater in Sears Park in memory of O’Neill. The amphitheater, O’Keefe said, would fit in with the town’s ongoing plan to improve Sears Park. It is also part of the same streetscape project

“Everybody loved the idea,” O’Keefe said of the new plan.

O’Neill, who was Connecticut’s governor from 1980-91, was raised in East Hampton. He lived in East Hampton intermittently throughout his life, operating O’Neill’s Taproom, which is now Governor’s Tavern. O’Neill died in 2007 at the age of 77.

Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Plummer explained that there was already an amphitheater included in the Sears Park master plan, so building one would be a great addition to the park as well as a way to memorialize Governor O’Neill.

“This just seemed like a great idea,” Plummer said. She said the amphitheater in Sears Park was the only option the committee considered.

Noise on and around the lake is a concern for many residents in the area, but O’Keefe insisted that the amphitheater’s structure and its intended programming would not cause any noise issues. He explained that the amphithe-

ater would be used for events like nature talks and community plays, rather than for loud concerts.

O’Keefe is currently negotiating with the state’s Office of Policy and Management to see if the town can use the grant money for the new project. If the state approves the change, the O’Neill Memorial Park Committee will offer its recommendation to the town council, who will vote on the issue. Plummer added that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board would have to discuss the issue as well.

O’Keefe said he hopes construction can start in time for Sears Park’s 100th anniversary later this year.

The site on Route 66 that was originally proposed was home to Mr. Di’s Restaurant until it burned down in 1997. The town granted the lot a zoning variance in 2008, when the lot’s owner Thomas DiStefano requested that the town allow him to remove some remaining debris and fill the lot in with grass. At that time, the town was already looking into purchasing the lot to build a park.

O’Keefe says the change in plan will not affect the zoning variance, and DiStefano will have to continue with the clean-up on his lot.

Not everybody is happy with the change. Mary Ann Dostaler pointed out that parking at Sears Park is limited, and only available to East Hampton residents. Dostaler said she’s also worried that the change of plans would go against the work that the Economic Development Commission (EDC) had put into the streetscape

But O’Keefe said that while he hadn’t discussed the changes with the EDC, he is confident that they will approve of the change, since it will contribute to the town’s economic development.

# Hebron Library Enters New Consortium

by Lindsay Fetzner

On Monday, March 8, the Douglas Library entered into a new phase of technology. The library is part of a pilot project with Bibliomation Inc., called BiblioOak, and offers the library a new circulation system along with an extensive list of improvements to their current system, according to Mary Ellen Beck, director of the library.

Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney said Beck has been very diligent in finding different ways to update and improve the library. Joining forces with Bibliomation as a "guinea pig" for the trial testing is a great opportunity, he said. The library looked at updating their software and servers which would have cost between \$20-40,000, Tierney said, but with the new catalog system, "it's a big expense that we don't have to incur."

Beck said the Bibliomation library consortium will eventually include over 100 libraries in Connecticut; all 100 of them should come on board, and become available to patrons, over the next 18 months. Douglas Library has partnered with four other libraries – the closest to Hebron being Lebanon – to present the new catalog system. Other towns include Salem and Beacon Falls. Beck said Hebron is the largest of the partners and making the transition was the most challenging because of the large collection of materials and computers the Douglas Library has.

The new program allows patrons to review materials online, place holds and even renew items checked out. There is also the opportunity for e-mail notifications when materials are due, outstanding fines or overdue items.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Chair Jeff Watt said he gives Beck "a lot of credit" for the hard work and dedication she has put into the unveiling of the new catalog system. He said it is a great opportunity for residents to have access to the catalog outside of the library hours.

Beck said over the next five years, the project

will save the town about \$113,650. The start-up cost to the library this year is \$5,000, Beck said. Next year, the price will drop, costing \$2,000. Joining the library consortium was one source of savings for Douglas Library. Another was for the software that the library is currently beta-testing. Beck said if the software had to be purchased, it would cost between \$15-20,000. "This was a tremendous deal," she said. Beck said that if the program proves to be as cost-efficient as hoped, it could inspire other libraries to become involved. "Right now, we are setting the groundwork for the software by beta-testing it."

Beck discussed many of the challenges the library has faced preparing for the new system. Tagging all of the library's materials, she said, was the biggest obstacle they faced. Adult Services Librarian Elaine Boudreau said staff members had to review approximately 42,000 pieces of material over about six weeks.

"We had to touch every item in the library to check if it had a compatible barcode," Beck said. If the item's barcode was not compatible, a new label had to be put on. Other elements still facing the library include working between two systems. Items that were checked out before March 8 appear on the old system, whereas items checked out after that date appear on the new system.

Training the staff on the new system has been ongoing, Beck said, and will continue to take place. The senior library staff members were the first employees to be trained. Beck noted that throughout the entire transformation, the library did not close during its regular hours. "We wanted to stay open as much as possible," she said.

"It is a process to learn," Boudreau said. "But overall, the patrons have been extremely patient." She said the library staff has been extremely busy with a lot of "behind-the-scenes

work," but in the long run, especially for the patrons, "it will be very good for them."

Beck said residents have started to take advantage of the new program. "We pulled off a whole page of holds the first day," she said, which totaled between 20 and 25 items. Currently, the library does not have the technology to show the statistics of the online catalog system, but may be an opportunity in the future.

Beck joined the Douglas Library staff five years ago as the director. When asked what sparked her interest in the development partnership, she said it was part of the five year program she created when she started, outlining the changes she wanted to see in the library. Beck has been part of a consortium library before and has experience working for an online research library. "I wanted to see the library online," she said.

The combination of Beck's interest in technology along with the opportunity for the library to go online made this project a quintessential opportunity for the Douglas Library. Beck hit the ground running with Bibliomation Inc. last year, proposing the idea to the town manager team on September 11, 2009.

The online catalog is available at <http://acorn.biblio.org/douglas>. If Douglas Library does not have a particular item a patron is looking for, the new program lets people browse the catalogs of other libraries in the BiblioOak network. If another library has the material, a hold can be placed online and when it comes in, picked up at the Douglas Library.

"It is a two-way exchange," Beck said. "And it opens up what is available in real time."

The opportunity to view other libraries' catalogs, as opposed to calling each individually, is expected to be a welcomed convenience and a time-saver.

To access individual accounts, click on the 'My Account' link on the aforementioned

website, which will prompt a library card number to be entered. For first time users, the password will be the last four digits of the patron's phone number, but the program will prompt people to change the password after logging in the first time. It is important to note that only items that have been checked out since March 8 will be seen. Any items taken out before this date have not been entered in the database for review.

To renew items currently checked out, click on the 'Items Checked Out' link, which should appear when logged into the system. A list of items checked out should appear, along with the option to renew any of them. Patrons have the option of choosing one or all of the items to renew.

Placing a hold on an item is just as easy. Once an item has been identified in the library catalog, clicking on the 'Place Hold' link will secure the hold. Holds can be reviewed under 'Items on Hold.'

When materials put on hold become available, patrons can choose to be e-mailed, called or both. Beck said she is trying to collect as many e-mails of residents as possible, as this is the preferred method of contact.

The library's borrowing guidelines have also loosened with the new program underway. According to Beck, older library materials will now be available to residents for three weeks, instead of two. Newer materials will still follow the two-week guideline. Older DVDs can be borrowed for one week, however newer ones will be limited to three days.

"It's exciting for the library," Beck said. "It's a whole new dimension well worth the wait." Beck is asking residents for their continued support and patience as the transformation takes place. Any further questions about the consortium can be directed to the library at 860-228-9312.

# Insurance Costs Impact Hebron School Budget

by Lindsay Fetzner

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz announced at a Board of Education (BOE) meeting last Thursday, March 11, that there is an increase of \$52,216 in insurance costs.

Cruz said these costs had to be absorbed into the present budget to remain at a 3.99 percent increase. Without additional cuts to the budget, the insurance costs would have spiked the budget to an increase of 4.43 percent. But, with additional recommended reductions, Cruz brought the overall increase down from 3.99 percent, or \$12.18 million, to 3.29 percent, \$12.10, which is a difference of .7 percent.

A savings of \$66,000 came in the form of "the only initiative identified as above a flat-funded budget," Cruz said. This included the elimination of 1.0 position for all-day kindergarten and furniture. The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projected that 116 students would enroll in the kindergarten program. However, there are currently only 106 students that are anticipated to enroll, Cruz said, and is a figure that has remained steady over the past two months. With a 1.0 reduction, the all-day kindergarten program plan would offer five full-day sessions and one half-day session. Each of the five sessions would contain 18 students, with 16 in the half-day session, for a total of 106 students.

BOE member Mark Allaben identified some risks that have to be considered. In addition to the chance of more families moving into town, he said he hoped the full-day program with a total of 18 students would work. "It's a little on the high side," Allaben said. But, he stressed that there is no way to predict how many people will move into Hebron and hopes the compromises and bets the board is taking will hold.

Cruz said her intent is to design programs around the children's needs. "Not every child fits the mold of a half-day program – some need more time," she said. In light of this, Cruz said she wants to offer parents options, which is very important, and let them decide what is best for their child.

If the school system were to reduce to all half-day kindergarten, there would be a total savings of \$123,000, resulting from the elimination of two teaching positions. Part of this figure is the two salary placeholders at \$97,648 (\$48,824 each). The remaining savings would result from the two insurance placeholders totaling \$25,352, at \$12,676 apiece.

Parents both in favor and opposed to the all-day kindergarten program voiced their opinions during public comment. Maura Baker expressed her full support for all-day kindergarten. "As the polls show, parents want this," she said. "Removing it would be a long-term loss for our students." She said her daughter was involved in the pilot program last year and overall, is "a really positive way to start a school career." Diana Wursthorn agreed with Baker and identified the shortage of time in the half-day program. "I really am in favor of full-day kindergarten," she said.

Others, however, did not agree and said this year is not the time to implement the full-day program in light of the economic difficulties currently facing Hebron. "This year is not the year to expand the program," said Robin Lane.

Joleen Swanson agreed. "I think with so many people having such a hard time paying their taxes, paying their mortgage, it will be hard for them to come up with the extra money," she said. "I have a hard time supporting all-day kindergarten at this time and I don't think it's the year to do it."

Lane is also extremely concerned about class sizes and keeping teachers. "Once those class sizes are up and those teachers are gone, it's going to be hard to get that back in place," she said. Lane described the kindergarten teachers in Hebron as "amazing and wonderful" and is in favor of keeping them in place. She also thanked the BOE for their time and energy, and let them know they are "doing a fabulous job."

"It is not an easy job," she said. "Especially during this time of year."

A petition in opposition to the implementation of the all-day kindergarten program, addressed to the Hebron selectmen, finance and education boards, is currently circulating in town. It states: "We are opposed to the implementation of an all-day kindergarten program in FY 2010-11 and FY 2011-12 due to the current and projected economic climate in Hebron. We also believe that sufficient questions and concerns have been raised about the efficacy of an all-day kindergarten program, which is not required by the State of Connecticut, and we believe that we cannot afford to implement this non-required program in the current economy."

The petition is available in hard copy and also online ([www.petitiononline.com/FY101112/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/FY101112/petition.html)). This weekend, the petition will

be available at the Hebron Republican Town Committee (RTC) tent from 10 a.m.-noon both days at the Maple Festival. (RTC Chairwoman Donna McCalla stressed the petition is not an initiative started by the committee, and that the committee is simply offering the opportunity for community members to sign it.)

BOE Chair Jane Dube said the petition is a "good way for people to get their views across." However, Dube said she felt that decisions about the education program in town are better left to the superintendent and BOE to make, despite the fact she does not know the background and experiences of those who sign the petition.

The all-day kindergarten program has been piloted in Hebron for two full years, Dube said. In that time, she said the board has "never had someone voice their opinion about all-day kindergarten at [BOE] meetings before this year. ... I've never heard any opposition." Although Dube said she initially had reservations about the program, she has "come to understand" the opportunities it opens up for the children.

Other reductions Cruz discussed last week in light of the rise in insurance costs were non-union employee concessions to help reduce the bottom line of the budget, which Cruz described as being "very grateful for." Additionally, Cruz highlighted the redirection of staffing resources, which would keep class sizes within the board recommended guidelines. "Maintaining class size is of utmost importance," she said.

BOE members agreed. Allaben said, "When class sizes go above 25, it really impacts the kids and their achievements." Stephanie Raymond also voiced her concern and said that classrooms are not equipped to have 25 kids in the classroom. The overall list of recommended reductions totaled \$133,629 since Jan. 28, Cruz said during her presentation, bringing the bottom line to the recommended 3.29 percent.

Part of Cruz's presentation included the specifics on what a zero percent increase to the budget would entail. In order to reach an increase of 2.5 percent, an additional \$92,500 would have to be cut. To reach 1.5 percent, another \$118,000 would need to be eliminated. And, to reach zero percent, the board would have to consider reducing the current proposed budget by an additional \$175,231, for a total reduction of \$385,731.

BOE members voiced concern for how these

significant reductions would affect the students. "There is no way for us to take \$385,731 out of the budget and not affect the kids," Allaben said. "The 3.29 percent is the bottom line and that is the message for me."

Dube said the board has tried to be responsive to the questions raised from the public and tried to identify cuts that would serve smaller numbers of students. Although Dube said these are "not things she would personally advocate for," she stressed being cooperative and making people understand where the board stands. "What will matter is what we can hold onto and preserve," she said last Thursday.

Some of the potential budget cuts under discussion that would be made to reach a zero percent increase are a classroom teacher (\$61,494), one librarian (\$61,494), two Challenge and Enrichment (C&E) teachers (\$122,988) a custodian (\$27,928) and a paraprofessional (\$19,695). "I don't recommend any of these," Raymond said. She stressed, like many board members at the meeting, trying to find areas to cut that would have the least impact on the children. Cruz said that the long-term impact of short-term gains should be considered. "No decisions are easy decisions," she said. "And sometimes the decisions we make will end up costing us more in the long term."

Despite the cuts that are proposed, Cruz said it is important to remember the priorities of the BOE throughout the whole process. "Where do we want the schools to be in five to ten years," she asked, drawing on continuing the commitment to the strategic plan. Additionally, Cruz put emphasis on supporting maintenance and capital projects, which she said, "are critically important." Maintaining class size, supporting technology expansion and promoting diverse academic plans were also included in the board's list of priorities that she mentioned.

Cruz also acknowledged the school board in honor of Board of Education Appreciation Month. "I just want to say how much I appreciate the work the board of education does for this community," Cruz said. "It is a tremendous amount of work." Cruz, along with the help of four students, presented the BOE with their honorary certificate.

The next BOE meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 8, at 7 p.m., at Gilead Hill School, located at 580 Gilead St.

# Team Arya Marches for Premature Babies

by Katy Nally

Heather Perham's daughter Arya Gast was the size of her hand when she was born 15 weeks early on April 13 of last year.

She weighed one pound and 14 ounces and stayed at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the UConn Health Center in Farmington for 16 weeks.

"I think at first you're in shock," Heather, a Colchester resident, said. "Then eventually it kind of hits you." Arya, like other premature babies, was born with underdeveloped lungs. Just one month ago, Arya was able to come off her medication that treated the fluid left over in her lungs, her mother said.

During her time at the NICU, Arya breathed with the help of a continuous positive airway pressure machine called a CPAP and later, through tubes in her nasal canal.

Throughout her hospital stay, Heather, Arya's father Ed Gast and Arya's brother Ian would visit the tiny infant to "hold her and rock her" and garner support from other parents struggling through similar situations, Heather said.

Much of that support structure was constructed by the March of Dimes, a nonprofit health organization that aims to defeat premature births, as well as to "improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality," according to the website [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com).

Heather said March of Dimes helped her with "pretty much anything to everything you could think of." She said a representative from the organization gave her information about premature babies both before and after the delivery, set up support groups for parents and families, provided donations of hats and blankets and even helped with scrap booking.

Dealing with a premature birth for the first time, Heather said she and other parents were confused, so the March of Dimes representative stepped in. "They helped to keep my spir-



**Arya Gast, 11 months, was born 15 weeks premature. Her mother, Heather Perham, began Team Arya, and will participate in the March of Dimes March for Babies, Sunday, April 25 at Rentschler Field in East Hartford.**

its up, and gave me many coping tools," Heather said in a letter.

In a gesture of thanks to the organization that guided her through Arya's birth and first few weeks of her life, Heather founded Team Arya, which now has about 20 people who will walk during the March for Babies event, presented by the March of Dimes, Sunday, April 25 at Rentschler Field in East Hartford.

"During those 16 weeks of numerous trips and phone calls to the hospital, the March of Dimes... was a godsend to me," Heather said in a letter.

Team Arya donation boxes have sprung up all over town and the money will fund research

of premature births and March of Dimes staff like the representative who helped Heather at the NICU. Heather said 70 percent of donations will fund research and 30 percent will go toward personnel.

Unlike some babies, doctors were never able to determine why Arya was born so early. According to the March of Dimes website, four in 10 premature births are caused for unknown reasons.

Heather, 32, said she came in for a routine checkup one day and doctors told her she was dilated and Arya would soon come. "It was like a whirlwind," Heather said.

When Arya was born, Heather said she and Ed were "lucky" because their daughter did not have some of the other medical complications associated with premature births. Some premature infants suffer from brain bleeding, vision loss and heart defects, according to the March of Dimes.

Arya had problems with her lungs and needed two blood transfusions during her time at the NICU. "Her body just didn't know how to do anything," Heather said. Arya's body was exasperated and couldn't work well on its own. "We just really sat and waited... for her to get bigger," Heather said.

Once Arya was in the hospital for 16 weeks, she was able to venture home with her family. But, unlike other 16-week-olds, Arya was developmentally like a newborn. Now, at almost a year old, her body is at only an eight-month stage. Heather said this discrepancy usually irons out by age two.

Much of the treatments, tests and help Arya received at the NICU, Heather attributes to the March of Dimes. She said if it had been only 10 years ago, a baby born as premature as Arya might not have made it.

According to the March of Dimes one in 10 babies was born preterm in Connecticut in 2006. The organization defines premature as a

live birth before 37 weeks of gestation. Since the early 1980s, March of Dimes said the rate of premature births has increased by 36 percent.

Team Arya will join others for the March for Babies Sunday, April 25. There are nine walk sites throughout the state. For more information about the walk, and to donate, visit [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com).

Area businesses that have donation boxes until the end of March are: State Farm, Illiano's, Express Care Valvolone, TD Bank, Mark's United Auto Parts, Copies Plus more, Peg's Vintage Diner, Savings Institute Bank & Trust, Hope Hardware & Plumbing Supply, Corvettes & Classics, Quality Consignments, Lori's Mobil, The Polish Club, The Fish & Game Club and NAPA. Team tee-shirts will be donated by AHM Landscaping.

Also, team shirts are being donated by AHM Landscaping.

"Remember, every dollar counts in the fight for babies' lives," Heather said in a letter. "And with our help one day every baby can be born healthy."



**Arya Gast at two days old**

## Colchester BOE Asked to Explore Cuts

by Katy Nally

After the \$36.48 million education budget was presented this past Monday, Board of Finance (BOF) Chair Bruce Hayn asked the inevitable question: what would more cuts look like?

He gave the Board of Education (BOE) until next Monday, March 22, to come up with hypothetical answers to the question that would inform the BOF as to "what each cut means." BOE Chair Ron Goldstein said Tuesday the administration would work this week to indicate what direction the budget will move.

"You put together, I think, a great budget," Hayn said. "But we are looking at some economic issues here."

Hyan stressed the importance of being educated about the BOE budget because "there's going to be a cut of some sense," he said.

"The board has presented a budget that... maintains what's special about the district," BOE Chair Ron Goldstein said Tuesday. "We've preserved the best we can."

The \$36.48 million BOE budget shows an increase of about 4.75 percent over the 2009-10 adopted budget. BOF member Rob Tarlov noted that this increase has little to do with an increase in expenditures and more with a revenue shortfall. "It's the one side we can't control," Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said.

BOF member Mike Caplet asked Loiselle about the implications of increasing class size. Loiselle said she "hesitated" to do that in the current proposal, saying the "number one" request from the teachers is to keep class size down. "We expect a lot out of our teachers and they rise to the occasion," Loiselle said. Currently, Colchester class size is larger than the average of schools in Colchester's District Reference Group (DRG), which is a group average, Loiselle added.

Although the hypothetical cuts would help the BOF make decisions about the education budget, Hayn said he realized many further reductions would severely impact the district. "I know every thousand you're looking at probably means teachers. It probably means programs," he said. Goldstein agreed with Hayn on the importance of educating the board.

Hayn mentioned that after too many cuts, the town could "get to a place where no body supports the budget." BOE member Tim Lamp said if the boards put forth a budget that "hurts everybody," then taxpayers might not even vote. Loiselle said the current proposed budget preserves programs that are "most important to families."

Board members of both the BOE and BOF hypothesized what a passable budget would look like. "Let's face it, the taxpayers will tell us what we want to know," Hayn said.

The March 10 budget forum was brought up as one indication of what voters want, although Hayn said most of the people who attended that night advocated for their special interests, and few came to speak against a tax increase. Based on past budget votes, Hayn said the forum might not represent the overall thoughts of the townspeople. "Unfortunately, 100 people don't get a budget passed," Hayn said.

One way to receive everyone's input, which board members discussed, was to go on a "road show" and make appearances at community groups, Goldstein said. "That unknown voter," Hayn said. "We've got to find that voter," Goldstein stressed.

Board member also discussed the price of organizing more than one referendum vote, which would cost about \$4,000.

Final budget changes are scheduled to be discussed Monday, March 22, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

## Colchester Police News

3/11: Joseph James Julian, 22, of 185 Leonard Bridge Rd., turned himself in for second-degree harassment, State Police said.

3/11: Walter Ortiz, 68, of 274 Locust St. City, Springfield, MA, was charged with failure to drive in proper lane and DUI, State Police said.

3/11: A juvenile turned himself in for risk of injury to a minor and third-degree assault, State Police said.

3/14: Tiffany Robles, 26, of 15 Edgewood St., Hartford, was charged with operation of a motor vehicle when license or registration is

suspended, DUI, failure to drive in proper lane, failure to stop on right for an emergency vehicle, State Police said.

3/15: Kathryn Marie Sansevero, 21, whose last known address is 19R Bella Dr., Durham, was charged with third-degree burglary and second-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

3/15: Marilyn Elizabeth Saltus, 42, of 36 Geer Rd., Lebanon, turned herself in for sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

## Colchester Woman Files Suit in Kleen Energy Explosion

by Katy Nally

A Colchester woman is among the 12 that have filed suit against the Kleen Energy Systems following the explosion that killed six and injured 26 last month.

Carol Thompson, who did not want to comment for this story, is working with the law firm Stratton Faxon of Hartford in a liability suit.

Paul Edwards of Stratton Faxon said Thompson filed the suit March 9, as a result of her husband's injuries from the explosion. Thompson's husband was working at the Kleen Energy Plant in Middletown on the day of the explosion. Edwards said her husband had nothing to do with the purging of the gas lines and was working as a carpenter on Feb. 7.

Thompson joins 12 others in two separate suits against Kleen Energy Systems, O&G Industries, the general contractor for the project, and Keystone Construction & Maintenance, the company responsible for the gas line purge, Edwards said. The second suit was filed before March 9 and included plaintiffs from

Ducci Electric, who were also working at the plant the day of the explosion.

Teaming up with Stratton Faxon is the law firm Gillis & Gillis, which is handling workman's compensation cases.

Edward Gillis said the plaintiffs involved with the two suits stemming from one incident is a "pretty significant number" of people.

Both Gillis and Edwards said they expect more people to join the lawsuits as the case becomes more involved.

Currently none of the people Gillis represents are still in the hospital due to injuries sustained in the explosion, though one was recently discharged after being treated for a fractured pelvis, he said.

The explosion at the Kleen Energy plant occurred when personnel were purging the gas lines. According to Middletown Emergency Management Director George Dunn, 22 fire departments, four police departments and 34 ambulances responded to the scene.

"It was a mass casualty incident," he said.

# Obituaries

## Hebron

### Kerry Margaret Williams

Kerry Margaret Williams, 20, of Hebron, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, March 10, at Hartford Hospital. Born May 19, 1989 in Hartford, she was the daughter of Mark and Jo-Ann (Smythe) Williams of Hebron.

Kerry attended school in Hebron and was a 2007 graduate of RHAM High School, and a 2009 graduate of the Connecticut Culinary Institute in Hartford. Kerry was currently working in food preparation at the banquet facilities of Glastonbury Hills Country Club. She simultaneously worked for Highland Park Market in South Windsor.

As a young girl, Kerry enjoyed softball and gymnastics. She loved summer vacations at Cape Cod with her family and held an avid love of the Beatles' music. She will be remembered for her beautiful smile and sparkling blue eyes which would light up a room.

In addition to her loving parents, survivors include her brother, Ryan Williams of Hebron; her grandfather, Francis Williams of Hamden, her aunt, Leslie Williams of Mission Viejo, California, her uncle Charles Smythe of Parkville, NY.

The family thanks Hartford Hospital's Cardiac ICU for its excellent and compassionate care.

She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

Calling hours were held Monday, March 15, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, March 16, directly at Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., Hebron. Burial will follow in the Gilead Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Hebron Interfaith Human Services, P.O. Box 634, Hebron, CT 06248.

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

## Colchester

### Cheryl Marie Marcaurel

Cheryl Marie (Keefe) Marcaurel, 53, of Norwich and formerly of Colchester and Hebron, passed away Friday, March 12, at the CT Hospice in Branford. Born July 9, 1956, in Manchester, she was the daughter of Phyllis (Stenstrom) Keefe of Port St. Lucie, FL, and Richard A. Keefe of Amston.

Ms. Marcaurel was a 1974 graduate of RHAM High School in Hebron and had worked as a waitress for many years, most recently at Dominic's Brickoven. She will be remembered for her strong work ethic and her undying love for her family – especially her grandchildren.

In addition to her parents, she is survived by her loving companion, Thomas Winston of Norwich; six children, Jennifer Marcaurel of Franklin, Melanie Marcaurel of Tennessee and Charlene, William, Joshua and Thomas Winston, all of Norwich; four grandchildren, Trevor and Tayler Foster, Nahzeke Boyce and Tatyana Winston; five brothers, James and Todd, both of Florida and Richard, Daniel and Jeff, all of Amston; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends called Tuesday, March 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service followed. Burial private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the CT Hospice, 100 Double Beach Rd., Branford, CT 06405 or to the American Cancer Society, 225 Dunham St., Norwich, CT 06360.

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

## Colchester

### Crystal Baver

Crystal (Emery) Baver, 67, of Colchester, passed away unexpectedly Saturday (March 13, 2010) at home. Born Nov. 11, 1942 in Portland, ME, she was a daughter of the late Wellington and Valerie (Webber) Emery. She will be remembered for her love of all things "Elvis," but most importantly for her devotion to her family.

She is survived by her husband of 25 years, Burton; two children and their spouses, Sharon and James Riddell of Lebanon and Stanley and Jill Moors of Wakefield, RI; five grandchildren, Shannon, Stephanie and Stephen Garthwait, Jr. and Leah and Katie Moors; two sisters, Sharon Lee of East Hartford and Tsani Pinnone of Rocky Hill; and numerous extended family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the charity of one's choice.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Carol Chemerynski

Carol Diane (Mintz) Chemerynski, 79, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Friday evening, March 12, at her home, surrounded by her loving family, after a courageous battle with cancer. Born Aug. 1, 1930, Carol was the daughter of the late Samuel and Anna Mintz, and beloved wife of George Chemerynski for 60 years.

A lifelong resident of Colchester, she attended local schools, graduating from Bacon Academy in 1948. Carol enjoyed a long career in the Colchester school system, where she was loved by all of the faculty and students. She was a member of Ahavath Achim Synagogue.

Carol is also survived by her three children: Cheryl Croce and her husband Vincent, Mark Chemerynski and his wife Teri, all of Colchester; Michael Chemerynski and his wife Jane of Marlborough; her grandchildren Jonah Piascik and his wife Jennifer, Jesse Piascik and his wife Shawntel, Marissa Taylor and her husband Jeffrey, Charity Chemerynski, Sara Kinney and her husband Trevor, Hannah Waltz and her husband Matthew, Rachel and Krista Chemerynski; her great-grandchildren Samuel, Benjamin, Jaelyn, Miya, Jacob, Luke, Austin, Meadow, Anna and Evan; her sister Lois Fleischmann and her husband Joseph; her great-niece and nephew Natalie and Ethan Gaudette. Carol's niece and nephew Marci Lynn and Ronald Scott Rosenfeld predeceased her.

Carol was a wonderful, caring person who shared her love with her large family and many special friends. All those fortunate to know her were blessed with her warm and generous heart. Carol enjoyed every moment spent with her family, especially Saturday coffee hours, holidays, birthday parties and other family gatherings. She also cherished time spent with her many long-time close friends, playing mah jongg or bingo, and meeting for lunch.

Funeral services were held Monday, March 15, in the Sanctuary of Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester, with Rabbi Ken Alter officiating. Interment followed in the Ahavath Achim Cemetery. A memorial period was observed at the Chemerynski home, 83 Prospect St. Colchester.

In honor of Carol, memorial contributions may be made to the Carol Chemerynski Memorial Scholarship, c/o Bacon Academy Scholarship Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 213, Colchester, CT, 06415. Arrangements were entrusted to Weinstein Mortuary, Hartford.

For further information, or to share memories of Carol with her family, visit [www.weinsteinmortuary.com](http://www.weinsteinmortuary.com).

## Colchester

### David Levine

David Levine, 97 years of age, of Colchester, died peacefully in his sleep at home Monday, March 15. Born in Duryea, PA, he was the son of the late Hyman and Ida (Myerowitz) Levine. He attended Boston University.

David was self-employed for many years in the poultry business and later became the Kosher Food Inspector for the State of Connecticut. Many years ago, David was involved in Colchester local politics and he served as mayor of Colchester. He was a member and past president of Congregation Ahavath Achim in Colchester. He was also a member of the Knights of Phythias.

He leaves his wife, Lucile (Lubchansky) Levine; two daughters, Arlene Tulacro and her husband James of Darien, and Honore Poch and her husband Richard of West Chester, PA; four grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, March 17, in the Sanctuary of Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester with Rabbi Kenneth Alter officiating. Interment followed in Congregation Ahavath Achim Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Congregation Ahavath Achim or to the CT Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, 279 New Britain Ave., Suite 5, Kensington 06037.

Arrangements are entrusted to Weinstein Mortuary, Hartford. For further information, directions, or to share memories of David with his family, visit online at [www.weinsteinmortuary.com](http://www.weinsteinmortuary.com).



## Andover

### Richard A. Drabicki

Richard A. Drabicki, 57, of Andover, beloved husband of Renata A. (Rosner) Drabicki, passed away Sunday, March 14, at Manchester Memorial Hospital.

Born in Poland, son of Janina (Nawrocka) Drabicki of Poland and the late Mieczyslaw Drabicki, he lived in Marlborough and East Hartford before moving to Andover 11 years ago. Richard was employed at Crystal Tool and Machine Company in Rockville. He was a communicant of SS Cyril & Methodius Church in Hartford.

Besides his wife, he is survived by two sons, David R. Drabicki of Marlborough, and Daniel S. Drabicki of Willimantic; a brother, Mieczyslaw Drabicki and his wife Alicja of Poland; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins in the United States and Poland.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Helen (Mokrzycki) Drabicki; and his sister.

A funeral service was held Thursday, March 18, from the Waszkelewicz South Green Memorial Home, 43 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford, with a Mass of Christian Burial following at SS Cyril & Methodius Church, Hartford. Burial followed in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford. His family received friends Wednesday, March 17, at the funeral home.

## Marlborough

### Florence Louise Peck

Florence Louise Peck, 92, of Manchester, died Friday, March 12, at Marlborough Health Care. Born Feb. 3, 1918, in Hartford she was the daughter of the late Loren H. and Anna P. (Eckert) Peck.

Florence had worked for The Travelers Insurance Company for more than 45 years and was a lifelong and devoted member of the Emanuel Lutheran Church in Manchester, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and a lifelong member of Welcome Rebekah Lodge No. 47. She was a lifetime member of The Travelers Women's Club and The Travelers Retiree's Club and visited all 50 states and many foreign countries as part of trips arranged through The Travelers Clubs.

On behalf of Florence we would like to say a special thank you to her "adopted daughter" Vera Averill who was a loving and devoted friend and to the wonderful staffs of Emanuel Lutheran Church, Luther Ridge Assisted Living Center, Marlborough Health Care Center and the Masonic Home Health and Hospice who cared for her with such compassion.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, March 17, in the Emanuel Lutheran Church, 60 Church St., Manchester. Burial followed in the family plot in Hillside Cemetery in East Hartford.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Emanuel Lutheran Church 60 Church St. Manchester, CT 06040.

The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

## Portland

### Ann L. DeLuca

Ann L. Fazzino DeLuca of Portland went peacefully to be with her Lord and Savior Saturday, March 13, while surrounded by her family.

She was the beloved wife of the late Frank DeLuca; mother of Frank DeLuca and his wife Barbara of East Hampton, Ronald DeLuca and his wife Carol, and Richard DeLuca and his wife Sheila; grandmother of Scott DeLuca, Kevin DeLuca, April DeLuca, Emily DeLuca, Rachel DeLuca, Ian DeLuca, Kimberly Fritsch, and William Zadroga Jr.; great-grandmother of Lauren and Chelsea Fritsch; and sister of James Fazzino of Roseville, CA.

Born in Rocky Hill, a daughter of the late Joseph and Lucille Milardo Fazzino, she was a Portland resident for many years. She was a parishioner of the Church of Saint Mary and had worked in the Bereavement Committee.

She was predeceased by her sister Josephine Mullaney, and brothers Angelo, Sebastien, and Salvatore Fazzino.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend a Mass of Christian Burial today, Friday, March 19, at 11 a.m., in the Church of Saint Mary. Interment will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in Ann's memory may be sent to the Vita Hospice Charitable Fund, 100 South Biscayne Blvd. Suite 1500, Miami, FL 33131 or to the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. For directions, or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit [www.portlandmemorialfh.net](http://www.portlandmemorialfh.net).

## East Hampton

### Thomas Henry Villemaire

Thomas Henry Villemaire of 12 Iris Ln., North Providence, RI, formerly of East Hampton, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, March 15. Born in Burlington, VT, on July 26, 1945, he was a son of the late Peter and Dorothy (St. Pierre) Villemaire.

He graduated from Glastonbury High School in 1964 and went on to work at Pratt and Whitney in East Hartford for many years as a sheet metal mechanic before running his own business. He was an avid fisherman, consummate handyman, and master BBQ chef. He enjoyed camping and had a great sense of humor. Thomas was truly beloved by any and all who had the honor of knowing him.

He leaves behind to celebrate his life his beloved wife, Janice O'Connor. He also leaves his brother, Bert and his wife, Mary, of Healsburg, CA; his son, Brian Villemaire and his wife, Linda, of Middletown; his daughter, Donna Gordon and her husband, Jay, of Colchester; four grandchildren, Jonathan and Megan Villemaire of Middletown, Chelsea and Jared Gordon of Colchester, Cristin and Jerricha Linkovich of Middletown and Amber Linkovich of Willimantic; great-grandchildren, Austin and Jaeden of Middletown. He also leaves his stepchildren, Patrick Gilday and his wife Nichole of Texas, Dawn Bilodeau and Marc Gilday, both of North Providence, RI; grandchildren, Asjey, Eric, Zachary, Jason, Nicholas, and Katherine Cook, all of North Providence, RI; great-grandson, Jayden Cook of North Providence; his brother-in-law, Steve O'Connor and sister-in-law, Sue Noel.

Join the family in a celebration of Tom's life on Saturday, March 20, at 11 a.m., in the Robbins Funeral Home, 2251 Mineral Spring Ave., North Providence, RI. Calling hours are today, Friday, March 19, from 5-8 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to American Cancer Society or to the Boys & Girls Club of America.

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Let's try this again.

For last week's column, I'd written a good deal about the Hebron Maple Fest, and how I was looking forward to it, all the wonderful things to do, etc., etc. Then I got word last Wednesday afternoon it was being postponed, due to heavy rains and wind that had been projected.

Postponing it turned out to be the right move; the weathermen haven't exactly batted 1.000 so far this year, but they nailed last weekend's forecast. The wind was strong indeed – and likely would've taken down some tents, had the show gone on – and it also rained. A lot. As anyone who's been in Hebron at this time of year knows, mud is something of a rite of spring, even when the weather's nice out. So heavy rains would've only exacerbated the situation.

Happily, the weather outlook for this weekend is much nicer, with sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-60s (!) predicted. Also, many of the events that were planned for last weekend have been rescheduled for this weekend. (Not all of them, though. The Husky dog sled exhibition planned at Christ Lutheran Church, for example, has unfortunately been scrapped. And there will be no Douglas Library book sale, as that went on last weekend anyway, despite the rain. It was indoors, so that probably helped.)

I'm glad the weather looks like it'll cooperate, because the Maple Fest is always a fun time. Though I haven't "had" to go since 2004 – my last year as a Hebron beat reporter – I still go nearly every year. Though I'm now very familiar with the process of converting maple sap into delicious syrup, I still like swinging by the various sugar shacks to see the process first-hand. Stopping by the American Legion and VFW tents in the center of town is also a tradition of mine, to pick up a cheeseburger or a chili dog (and sometimes both, if I'm feeling hungry).

Plus, there are a ton of activities both days of the festival, including the Hebron Historical Society's quilt show, an ice cream-eating contest at Ted's and much, much more. Lindsay Fetzner touches on a lot of the Maple Fest draws in her front-page story this week, which should do plenty to whet your appetite for the 20th annual event.

But the Maple Fest wouldn't be the Maple Fest without maple-related food products – and there are scores of them. Every sugar house is selling maple syrup, along with some other maple products, like maple cream, maple peanuts, maple butter. The fantastic Majestic Kettle Corn is back this year, offering maple kettle corn by the New Alliance Bank on Main Street. (You have to trust me and buy a bag or two; there is nothing quite like it.)

One of my favorite maple treats is Gilead Congregational Church's simply-awesome maple pudding cake, which the church sells every year at the Wenzel Sugarhouse on East

Street. (Don't know where that is? Don't worry, once again the *Rivereast* is offering a handy maple map right in the middle of this week's issue.) Be sure to ask for it warm, with ice cream on top!

And no Maple Fest would be complete without the ice-cold maple milk sold in front of the Old Town Hall in the center of town. Made with whole milk, real maple syrup and some "secret spices," this beverage, sold by the Hebron Historical Society, is absolutely delicious. It's made with just the right amount of maple flavor – more than just a hint, but not so much that it is overpowering and *too* sweet. It's a truly refreshing treat.

I usually start my Maple Fest day around noon or 1 p.m. But for those of you who are early-risers – and those of you who like their maple syrup served the traditional way, over pancakes – there are pancake breakfasts both days of the festival. The Knights of Columbus will hold one Saturday at the Church of the Holy Family, while the Hebron Lions will have their annual buffet Sunday at RHAM High School.

So there will be lots to see and do – and, of course, eat – in Hebron this weekend. If you've never been to the Maple Fest before, I encourage you to come check it out. You won't be disappointed, and neither will your taste buds.

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I heard an interesting piece of trivia this week. This past Monday, March 15, marked the 25th anniversary of something I honestly wouldn't have thought would be 25 years old: The world's first .com.

On March 15, 1985, a Massachusetts computer company named Symbolics registered the Internet's very first domain name, [symbolics.com](http://symbolics.com).

Just how early was that date? The Internet barely existed in those days. This was before AOL, before the world wide web, before even graphics-based Internet browsers. The Internet was used by academics, and in the military, but it would be years before it would become the 'net we all know and love today.

That was some fine foresight by Symbolics. Just how far ahead of its time was the Bay State company? Well, there were all of five domain names registered in all of 1985. Apple didn't register its domain until 1989, and Microsoft in 1991. (To be fair, IBM seemed to recognize the way of the future fairly early on, registering its domain in 1986, which was also the same year Sun did.)

These days, Symbolics isn't what it once was. (Apparently, in the mid-'80s, when it registered that domain, it was a pretty big deal, and was a key player in artificial intelligence software.) But even if it's not a household name, the company will forever have a place in history, as an answer to a future *Jeopardy!* question and a gentle reminder that the Internet has been around much longer than perhaps any of us thought.