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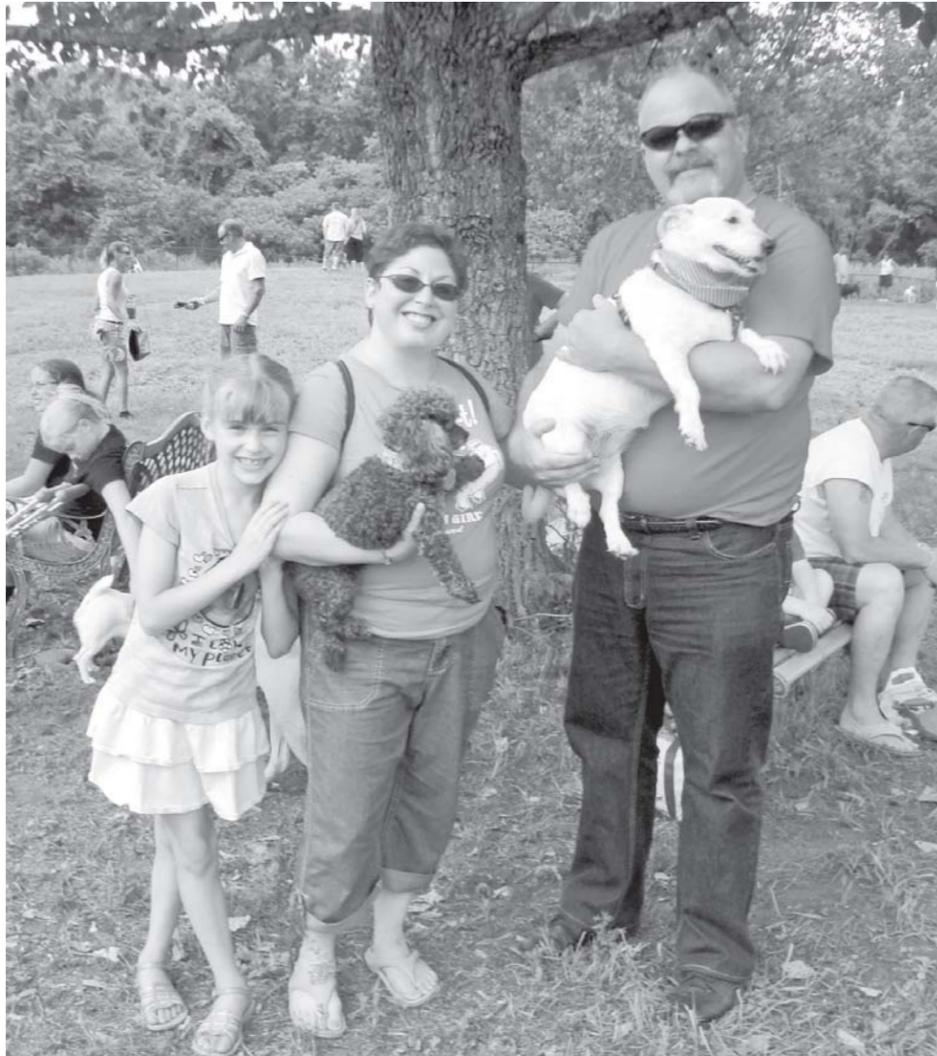
News Bulletin

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The Balaski family brought their two dogs Pepper and Bella to the opening of the Colchester Dog Park this past Sunday. Pictured above, from left to right, are Salem residents Jaden, Marnie and Darryl Balaski.

Colchester Goes To the Dogs

by Lindsay Fetzner

As Colchester First Selectman Gregg Schuster put it Sunday afternoon, “every dog has its day.” And last Sunday, July 18, was definitely “the dogs of Colchester day,” when the Colchester Dog Park officially opened its gate.

The grand opening and pet expo, sponsored by Mr. Lockout, was held this weekend, culminating nearly two years of work by the volunteer Dog Park Committee, made up of about a dozen residents. The event was well received by the public, as many canines and their owners came out to celebrate the opening, both from town and from surrounding communities.

The morning portion of the four-hour event included a ribbon cutting by Schuster and the unveiling of a memorial in memory of Scott Gagnon, who passed away in February at the age of 41. He was the son of Colchester resident Mary Gagnon, who contributed a generous donation of \$20,000 – half of what the Dog Park Committee wound up raising – for the park. “Scott just had a way with dogs,” Gagnon said.

Before the crimson red ribbon was cut, Dog Park Committee president Keith Kelley said Gagnon’s donation was “really what allowed us to build this park so quickly.” Committee treasurer Amanda Nelson piggybacked Kelley, and thanked her “for really making this park possible.”

“In a way, it was Scott’s donation,” Gagnon said. “And I am just glad to see a part of Scott will go on forever. That made me feel really good.”

Gagnon commended the work of all the people involved with the park. “I was fortunate to have the money to make the donation but it’s

those people who worked so hard,” she said.

Schuster described the work of the committee as “incredible” and thanked those involved on behalf of the town. “When a small group of individuals puts their mind to it,” he said. “They can do anything.” He said the park originally started as a dream, and after working with the town and “moving Earth,” it became a reality. “It’s phenomenal what people do in town.”

Kelley went on to describe the park as “a work in progress,” as “there’s a lot more we’d like to do out here,” he said. With the fence, driveway, signage and memorial under their belts, Kelley said some of the next projects to tackle are a bulletin board, gazebos, a pavilion and possibly an agility training area for the pooches.

A path to the rail trail, originally part of phase two, has already been completed, Kelley said, and added that the dog park parking is an added bonus for the trail users.

Standing underneath a large tree in the park, which provided shade from the oppressive 90-degree heat, Kelley looked out at the crowds of people and the unleashed dogs running free. “It’s incredible,” he said. “Having the crowds is just wonderful. And the dogs are apparently loving it.” Kelley has two black Labs himself, Shannon and Ryan.

For many residents, the dog park is a welcomed addition to the town. Both Stephanie Turner and Billie Bunting, Colchester residents, said they “couldn’t be more excited.” The couple often traveled to Wethersfield to utilize their dog park. “We’ve been waiting,” Turner

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Community Mourns Beloved Hebron Doctor

by Lindsay Fetzner

To the community, Dr. Amitabh Ram brought extensive medical expertise, compassion and a renowned devotion to his young patients and family.

On Thursday, July 15, the doting pediatrician passed away due to illness at the age of 51, leaving behind family, friends, patients and students whose lives he touched in so many ways.

Ram left behind his mother, Geeta, wife of 24-and-a-half years, Piyali, daughter, Pronoma, and younger brother, Jai, who resides in India.

Educated at the National Medical College in Calcutta, India, Ram followed in his mother’s footsteps and became a pediatrician. He practiced in India, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Family members said he often told them, “I can’t think of myself being anything other than a pediatrician.”

Ram and his wife moved to Glastonbury in 1994 after completing his residency in New York City while attending Columbia University. Shortly after, Ram became an assistant clinical professor at the University of Connecticut (UConn) Medical School.

In 1999, Ram built his practice in Hebron, alongside his wife, from the bottom up, opening his doors without a single patient. Piyali said it was word of mouth that created the success of the practice, which Hebron resident Karie-anne Everlith said, “half the town” went to.

“We started with zero,” Piyali said, working seven days a week when the practice first opened. Then, in 2002, Ram opened a second practice in Hartford. Piyali, who serves as the administrator for both of the offices, said some of Ram’s patients were traveling from Hartford to Hebron to see him, and that was a forerunner in the decision to open the second office.

Both Piyali and Pronoma said Ram was “totally patient-minded.” Even on Sundays, when the Hartford office was closed, he would travel there to meet them. Be it Christmas morning or New Year’s Eve, his patients could count on him to be there, no matter the time of day.

Piyali said Ram used to say he had two kids, one of which was his daughter and the other, his practice.

A mother of two from Hebron, Elizabeth Blecker, said her family questioned whether her son had an autism spectrum disorder when he

was just over 2 years old. “The first thing I did, literally, was pick up the phone and call Dr. Ram,” Blecker said. “It was always the same way,” she added, with Ram asking if she could come to the office “right now.”

Even when her kids were “sick with basic things,” Blecker said she “half-expected him to show up at the door.”

Susan Redman, a Hebron resident, said Ram “made phone calls in the middle of the night” and always took the time to explain everything.

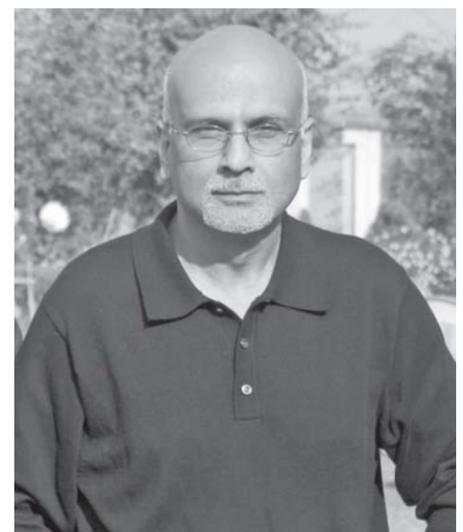
“He was just that amazing...and I couldn’t [have had] my kids in better hands,” Blecker said.

For Hebron resident Shawn Hartan, Ram’s dedication proved true yet again nearly seven years ago when her daughter ran a fever and was lethargic, and it was assumed that she had mononucleosis. After bringing her into Ram’s office and completing blood work, Hartan said Ram listened to her lungs and “let out a sigh of relief.”

“I can sleep well tonight,” Ram told Hartan. “It’s pneumonia.”

“The thing I loved about him the best was

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Beloved Hebron doctor Amitabh Ram passed away last week. He is seen here in Calcutta, India, where he visited an education center run by his nonprofit organization.

Dogs cont. from Front Page

said, as the park is only a five-minute commute from their home. Turner and Bunting brought along their two rescue dogs, Tucker, a Labrador mix, and Daisy, a border collie mix, to enjoy the new park.

The Balaski family, from Salem, also brought their two canines, both rescue dogs, on Sunday. Darryl Balaski said his pooch Bella, a 4-year-old part-Jack Russell and part-Chihuahua from Puerto Rico, is a celebrity in the community. "Everybody knows her in town," he said, adding, "She's my best friend."

Accompanying Bella under the shade of the large tree in the park was Pepper, a 3-year-old toy poodle from Arkansas. Darryl, in addition to his wife Marnie and daughter Jaden, frequented the Norwich dog park, and are thrilled to have a park closer to home.

These dogs will join the approximately 1,500 registered dogs in Colchester. According to the dog warden, there are nearly 1,800 dogs in town that are unregistered. But they may not use the park, as dogs must be vaccinated, licensed and wear tags.

Dog Park Committee members were equally as excited to finally unveil the park to the public.

"I'm ecstatic," said Nelson, adding lightheartedly, that having opening day finally come around is "a huge weight lifted" off of her. Nelson explained that the past couple weeks and months have been "really busy, but really exciting" for the committee members, between cleaning up the park and collecting materials for the opening which sometimes kept the crew at the park until 11 at night.

Nelson, who has a 3-year-old border collie named Cooper, said the best part of the day was "seeing all the dogs walk around the park. "It's

all about a place to play off leash," she said.

The members of the committee, volunteers, sponsors and vendors made the park become a reality, Nelson said, adding, "It's definitely a group effort."

Committee member Carol Small said overall, "It's been going really, really good," but added, "we still have things we need to get done... We'll call that phase two," Small said. Her 7-year-old pooch Payne Stewart, a sheltie mix, later accompanied Small at the celebration.

The committee raised approximately \$40,000 for the park, Nelson said. And, the park came at no additional cost to the taxpayers, Schuster said. Funds were raised from several events, including a walk-a-thon last September, sales at the annual tag sale, and sales from bricks that will pave the entrance of the path into the bullpen, where dogs can be unleashed, among others. Money raised from over 100 bricks is estimated at \$7,000, Nelson said. There were also many donations from donors and sponsors that contributed to the construction of the park.

In July of 2009, the park project was brought before the Board of Selectmen and approved, Nelson said. It is a two-acre site, which is divided into two parts, one for smaller dogs and one for large dogs that is completely fenced in.

Nearly 30 years ago, the site was the location of the town dump, which was capped many years ago. One of the reasons the site was chosen is that the town already owned the property.

Donations are still being accepted for the park. They can be mailed or dropped off to Colchester Parks and Rec. Committee, c/o Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT



First Selectman Gregg Schuster, fourth from right, and members of the Colchester Dog Park Committee at last Sunday's opening ceremonies.

06415 with attention to Dog Park Committee. Bricks can also still be purchased and personalized online at www.bricksrus.com/order/colchesterdogpark.

Sponsors also included Colchester Rotary Club, B&M Upholstery Supply, Al's Absolute Best Restoration and Cleaning Services, Colchester Dental Group, Skyview Realty, A-1 Homebuyers and Yoga for Health.

The fenced-in, off-leash dog park is located at 89 Old Amston Rd. It is free and open to residents and non-residents of Colchester. The hours are a half-hour after sunrise to a half-hour before sunset. Parking is available on site as well. For more information, visit www.colchesterct.gov/dogpark or on their Facebook page.

Doctor cont. from Front Page

how he took the time to explain everything," said Redman. Many parents remember Ram drawing on the exam room paper to explain the prognosis of their children.

"He was so knowledgeable," Redman said. "Probably the most intelligent doctor I ever met. He could diagnose everything."

Everlith also praised Ram for his candor. "He wasn't overzealous with medicine," she said. "If he felt there was a practical solution, he went with it. He did what he felt was right for the kids."

Ram's memory, too, was one quality that never went unnoticed, by both patients and family members. Whether he was talking to a parent with one child or four, Ram had an ability to "remember everyone's medical history," his daughter said. "It was something really special," she added.

"Anytime my kids would get sick, he would ask about each of the other kids," said Everlith. "Having four kids, that's kind of special."

Hebron resident Linda Waitkus agreed and said "he was always interested and always wanted to know how the other children were

doing." Waitkus' children, ages 18 to 28, went to Ram ever since he opened his doors.

Pronoma said her father was "a man of very few words," but always had a way with interacting with all of his patients, forming a special bond with them.

Heidi Warner, a Marlborough resident and mother of three, said her children are "devastated that he won't be their doctor anymore." "My kids loved him," she said, and added that her children "looked forward to going to see him, which is amazing."

A couple of months ago, Hartan said her 8-year-old son Brian had to go to the emergency room. On the way home from the hospital, Brian told his mother, "I think I want to be a doctor and help people like [Ram] does."

Pronoma, a senior at UConn, said she too wants to pursue the sciences and get a master's degree in immunology. She is currently a double major at UConn, working toward a degree in sociology and molecular biology with a minor in human rights.

The devotion Ram had stretched far beyond the confines of his two practices in the state,

and into a place he once called home.

In 2004, Ram underwent a major surgery, and after getting well, family members said he believed God had given him a second life and a greater purpose.

About a year later, Ram started a nonprofit organization called Magis Sylvestris International Health Agency (MSIHA), with a goal of serving under-privileged children in India.

In Varanasi, India, Ram set up a computer literacy center and spoken English classes at a school for deaf children.

And, in Calcutta, Ram started an education center for children "from scratch" for children. He hired two computer teachers and one English teacher. Piyali said without a knowledge of the English language in India, it is extremely difficult to get a job. As time went on, kids who attended the center grew up, and were eventually employed by Ram, which Pronoma described as "novel" and a "community education model" for the children from lower-socio-economic backgrounds.

Family members said Ram's goal when he

began the project was to take one child from the area and "give them a better life," which he accomplished by leaps and bounds. Piyali said Ram traveled to India often, usually going there at least twice a year.

Ram's dedication to his work proved true again this past June, when, for the first time since his major surgery six years ago, he took time off for his illness. In 2004, he returned to work 19 days post-operation.

"He was truly unique," Blecker said. "And we're so lucky he decided to hang his shingle right up the street."

Family members said with Ram's passing that both practices will "still go on with his philosophy" and they will run them "like he wanted us to."

A memorial service will be held in Ram's memory at the Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St., Glastonbury, on Saturday, July 31, from 3-6 p.m.

Charitable donations can also be made to MSIHA at PO Box 359, Hebron, CT 06248.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

When people in the area learn I'm from Manchester, it's not altogether uncommon for them to mention that they like eating at that place in town that sells the burgers with the giant cheese.

"Ah, you mean Shady Glen," I respond.

"Yes, that's it!" they answer, usually with a big smile on their face.

Shady Glen is a Manchester institution, but its eats are known throughout the area, from its many varieties of delicious homemade ice cream to its cole slaw, which is so popular it's sold by the gallon and served up at cook-outs and church picnics throughout the area (including at a chicken barbecue this weekend at Gilead Congregational Church in Hebron).

But the cheeseburgers are what's made Shady Glen famous not just in the area, but nationwide too. Anyone who's had one knows why; there is more cheese than burger, so much so the cheese spills out and crisps up. It's been described as a UFO of cheese, though to me it more resembles rays of delicious, crispy sun.

So you can imagine my shock when I learned over the weekend the cheese had changed. A friend of mine and fellow Manchester native, who was visiting from out of state, said he had been to Shady Glen and was shocked by what he saw. He commented, only half-jokingly I suspect, that it was just a bitter reminder that you really can't go home again.

I was appalled at hearing they changed the cheese, but also intrigued, and stopped by Shady Glen on my way home from work Monday to see what the fuss was all about.

To be honest, you notice a difference before you even take a bite. The cheese is no longer that perfect shade of orange; it's more of a yellowish-orange. The crispy cheese surrounding the burger isn't *quite* as crispy. It's still possible to break it off and eat it separately from the burger (growing up, I used to alternate between eating it that way and just doing the crispy cheese and the burger at once, in several big bites), but it's a bit more sloppy an endeavor. It's a good burger, and a good deal better than anything you'd get at a fast-food place, but it's not *the* Shady Glen cheeseburger.

So what happened? Why did Shady Glen tinker with the cheese that's made it known across the country? Well, according to the *Journal Inquirer* (which ran a front-page story about the new cheese on Monday; yes, this is

big news around here), it wasn't the restaurant's idea. Shady Glen's cheese supplier, Schreiber Foods of Green Bay, WI, switched to buying its milk from a Missouri farm instead of its "usual northern counterparts."

The executive manager of Shady Glen, William Hoch Jr., told the *J*I the milk "makes all the difference." The farm change resulted in a switch in certain characteristics of the milk, such as its pH balance, and that was reflected in the cheese itself.

Some customers, according to the *J*I, just hate the new cheese. One longtime customer was quoted as saying she wouldn't be back to the restaurant – for a burger anyway – until the cheese is changed.

Now, I didn't think it was *that* bad. Is it the cheese I grew up with, or that I had as recently as last year? No. But it still tastes pretty good, and while the cheese isn't as crisp and is perhaps a bit more gooey than it should be, the end result is still better, a good deal less sloppier, than trying to prepare it for yourself in your kitchen.

But Hoch recognizes it's not what customers are used to, not the product that put Shady Glen on the map. (And just how well-known is it? Earlier this year, the Food Network had a show in which various cooking show hosts and executives of the network spoke of their favorite places in the country to eat cheese. One of those interviewed selected Shady Glen. Surrounded by fancy-sounding eateries in Los Angeles and New York City was little Shady Glen of Manchester, CT. That was pretty cool.) So he's been working hard, with a different Wisconsin supplier, to try to replicate the old cheese recipe, this time using milk from those northern cows. He said he hopes to have the problem solved by the end of the month.

I wish him well. In the meantime, there's still plenty of other stuff to stop by Shady Glen for, from that aforementioned delicious ice cream to their piping hot crinkle cut fries that you have to salt yourself but somehow they're better that way to even their soda, which is made the old fashioned way, by spraying a glob of syrup into a glass and mixing it with carbonated water, on the spot. (Trust me, you'll notice a difference. Immediately.) And, even though it's not yet back to its old self, a pretty good cheeseburger too.

* * *

See you next week.

Angry Motorist Throws Milkshake at Fellow Driver

An apparent case of road rage involving a flying milkshake brought Portland Police to the Tri Town Plaza Tuesday afternoon.

According to police, an East Hampton woman was driving her car eastbound on Marlborough Street, in the right lane, when she attempted to cross into the left lane to turn into the Tri-Town Plaza. While doing so, the woman allegedly crossed in front of a white Chevrolet Suburban driven by Yajira Vega, 33, of 154 Orchard Hill Ln., Willimantic. The East Hampton woman then stopped at a red light, in the left turn lane, police said.

An "outraged" Vega then drove by the car from East Hampton and tossed her strawberry milkshake toward it, police said. According to police, the shake, which came from Sonic, flew through the East Hampton woman's open passenger window, landing within her car and spraying the inside of the vehicle and dash-

board with strawberry shake. Vega then sped off, continuing up Route 66, police said.

Police said the "drenched" East Hampton woman then called 911 and relayed Vega's vehicle information. Portland officers then requested the information be passed on to East Hampton Police, who located Vega's vehicle and detained her until Portland officers could respond.

Vega, who told police she was upset about the East Hampton woman cutting her off and also stopping quickly, was issued a \$375 ticket for throwing objects at a motor vehicle. According to Sgt. Scott Cunningham, the East Hampton driver denied cutting Vega off or stopping too quickly.

While road rage incidents are nothing new, Cunningham said with a laugh, "That's a first with the shake," and added, "I hope it's not a sign of things to come."

East Haddam Man Charged With East Hampton Home Break-In

A two-hour manhunt led to the arrest Wednesday of an East Haddam man who had allegedly broken into a home on Gadpouch Road, East Hampton Police said.

Richard LaFountain, 28, of 8 Haywardville Rd., East Haddam, was charged July 21 with third-degree burglary, second-degree criminal mischief, interfering with police and escape from custody, police said.

Police said they were first alerted to the Gadpouch Road residence by a neighbor who reported seeing a "suspicious" motor scooter parked in the driveway. Before calling police, the neighbor also alerted another nearby resident, who went to the house to investigate, police said. Police said that resident discovered the doors to the home had been broken into and the house was not secure. The resident then walked into the house and interrupted LaFountain, who was in the process of burglarizing the residence, police said. Once he saw he was spotted, police said, LaFountain left the house, got on his motor scooter and fled the scene.

East Hampton Police Officer Kevin Wilcox arrived at that time and saw LaFountain fleeing on the scooter, heading east on Gadpouch, police said. Police said Wilcox attempted to stop LaFountain, but he continued to flee and "was able to elude capture in the rural area of town."

Wilcox and fellow officers Jason Wishart and John Wilson then began patrolling the area, attempting to find LaFountain, police said. After speaking with residents, receiving

a few "anonymous tips" and searching for LaFountain for two hours, police said, it was learned he fled the area on foot after ditching his scooter in the woods, and was thought to be a few miles away from the alleged crime scene.

Police said they received information that LaFountain might be on foot on a portion of the old Air Line Trail near Childs Road. Wishart responded to the area, police said, and captured LaFountain on the trail, near Forest Street. LaFountain was taken into custody and did not resist arrest, police said.

Police said LaFountain admitted to his involvement in the crime and brought police to his scooter, which he had dumped in the Meshomasic State Forest, about one mile from the scene of the alleged crime. The scooter was seized as evidence, police said, and LaFountain was arrested on the burglary and criminal mischief charges. Police said it has not yet been confirmed whether LaFountain stole anything from inside the residence he was allegedly burglarizing, but they said no stolen items were found in his possession.

While in custody, police said, LaFountain attempted to escape through a window at the police department. Police said he was captured "almost immediately" near the parking lot by Wishart, Wilson and Officer Matthew Hanlon. LaFountain was additionally charged with the aforementioned interfering and escape from custody charges.

LaFountain's bond was set at \$50,000, and he was due in court yesterday, July 22.

Hebron Police News

7/12: Michelle Ortiz, 40, of Manchester, was transported via Hebron Ambulance to Manchester Memorial Hospital for a "medical evaluation," after veering off Route 85, State Police said. At about 2:57 p.m., State Police said, Ortiz was traveling northbound on Route 85 in the area of 626 Gilead St., when the 1994 Mitsubishi 300GT went off the roadway toward the right shoulder and struck a street sign and two mailboxes. The vehicle sustained front- and passenger-side damage, State Police said. Ortiz was wearing a seatbelt, according to State Police. She has since been discharged from the hospital.

Portland Police News

7/13: Two juvenile males were arrested for possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, Portland Police said.

7/16: Kevin Borowicz, 19, of 708 Laurel Grove Rd., Middletown, was charged with DUI and obstruction of view, police said.

East Hampton Police News

7/4: Jeremy Adams, 39, of 1A Riverview Dr., East Windsor, was arrested for failure to drive right, DUI, drinking while driving, possession of drug paraphernalia and narcotics, and possession of drug paraphernalia and narcotics within 1,500 feet of a school, East Hampton Police said.

7/10: A 16-year-old juvenile was arrested for disorderly conduct and assault, police said.

Colchester Police News

7/11: Sometime between Saturday, July 10 and Sunday, July 11, a 2000 Kawasaki KX dirt bike was stolen from Westchester Road, Colchester Police said.

7/12: Jody Kress, 34, of 551 Old Hartford Rd., was charged with second-degree forgery and criminal attempt to illegally obtain prescription drugs, Colchester Police said. According to police, the victim was the CVS on Main Street in Colchester. According to police, Kress attempted to obtain a drug via a forged prescription.

7/13: Jonathan Hennessey, 26, of 1555 Route 12, Gales Ferry, was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

7/13: Ashley Post, 22, of 24 Gill St., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

7/13: Benjamin Adams, 20, of 27 Myrna Dr., Marlborough, turned himself in for three counts of failure to appear and two counts of violation of probation, State Police said.

Hebron Selectmen Eye Closing Roads, Applying for STEAP Money

by Lindsay Fetzner

Last Thursday, July 15, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) discussed discontinuing three roads in town, several options for a state grant proposal and moving forward with a plan to improve technology in the Town Office Building.

The three roads targeted for possible discontinuation are portions of Grayville Road, Crouch Road and Jagger Lane. The three had also been discussed at the July 1 BOS meeting.

At last Thursday's meeting, Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that, according to the town attorney, David Holtman, the discontinuance of roads is a two-step process. First, a resolution must be adopted, signed and maintained as a record for the town. The resolution must then be submitted to a town meeting for approval. If and when approved, the road is then deemed as discontinued.

It was also noted that if only a portion of a road is discontinued, as opposed to an entire roadway, that particular portion must be clearly described to prevent inquiries on which portion is discontinued and which is not, according to Therrien.

The portion of Grayville Road that would be discontinued starts at the western boundary of 181 Grayville Rd. and runs west to Jones Street. The presently-unimproved portion of Crouch Road would be discontinued. Lastly, the presently-unimproved portion of Jagger Lane, beginning at the existing cul-de-sac and running west to the intersection of Route 85, would be discontinued.

All discontinuations were referred to a future town meeting, which has yet to be scheduled.

Also at the meeting, Therrien discussed upgrading some of the outdated pieces of technology in the Town Office Building. Therrien reported that two computers in the office alone had crashed within the past couple of weeks – that of Interim Finance Director Elaine Griffin and another in the assessor's office. Therrien estimated that it takes at least 20 minutes each morning for computers to completely boot up.

"Let's get the town where it should be," Therrien said.

Although Therrien said she is "not a lease fan when it comes to computers," she said it makes sense because of how fast technology changes. With an 8-year-old server, Therrien suggested purchasing new technology items, such as computers, servers, hardware and software.

Board of Finance (BOF) member Mal Leichter was in attendance at the meeting, and agreed with Therrien in moving forward with a technology plan.

"We don't have much choice," he said, adding that if the town were to let the present equipment go any longer, information could be lost.

The selectmen voted to allocate \$17,000 from the CIP budget and \$12,000 from capital non-recurring, contingent upon approval from the BOF.

With the annual state Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant application due July 20, the BOS also spent some time at last week's meeting discussing a few options of where the possible grant money could be directed.

Therrien initially recommended the BOS re-

quest a \$300,000 grant. Out of that amount, she suggested \$100,000 be allocated for planning purposes (referred to as the charrette process) and another \$100,000 for continuing the façade program, not only on Main Street, but in other areas of town as well. For street plantings on Main Street, \$30,000; sidewalk connections, \$50,000; and \$20,000 for a community events sign for Main Street.

Some board members felt the town should apply for the maximum \$500,000 that is available from the grant, and to find other improvements that could make up the additional \$200,000.

The BOS voted to authorize Therrien to submit the application of no more than \$500,000 for economic development.

However, after the meeting, Therrien learned that STEAP funds couldn't be used for planning purposes, unless the end result is capital costs. As a result, the Economic Development Commission voted this week on the following areas to apply for in the grant application, totaling \$500,000:

For façade and signage improvements to businesses in town, which will extend beyond Main Street, \$302,000. At least 25 percent of the cost must be paid by private property owners, Therrien said. Sidewalk installation accounted for \$93,500. It includes sidewalks from routes 66/85 to the Town Office Building, in front of Ted's shopping center, and along the south side of Main Street from Route 316 to Pendleton Drive, Therrien said.

An additional \$52,000 was designated for tree installation along Main Street and for im-

provements to landscape. For a community events sign to be assembled on the corner of routes 66 and 85, \$20,500 was allocated. Also, \$32,000 was set aside for a pedestrian crosswalk signal. Therrien said it would be placed in front of the Village Green District along with a new traffic light.

Therrien said the town will most likely hear back from the state in September as to whether it would receive the STEAP grant money.

Also at the meeting, Matthew Barrett of the volunteer fire department was appointed as assistant chief officer, as recommended by Fire Chief Fred Speno. As the assistant chief officer, Barrett will continue his current duties overseeing the operations of station one and its members, as well as station two and three.

Selectman Jeff Watt said he was thrilled to see someone in the department "come up through the ranks.

"I am very excited to see this action take place," he said.

Dan Phelps of the fire department praised Barrett and supported his appointment. "Matt has done a great job," he said, adding that Barrett has gained the respect of the people in the department and "highly recommended" him for the position.

Also at the meeting, the Hebron Code of Ethics was approved, as amended by the Ethics Study Committee, to be in effect starting on Aug. 1, 2010.

The next regularly-scheduled meeting of the BOS will be Thursday, Aug. 19, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, as its Aug. 5 meeting has been canceled.

Town Hires New Hebron Finance Director

by Lindsay Fetzner

On Monday, Aug. 2, Hebron will have a new addition to the town; Lisa Hancock will assume her role as finance director.

Hancock, 49, comes to town with over 26 years of experience in public finance. She was appointed to the position at the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting last Thursday, July 15.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said Thursday that Hancock has "years of experience in the financial area," where she is "highly regarded." Therrien added that in the interview process with an outside panel, including town officials from surrounding communities, Hancock "came out number one."

John Elsesser, town manager of Columbia, Alan Desmarais, retired finance director of Manchester and Jeff Jylkka, finance director of East Hampton, were all part of the outside panel.

In the interview, Hancock said the group asked some "very thorough questions" in an effort to "really get to know if the person had a good understanding."

The top three candidates then were interviewed by Therrien, Interim Finance Director Elaine Griffin and Board of Finance member Lynn Guerriero. Hancock said she was pleased with this interview.

"It was very laid back," Hancock said, adding, "They made me feel very comfortable."

Jylkka said this week Hancock "impressed myself and certainly she impressed the other



Lisa Hancock

two panelists." He said he has known her professionally for 10 years, and added that she's "well-respected amongst the other [town] finance directors."

He added, "She is a great person, very nice personality. ... I can't say anything bad about her, only good things."

Griffin said Hancock "definitely has all of the skills and expertise" for the \$85,000-a-year position. During the final interview, Griffin said she focused a lot of her questions around communication skills, which was "the definitive problem with the former finance director."

Hancock, Griffin said, is "very communicative."

"She is definitely more than qualified and I think I will be able to work quite well with her," Griffin said.

The town's former finance director, Jim Day, was fired in October 2009 and later sued the town, alleging he was terminated for "whistle-blowing" and "practicing his right to free speech." (The case is still pending.) One month after his firing, Griffin was appointed as the interim finance director. When Hancock assumes her post next month, Griffin will resume her role as financial administrator.

Hancock's was one of approximately 60 resumes that were received for the finance director position. She said "it feels wonderful" to come out on top.

After graduating from the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg, Hancock was hired as an accountant in Pinellas Park, FL, where she worked for three years. Over the years, Hancock has worked her way up the ranks, eventually accepting her present position as finance director in Wethersfield.

The Glastonbury resident said she always wanted to work for the federal government, but

she found in her first position out of college, that she "really enjoyed that kind of work."

"I moved right up through the system," she said. "I went from accountant to a senior accountant to a controller level only within a few years."

After 14 years as controller for the Town of Glastonbury, Hancock became the chief financial officer for the Town of Colchester and for Colchester public schools.

She said she was hired "to bring them together and form one financial operation." She described the role as "quite challenging" and "a major undertaking," both getting people to work together and earning their trust.

In 2004, Therrien – then the town manager in Wethersfield – hired Hancock as the director of finance in Wethersfield, where she has worked ever since.

"The feeling that somebody who has hired you before has hired you again after going through a complete process...that just says a lot for the both of us," Hancock said.

She described Therrien as "the most ethical person that I have ever met."

"I really enjoyed working with her," Hancock said. "She has a lot of talent."

Working with Therrien again will definitely be a highlight of Hancock's new position. At last Thursday's meeting, Hancock said, "what set the hook" for the position was when Therrien was named town manager in Hebron. "It made it even more appealing to me," she said.

Among the other things Hancock said she is looking forward to will be working with the staff in town. She said at last week's meeting she had been told that Griffin "has done a phenomenal job" as the interim finance director, and "is going to be another asset." Hancock said

Griffin will not only be "an excellent right arm" but a "left arm too."

Hancock said she will also use her "really strong negotiation skills" in the area of improving the technological needs of the town. "There is a lot of work that needs to be done," Hancock said. "I'll drive a hard bargain...I don't let up."

Looking ahead, Hancock said "there is always a challenge in government," with one of the hardest things being "trying to do more with less." Hancock said she will look at ways to accomplish and prepare a budget that will meet the needs and services of the citizens "in a way that is controllable and affordable."

Hancock also comes to town with leadership experience, largely from her current role as president of the Connecticut Government Finance Officers Association (CT GFOA). Mentoring colleagues and creating training programs with a focus on cost-saving measures and new technological processes for financial operations are among her accomplishments while part of the association, Hancock said.

Hancock also held several other officer and board positions with CT GFOA, and served on its audit committee and held the position of program chairman for the association.

When she comes on board, Hancock said, she wants to put efficiencies into place that will alleviate staff efforts and allow for more focus on revenue generation and expenditure savings.

Hancock said she plans on working together as a team with the other staff members to "try to find savings, to try to tighten things where they can be and make things more efficient." Taking that approach, Hancock said, she will be sure to get everyone's input. "Before you make any drastic changes," Hancock said, "make sure all the stakeholders are involved."

Candidate Unhappy with Opponent's Website Postings

by Claire Michalewicz

August is approaching, which means political primaries are almost here. This year, two Democratic candidates will be facing off in a primary for the probate judge candidacy, for a new probate district that includes Portland, East Hampton, Marlborough and East Haddam.

And the two candidates don't seem too thrilled with each other, particularly over what one of them posted on his campaign website.

On Aug. 10, registered Democrats will choose between Stephen Kinsella, the current probate judge in Portland and Marlborough, and Kenneth Barber, an East Hampton lawyer. The winner will go on to face Republican candidate Jennifer Berkenstock, another East Hampton attorney, in the November election.

As the date of the primary approaches, both candidates said they're optimistic.

"I think we're gonna prevail in this," said Barber, he pointed out that he and Kinsella were "two different types of people," with different experiences and qualifications.

Kinsella has worked in law for decades, working as a city attorney in Hartford before being elected judge of probate. Barber, meanwhile, boasts a variety of experiences, including past jobs as a police officer and university professor, and years of experience in the Army.

Kinsella, though, also thinks he'll win. "I think I've got quite a bit of support," he said. "I feel I'll be the winner. Overall, I feel good."

Barber said his campaign has been a learning experience for him. One decision in particular, he said, created some problems for him: the decision to post Kinsella's divorce papers on his website, www.barberforprobate.com. Barber, who has since taken the papers off his site, said posting them "was probably not the smartest thing I ever did."

However, Barber noted the papers were publicly available at Middletown Superior Court. "It's quite easy to get," he said.

Barber said he took the papers down after getting feedback from people who thought it was a bad idea. He said he never talked about Kinsella's divorce publicly, but just put the papers on his site because he thought Kinsella was being misleading about his marital status.

"He told people he was happily married," Barber said, "and that's not entirely accurate."

Kinsella, though, called Barber's statement "a complete fabrication," explaining that he had never tried to mislead anyone about his marital status. He called Barber's decision to post the documents "unconscionable." His divorce, he said, was a personal matter, and it had no place in a political campaign. Kinsella said he and

his wife had split amicably, and said he worried how his two sons would feel if they discovered their parents' divorce papers were posted online.

On his site, Barber also posted other court papers involving Kinsella, stemming from a 2008 dispute with a neighbor over the maintenance of their shared driveway. Kinsella said that case has since been resolved. However, while the divorce papers have been taken down, the papers dealing with the 2008 dispute remain on the website as of press time.

"I don't understand how anybody would do that," Kinsella said about Barber's decision to post the court documents about him. "I didn't do anything illegal or wrong. It's just not right."

Kinsella said Barber's actions raised concerns about Barber's professional abilities.

"What kind of person who wants to be a judge does that?" he said. He pointed out that since Barber posted information about him, he might also post information about his probate clients.

"Maybe it was a wrong decision," Barber explained. He also discussed his experiences as a Bloomfield police officer, when he was suspended for four weeks in 1998 for making inappropriate comments. Barber said this had

happened "many, many years ago."

"You'll never tell the whole story," he added, explaining that there were other people involved in the controversy, and he didn't want to bring them into the discussion.

Barber said his campaign had been a challenge for him so far, but he has been humbled by the support he's been receiving from residents. "I would say it's a success," he said. "No matter where I go, I have people approaching me."

Barber said he was confident that he was the best candidate in the race, and expected to win.

"A lot of people have seen the level of work that I've done," he said. "People know what I'm really about."

Barber also said Kinsella had political connections that could interfere with his work as a judge, since he comes from a family of Democratic politicians. "If you've been eating, breathing, drinking politics your whole life," he said, "I don't think there's a place for that as a judge."

Kinsella, though, said he didn't view the judgeship as a political position. He said he hopes voters look at his record as an attorney and a public servant.

"I think once they look at that," he said, "they'll see that there's a difference between the candidates."

YPCCA Performing *Les Miz* Next Week in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

The Young People's Center for Creative Arts (YPCCA) is busy preparing for its annual summer musical, and this year, they're staging *Les Misérables*, a show that many of those involved say is special to them.

Every July, YPCCA campers meet for a four-week camp, rehearsing songs and dance numbers that culminate in a full-scale musical production. The camp schedule is strenuous, but campers and staff say the experience is worth it.

"This is the hardest part of the year, but we all live for this month," said Ryan Addario, YPCCA Director Rachel Mansfield's assistant. "We really are like family here." Addario has been with YPCCA for eight years, and the first production he was involved with was their 2002 production of *Les Misérables*.

The East Hampton-based YPCCA, founded in 1982 by Mansfield's father, Mike, is a non-profit group that gives teens a creative outlet beyond the experiences they might get in school. The camp is open to area students from fifth grade up through 2010 high school graduates. Earlier this summer, they staged *Peter Pan* with elementary school students, and held a fundraiser show with a cast of children and adults in the spring.

Addario stressed that while the musical production is the part of the YPCCA program that most people end up seeing, the other things they rehearse are just as important. This past Thursday, YPCCA put on a cabaret show, showcasing dance numbers and songs that they'd been rehearsing in their other classes during the camp.

Despite all the effort that goes into the camp, Addario said it doesn't feel like work for him. "It's a camp for like-minded people, so it just feels like playtime," he said.

Addario said the play was a challenge for campers, since the subject matter is heavier than many other musicals.

"It's not easy for a middle-class kid from

Connecticut to be a French beggar," Addario said. But, he said, students were successfully disappearing into their roles.

"I really am taken aback," said Addario, pointing out that the campers ranged in age from fifth grade to recent high school graduates. "You forget how old the kids are."

Despite the bleak subject matter, cast member Kevin Paley, 16, said there are some brighter moments in the production. "I like my part as Thénardier," Kevin said. "I like lightening the mood when everyone's dying."

Lindsay Shea, 18, said *Les Misérables* is her favorite musical of all time, and she and her friends started singing and dancing when they found out that Mansfield had chosen the play for their summer show.

Sixteen-year-old Martha Henze also said the show was special to her. YPCCA put on *Les Misérables* eight years ago, and Martha, then eight, said she remembered being "absolutely blown away" by the production. "It's come full circle," she said.

"We've all done other camps and nothing else compares," Kevin said.

"This camp is the best," said Martha. Martha said she'd attended other theater camps, but kept coming back to YPCCA because of the people she'd met.

Lindsay agreed. "You come back for the people," she said. "You make the best friends you've ever had."

"This is definitely the highlight of my summer," added Rachel Viccaro, 16. Rachel said the cast members would reminisce about the show for months, until in the fall, they started looking forward to next year's production.

"What an incredibly talented group," said Mansfield during rehearsal, as her campers put together an elaborate barricade of furniture used in the show's battle scenes. She said part of the reason she chose *Les Misérables* was that a former YPCCA music director, Chris Janke, had re-orchestrated the 2006 Broadway revival of



***Les Misérables* cast members rehearse a battle scene on a furniture barricade during a rehearsal this week. The YPCCA musical production will run from July 29-Aug. 1 at East Hampton High School.**

the show.

"It's really exciting to be doing it," Mansfield said. She said that because YPCCA was performing the school edition of the show, staff members were not legally allowed to act in it. "It makes it so we totally depend on kids. It's just them, singing and acting."

Mansfield also thanked the music director, Matt Campisi. "This show is as much his as mine," she said, explaining that the show included nearly two-and-a-half hours of continuous singing.

"They're really stepping up to the challenge," said Campisi of the cast members. YPCCA's summer program, he explained, was only four weeks long, and after only two-and-a-half

weeks of rehearsing, the show was coming along well because of the campers' dedication. "They all want to be here," he said. "They all want to do their best."

"You'll laugh, you'll cry and you'll want to come back for the next three shows," concluded Kevin.

YPCCA is presenting *Les Misérables* at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St., next Thursday through Saturday, July 29-31, at 7 p.m. each night. There will be a matinee performance Sunday, Aug. 1, at 2 p.m. Tickets, which can be purchased online at ypcca.org, cost \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and children age 6-16, and are free for kids under 5. Tickets will also be available at the door.

Colchester Selectmen at Odds Over Business ‘Advocate’ Position

by Katy Nally

A platform that First Selectmen Gregg Schuster ran on during last November’s election – hiring an economic development coordinator to bring business to Colchester – sent a wedge between the Board of Selectmen (BOS) at last Thursday’s meeting, pitting the board’s three Republicans against its two Democrats.

Also at the Thursday, July 15, meeting Schuster gave an update on Colchester’s resident state trooper program and said the next four-board/commission meeting between the town’s Police Commission, Police Retirement Board and boards of finance and selectmen, is scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 12, 7 p.m. at Town Hall. He said issues raised at the last police-town meeting held on June 30 would be addressed.

At the Thursday, July 15, meeting, selectmen agreed Colchester needs an economic development coordinator to bring businesses to town. However, one word used in the job description, “advocate,” set off selectmen Rosemary Coyle and James Ford. Coyle also noted the use of “appropriate,” saying it was subjective.

“For me, ‘advocate’ is a very disturbing word,” Coyle said.

Part of the job description approved last Thursday reads, “Advocate on behalf of appropriate businesses applying for permits to boards and commissions.” Coyle wanted to change the sentence to, “Work with businesses applying

to boards and commissions to facilitate the process.”

The definition of an advocate, Coyle said, is someone who “promotes the interests of another.” In this case, the economic development coordinator would advocate for businesses, Schuster said.

“I very strongly believe we do not pay a town employee to be an advocate,” Coyle said, adding, if anything, the economic development coordinator should “advocate for the town of Colchester.”

“That’s what I think we should be doing,” she said.

(After the meeting, Coyle said the economic development coordinator would be paid by the town but would also be advocating for business and, she warned, “you can’t have two masters.” But Schuster, and selectmen Stan Soby and Greg Cordova, disagreed.

“We do need someone to go up there and advocate on behalf of businesses,” Schuster said. “We need someone standing up there, saying this is what these businesses can bring to Colchester.”

Soby called the position “something that the town needs,” and added, “For too long this town has had the reputation of being business-unfriendly.”

Cordova said, “Someone should advocate for these people.”

Still, for Ford, a former member of the town’s Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), the

word “advocate” did not sit easy. As an advocate for businesses, Ford said, there’s a chance the economic development coordinator could come before the PZC with pre-determined decisions slanted toward business owners and developers.

“Once you cross the line to advocate,” Ford said, “you cross the line to pre-determined decisions.”

Coyle seconded Ford’s ideas, adding Colchester’s job description for the town planner, who is also associated with the PZC, never uses the term “advocate.” Instead, the phrase “works with” appears, which Coyle said was suitable.

Coyle made a motion to approve the economic coordinator’s job description with the amended sentence “Work with businesses...to facilitate the process,” instead of using “advocate” and “appropriate.”

Ford seconded her motion for the amendment, but it was voted down 2-3, Ford and Coyle for and Soby and Cordova against, with Schuster as the tie-breaking vote.

A new motion made by Soby to approve the job description as it was presented, was seconded by Cordova and passed 3-2. This time, Soby and Cordova for, Ford and Coyle against, and Schuster was again the tie-breaking vote.

Schuster said after the meeting that with the job description now finalized, the town would begin advertising for an economic development

coordinator very soon. “I’m not waiting,” he stressed.

The position would be part-time and is in this year’s budget for \$20,000. Schuster said the actual salary might be less than the allotted amount.

In his first selectman’s report, Schuster told the board he attended a state Department of Public Safety meeting in Meriden to discuss the possibility of regionalizing towns’ resident state troopers. He said about 20 state troopers attended, as well as many town officials.

Schuster said regionalization “will occur at some point” so the meeting was an opportunity to be “proactive” about a very far-off possibility.

Among other police matters, Schuster said another meeting between selectmen, the Police Commission, Police Retirement Board and the Board of Finance would be held Thursday, Aug. 12 to answer questions raised at the last four-board/commission meeting on June 30.

The June meeting was held in response to an exodus of three police officers of the Colchester force, during a month’s time. After the meeting, the Police Commission agreed to come forward with an action plan for the short- and long-term future of Colchester’s police force.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the BOS will be Thursday, Aug. 20, 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

Meet the New Colchester Board of Education Member

by Katy Nally

Brad Bernier, a firefighter, “micro” business owner, and former radioman first class for the U.S. Navy, is the newest member of the Board of Education (BOE).

Board members sought an unaffiliated applicant after Tim Lamp left because he moved out of town. It came down to a “very, very tough decision,” between two candidates, but the BOE unanimously chose Bernier, BOE Chair Ron Goldstein said.

“He brings an excitement,” Goldstein added. “He has a real interest in the school district.”

Bernier, 42, has been following the progress of the school district since his family moved to Colchester in 1992. He said the most notable aspect of his resume – his two girls, ages 9 and 14 – will be in Jack Jacter Intermediate School and Bacon Academy, respectively, come September. Part of the reason Bernier selected Colchester was because of the “fine reputation” of the schools, he said in his cover letter to the board.

During the interview process, last Tuesday, July 13, Bernier said he told BOE members he wished the schools would “maintain” the qualities he’s come to appreciate since his girls began at Colchester Elementary.

“The reputation [of the schools] that drew us to Colchester has shown itself to be well-

deserved,” Bernier said in his cover letter. “It will be an honor to have a part in sustaining that reputation for future generations.”

Goldstein said the board took notice of Bernier’s “commitment, passion for education and for putting the kids first.” “That’s our number one priority,” Goldstein added.

As a board member, Bernier said he would utilize his “strong work ethic and willingness to learn.”

“I think it’s going to be a challenge, but I look forward to it,” he said.

In the past, Bernier worked at the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department, but when he found a position in East Hartford as a firefighter, he had to relinquish his volunteer job. He has worked in East Hartford since 1997.

Before he became a firefighter, Bernier received his paramedic certification from Three Rivers College and completed 32 credits, part time, at the University of New Haven through a Navy development program.

In addition to having 16 years of experience fighting fires, Bernier has owned and operated Bernier Construction, LLC, since 2000.

Although he called it a “micro” business – hiring only a “handful” of employees at a time – Bernier said, as the owner, he has experience with balancing his own books.

He recognized his experience is not “remotely close to balancing a \$30 million budget,” but the process is “very similar,” just on a “smaller scale,” he said.

This past budget season, voters approved a \$31.05 million budget, at an increase of 3.31 percent over the 2009-10 package. Bernier said he had been following the process and realized “just maintaining the status quo” will be difficult for 2010-11.

“It’s going to be more challenging because of the reduced monies coming from the state and federal government,” he said.

Along with the budget process, Bernier also took note of residents’ ideas on the proposal.

“I have a fairly good sense of people’s thoughts,” he said.

At future BOE meetings, Bernier said he would welcome as much public input as possible, adding it’s better to hear from “50 people who don’t agree with you,” than no one at all. Bernier stressed he wanted to hear the “good, bad and different.”

When the time comes for his first, regular BOE meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 10, Bernier said, “I will truly go into this open-minded and willing to learn.” Being on the BOE all comes back to “doing the best we can for our kids,” he said.



The BOE welcomed a new member, Brad Bernier, after interviewing him and another candidate, Tuesday, July 13. Bernier is a firefighter for East Hartford and owns a construction company.

After 20 Years, Portland Dance Studio Owner Moves On

by Claire Michalewicz

Amber McAuliffe DiMauro started a dance studio when she was just 19, and 20 years later, she's ready to move on to other things. DiMauro, who has run Encore Dance Studio for two decades, is leaving her business in the hands of a friend.

"Twenty years is a long time to do anything," DiMauro, an East Hampton resident but native of Portland, said. "I'm done being a studio owner. I went in on my own terms, and I want to go out on my own terms."

"I'm a very determined person," DiMauro continued, recalling that initially some in town didn't take her seriously when she tried to open her studio. After signing a lease for a building in June, she had her studio up and running within two months, with help from family and friends. DiMauro said opening a dance studio was something she had always wanted to do, but at that point, the timing was right.

Encore is now at its third location, in the Portland Shopping Center on Marlborough Street, after several years in two separate facilities on Main Street. In addition, DiMauro said, she also ran second locations for a few years, in Glastonbury and East Hampton.

DiMauro is selling her studio to Beth Rondinone, who formerly owned a studio in Middletown. Rondinone had to close her studio because of escalating rent costs a few years ago, but was hoping for a chance to manager another one. Rondinone, who lives in Middletown, said she found out about Encore almost by accident, but was glad she had the opportunity to take over.

Rondinone and DiMauro had known each

other since childhood, Rondinone explained, when the two girls took dance classes together. Rondinone said her mother heard that DiMauro was looking to sell her business and urged her daughter to make the call. At first, she recalled, she was apprehensive about doing it, but within weeks, she and DiMauro had worked out an agreement.

"This is gonna be mine," Rondinone said, gesturing at the studio. "It's like a piece of me has been missing."

"You could tell she cared about who her kids were gonna dance with," she added, explaining that she was honored that DiMauro had chosen her to take over.

Rondinone, 37, said she hopes to run the studio for a few decades. "I think I have a lot left in me," she said.

But while Rondinone is the new owner of the studio – now named Bravo – DiMauro still plans to stick around, teaching one day a week. With the lightened work load, DiMauro said she's looking forward to being able to spend time with her daughter, MaJenta, who's now 9. Teaching dance classes in the evenings, DiMauro explained, has meant that she hasn't been home very often to have dinner with her daughter.

In addition, DiMauro added, she's hoping to spend more time in New York, training and working as a backstage director at the Broadway Dance Center.

The past few years, DiMauro said, have made it more difficult to run a dance studio. With a struggling economy, many customers have decided that dance classes are a luxury that had to be cut to save money, DiMauro. But, she

stressed, that wasn't the reason she was leaving her studio.

DiMauro said her love of dancing and working with kids has kept her in the business for so long. "It's more than learning dance," she explained. "They learn life skills and confidence." DiMauro started dancing when she was 5, when her mother pushed her into it as a way to overcome her shyness. Laughing loudly, DiMauro added that it was now hard to imagine that she had ever been shy.

Rondinone said she also looks forward to making a difference in her students' lives.

"I want to emulate being a positive role model," she said. "When they're really little, they follow after everything. They look up to everything I do."

Under Rondinone, there will be some changes, but she and DiMauro say they want to keep the transition from one director to another as smooth as possible. Rondinone said she wanted to change the name in order to differentiate between DiMauro's era and her era, but she consulted with DiMauro to find a name that went well with Encore. Rondinone said everything else, from the classes the studio offers to the tuition prices, will stay the same.

DiMauro said her students had been loyal over the years, and many of them were upset and concerned when she announced she was selling the studio. But, she said, they were now relieved that the studio would continue.

Fall dance classes start at Bravo on Sept. 13. Students can register during registration dates scheduled for July 28 from 5-8 p.m., July 31 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., and Aug. 4 from 4-8 p.m., or can call 860-342-0985 for more information.



Amber DiMauro, left, has sold her Encore Dance Studio to Beth Rondinone.

Motion Says Reimondo Is Owed a Hearing in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

The motion for a hearing filed by laid-off police chief Matt Reimondo's attorney contains a detailed description of one of the harassment complaints filed against Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe, but O'Keefe says the allegations are untrue.

The motion, filed last week by Reimondo's attorney Leon Rosenblatt, also claims that Reimondo is legally entitled to a hearing regardless of why he was laid off.

Reimondo had the beginning of a public hearing on July 2, but the hearing ended quickly after O'Keefe's attorney, Mark Sommaruga, filed a motion explaining that Reimondo did not have a right to a hearing, since he had been fired for budget reasons.

In last week's motion, Rosenblatt alleged that O'Keefe urged a female town employee to get into his car, and gave her a ride from the town hall to Stop & Shop, where her car was parked. According to Rosenblatt, the woman said O'Keefe rubbed and squeezed her leg.

The next day, the woman went to Reimondo to complain about O'Keefe's actions, Rosenblatt said in his motion. Another woman overheard their conversation and explained that O'Keefe had inappropriately touched her as well, the motion said. Rosenblatt said Reimondo encouraged the women to write down their complaints, and he forwarded them to the town attorney, Jean D'Aquila. From then, Rosenblatt's brief explains, the complaints were passed on to the Town Council, who started an investigation into them.

This was the first time one of the harassment incidents has been released to the public. O'Keefe, though, had a different version of events. In Attorney Mark Sommaruga's investigation into this and two other complaints, Sommaruga found no evidence to substantiate the woman's claims. The Town Council reviewed Sommaruga's report on May 25, and voted to accept it.

O'Keefe, Sommaruga said in his report, said he gave the woman a ride to Stop & Shop, but never touched her inappropriately. Instead, Sommaruga's report said, O'Keefe said he shook the woman's hand before she exited the car and told her that since she was new to the

town, she was welcome to come to him if she needed anything.

Rosenblatt's motion said that Reimondo delivered the written statements from the two women to D'Aquila on or about April 26. Days later, e-mails between O'Keefe and Finance Director Jeff Jylkka show, O'Keefe began asking Jylkka about possible cuts to the town's police department. The first e-mails were sent on April 30, the same day as the town council's first executive session to discuss the harassment allegations.

O'Keefe has said repeatedly that he started collecting data at that time because he thought the town's budget would fail at the May 5 referendum, and was researching areas where he could potentially make budget cuts. The budget passed, and Reimondo was laid off on June 22, when O'Keefe called him into his office, taking his gun and badge and having him driven home, Rosenblatt said in his brief.

Also in Rosenblatt's motion, he explained that the town did not actually eliminate Reimondo's position, since O'Keefe appointed first himself, and then Acting Lieutenant Michael Green, to the position.

Now that the town has received Rosenblatt's motion for a hearing, it is up to O'Keefe, with the advice of attorney Nicholas Grello, to decide if Reimondo deserves one. Sommaruga said if O'Keefe and Grello decide to grant Reimondo a hearing, it probably wouldn't happen until early or mid-August because of scheduling conflicts.

Sommaruga said he had reviewed Rosenblatt's motion. "I obviously don't agree with his view," he said. Sommaruga said he was reluctant to discuss the details of the harassment concerns, since he did not want to reveal any confidential information about the three women involved. "I'm reluctant to say if they're accurate," he said of Rosenblatt's description of events. "I think it's clear I did investigate this."

Rosenblatt said that not only was Reimondo entitled to a hearing, but O'Keefe never had the power to remove him to begin with. According to both the town's charter and its ordinances, Rosenblatt said, the town is required

to have a police chief, and the town manager does not have the authority to eliminate the position.

In addition, Rosenblatt said that state statute 7-278 requires a public hearing when a chief requests one after being dismissed for any reason. The language, Rosenblatt said, is "clear and unambiguous."

"There is absolutely nothing in the statute that limits the availability of a public hearing to dismissals for cause," Rosenblatt said in his motion. "The Town Manager's entire argument flows from the facile assertion [that] because he has the power to appoint a chief, he has the power to remove him. This is false."

In a statement released this week, six Town Council members (excluding Sue Weintraub) explained that they were confident that the harassment concerns were investigated properly, and that the investigation had nothing to do with the elimination of Reimondo's position.

"The harassment allegations against O'Keefe that are incorrectly part of this story were handled appropriately by the Council with all the information we had available to use at the time," the six council members said in their statement.

In addition, they stressed that Rosenblatt, who consulted with the claims, had clarified to Sommaruga that the women's claims were concerns, rather than complaints. The council members said Rosenblatt stressed to Sommaruga that the three claims did not warrant a formal investigation, but "open discussion to find ways to keep offensive conduct from happening in the future."

Weintraub was the lone council member to dissent on both Sommaruga's report about the harassment complaints and the council's decision to approve a severance package for Reimondo. In a statement released on Tuesday, Weintraub said five of her fellow council members (excluding Melissa Engel) were trying to make it seem as though they were being kept "out of the loop" concerning the harassment allegations and the decision to lay off Reimondo.

"These five council members and Engel ARE the loop," Weintraub wrote. She added later,

"Even if these five Council members only had access to the information I was given, why didn't they come to the conclusion that I did and do the right thing?"

At the last Town Council meeting on July 13, Weintraub raised questions about whether Michael Green was capable of leading the police department. Green's disciplinary records, obtained through an FOI request, show that Reimondo demoted Green from sergeant to patrolman for four-and-a-half months, from September 2009 to February 2010.

Reimondo's letter to Green about his demotion lists conduct unbecoming of an officer and dereliction/neglect of duty as reasons for his demotion, along with violations of regulations concerning command responsibility and the role of a shift supervisor.

O'Keefe responded in an e-mail that he was fully aware of Green's demotion, but that he considered other factors when choosing an acting lieutenant.

"I stand by my decision to appoint Sgt. Green into the Lieutenant position," he said. "He is most definitely qualified and the right person for this new role."

Green said he knew people had raised questions about his abilities to run the department, but assured them that he was capable. His disciplinary problems, he said, largely sprung from a personality clash with Reimondo.

"Frankly, it's not a big secret that Chief Reimondo and I have very different personalities and managerial styles and philosophies," Green said. "We butted heads from time to time."

Green said he did not feel the demotion was necessary, but said he accepted his punishment without complaint.

"I've never fought anything," he said. "I've just taken my lumps and moved on."

In another police department personnel matter, a Town Council meeting was scheduled for Thursday evening, after press time, to discuss a voluntary layoff request by an officer. The discussion was originally scheduled for the July 13 council meeting, but was rescheduled due to FOI concerns.

Portland Selectmen Talk About Possible Ethics Commission Changes

by Claire Michalewicz

Proposed changes to the town's ethics commission generated lengthy discussion at Wednesday night's meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS).

At the regular selectmen's meeting, Ethics Commission Chairman George Law presented the proposed changes to the ordinance that established the commission. The most notable change, he explained, was a change to the way investigations were handled. Under the current ordinance, Law explained, if a situation leads to a Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities investigation or legal action, the ethics investigation is halted. With the commission's proposed changes, the first selectman would be required to notify the commission that an investigation or legal action was happening, and the commission could determine whether to continue investigating.

"This way, it's not fully in the hands of the first selectman," Law explained.

Selectmen Sharon Peters and Brian Flood both questioned whether the ethics commission's investigation could interfere with legal action.

"The way the ordinance is presently written, it ties our hands," said ethics commission member Terri Larson. Peters agreed, but said

she worried about how evidence and any findings of the commission could affect litigation.

"We're just talking about the timing," Peters said, explaining that the ethics commission could conduct their own investigation afterward. Larson stressed that sometimes timing was important, and cited a case in which the ethics commission had to call a special meeting to investigate a case immediately.

Selectman Mark Finkelstein pointed out that the ethics commission was founded partly because of allegations of ethics violations from a former first selectman, and suggested finding an alternate way of investigating complaints that wouldn't leave the investigation in the first selectman's hands.

Flood suggested another change to the ordinance, because he worried that the commission's statement of policy, rather than the more comprehensive guidelines elsewhere in the ordinance, could be used to find ethics violations.

"It's my sense that it was very clear that this was not gonna be able to be used to find a violation," Flood said. He suggested removing this section of the ordinance, or making it clear that the statement was only for informational purposes.

The selectmen agreed to continue discuss-

ing the ordinance at a later meeting when all seven selectmen were present. (Carl Chudzik and Kathy Richards were both absent, and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield left early to view damage from Wednesday's thunderstorm.)

Also at the meeting, the selectmen continued to interview candidates for the School Facilities Study Committee, which is scheduled to start meeting in September. The committee will consist of two selectmen, two Board of Education members, and three regular members and two alternates selected from the public. The BOS is still waiting to interview three more candidates, and Bransfield said she hoped to schedule the interviews for their meeting on Aug. 4, and the BOS could choose candidates at that meeting.

The committee will study the use of space at all of the town's schools, except the high school, and try to determine whether the buildings will provide adequate space for project future enrollment.

The other major agenda item, the fire department's year-end fiscal report, was pushed back to a later meeting because Fire Chief Bob Shea was busy responding to calls about storm damage.

The next BOS meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 4, at 7:30 p.m. in the library.

Prior to the meeting, residents voted to extend the High Street water main all the way to the tanks at the top of the hill.

In a town meeting held before the regular Board of Selectmen's meeting, residents voted to expand the High Street water main project, rather than just replacing the main up to Spring Street as previously planned. Seven residents voted on the motion to appropriate \$125,000 from the water operating budget to put it toward the installation of 1,000 more feet of pipe, with six votes in favor of the expansion and one ballot disqualified because it was difficult to read.

The changes were proposed at the July 7 BOS meeting, when the selectmen closed an unused well development fund and transferred the money into the water operating budget.

The project was originally scheduled to extend all the way to the tanks, but in February, the BOS voted to scale back the project because the town had not allotted enough money for it. Wednesday's vote allows the projected to be completed as originally planned.

Hundreds Flock to Portland Fairgrounds for Fireworks Show

by Claire Michalewicz

Despite the heat and the threat of thunderstorms, Portland fireworks drew hundreds to the Portland Fairgrounds on Saturday for an evening of music, food, and of course, fireworks.

In a year when many other towns canceled their displays, Portland organizers said their event was a success, thanks to support from community members.

For many in the audience, the fireworks are an annual tradition.

"These are the best fireworks in Connecticut," said selectman Carl Chudzik.

Portland resident Erin Toller had a similar opinion. "They're the best fireworks ever," she said. "I haven't missed them since I was a toddler." This time, she brought along a friend, Christian Ayala, who said he was looking forward to seeing the display for the first time after hearing so many rave reviews from Toller.

Kevin McCarthy, from Hamden, said he'd been coming to Portland's fireworks for years. "This is a neat little town," he said. "It's fun."

McCarthy added he "would recommend anyone from out of town to come and see it at least once."

The fireworks pre-show included music from The Michael Cleary Band, a Portland-based rock and funk band, and a tribute to local residents who have served in the military.

This year's event was dedicated to former Portland Restaurant owner Michael Lastrina and to Salvatore Logano, grandfather of NASCAR driver Joey Logano. Both Lastrina and Logano died in 2009, and master of ceremonies Dave Kuzminski said they were both longtime contributors to the fireworks and to the Portland community. Kuzminski introduced a recorded tribute to Lastrina and Logano, done by Fireworks Committee co-chairman Ed Dunham. Narrating over a recording of Frank Sinatra's "My Way," Dunham recognized the two men for their contributions to the Portland community over the years.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield presented a proclamation declaring July 17 Joey

"Sliced Bread" Logano Day in Portland, explaining that the "sliced bread" moniker meant Logano was the best thing since it. Wayne "Duffy" Duff, a friend of Logano's family, accepted the award on his behalf.

Joey Logano's presence was also felt in the raffle prizes, including the grand prize, a door from his car. The door, Kuzminski explained, was one of the few pieces of Logano's car that remained intact during a crash on a race track. Portland resident Bill Evison won the door, while other prizes included a model of Logano's car, a T-shirt signed by Logano and gift certificates for local business.

In the hours leading up to the fireworks show, organizers said the event was running smoothly.

"We dodged the bullet missing the rain," said John Steele, who was cooking hotdogs at one of the concession stands. Steele said people were coming later than in previous years, which he attributed to the heat. Still, he said, the turnout was impressive.

Jill Deane, who was selling footballs, glow sticks and other toys to support the fireworks, said she was glad to see many people coming to her tent to buy souvenirs. All the money raised, she said, would go to pay for the fireworks.

Near 9 p.m., Kuzminski brought out a basket of children's names, to select who would be able to press the button to start the fireworks show. Jaelena Rivera, 8, of East Hampton, was chosen to kick off the ceremony.

Then, after a recording of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and a display of fireworks shaped like a flag, the show started. The display, designed by Ocean State Pyrotechnics from Hopkinton, RI, was set to music by Jason Tam of the Hartford Stage Company. For over half an hour, brightly colored fireworks lit up the sky above the fairgrounds. There were red ones and blues ones, loud ones and quiet ones, and afterwards spectators seemed to agree that they were entertaining.

"They were pretty," Erica Folta, 8, said enthusiastically. "Yeah, I guess they were pretty."



The Portland Fireworks dazzled hundreds at the Exchange Club Fairgrounds last Saturday.

Michael Oliyos, 10, said his favorite parts of the show were the loudest fireworks. In addition, he said, he got a chance to get ice cream and play football with some of his friends.

Thunderstorms in the area created a few problems with the show, but the event's treasurer, Sharon Hoy, said organizers were able to work around it. A heavy downpour hit the fairgrounds around 8 p.m., but cleared up within several minutes. With another thunderstorm possibly approaching, she said, organizers made the decision to start the fireworks 15 minutes ahead of schedule, at 9 p.m.

"It was fantastic," Hoy said. "We were quite proud of our little town." Hoy commended local businesses and residents who donated money and enabled the fireworks to happen this year, when many other towns were forced to

cancel their events.

Hoy said she was glad the fireworks had expanded over the years, because it provided an evening of fun for people of all ages. "It's become a real nice family event," she said.

Hoy said she was happy with the turnout, though she thought there weren't as many spectators as the previous year. She said the heat and the threat of thunderstorms might have kept people away.

Hoy also thanked her fellow volunteers, especially fireworks committee Co-Chairs Ed Dunham and John Sobczyk, for their help in organizing the event. "They work so well together," Hoy said. Each of the organizers, she said, had their own expertise and skills.

"We're proud of the town to be able to continue the tradition," Hoy said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Neal E. House

Neal E. House, 96, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Julia (Casteran) House, died Thursday, July 15, at his home, surrounded by his loving family. Born Aug. 31, 1913, in Middle Haddam, he was the son of the late Samuel and Eda (Creveling) House.

Neal lived in the East Hampton area his whole life and was the owner of N. E. House Co., which he started in 1941. Prior to starting his own business he had worked at Pratt & Whitney for six years as a tool and die machinist. Neal was the youngest of 11 siblings, and he held in high regard honesty, responsibility, sharing, frugality, hard work, fun, and caring for others. Neal and his wife Julia would have been married 75 years on Sept. 27, 2010.

Besides his wife, Neal is survived by a son, Walter House and his wife Shirley of Maine; four daughters, Rita Arnold of New Hampshire, Nancy Knott and her husband Raymond of Arizona, Janice Cross and her husband Allan of Portland and Susan Wetmore and her husband Gordon of Massachusetts; 13 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by all 10 of his brothers and sisters.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, July 21, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial followed in the family plot in Union Hill Cemetery. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral home on Wednesday morning before the service.

The family requests that memorial donations be made to the 2nd Congregational Church, Route 151, Middle Haddam, CT, 06456.

To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Portland

Marlene E. Shea

Marlene E. (Shay) Shea, 77, of Portland, beloved wife of the late Francis T. Shea passed away peacefully at home on Saturday, July 17. Born June 20, 1933, she was the daughter of the late Eugene and Julie (Verhengen) Shay.

Marlene grew up in Williamsburg, MA, moving to Connecticut in 1953 with her beloved husband Francis to raise their family. Marlene retired from Middlesex Hospital in 2007 after 33 years of dedicated service. She was deeply devoted to her family and will be remembered for her kindness and generosity. Her family will always cherish the wonderful memories of two of her favorite places, summers spent in Old Orchard Beach, ME, and enjoying time in several Connecticut State Parks.

She is survived by her five children, A. Joseph Shea and daughter-in-law Judith of Essex, Stephen M. Shea of Suffield, Laura D. Smith and son-in-law Eric of Colchester, Mark Peter Shea of Marlborough, and Timothy S. Shea and daughter-in-law Laura of Andover; her grandchildren, Molly Shea, Megan Flagg, Colleen Corcoran, Sean Smith, Kate Smith, Michelle Shea and Warren Shea. She also leaves her brothers, Edward Shay and wife Marguerite and Eugene Shay and wife the late Patricia Shay, several nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Friends may attend calling hours today, July 23, from 5-7 p.m. with a memorial service at 6:30, at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St. Portland. Private burial will take place in St. Mary's Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations are made to the "DEP-Endangered Species/Wildlife Fund," Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Financial and Support Services, 79 Elm St., Hartford, CT 06106-5127, or the American Lung Association.

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

Portland

William A. Waller Jr.

William A. Waller, Jr., 80, of West Cotton Hill Road, Portland, husband of the late Mary (Cholawa) Waller, passed away Tuesday, July 20, at Middlesex Hospital with his family surrounding him. He was born April 11, 1930, in Middletown, son of the late Margaret (Brown) and William Waller Sr.

Prior to his retirement, Bill was employed at Connecticut Valley Hospital as a mason foreman and later served as canine officer in Cromwell. He was a member of the CT Valley Hospital Fire Department and a lifetime member of the Cromwell Fire Department, where he held the rank of lieutenant for many years. Bill loved reminiscing of his baseball days at Woodrow Wilson High School, was an avid boater and enjoyed camping.

He is survived by his four children, Nancy DiStefano and her husband Michael of Haddam, Marilyn Turano and her husband Peter of Portland, Deborah Waller-Lawton of Moodus, David Waller and his fiancée, Elzbieta Regula of Portland; his sister, Jean Flynn of Cromwell; his brother, James Waller of Portland; four grandchildren, Summer DiStefano, Alicia and David Turano and Steven Jacobucci; two great-grandchildren, Hailey and Travis; also several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held today, July 23, at 11 a.m., at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Private burial will be in Swedish Cemetery, Portland. Friends may call at Biega Funeral Home today from 10-11 a.m., prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

To send a message of sympathy, visit www.biegafuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Amitabh R. Ram, MD

Amitabh R. Ram, MD, 51, of Glastonbury, attained eternal rest and peace on Thursday, July 15, surrounded by his friends and family. He is survived by his mother, wife, daughter and younger brother.

A pediatrician by profession, he ran two successful pediatric practices in Hebron and Hartford. He will be remembered by his staff, patients and community for his quality of care, service, compassion and competence. He built his practices with dedication rarely found, and they will continue to serve the community, led by his able healthcare associates. Dr. Ram was an assistant professor at UConn Medical School with a lifelong passion in teaching and research in medicine.

As a pediatrician, Dr. Ram cared deeply about children and he had started a U.S. nonprofit organization called MSIHA (Magis Slyvestris International Health Agency), with the mission of serving under-privileged children in India. Currently, MSIHA runs two thriving educational centers in Calcutta and Varanasi providing computer literacy and spoken English classes to children from lower socio-economic backgrounds and physically challenged children. His vision, contribution, sacrifice and humanitarian work in this regard are inspirational. His friends and family hope to carry forward his work with support from those who care to lend a helping hand.

In lieu of flowers, his family requests a voluntary charitable donation to MSIHA at PO Box 359, Hebron, CT 06248.

Dr. Ram received his medical degree from National Medical College, Calcutta, India. He practiced and served in many countries including India, Israel, UK and USA. Dr. Ram was indeed an exceptional individual, true to his medical profession, compassionate towards the community and a pillar of strength to his family and friends. Those who came in contact with him will always remember his inspiring sense of solidarity, his deep knowledge in diverse fields, his fighting spirit against all odds, his lively humor and above all, a wonderful human being with a pure heart.

A memorial service is organized in his memory at Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St., Glastonbury, Saturday, July 31, from 3-6 p.m. All friends, patients, staff and family are welcome to attend.

To share a memory, visit www.courant.com.

Colchester

Joseph V. Nichols

Joseph V. Nichols, 94, died Tuesday, July 20, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. He was the loving husband for 62 years to the late Mary (Kiebish) Nichols. Born in Colchester, he had lived in East Hartford for 65 years.

He was employed as a toolmaker for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft for 35 years, until his retirement at age 62. Joe attended the Marlborough Congregational Church. He loved gardening, fishing and his family times, especially his time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Wayne and Mary-Ann Nichols of East Hampton, six grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Funeral service will be held today, July 23, at 9:30 a.m., in the Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., Marlborough, with the Rev. Fred M. Dole officiating. Burial will follow in Hillside Cemetery, East Hartford. Family and friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, Thursday, July 22.

Memorial donation may be made to the National Federation of the Blind of CT, 477 Connecticut Blvd, East Hartford, CT 06108.



Colchester

Tina Del Pivo Hernandez

Tina Marie Del Pivo Hernandez, 42, of Warsaw, IN, died of natural causes at 11:43 a.m. Saturday, July 3, at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center, Mishawaka, IN.

Beloved wife, mother, daughter and sister. Tina leaves her husband of nearly three years, Samuel Hernandez, and her only son, Kyle Del Pivo, both whom she loved dearly.

Tina was born weighing six pounds, two ounces on June 21, 1968, to Louis and Margie Vassak Del Pivo of Colchester, both of whom survive her. The youngest of four children, Tina is also survived by two brothers, Richard Del Pivo and Robert Del Pivo, and one sister, Cindy (Del Pivo) Mellor. She also is survived by the following: Brian Mellor (brother-in-law), Marjorie Del Pivo (sister-in-law), Andrew Joseph (AJ) Del Pivo (nephew) and numerous uncles, aunts and cousins.

Tina lived in Naugatuck until 1981, when she moved with her family to Colchester, where she graduated from Bacon Academy in June of 1986. In 2005, she moved to Warsaw, IN, where she met her loving husband Samuel.

Tina was an executive assistance to the vice president of nursing at Goshen Health System, in Goshen, IN. She was involved with many activities but what was most important in her life was being one of Jehovah's Witnesses. There she helped many including those who were deaf to learn about the God she served. She was a member of the Warsaw Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and volunteered with the Jehovah's Witnesses Regional Building Committee since 1991.

Tina was loved by many and will be greatly missed by her family and friends especially Ann and John, Sharon, Marisa, Aliya, Sharlene, Helen, Lucy, Katrina and Yvette, along with her wonderful pets - Malibu and Fluffy-toes (and the doggies). Thank you all for your support and prayers during this difficult time.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, July 24, at Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 297 Westchester Rd., Colchester, with Brother Gary Wnek officiating. Burial was private. Cremation has taken place.

The Elkhart Cremation Service is in charge of arrangements. Condolences may be sent via www.elkhartcremation.com.

Portland

Regina M. Burk

Regina M. Burk, formerly of Portland, passed away Sunday, July 18, 2010 in Bluffton, SC. She was a longtime resident of Daytona Beach, FL.

Jean was the daughter of Sophie and Joseph Martin and born in Caribou, ME, on March 5, 1921. She lived in Hartford and Portland for many years before moving to Daytona Beach in 1991. She retired from the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company after 29 years of service.

She was preceded in death by her beloved and devoted husband, Clifford Burk. Jean is survived by her son, Michael Rocco and daughter-in-law, Beth, of Bluffton, SC; two grandchildren, Michael Rocco Jr. and wife, Mary Beth, of Chicago, IL, and Amy Manion of Channahon, IL, and three great-grandchildren, Tommy, Stephanie and Jake Manion. She is also survived by brothers, Frederick Martin of Dania Beach, FL, and William Martin of Beaumont, CA, and many nieces and nephews.

She was a loving person who was faithful in caring for infirmed relatives. Jean was active as a volunteer at the local hospital and participated in many church activities. She will be greatly missed by all who knew this caring, loving and gentle person.

There will be a funeral Mass celebrated at Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church, 4675 South Clyde Morris Blvd., Port Orange, FL, on Wednesday, July 28, at 8:30 a.m. Burial will be at Rose Hill Memorial Park, Rocky Hill.

Saul's Funeral Home of Bluffton, SC, is assisting the family with their arrangements. (www.saulsfh.com)



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

When people in the area learn I'm from Manchester, it's not altogether uncommon for them to mention that they like eating at that place in town that sells the burgers with the giant cheese.

"Ah, you mean Shady Glen," I respond.

"Yes, that's it!" they answer, usually with a big smile on their face.

Shady Glen is a Manchester institution, but its eats are known throughout the area, from its many varieties of delicious homemade ice cream to its cole slaw, which is so popular it's sold by the gallon and served up at cook-outs and church picnics throughout the area (including at a chicken barbecue this weekend at Gilead Congregational Church in Hebron).

But the cheeseburgers are what's made Shady Glen famous not just in the area, but nationwide too. Anyone who's had one knows why; there is more cheese than burger, so much so the cheese spills out and crisps up. It's been described as a UFO of cheese, though to me it more resembles rays of delicious, crispy sun.

So you can imagine my shock when I learned over the weekend the cheese had changed. A friend of mine and fellow Manchester native, who was visiting from out of state, said he had been to Shady Glen and was shocked by what he saw. He commented, only half-jokingly I suspect, that it was just a bitter reminder that you really can't go home again.

I was appalled at hearing they changed the cheese, but also intrigued, and stopped by Shady Glen on my way home from work Monday to see what the fuss was all about.

To be honest, you notice a difference before you even take a bite. The cheese is no longer that perfect shade of orange; it's more of a yellowish-orange. The crispy cheese surrounding the burger isn't *quite* as crispy. It's still possible to break it off and eat it separately from the burger (growing up, I used to alternate between eating it that way and just doing the crispy cheese and the burger at once, in several big bites), but it's a bit more sloppy an endeavor. It's a good burger, and a good deal better than anything you'd get at a fast-food place, but it's not *the* Shady Glen cheeseburger.

So what happened? Why did Shady Glen tinker with the cheese that's made it known across the country? Well, according to the *Journal Inquirer* (which ran a front-page story about the new cheese on Monday; yes, this is

big news around here), it wasn't the restaurant's idea. Shady Glen's cheese supplier, Schreiber Foods of Green Bay, WI, switched to buying its milk from a Missouri farm instead of its "usual northern counterparts."

The executive manager of Shady Glen, William Hoch Jr., told the *JI* the milk "makes all the difference." The farm change resulted in a switch in certain characteristics of the milk, such as its pH balance, and that was reflected in the cheese itself.

Some customers, according to the *JI*, just hate the new cheese. One longtime customer was quoted as saying she wouldn't be back to the restaurant – for a burger anyway – until the cheese is changed.

Now, I didn't think it was *that* bad. Is it the cheese I grew up with, or that I had as recently as last year? No. But it still tastes pretty good, and while the cheese isn't as crisp and is perhaps a bit more gooeey than it should be, the end result is still better, a good deal less sloppier, than trying to prepare it for yourself in your kitchen.

But Hoch recognizes it's not what customers are used to, not the product that put Shady Glen on the map. (And just how well-known is it? Earlier this year, the Food Network had a show in which various cooking show hosts and executives of the network spoke of their favorite places in the country to eat cheese. One of those interviewed selected Shady Glen. Surrounded by fancy-sounding eateries in Los Angeles and New York City was little Shady Glen of Manchester, CT. That was pretty cool.) So he's been working hard, with a different Wisconsin supplier, to try to replicate the old cheese recipe, this time using milk from those northern cows. He said he hopes to have the problem solved by the end of the month.

I wish him well. In the meantime, there's still plenty of other stuff to stop by Shady Glen for, from that aforementioned delicious ice cream to their piping hot crinkle cut fries that you have to salt yourself but somehow they're better that way to even their soda, which is made the old fashioned way, by spraying a glob of syrup into a glass and mixing it with carbonated water, on the spot. (Trust me, you'll notice a difference. Immediately.) And, even though it's not yet back to its old self, a pretty good cheeseburger too.

* * *

See you next week.