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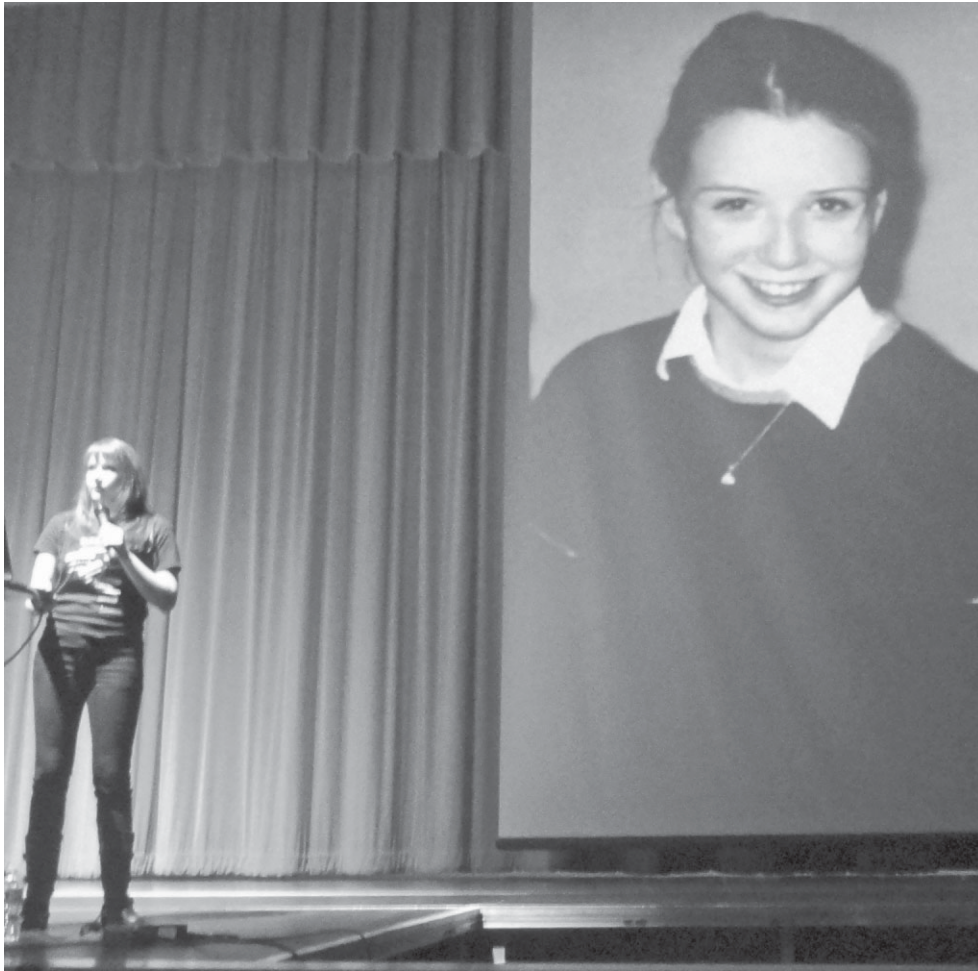
News Bulletin

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Kristi Krings led a presentation at RHAM Middle School Tuesday night called "Rachel's Challenge." Krings told the story of Rachel Scott, who was the first victim of the Columbine High School shootings in 1999, and challenged students to live according to Rachel's message of kindness.

"Let Your Words Be The Words That Heal"

by Geeta Schrayter

In a special event on Tuesday, members of the RHAM community gathered for an evening follow-up to Rachel's Challenge, a program that looks to create positive changes in the way students – and people in general – treat each other.

The program, which was presented to students in seventh and eighth grade earlier that day, was inspired by Rachel Scott, the first victim of the 1999 Columbine High School shootings.

Rachel's hope was to create a "chain reaction" of kindness that would help make the world a better place. Her life, as well as the content of her six diaries, is the foundation for the program, which aims to build upon her message and improve the world, one act of compassion at a time.

During the school day, students assembled to watch a presentation on Rachel's Challenge, followed by a training session that taught the students how to put the challenge into action. This included setting up a Friends of Rachel (FOR) club at the school, in conjunction with the Chainlinks Club that's already present.

At the evening presentation, community members had the opportunity to witness the same visuals that impacted their children earlier in the day. "[The students] really want you to hear the things tonight that moved them and impacted them," said program presenter Kristi Krings.

A combination of video clips, photographs,

accounts from family and friends, as well as Krings' narration, served to recount the events of Columbine and outline Rachel's life.

Krings described Rachel as kind and thoughtful. Krings stated that Rachel "was not perfect; she was just a normal teenage girl who treated others the way she wanted to be treated."

Rachel went out of her way to be kind to others, Krings said, and just how much of an impact those small acts of kindness had become apparent after her passing. Her family began receiving phone calls, letters and e-mails from people whose lives had been touched by the 17-year-old.

Krings told the crowd about a girl named Amber who, after Rachel's passing, told the Scotts their daughter had turned her first day at Columbine High School from the worst day ever to one of the best. After moving there from Georgia, Amber had spent the day being ignored in the hallways. She said that no one made eye contact with her and no one spoke to her. At lunch she sat alone. That is, until Rachel noticed and invited her to sit with them. The girl declined, but Rachel wouldn't be deterred and instead returned a moment later to sit with her with all of her friends in tow.

Krings also shared the story of a student named Adam, who credited Rachel with saving his life. Born with a disease that caused him to talk, walk and look differently, he had

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From Andover Resident to Hartford Superintendent

by Geeta Schrayter

Dr. Christina Kishimoto has been working to improve Hartford Public Schools (HPS) for the past six years.

As assistant superintendent, she was an educational leader who worked in areas such as school curriculum, policy changes and improvements, and new school designs. Over the years, she created 26 new school models in the district.

"I was very interested in continuing this work," said Kishimoto. So when the opportunity to become superintendent presented itself, she applied and was offered the position, "which is wonderful," she said.

Hartford Board of Education Chairman David MacDonald, who's worked closely with Kishimoto, stated he's confident "she is the leader Hartford needs." MacDonald said "her in-depth knowledge of our reform agenda" and her "consistent, strong leadership in executing that agenda" were the main qualities that recommended her for the position.

Kishimoto's appointment was announced in March and she officially came on board under a three-year contract in July.

As superintendent, Kishimoto said her biggest challenge will be learning how to accelerate the positive changes that are already occurring in HPS. When Kishimoto and the Board of Education first began working on a reform process five years ago, there was a small group of high performance schools, a lot of low performance schools and "very few in the middle," she said. Now, that's shifted so that the number of higher performing schools has increased from four to 11 and many of the schools that were considered low performing are now in the middle.

"Now it's 'how do you take schools that have improved to that degree to the next level?'" she stated, "so that we have a greater number of high performance schools."

In order to do this, Kishimoto said school officials need to focus on instructional quality. Specifically, she stated, improving what's happening in the classroom, "the quality of teaching, how you access students and individualize learning for them," which will require the help of Hartford's teachers.

Kishimoto said the rewards of the position will arrive as she begins to see the success of

the five year plan she's framed which focuses on three goals.

The first goal is to have every child reading at grade level by the third grade, a factor that determines high school success.

The second is to restructure the middle school experience so it engages students during the crucial sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade period when kids often get distracted and are going through changes.

"It could be a tough time," Kishimoto said, "but while they're going through all that I want them to be having fun at school."

Lastly, Kishimoto aims to improve college readiness, and ensure each student who graduates with an HPS diploma will be able to start college without the need for remedial courses.

Kishimoto said one of the things she's excited about is being contracted with The College Board. This means that every junior in HPS will take the SAT exam during the school day, eliminating the need to register and come on a Saturday, when they may have work or other obligations.

"A lot of [students' success] just involves tak-

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Former Andover resident Dr. Christina Kishimoto is now the Hartford Superintendent of Schools.

Rachel’s Challenge cont. from Front Page
endured years of bullying. One day, two boys twice his size were being particularly mean: slamming him against the lockers, knocking books out of his hands and calling him names. Rachel noticed from down the hall, ran over and got between Adam and the bullies with her fists balled, saying “if you touch him again, it’s ‘go time.’”

Adam told her parents she had saved his life when she stood up for him, because he had been planning to take his own. Until he met Rachel, Adam said he felt like nobody cared whether he lived or died.

It was stories such as these that highlighted the impact Rachel had on the people around her, and supported the five goals that the students were challenged with during the day and community members were challenged with that evening.

The first of those goals was to look for the best in people. Krings said this goal came not only from Rachel, but her older brother too.

Craig Scott was also a student at Columbine High School, and on April 20, 1999, he ended up in the library with two of his friends when Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold began shooting. The library was the scene of the most fatalities.

In a video that was played during the event, Craig described what happened that day. He said the shooters came into the room firing their guns and yelling at each other and the students. When they saw Craig’s friend Isaiah, who was one of the few black students in the school, hiding under the table with Craig and his other friend Matt, they taunted him with racial slurs.

“The last thing he heard was racial slurs being said against him,” Craig said in the video. “And the last thing he said was ‘I want to see my Mom.’” Then they shot Isaiah, and then they shot my friend Matt.”

Krings shared that Craig had spoken to her and expressed his desire for Rachel’s Challenge to help eliminate prejudices. “He said ‘Kristi, when you talk to people, would you just ask them to get rid of any prejudices that they have in their hearts towards people that are different than them?’” explained Krings.

Avoiding prejudice was also something Rachel wanted. In an essay she wrote on ethics a month before she died, Krings said Rachel “challenged her reader to start what she called ‘a chain reaction of kindness and compassion.’” She wrote a code of ethics for people to follow, which included looking for the best in others.

“Look for the best in others and you won’t have a problem with prejudice,” she wrote. She challenged people to give others three chances before daring to judge or label them.

“We can always find what we look for in people,” Krings stated. “So if you look for the worst, you can find it. It’s there. But if you look for the best, you can find that too.”

Superintendent cont. from Front Page

ing away some of the impediments,” said Kishimoto. “I’m trying to change the mindset of the district in how we operate.”

She stated that there are some things within the district, such as meeting state standards; that should remain typical. But other aspects need to be different.

“Our school system is an urban school system,” Kishimoto said, “and our kids have experiences and challenges that may be different from their peers in suburban areas.” Due to this, how the board accomplishes their work, she said, needs to be different.

And she knows a bit about both environments. Kishimoto grew up in New York City, but moved to Andover when she came to Connecticut, and was a resident for a total of 15 years.

“I didn’t know anything about Andover when I moved there,” she said. “I just loved the country and I love the cows and the horses.” She added that the switch from city life to country living was exciting. “It was a great change,” she said.

“Where I lived – my home, my property – was my favorite place” she reminisced. “My house sat up on a hill, we had 25 acres of land . . . between the privacy and just the beauty of the land, it was just fabulous.”

Andover also holds a special place with Kishimoto, for being a conversation starter between her and her husband.

“I was always fishing the small streams” she said. “That was actually my favorite pastime. It’s probably the thing people know least about me.” Kishimoto used to enjoy fishing in the streambed near Long Hill Road, and she credits this hobby with leading to her marriage.

“We got to know each other because of the small stream fishing that we did” she said.

The two of them met at Wesleyan University, and “our conversation started with him [saying] ‘I heard you fish in Andover. I fish over

Other goals in the challenge included choosing positive influences and speaking with kindness. Krings explained that Rachel had role models such as Anne Frank and Dr. Martin Luther King, while the shooters looked up to Adolf Hitler.

“Rachel chose positive influences in her life and I want to challenge all of you in the room to do the same,” said Krings. “Because the choices that we make today, do determine who we become tomorrow.”

In her code of ethics, Rachel wrote, “people will never know how far a little kindness can go.” Krings said that people often look for something big that will make a “dramatic difference” in the lives of others, but stated in the process, “a million little things that would make an even bigger difference” are overlooked. People may be going through something that no one else knows about, and a smile or an act of kindness could make a significant difference in their lives, Krings explained.

“We all know that words can hurt and words can heal,” she challenged. “Let your words be the words that heal.”

Rachel’s Challenge has impacted people all around the world. “If you go halfway around the world to Australia or New Zealand, you’re going to find students there who have accepted Rachel’s Challenge,” said Krings. Over 50 million people have heard Rachel’s story, and it’s impacted individuals such as former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, and such celebrities and athletes as Chuck Norris, Elton John, Tony Romo and Tony Dorsett.

But the program’s target is students, and at the RHAM presentation Krings hoped to impact the school’s seventh- and eighth-graders the same way millions of individuals already have been.

For seventh grader C.J. Yopp of Hebron, that’s exactly what happened. Even though C.J. saw the presentation during the school day, he returned with his mother in the evening to see it again.

“I thought it was really cool how we got to learn more about Rachel and how she experienced this and how she really is,” said Yopp.

While he admitted he was probably guilty of a little prejudice, “everyone [is] really,” he accepted the challenge, stating, “I’m definitely going to change the way I see people.”

After she died, one of Rachel’s diaries was found; it was stored in her backpack, which had been shot that fateful day. On the back of the diary, next to a bullet hole, Rachel had written, “I refuse to be labeled as average.” Those who knew her, and the millions who have been impacted by her life would say she’s far from it.

For more information on Rachel’s Challenge, visit rachelschallenge.org.

there,” shared Kishimoto. “And that’s how the story started.”

“It’s so funny,” Kishimoto laughed. “No one knows that story. I can’t believe I said that! I’m supposed to be a tough superintendent here, you know, and I’ve got this like, softer side.”

But fishing story aside, Kishimoto is all business and dedication when it comes to her position as superintendent, even tying her family’s decision to move to Hartford back to the students.

“One of the things our kids have to learn in a school system like the Hartford Public Schools, where we have a high poverty level,” she said, “is that when you access education and you’re successful through education, one of the things that provides you are choices . . . and where you choose to live and work, and where you choose to play as an adult, is part of the choices you have.”

Kishimoto said relocating to Hartford made sense, “in terms of just, my responsibility, and wanting to be fully invested, and living and taking advantage of the Hartford community.”

However, even if she hadn’t become superintendent, Kishimoto says it was time for some place new.

“I do not predict where I’m gonna be,” she said. “I really enjoy where I am at the moment and I keep myself open to what’s going to happen next. I think that’s how I ended up in Andover from New York City,” she added. “I mean, how do you go from the Bronx into Andover, right?”

“I was just ready for something . . . for that next thing,” said Kishimoto.

And at present, that “next thing” would seem to be filling the role described to her by MacDonald and being “the leader Hartford needs,” working with 24,000 students, 48 schools and a staff of 5,000 as Hartford’s superintendent.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Red Sox fans likely feel differently, but last Wednesday was an absolutely fascinating end to the baseball season.

For four – yes, *four* – teams, the whole season had boiled down to one game. The Red Sox and the Atlanta Braves (which, in a piece of meaningless trivia, had co-existed with the Red Sox in Boston until the 1950s, when the team moved to Milwaukee) had both blown wild-card leads that were thought to be insurmountable – nine games for Boston, eight and a half for Atlanta.

So the two punch-drunk teams, as well as the two squads that had been chasing and finally caught them (the Tampa Bay Rays and the St. Louis Cardinals, respectively), entered play last Wednesday in absolute must-win situations.

As we know, only two of those teams won. Down in Atlanta, the Braves blew a ninth-inning lead against the hated Phillies before losing in extra innings. St. Louis had won its game against Houston quite handily earlier in the evening, so the Cards found themselves advancing to the playoffs, while a stunned Braves team was forced to sit and wonder.

I spent last Wednesday night shuttling between all four of the games (which fortunately were all on TV). And for a good portion of the night, it looked like Boston would actually avoid the dubious distinction of having the biggest September collapse in baseball history. The Sox were leading Baltimore, and Tampa Bay had fallen into an early 7-0 hole against the dreaded Yankees. But the never-say-die Rays amazingly came back, scoring six in the eighth and one in the ninth, to force extra innings.

Meanwhile, up in Maryland, the Red Sox managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, giving up the tying and winning runs in the bottom of the ninth to the scrappy Orioles, who were playing for nothing but pride, and making the most of it.

Mere moments after Boston lost, the Rays’ Evan Longoria deposited a screaming line drive into the left field seats – and Tampa Bay was headed to the playoffs.

Okay, full confession time: I was rooting for the Rays. I just found them an amazing story. Talk about underdogs. Here was a team, with the second-lowest payroll in the game, which had seen several star players depart last season, that somehow hung on – and against the Red Sox, the team with the second-highest payroll in the game (after the Yankees). What a great story they were.

So I was happy when the Rays made it into the playoffs – and sorry to see them lose the Division Series to Texas this week. The Rays had been quite the little engine that could this year – and I’d have loved to have seen them go all the way. But still, they have a lot to be proud of. Hopefully they can build on this success and be a force in the American League next season.

As for the Red Sox, they learned this sea-

son what a lot of teams – including the Mets – have learned over the years: you can’t buy yourself a championship. Sure, they were bit by the injury bug this year, but what seemed to hurt them more was a lack of team chemistry. Whenever people start talking about team chemistry, there’s always going to be some stat-head who says chemistry is overrated. But it really isn’t. You can throw gobs of money at the Adrian Gonzalezes and the Carl Crawford of the world, but at the end of the day, you have to have chemistry; you have to have a team that meshes together as a unit. I’m not sure that happened here.

Instead, what the team did have, according to many accounts, was: a sense of entitlement; a lack of urgency; and a lack of clubhouse leadership. (“They don’t need a leader,” ESPN quoted an anonymous Boston player as saying. “They need a babysitter.”)

To be honest, it’s been less fun in the last couple of years to watch the Red Sox, as they began spending money like it was going out of style and, frankly, began to bear more than a passing resemblance to the dreaded Yankees.

And the Red Sox’ transformation to “New York Yankees: Massachusetts Edition” took another step closer to completion last Friday when Terry Francona – the man who had led Boston to not one but two world championships, after being title-less for more than eight decades – fell on the sword and announced he would not be returning to manage the team in 2012.

Sure, the Boston front office was gracious enough to let Francona act like this was all his idea, and not make it look like they basically showed him the door – but even Tito, in his press conference last Friday, wondered aloud if ownership even wanted him back. For the front office to want to part ways with Francona after one disappointing season, despite all he’s done for them, seems very Yankees-esque. As a friend of mine has remarked, it’s like the last scene in *Animal Farm*. The once-sweet pigs have become the evil humans.

Perhaps the Red Sox can spend this off-season figuring out how they can go back to being the Red Sox. For now, though, there’s postseason baseball to watch. I’m writing this column Tuesday night, so I don’t know what else will have transpired in the playoffs by the time you read this. So who knows, this matchup might not even be possible. But what I’d like to see is a Texas Rangers-Milwaukee Brewers World Series. Two teams who have never won a championship squaring off for all the marbles. Hopefully, the Rangers will win.

And I also hope the World Series proves to be as fascinating as that 162nd day of baseball was last Wednesday. Because, really, that was some mighty fine entertainment.

* * *

See you next week.

School Board Member Proposes Dress Code for EHMS

by Joshua Anusewicz

If Board of Education member Don Coolican gets his way, residents might see a lot more sharp-dressed youngsters around East Hampton.

At a recent board meeting, Coolican requested that the idea of having a “dress code” at East Hampton Middle School be put on the agenda as a topic of discussion.

The dress code Coolican is proposing would include a solid color polo shirt, with khaki pants (or shorts for the warmer months) and dress shoes. Coolican, who said he has raised the question at meetings before but “can never get it seconded,” cited three main reasons for a dress code.

The first reason, Coolican said, is that he feels students at the school dress inappropriately, “particularly girls.” He said that this can bring up a “touchy” situation if a male faculty member has to work closely with female students.

The second reason Coolican said a dress code

would be useful is to help curb bullying at the school. Coolican said that clothing has become a “competition,” where students can feel alienated if they don’t have the most popular brands or styles.

“Kids won’t feel discriminated against if they don’t have the most up-to-date clothes,” Coolican said.

Coolican’s third reason for the code has less to do with school, and more to do with helping parents. Coolican said if students are wearing the same outfits, parents won’t “have to discuss what to wear every morning.” Coolican, who has 14 grandchildren, said he understands the difficulties of discussing with children what clothes to wear.

But he also believes that having a dress code will save parents money. He said that uniform clothing can be ordered at “a good price,” and is much less expensive than designer clothing.

At the meeting, the board, although not in total agreement, reached a consensus to look into the proposal further. Coolican said that in

the past, the proposal has usually been discussed by the policy committee, who he said has “put it off.” His hope is to create an “ad hoc committee” instead that would look into the proposal.

Nancy Briere, the principal of EHMS, said Wednesday that all of the points Coolican makes are “valid points,” but said the school already has a dress code that is appropriately enforced.

“If there are ever any incidents, we address them,” Briere said, adding that teachers often bring issues to the attention of the administration and it is “corrected swiftly.”

Currently, Briere said that the main concern is students that wear “revealing” clothing, such as short shorts or tops that don’t completely cover the upper-body. She said that in a case where a student was wearing something revealing, the school provides clothes to cover the student’s outfit for the rest of the day.

Briere, who said she hasn’t spoken directly

with Coolican about the matter, admitted that the ideas of a dress code curbing bullying and easing the burden on parents were things that should be discussed. She said that as the discussion moves forward, she would be “open to being involved” in the process, although she doesn’t feel that enforcement is currently an issue.

Coolican said the dress code that is in place at the middle school is not always “totally enforced,” which he says “blurs the line” for what is appropriate for students to wear.

“Sometimes, you can walk into the school and say to yourself, ‘What are these kids wearing?’” Coolican said. “And the styles are always changing.” He said that he has spoken with a number of parents within the district, and said that he “almost never hear[s] that it’s a bad idea.”

At this point, the matter has been made a discussion topic at future board meetings, but no motion has been made.

Layoffs Rescinded, Nine Return to Troop K

by Joshua Anusewicz

Nine state troopers that were laid off from Troop K in Colchester in July as part of Governor Dannel Malloy’s budget-balancing plan will soon be returning to patrol, the Connecticut State Police Union confirmed this week.

Earlier in the week, the Department of Public Safety announced that the statewide lay-off notices for 56 state troopers, which went into effect on Aug. 24, had been rescinded. State Police Union President Andrew Matthews said Wednesday that this included Troop K, which covers Colchester, Hebron, Andover and Marlborough, as well as other area towns.

“We’re all pleased,” said Matthews about the troopers. “It’s a great day, especially for the public safety of the state. We’re all thankful.”

Matthews credited the police union members and the governor’s administration for “putting these guys back to work” in what ended up being a “respectful” six weeks.

According to the Department of Public Safety, since “the state employee unions ratified” the budget cuts, a total of 40 personnel “of various ranks” had chosen to retire on either Sept. 1 or Oct. 1, freeing up a total of \$2,254,460 in salaries. The 56 state troopers who have had their layoff notices rescinded have salaries totaling \$1,888,830.

“As a former state trooper myself, it pained me to send layoff notices to the 56 men and women who are part of our state police force,” Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Commissioner Reuben Bradford said in a press release. “With the retirements of some of the longest-serving members of the state police, we were able to rescind the layoffs. ... I’m looking forward to having them back on the road.”

The troopers that had received the layoff notices were from the 121st training troop – the most recent graduates and newest members

of the force. These troopers will be “stationed on the road,” the press release stated, and will be returning either today, Oct. 7, or Friday, Oct. 21, depending on the order they were laid off.

State Police Lt. J. Paul Vance told the *Riverast* in July that the layoffs would not affect resident state trooper operations in the towns. Vance could not be reached for comment for this article.

Matthews said Wednesday that while all of the laid-off troopers would be returning to patrol, it has not been determined whether troopers who had been “pulled from their units” into patrol would be returning to their respective units. He said that due to the layoffs there was “transferring” amongst personnel statewide, where some troopers were performing more than one task. This created a public safety concern, he said.

A concern that remains is the total number of members on the force throughout the state,

which will be 1,127, with the layoffs rescinded. The statutory mandate that was passed in 1998, Matthews said, is 1,248. He said that staffing levels “haven’t been this low since the ‘70s and ‘80s.”

When asked if the union planned to push the state to enforce the mandate, Matthews said there is currently “pending litigation” and that the union has been asked not to disclose any details for the time being. It was stated in the press release, however, that there will be efforts to streamline the state police for cost-cutting measures, which would possibly go against any effort to enforce the mandate.

“This does not reverse the process already started by Commissioner Bradford to streamline the department and see more sworn personnel performing hazardous duty functions around the state,” Office of Policy and Management Secretary Ben Barnes stated about the layoffs being rescinded.

Portland Selectmen Discuss Tree Maintenance, Possible Removal

by Joshua Anusewicz

In the weeks since Tropical Storm Irene swept through Portland, concerns have been raised over the number of trees in the town that are in poor condition, and could pose a threat if another storm hit.

At a Board of Selectmen’s meeting on Wednesday, selectman Fred Knous requested to discuss some of the issues that he found most important. Knous provided an outline to the board, which touched on key points regarding the response from Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) to trimming trees, and the town’s own response.

Knous said his biggest concern was that residents “pay high bills for electric service and deserve quality service.” With that in mind, he felt CL&P’s response was “not robust enough” following Irene. He brought up that, during a testimony, CL&P claimed they had to spend \$75 million in storm response, and the company told the state that they are “not a tree trimming business.”

What concerned Knous was not how much it cost CL&P, but how much it cost the town and its residents.

“The power outages certainly cost our town, too,” said Knous. “And CL&P will undoubtedly try to recover their end with higher rates, which we have to pay.” He added that while CL&P’s “mission is not tree removal,” tree trimming is actually built into customers’ rates.

During that testimony, Knous said, CL&P stated that it wasn’t a lack of “tree trimming” that had caused the lines to be knocked down, but “hazard trees” instead.

What Knous proposed to the board was a recommendation to “proactively” review the trees in town, and attempt to remove any trees that look as though they could pose a threat to power lines or personal property. He said that even if trees could not be removed, the town could “increase the cycle of tree trimming.”

Director of Public Works Rick Kelsey, who also works as the de facto tree warden for the town, said Portland has a “good tree maintenance system” in place, but any increase in tree work would “all boil down to budget.” Kelsey said the town currently has \$15,000 in its budget for tree maintenance, which has not been

touched since the current fiscal year started in July.

Kelsey said he keeps a record of hazardous trees in town, and that he currently has a list of “about 75 trees” on both public and private property. That list, he said, is compiled by hazardous trees reported by himself, the highway department, and concerned residents. Those trees that are on public property, Kelsey said, are checked for their condition and prioritized by those that pose the biggest threat to residents.

During Irene, Kelsey said the high winds “actually helped a little” by knocking down some of the weaker trees. However, Kelsey said that “some of the good trees fell, and that some of the bad trees didn’t,” which means some of the hazardous trees could be in even worse shape.

No action was taken to expedite the tree maintenance, but First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she has spoken with CL&P to plan a meeting between the company and the town to make “a concerted effort toward main-

tenance and removal.” She said CL&P has already begun trimming trees that Kelsey had listed as hazardous, but its only trees located near CL&P power lines.

Bransfield said there are “tens of thousands of trees” throughout the town, and many more hazardous trees that aren’t located near CL&P lines that need to be removed. She said she plans to work with Kelsey and the town’s Conservation Commission to discuss the maintenance of these trees.

Aside from safety, Bransfield said that trees are also “part of the town’s landscape” and add an aesthetic value to the town. She said that if trees are removed, whether on public or private land, she plans to consult “arborists or landscapers” to find out options for replacing the trees. She said that keeping a neighborhood “filled in” with trees maintains property value and makes the town “look better.”

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen’s meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 19, at 7:30 p.m., at Portland Library.

More Money, More Problems for Portland Arrigoni Project

by Joshua Anusewicz

The state Department of Transportation (DOT) announced last week that the project to repair the Arrigoni Bridge is running about two weeks behind schedule, and the budget has increased by almost \$2 million.

However, DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick said this week the department plans to “make the time up” as the project moves along.

The first stage of the project, which began in June, is now scheduled to finish in mid-December; it was originally slated to be completed at the end of November. This stage will replace the deck and pedestrian sidewalk on the south side of the bridge.

Nursick said it’s not uncommon for projects that deal with bridges to suffer setbacks, as the condition of the “superstructure” is often not known until the deck is taken up.

“When we talk dates, there are variables that are still unknown to us,” Nursick said Tuesday. “The DOT has to deal with this all of the time.”

This echoed the words of Dave Cutler, a supervising engineer from the DOT, who said at an April meeting of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce that the dates were all tentative.

As for the cause of the setback, Nursick said

two additional tasks will have to be done in the first stage of the project. The first will be to repair the portions of the pedestrian sidewalk that approach the bridge from the Portland and Middletown sides, which he said would cost an additional \$600,000.

Also, the handrails on the pedestrian sidewalks, which Nursick said the DOT expected to reuse, will need to be replaced. This will cost roughly \$500,000.

The handrails “were in much worse condition than we expected,” Nursick said.

On top of the additional \$1.1 million for the construction of the bridge, the DOT has also added \$800,000 for more police patrol on both sides of the bridge. This will continue to include police at the intersection of routes 17A and 66 in Portland, but will now include an additional officer at the foot of the bridge to make sure traffic is running smoothly.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield called the increased police presence “money well spent.”

“We need to provide appropriate traffic control,” she said. “Our officers have done a fantastic job.”

Bransfield said she has seen less congestion on Main Street during peak hours, and added that she was encouraged so many drivers have heeded the officers’ instructions to “stay in line” as they approach the bridge.

Bransfield said she has heard mostly positive feedback from residents regarding the bridge, but did say she received some negative comments in September, when residents were using the roads under the bridge as a “short-cut” to avoid the traffic. She said that after she received several calls about the matter, an officer was briefly stationed under the bridge and the problem “seems to be fixed.”

Nursick said the recent setbacks and additional costs are “not out of the ordinary” for a project of this scale, and that the final completion date is still scheduled for next fall.

“We don’t consider ourselves behind until we miss our completion date,” Nursick said. “We don’t expect to miss that.” He added that there are no additional concerns for the project at this time. The project is due to be completed by fall 2012.

According to Nursick, the project is currently awaiting the arrival of the first major portion of

decking to put into place. He said that when it arrives, the decking will be manufactured and placed in, concrete will be poured for the road and the sidewalks, and then asphalt laid down for the road. The lane on the south side of the bridge will then be open for traffic, Nursick said, in mid-December.

When the south lane is completed, the second stage will begin on the center lane that has yet to be repaired. This will close the two center lanes of the bridge and split traffic to the outside lanes of the bridge.

Nursick said that about a week ago, workers began on night shifts from 7 p.m.-4 a.m. to help get closer to the expected completion date of the first stage.

The cost for the project now sits at roughly \$19 million, and is being entirely funded by the state, including the cost for police presence. The construction is being performed by The Middlesex Corporation of Littleton, MA, with the help of the state DOT.

In 2009, the bridge was graded a three out of 10 by the DOT; the bridge was built in 1938, and its structure has remained mostly untouched since then.

Marlborough Selectmen Vote ‘Yes’ on Tax Abatement

by Bailey Seddon

The selectmen voted Tuesday to approve a tax abatement for residents 65 or over, or those who are totally disabled, as discussed at a public hearing last month.

The tax relief proposal was originally put forward by the chairman of the Commission on Aging, Dennis Hawrylko, and would provide tax relief to all residents 65 or over or totally disabled.

At Tuesday’s meeting, the board made some changes to the tax abatement program. The biggest change was to make the tax relief only to residents over 65 or completely disabled that were making \$28,900 or less. Those making up to \$23,600 would get \$500 in abatement and those making \$23,601 to \$28,900 get \$300 in abatement. There are 32 households in town that qualify for the abatement, according to the selectmen. First Selectman Bill Black mentioned that the money to pay for the abatements would come from the \$20,000 the town receives in debt service reductions for the next 13 years.

These numbers varied greatly from what was presented at a Sept. 20 public hearing. The initial proposal would have given \$500 to anyone who makes \$32,201 or less, \$400 to anyone making \$32,201-45,300 and \$300 to those who make \$45,300 or over.

However, all three of the selectmen wanted to scale back those figures.

“In this economy, you have got to go in conservatively,” said selectwoman Riva Clark.

The revised proposal, selectman Joe La Bella said, “is a much more modest version than we had previously discussed.”

This new tax relief abatement aligns with the Circuit Breaker program, a program for low-income residents, which is authorized and paid for by the state. The town would give eligible residents their tax abatement but residents could also get additional money from the state Cir-

cuit Breaker Program. The program is based on a sliding scale, which varies based on people’s income and marital status. For instance, a resident could get an additional \$1,250 if they are married and have an income of under \$11,700, La Bella said.

The selectmen also nixed the idea of having the town place liens on the homes of people eligible for the tax abatement. At last month’s public hearing, several citizens had advocated the liens, including Board of Finance Chairwoman Cathi Gaudinski and fellow finance board member Cliff Denniss, while Hawrylko was opposed, saying they lead to “a second-class citizen type of mentality.”

At Tuesday’s meeting, Black agreed with Hawrylko, saying simply, “They don’t work.”

Also at Tuesday’s meeting, Black commended the Commission on Aging for how much work it has done on the program.

“I think they have been generous in the way they went about this and pursued it,” said Black.

During the public comments section of the meeting, Board of Finance member Dick Shea said state statute states an ordinance such as the tax abatement proposal cannot solely be done by the Board of Selectmen – which was something he had brought up at last month’s public hearing.

“It’s very clear to me it can only be done on recommendation from the Board of Finance,” Shea said. Shea said no such recommendation was made by his board and urged the Board of Selectmen to discuss it with the Board of Finance before a decision was made. Shea also felt that if the selectmen did not discuss the new law with his board then the law itself could be brought into question.

“I would urge this board to come down on the conservative side of the law,” Shea said.

The board listened to Shea’s comments but once the time to make the decision came, First

Selectman Bill Black said that he felt the Board of Selectmen have given the Board of Finance plenty of time to put input into the law.

“It has been a year-plus” that the selectmen have been looking at the proposal and the Board of Finance has still not made any recommendations, said Black.

La Bella agreed with Black, saying he felt the Board of Selectmen was not bound by a recommendation from the Board of Finance since finance board members had chosen not to act in the past year.

“Can we compel them to act?” La Bella asked the other members of his board. He said he felt they could not. Black agreed, and both felt that if the Board of Finance had wanted to act, by now they would have.

Clark agreed that the Board of Finance should have acted on the proposed ordinance, but said she felt a final draft should be sent to the Board of Selectmen before a final decision was made. Clark said the Board of Finance did not have to approve it, but she still felt it should be sent to them.

“It would be an appropriate step,” said Clark.

La Bella and Black disagreed, saying they wanted to move on and vote for the program.

“I think we have been more than patient,” said Black. “We owe it to our seniors...we have a responsibility to act,” Black said. La Bella and Black voted yes to the tax relief program, while Clark abstained.

Shea said Wednesday he felt the selectmen’s characterization of the Board of Finance’s lack of action on the ordinance was “really at odds with what happened.”

Shea said Black had agreed to meet with the Board of Finance “once or twice,” but then canceled each time.

“He just stonewalled that part of the process,”

Shea said.

The abatement will take effect for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Another ‘yes’ vote of interest was for the peddling and solicitation permits. As of now, anyone can obtain a permit, which is good for one year, and can go door-to-door in the town; either for a certain cause or to solicit to residents.

A couple of changes were made from the previous draft, which was also presented at the Sept. 20 public hearing. One such change was clarifying when the permit should expire. As of now it expires in June, but the board thought this should be changed to accommodate peddling season.

“The reality is...most peddling takes place in early spring to late fall,” said Black. The selectmen decided to switch the permits from running one fiscal year (July 1-June 30) to running one calendar year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31).

Clark said another change she would like is to have better contact information so the town could reach the company, or agent, that any peddler represents. Black liked this proposed change saying that sometime back, there had been a company that went around selling books but when they tried to get in contact with the agent, there was no number on file.

“It can be a challenge,” said Black, to get in touch with the agents. He said he also felt that it was a good idea for the protection of the residents. Clark agreed saying she wants to have the information part of the application process.

“We do our best to get our information” so we know who is in the town, said Clark.

The next Board of Selectmen’s meeting will be held Tuesday, Nov. 15, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Allegra Farm Offering Spooky Hayrides in Colchester

by Bailey Seddon

Halloween is mere weeks away and, in the spirit of the season, Allegra Farm will offer spooky storytelling hayrides. The hayrides start today and will run through the end of the month.

For nearly 40 years, John Allegra has been offering horse and carriage services for a variety of occasions, including weddings, funerals and even Hollywood productions. The Halloween hayrides are a new addition, though. Allegra said he has never offered the hayrides because he feels it can be too intense for the horses if there are too many loud noises or people jumping out at them.

"Haunted and horses don't go together," said Allegra.

Fortunately, Allegra was able to find a way to do the haunted hayride and not spook the horses. Instead of the typical offerings of a haunted hayride – loud music, dressed-up characters and screams – the farm will have a storyteller, Henry Savin, who will tell tales to people as they ride through the woods. Allegra said the scariness of the story will depend on the age group of the folks on each ride.

The hayrides cost \$10 per person and are held every Friday, Saturday and Sunday through the end of the month. Allegra will have a bonfire and encourages people to bring any food and drink they want. The rides, which are about 20 minutes each, will run from 7-9 p.m. Allegra added that if a lot of people show up, the rides may be extended past 9 p.m. and will run for about 20 minutes each, though he said 11 p.m. is the absolute deadline, as any longer than four hours is too much for the horses.

If they prove to be a success, the spooky hayrides will be something Allegra is hoping to repeat every year.

"I am up for anything once," Allegra said. "If it works we will do it again."

The hayrides are a way to help Allegra through October, which he said tends to be his slowest time of year. While horse and carriage rides may seem ideal for the warmer-weather, Allegra also keeps busy during the winter – most prominently during the lantern light tours at Mystic Seaport.

The tours, Allegra said, were "what really

turned my business into a full-time business."

During the lantern light tours, every night is Christmas Eve 1876, in the pretend village of Greenmanville. People carry lanterns around, participate in a storyline that is told to them as they enter the "town" and get to ride on a trolley or omnibus from Allegra Farm.

It is through his dealings with Mystic that Allegra learned of Savin. Allegra said Savin did impersonations at Mystic, and thought he would be perfect for the scary story rides. (Savin's activities at Mystic include participating in "Nautical Nightmares," which Savin called "an evening of spookiness" held weekends in October.)

Allegra has also gone Hollywood a number of times in the past 15 years, as his horses and carriages have been featured in such movies as *Amistad*, *Kate and Leopold*, *The Golden Boys* and *The Time Machine* and TV shows such as *Boardwalk Empire*, *The Buccaneers* and *Sex and the City*. Allegra himself even made the silver screen on one of these occasions. In *Kate and Leopold*, he played Leopold's (Hugh Jackman's) driver in a scene where Leopold is taken to his mansion for a ball.

While the lantern light tours and the movie gigs have been going on for a while, something new the farm is offering are "hot rod" funerals. Instead of a hearse, the deceased is brought to the graveyard in an antique car. Allegra said he thought this might be something that a lover of old cars would like as a funeral option.

"It's never been done before," he said.

Allegra Farm is also home to the Horse Drawn Carriage and Sleigh Museum of New England. Walking through the farm's barn with all the old carriages, it is easy to see why Allegra is called to be a part of movie sets. Allegra has acquired many carriages over the years, most of which are from the 1800s. There is also a carriage that only presidents and royalty had ever been in back in its heyday. Then there is an 1890 Cunningham hearse that was originally from Rochester, NY – and was nearly destroyed when the New Britain barn it was being stored in caught fire in the 1980s.



For those looking to get in the Halloween spirit, look no further than Allegra Farm in Colchester, which will begin offering spooky storytelling hayrides this weekend. Riders will be loaded into horse-drawn carriages, like the one shown above.

"We are very lucky it is still in existence," Allegra said.

While Allegra has a pool of 25-30 sub-contractors that he employs throughout the year, the only fulltime staff at Allegra Farm are him and his wife, Lori Kessel Allegra. Kessel Allegra helps most during the summer months when she has time off from her job at Connecticut College, where she is an assistant coach for the track and field team and runs the ice skating rink where she gets to drive the Zamboni.

Two of the horses Allegra will use in the spooky hayrides, 9-year-old Loretta and 5-year-old Casper, were roaming through the grass when the *Rivereast* came to visit last week. Kessel Allegra said that one of Casper's favor-

ite things to do is play soccer.

"He's adorable and he has such a personality," she said. Her husband laughed saying "he is twice as wide" as the other horses.

Allegra Farm is home to many types of horses ranging from age four through their late 20s. Among these are horses that used to be race horses but got too old to race anymore. These horses would have been put down if not for Allegra purchasing them.

"I give them a good long life as carriage horses," he said.

For more information about the spooky storytelling or Allegra Farm's other offerings, visit allegrafarm.com or call Allegra at 860-537-8861 or 860-680-5149.

Sign Vandalism Costing Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

A recent rash of sign vandalism in Hebron is costing the town thousands.

The vandalism, which has been directed towards signs on Jones Street and Burrows Hill Road, consists of crude drawings, words and the alteration of speed limits.

Although common to lose an occasional sign and have a few vandalized in the course of a year, this spurt of vandalism includes "20 or so" signs, according to Public Works Director Andrew Tierney, and has taken place over the last couple of weeks.

The vandalism normally extends to "one or two or three [signs] a year and then we can live with that" Tierney said. "Or somebody steals one and puts it in their garage or their bedroom."

"But," he added, "this is getting crazy."

Tierney noted that none of the vandalized signs can be fixed. Each one is replaced as soon as the Public Works Department is notified. While the department has a selection of replacement signs on hand, "signs are expensive" said Tierney, adding that "they're going right through my inventory."

The cost of replacing each sign is around \$100, when taking into account the sign itself, the posts and hardware, Tierney said. He stated that so far, the damage has cost a couple thousand dollars.

And town signs aren't the only thing being affected. Hebron resident Christine Intravia had an entire sign stolen from her property a little over a week ago. Intravia had purchased her husband a "tractor crossing" sign for Christmas that was placed out by their garage. After an incident a year ago where another of their signs was unscrewed and stolen, Intravia and her husband decided to bend the screws over on this one so it couldn't be removed.

But the culprits weren't deterred. Instead, they pulled the sign post out and took the entire thing.

"I was so aggravated," she said. "I was like 'you got to be kidding me. Not once but twice!'"

Intravia compared what she felt to when you park your car and somebody dings it then runs away.

"I'm pretty sure it's gotta be one group that's going around and just has nothing better to do" she said.

If she could talk to those involved, Intravia stated that in a polite way, she'd tell them to "grow up" and "find something better to do."

Tierney added that Resident State Trooper James Nolting has been notified about the vandalism. Nolting did not return calls for comment for this story.

Hebron Elementary Working to Fix Water Troubles

by Geeta Schrayter

Hebron Elementary School (HES) is continuing their work to fix the water bacteria issues that have been present since Tropical Storm Irene.

Although the school didn't lose power during the storm, Thad King, the director of health for the Chatham Health District, which serves Hebron, stated that after the storm there was an electrical problem. When the system was powered back up, King said the water in the atmospheric storage tank overflowed, which may have contributed to the bacteria problem. The atmospheric storage tank is not under pressure and contains water that's already been treated, stored and is ready to be distributed, King explained.

HES was never under a boil-water advisory because the school never lost power, stated King, but the water was tested as "sort of a preemptive review." It was through this testing that the presence of total coliform was discovered in the water.

"Total coliform is an indicative bacteria," said King. "It's a good indicator of sanitary quality – that's why we use it."

By itself, total coliform poses no health risks to the public, but may indicate the presence of E. Coli.

"The presence of total coliform indicates you need to do an inspection of the system to

determine what other problems might exist," said King.

Additional testing showed no E. Coli was present, but as a safety measure, the school refrained from using their water and continues to provide bottled water and water coolers and supply the kitchen with water for cooking.

In a letter sent to parents and guardians dated Sept 30, Superintendent of Schools Eleanor Cruz stated that the source of the coliform bacteria had been identified as a well at the end of the new soccer field. The well was chlorinated on Sept 29 and allowed to sit over the weekend. On Oct. 3, both of HES' wells were then chlorinated.

"We need to let the disinfectant sit and then we will thoroughly flush all water systems in the building," said Cruz.

After the system is flushed, Cruz stated another test will be conducted which will hopefully indicate the total coliform is no longer present in the water.

"We will continue to provide bottled water for staff and students," said Cruz, adding that they're "in constant communication with the town health official and the town manager."

Cruz expects the process will take another two weeks to complete.



North Woods of Colchester will be celebrating the completion of the third phase of construction at the complex, which offers housing to resident over age 55, next Friday, Oct. 14. The homes, like the one above, are “designed with seniors in mind” and provide the residents an opportunity to live in a safe, active, and tight-knit community.

Over-55 Development Begins Third Phase of Construction in Colchester

by Bailey Seddon

North Woods of Colchester, an over-55 housing community, is holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony next Friday, Oct. 14, at 5 p.m., to celebrate the recent beginning of phase three of the five-phase project.

North Woods, located at 2351 Lebanon Ave., is a community for active adults 55 years and over. The development also describes itself as a “maintenance-free community,” as homeowners have relatively little to worry about when it comes to dealing with their homes. Homeowners’ shrubs are cut, their leaves are swept away and snow is shoveled right up to their doors.

The homes are all about quality, said developer Alan Williams, who joked that his need for perfection is what helped North Woods homes be “the best” in their price range. This was evident when the *Rivereast* took a tour of several of the homes on Monday. There were many qualities which set the North Woods homes apart from others. All the homes had stone on part of the exteriors, for aesthetic purposes and inside every home had hardwood floors, granite countertops and tile flooring in the kitchen and bathrooms.

Even though it was not obvious, the homes were designed with seniors in mind, people who might need more help as the years go by and the affects of aging set in. One example of this was the choice to have lever handles instead of knob handles in all the homes. This way, any resident dealing with arthritis won’t need to turn

the door handle; they can just push it down. Williams said North Woods can make other adjustments if homeowners need them.

“We are willing to customize for people,” he said.

Homes, which range from 1,300-3,000 square feet, start at \$289,900 and reach into the upper \$300,000s. While the community is for adults around retirement-age, their children can live there if they are over 18, and children or grandchildren under 18 can visit up to 60 days out of the year.

Residents have been living in their North Woods homes for about four years; currently, 58 people, ranging in age from 55-80, live at the community in 32 homes. Of these 58 people, about 70 percent are retired, Williams said.

Once phase three is complete, there will be 81 homes at the development, and when the fifth and final stage is complete – which Williams estimates is at least three years away – there will be 134 homes.

While the phase now underway is the project’s third, this is the first ribbon-cutting ceremony for the community. Williams said people who live here want to celebrate the extension of such a fun neighborhood.

“We want to share and emphasize the good” in the community, he said. He mentioned that he had invited local politicians, the Colchester Business Association and any other town members who would like to come to the event are welcome.

The ribbon-cutting is going to be “a nice little party,” he said.

One of the aspects of living in North Woods is the active homeowners’ association. The association features different events that residents can participate in about once a week. For the month of October, these include a trip to Gouveia Vineyard in Wallingford, a Halloween get-together at one resident’s home, bike rides on the Air Line Trail and a trip to Waterfire in Providence, RI.

Throughout the year, the neighborhood also celebrates holiday parties, Cinco de Mayo, Memorial Day and the Fourth of July, and there are barbecues every third Tuesday of the summer months. Many of these parties were at residents’ homes whenever someone offered to host. In the future, Williams said, he is hoping North Woods will have a Community Center and be able to hold some of these events there. The residents are willing and able to get out and be a part of society and much of that includes all the activities that are put together for residents to enjoy.

While North Woods is for people 55 and over, Williams made it clear that it was not a retirement village. Operations Manager Kevin Curtis seemed to feel the same way. He said life for residents at North Woods is much different from how he had pictured retired life.

“They just go, go, go,” Curtis said. “It’s amazing to watch.”

Curtis talked about a group of five women

who go out every morning at 8 a.m. to walk together. “You can hear them hooting and laughing,” he chuckled.

In short, Williams said, the community has “taken on a life of its own.” He said it is a great way for retired men and women to remain active.

“People live longer the more social they are,” he added.

Williams also touted the safety of North Woods. Williams’ office is visible as soon as one enters the development. He said this presence means there is less of a likelihood of outsiders breaking into homes.

“It is a very protected neighborhood,” Williams said.

Williams stressed there is “a lot of positive energy” at North Woods, and this was evident when, during Monday’s interview, Larry and Pat Donovan stopped by the office just to say “hello” to Williams and other employees before they went on their walk. The Donovans moved into North Woods only a few months before and both described how happy they were and how much they loved living in the community.

“We are closer to family up here,” said Pat Donovan. “We love it.”

“We meet some great people up here,” Larry Donovan added.

For more information on North Woods of Colchester, visit NorthWoodsOfColchester.com or call 860-537-5338 or 860-707-4353.

Hebron Farmers’ Market Hopes to Grow Entrepreneurs

by Geeta Schrayter

At the Hebron Farmers’ Market, visitors come across produce from local farmers, fresh baked goods and craft items. Usually these are sold by adults, but twice a year, on the aptly-named Young People’s Day, kids are added to the mix.

Young People’s Day, which was started last year, takes place once during the summer season and once in the fall, and allows children to learn what it’s like to make and sell their own products.

“We kind of want to encourage kids to be entrepreneurs and start their own businesses” said Susan Berry, a member of the Market Master Committee.

The first five kids to apply are invited to take part in the market on Young People’s Day and have the usual vendor’s fee waived. With the help of a parent, they’re responsible for all aspects of the process, from growing or making their products to deciding on price points, setting up their tent and being knowledgeable enough to converse with costumers.

“It helps them to get a sense of what it’s like

to actually make a product and sell it,” Berry said. “That’s really what our goal is: to give them a little bit of experience.”

Items sold by the kids have included jewelry, wallets made from duct tape, pillows and produce. “We’ve had kids who are really into gardening,” stated Berry. “They want to be farmers and they’ve sold a lot of their produce.”

At the most recent Young People’s Day on Oct. 1, inclement weather prevented three of the five kids who planned to be there from attending, but Berry noted that comes with the territory. “One of the things the kids learn is that at a farmers’ market you’re dependent on the weather” she said. But the two who made it were happy to be there and enthusiastic about their products.

Heather Clough, 11, of Hebron, was there with her mother, Fiona Clough, selling hand-made pillows she’d been making for the past couple of years.

“She made them as gifts for cousins and friends,” Clough said. “Then this opportunity for [Young People’s Day] came up and I think

she knew right away what she wanted to make and sell.”

It was Heather’s first time at the event, and she said she liked the opportunity. “I like to see people buy [the pillows],” she stated.

And she already knows that when it comes to selling a product, it’s not always about her personal preferences. When choosing what fabric to use, Heather said she doesn’t buy what she likes, but that “I kind of know what other people like.”

“She put a lot of time and effort into it,” said Clough “so there’s ones for boys and ones for young girls and older girls, too.”

Next to Heather, two sisters from Colchester were selling pumpkins, flowers, Indian corn and apple cider.

“We love apple cider and I know people love apple cider,” stated Sophie Savitsky. Her twin sister Maddie nodded beside her, inadvertently acknowledging that the 8-year-olds already knew a key point in selling: consumer interest.

The girls, who have a “pretty big farm” in Colchester and like to help out their father, have

been to the Farmers’ Market a couple of times already.

“We like selling stuff,” said Maddie.

“We LOVE selling stuff,” Sophie added.

Their father, Jeff Savitsky agreed. “They enjoy making the dollar,” he said. “They sell lemonade at my house in the summer and they make a killing.”

Along with encouraging local kids to “think about making something, think about manufacturing something or think about growing something,” Young People’s Day is beneficial to the farmers who frequent the market too, said Berry.

In July, the event “made it a really bustling market,” Berry stated. “So it was good for the farmers as well.” Berry said that the plan is to continue holding the event a couple of times a year.

The Hebron Farmers’ Market takes places from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Saturdays in June through mid-October at 1 Main St. in Hebron on the grounds of Church of Hope and the Red Barn. This year, its last day is tomorrow, Oct. 8.

The Renaissance Faire: Food, Fun and Wedding Venue

by Geeta Schrayter

The Connecticut Renaissance Faire is back for its 13th year, providing guests the opportunity to “escape to the past” – as well as to get married.

The Faire – which is being held weekends through Oct. 16 at the Lions Fairgrounds in Hebron – brings entertainment, food and shopping meant to be reminiscent of the Renaissance. However, Marketing Director Eric Tetreault is quick to say the Faire isn’t all about history.

“A lot of people are under the impression when you go to a Renaissance Faire that it’s a historic reenactment,” he said “and this is not.” He added that a Renaissance Faire is often a mix of history and fantasy.

“Our goal is to make it fun for everybody who comes here” he stated.

Food such as turkey legs, steak on a stick and bread bowl stews can be found, although Tetreault notes these aren’t necessarily authentic.

“The only [food] that’s reminiscent with the Renaissance is like bugs and stuff like that,” he laughed.

Shopping is also present and includes items ranging from jewelry to swords, housewares to entire outfits that look like they’re straight from the past.

This year, the Faire boasts events such as jousting, armored combat, comedy shows, magic shows, various musical productions . . . and weddings.

Although numerous stage performances take place during the Faire each day, the six weddings that will be taking place this year are legitimate.

“They’re becoming more and more popular,” said Tetreault. “We’re seeing that more and more brides are going for something like this [over] traditional weddings.”

Enjoin Wedding Coordinator Susan Mead said weddings have been held at the Faire for 10 years. When the Faire first began, Mead and a friend decided the event needed weddings. The following year, one of the girls who had worked at the Faire had the first Faire wedding.

“She brought her own food, [the couple] set up a little 20x20 tent, and we had a wedding!” Mead reminisced, adding weddings at the faire have gotten bigger each year.

On Oct. 1, Mead was preparing for a wedding with about 70 guests.

“We actually have six weddings this year. Three are with food and three are just vows only,” she said. “So there’s the choice.”

Mead creates the packages and allows each one to be tailored to an individual bride’s needs. “We try to customize for each bride for what she can afford,” she said.

A wedding at the Renaissance Faire means guests receive entry tickets and, depending on the package the couple chooses, a full sit-down meal with fare such as roast chicken and turkey legs, baked apples and wedding cake.

“Basically, it’s an all inclusive package,” Mead explained. “They come in with the dress all on and basically everything is ready for them” she said.

Events such as “Wenching” and “Rogueing” may take place prior to the wedding in an attempt to create what Mead calls “a license to play.”

In Wenching, a group of wenches come and waylays the groom. They tell him to “assume the position,” explained Mead, and he gets on his knees. Each wench then comes and kisses him across his forehead with bright red lipstick. “And then,” said Mead, “the bride gets to put the very last kiss on because he’s all hers.”

In Rogueing, the bride is “kidnapped” and placed under an arbor. Rogues then approach her with a bunch of roses. Each one presents her with a rose, compliments her and tries to convince her to go with them instead of the groom. At the end, the groom is given four roses and gets to be the last one to present to the bride.

“We had one [groom] ... swaggering down with his roses. He’s fidgeting in his purse – his pouch here – and he whips out a charge card and puts it in her cleavage” Mead laughed. “We all sat there and laughed and hoorahed.”

Mead said a Renaissance Faire wedding is often a choice for theater people or individuals who are interested in the era, but she added that another draw is the price. According to The Wedding Report Inc., a research company that tracks wedding trends, the average cost of a wedding in 2010 was over \$24,000. Packages for a wedding at The Renaissance Faire start at \$350 for the most basic activities and go to about \$4,000 for the grandest.

For Jason Yu and Abigail Wonneberger-Yu, who were married that afternoon, a Renaissance wedding was chosen for a couple of reasons.

“We both love [the medieval era],” said Wonneberger-Yu, adding that she’d always attended Renaissance Faires, and when she heard about the weddings, she’d said “let’s do it.”

“It’s always been a common interest” added her husband, who was also excited about the turkey legs and the costumes.



Abigail Wonneberger-Yu and Jason Yu were married last Saturday, Oct. 1, at the Renaissance Faire at the Lions Fairgrounds in Hebron.

“[My mom] was psyched about getting dressed in a medieval dress,” stated Yu.

“My sister made [almost] everything,” added Wonneberger-Yu, emphasizing that their friends and family were all very supportive.

Not having to plan everything was noted as another perk. “We didn’t have to plan everything. The events are here, people can just hang out,” Wonneberger-Yu stated.

But even without all the planning, Wonneberger-Yu said the wedding was still stressful.

“I’m excited to say our vows and then this

stress is gone,” she said.

The couple, who resides in Boston, said they’ve already planned on coming back next year to take part in the vow renewals that are also offered at the faire.

“I think it’s going to become a yearly thing for us around Oct. 1,” said Yu, confirming what Mead stated earlier: “I have had reoccurring couples that come ever since day one, every year on their anniversary to say ‘hello’ . . . it’s like a family.”

For more information on the Connecticut Renaissance Faire, visit ctfaire.com.

Portland Democrats Release Platform

The Portland Democrats released their platform this week. Democratic Town Committee spokesperson Gail Landry said the Democrats have a slate of incumbents who “work in harmony and effectively to advance the town’s interest and priorities.”

The slate is led by current First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and includes the following incumbents for Board of Selectmen: Fred Knous, Kathleen Richards, Mark Finkelstein and Brian Flood.

Last month, Portland was recognized by *Money* magazine and placed on its national list as one of the 100 Best Towns to live in for 2011. In addition, Brownstone Intermediate School was named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence on Sept. 15 by the U.S. Department of Education.

The DTC said its “Platform of the Future” includes “but is not limited to” the following priorities:

1. Provide necessary services to residents in

a cost-effective manner while holding the line on taxes.

2. Work with the Board of Education to ensure an “excellent” school system.

3. Expand the tax base by recruiting new businesses and assisting existing businesses.

4. Enhance the business climate by reviewing regulations and working with boards and commissions to modify barriers that may impede business development.

5. Continue programs to improve the town’s infrastructure, including the roads, energy usage and the water and sewer system.

6. Continue to plan and improve our parks and make them user friendly for residents.

7. Enhance property values and public safety by additional street improvements.

8. Promote and support “our well-run” fire, emergency and police departments, library, public works, senior programs and youth services.

Woman Crashes Into Tree in Marlborough

A woman collided with a tree after she lost control of her vehicle Friday, State Police said.

On Sept. 30, Kathleen Hauser, 58, of 436 East Center St., Manchester, was traveling west on Saner Road when she came to the stop sign at Chapman Road. Hauser lost control of her vehicle, going through the stop sign and hitting a tree. There were no injuries in the crash.

The vehicle was towed from the scene by Northeast Towing and Hauser was issued an infraction for a stop sign violation, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

9/27: Police are investigating the theft of a motorcycle on Gilead Street after the victim discovered it was stolen, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

9/27: Nicholas Clement, 18, of 21 Myrna Dr., was charged with third-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

10/1: Devin R. King, 30, of 37 May Rd., East Hartford was charged with failure to drive right, DUI and reckless driving, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

9/27: Police are investigating a reported burglary that was called in at 3 p.m. Suspect(s) broke into the Linwood Avenue residence through a window at the front of the home and took several items, Colchester Police said. Charges for the case are third-degree larceny and third-degree burglary, Colchester Police said.

9/28: Two 17-year-old male juveniles were each charged with drug paraphernalia and unauthorized manufacturing, State Police said.

9/28: Michael S. Starkel, 43, of 26 Oakwood Ln., Columbia, was charged with risk of injury to a minor, State Police said.

9/30: Jason C. Williams, 39, of 18 Drawbridge Rd., Preston, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane, State Police said.

9/30: David J. Phillips, 185 Prospect Hill, was charged with criminal trespass and breach of peace, State Police said.

10/1: Jerry L. Patch, 54 of 34 Pickerel Lake Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

10/2: Jason J. Thuotte, 37, of 14 Meadow Dr., Apt. 2, was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree strangulation, State Police said.

10/2: Matthew Desautels, 26, of Norwich, was charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, insurance failed to cover minimum requirements, DUI and operating a motor vehicle without a license, State Police said.

10/3: Tomas Vicente Mas, 28, of 284 South Main St., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

10/3: Antonio Morales, 38, of 284 South Main St., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

10/3: Joshua D. Wilcox, 19, of 574 Browns Rd., was charged with third-degree burglary from a motor vehicle and fourth-degree larceny from a motor vehicle.

10/3: Clarence Wright, 55, of 4 Cobble Way, was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

9/25: Lynn M. Roy, 45, of 58 North Lane, South Windsor, was arrested for DUI, East Hampton Police said.

9/25: Michael Curtis Sentell, 27, of 1B Long Hill Rd., was arrested for disorderly conduct, interfering with police, reckless driving and disobeying an officer signal, police said.

9/27: Eamonn Galvin-Rival, of 41 Champion Hill Rd., was arrested for first-degree failure to appear, police said.

Portland Police News

9/27: Chester Mounts, 53, of Smith Street, East Hampton, was arrested for operating under suspension, operating unregistered motor vehicle, misuse of plates, and having no insurance, Portland Police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Hope E. Evans

Hope E. Evans, 72, wife of the late Donald C. Evans of Colchester, passed away Monday, Oct. 3, at Hartford Hospital. She was born July 1, 1939, in Newburgh, NY. Hope worked for Tri Town Precision as a quality assurance inspector.

Surviving are her son, Ed Evans; two daughters, Suzanne Bonola and Dawn Senesac; a brother, Donald Terry; five grandsons and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services are private; there are no calling hours. Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home of Colchester is in care of arrangements.

East Hampton

Patricia C. Burt

Patricia C. Burt, 64, of East Hampton, died peacefully Wednesday, Oct. 5, at Apple Rehab in Middletown. Born May 16, 1947, in Warwick, RI, she was the daughter of the late Richard E. and Arlene (Hansen) Cline.

She attended high school in Rhode Island and received her bachelor's degree from URI. Patricia had retired from the State of Connecticut where she had worked as a children services consultant for the Department of Children and Families. She had been active in the East Hampton Seniors.

Patricia is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Leslie and William Dinunzio of East Hampton; a sister, Wendy Upright of North Carolina; and the light of her life, her two grandchildren, Carys and Chase; also her two granddogs, Belle and Jax.

She was predeceased by her sister Lori.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Oct. 8, at 11 a.m. in the First Congregational Church in East Hampton, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial will follow in Lakeview Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, 18 North Main St., West Hartford, CT 06107.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Anselmo Conderino

Anselmo Cipriano "Blackie" Conderino, 91, of Willington and formerly of Colchester and Marlborough, widower of the late Catherine (Troup) Conderino, passed away peacefully at his home Saturday morning, Oct. 1, with his loving family by his side. Born in Hartford Oct. 12, 1919, he was a son of the late Carmine and Maria (Pauroso) Conderino.

He and Kay were married in Agawam, MA, on Oct. 30, 1943. The couple raised their family in Marlborough and later moved to Colchester, sharing 65 years of marriage before she predeceased him on Dec. 2, 2008.

Conderino was a welder for 66 years before his retirement in 1982 from the Sheet Metal International Organization. He was a member of the Connecticut State Police Auxiliary for many years, serving out of the Hartford Barracks.

Conderino was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester. He had been active with the Colchester Seniors and was a former member and past president of the Marlborough Lions Club. He enjoyed helping countless people throughout the years.

Survivors include three children, Michael Conderino and his wife Lorraine of Colchester, Laura McNaughton and her partner Harry Neumann of East Hampton, Philip Conderino and his wife Karen of Willington; four brothers, Amato, Mario, Guiriano and Philip Conderino; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his wife and his parents, he was predeceased by four sisters, Alvina Casale, Rosemary and Felice Conderino and Gloria Gentile; and a brother, Philip.

Friends attended calling hours Wednesday, Oct. 5, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral gathered at the funeral home on Thursday, before the celebration of the funeral liturgy at St. Andrew Church, Colchester. Burial followed in the Marlborough Center Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to Hospice of Eastern Connecticut, 34 Ledgebrook Dr., Mansfield, CT 06250.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Joyce E. Meli Dera

Joyce E. Meli Dera, 61, passed away Sunday, Sept. 18, in Tucson, AZ, after a long illness. She was born Oct. 18, 1949, in Hartford, the daughter of the late John and Emma Dera.

She attended Hartford schools and lived and worked in the towns of, Hartford, Hebron, Andover and Willimantic for many years. She also worked at the Lebanon Veterinary Clinic and in recent years the Manchester Community College bookstore.

She made her home the past two years in Arizona with her daughter Marybeth Meli Phillips and her son-in-law Eric.

She was predeceased by a brother, John, and leaves two sisters, Joan Leitao of Enfield, and Janis Dera of East Hampton, as well as two nieces, Erin Vecsey and husband Matt, Pamela Leitao, and several nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

She was a wonderful, accomplished artist and had a great love of animals.

Donations in her memory can be made to Second Chance Center for Animals 11665 N. Highway 19, Flagstaff, AZ 86004.

Colchester

Mark Joseph Long

Mark Joseph Long, 45, of Colchester, passed away unexpectedly Monday, Oct. 3, at his home. Born in New Britain on June 7, 1966, he was a son of Robetine (Dumond) and the late Roger Long.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Navy and worked as a carpenter. Mark was an avid New England Patriots and New York Yankees fan. He was a loving son, brother and companion who was known to be very generous and had a big heart.

Including his mother he is survived by his loving companion of 22 years, Debra Bishop; two brothers, Kim and wife Leslie Long of Brewer, ME, Scott and wife Kristy Long of Dubie; three nephews, Derek, Kyle and Zachery, a niece, Taylor and many other friends and relatives.

Friends may attend calling hours today, Oct. 7, from 5-7 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A memorial Mass will be held at St. Lois Church in Ft. Kent, ME, at a later date. Burial will be in St. Lois Cemetery.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Kathleen E. Colaluca

Kathleen E. (Krause) Colaluca, 72, of Portland, wife of the late Peter A. Colaluca, died Friday, Sept. 30, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born in Stratford the daughter of the late William and Ann (Reilly) Krause. Prior to her retirement Kathleen worked as a registered nurse at Bridgeport Hospital. Later she worked as a food service manager at Trumbull High School.

She is survived by two daughters, Deanna Discenza and her husband John of Portland, Jeanne Mercaldi and her husband Mike of Southbury; four grandchildren, Giuliana Discenza, Gianni Discenza both of Portland, Laura Shemancik of North Carolina, Anthony Mercaldi of Monroe; five great-grandchildren; and also several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by two sisters; Ann and Patty and two brothers, Bill and Paul.

Kathy was a warm, compassionate person with a great sense of humor. Her grandchildren were the light of her life.

Funeral services were held Monday, Oct. 3, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Burial was held Tuesday, Oct. 4, at the Swedish Cemetery in Portland. Friends visited with her family Monday, prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Weiss Hospice Unit c/o Dept. of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit biegafuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Florence L. Azzi

Florence L. (Ramhrost) Azzi, 84, wife of Harry J. Azzi, of Cherry Hill Road, Norwich, formerly of Atlantic City, NJ, and Florida, died Saturday morning, Oct. 1, at the Harrington Court Rehabilitation Center in Colchester.

Born in New Brunswick, NJ, on March 23, 1927, she was the daughter of the late Frederick and Lillian (Millar) Ramhrost. On Dec. 26, 1945, in New Brunswick, NJ, she was united in marriage to Harry J. Azzi. Florence was an avid artist painting in both oils and watercolors and also enjoyed singing and dancing.

Surviving is her husband of 65 years, Harry J. Azzi; a daughter, Donna Jean Sherman and her husband Steve of Norwich; a sister, Lillian "Ivy" Davis of New Jersey; a granddaughter, Lisa Gauthier and her husband Ed of Norwich; four great-grandchildren, Ava Jean Gauthier, Nicholas Gauthier, Kaine Sherman, and Clay Sherman; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a grandson, Harry John Sherman.

A memorial Mass of Christian Burial will be held today, Oct. 7, at 11:30 a.m., in St. Joseph Church, 120 Cliff St., Norwich.

Arrangements are by the Labenski Funeral Home.

Colchester

June Ford

June Ford, 86, of Norwich, passed away Saturday, Sept. 26, at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was born April 25, 1925, in Trenton, NJ, to the late Minnie Hunt.

She retired from the City of Norwich Public Works where she was a secretary. She was a life-long member of the Leffingwell Baptist Church where she handled the flower arrangements.

June is survived by a daughter, Holly Eccleston of East Haddam; a daughter, Faye and her husband Robert Paradis of Lisbon; a daughter, Terri Kukla of Denali, AK, and a daughter Elysa Aymar of Fountain Valley, CA. She also leaves behind grandchildren Ryan Aimar, Lindsay Aimar, Joseph Roy, Donald Roy Jr., David Kukla, and Vera Richardson, as well as nieces Joanna Hunt, Dianna Picton, and nephews Fred and Ed Hunt and grand-niece Heather Hunt.

June is predeceased by her loving husbands, Louis Eccleston and John Ford; brothers, Walter and Henry Hunt; a sister, Audrey Pounder; a son, Louis Eccleston Jr.; and a granddaughter, Kelly Richardson.

A graveside service will be held at Maplewood Cemetery on Saturday, Oct. 8, at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in June's honor to the Leffingwell Baptist Church, 388 Salem Tpke., Bozrah, CT 06334.

Visit churchandallen.com to leave an online condolence for June's family.

East Hampton

Candy M. Miesch

Candy M. Miesch, 51, of Manchester, formerly of East Hampton, died Tuesday, Sept. 27, at her home. Born Jan. 12, 1960, in Manchester, she was the daughter of Richard Miesch and the late June (Miller) Miesch.

Besides her father, she is survived by the love of her life, David Embser of Manchester; her three sons, Daryl Cushin of East Hampton, Roy Webber III of Vermont, Jeremy Webber of Maine; a daughter, Brooke Webber of Washington; a brother, Richard Miesch of North Stonington; three sisters, Wanda Brunelle of Maine, Melony Miesch of Vermont and Dawn Benjamin of East Hampton; also her six grandchildren including Colby and Rachel with whom she was especially close.

Candy was a loving person who enjoyed her family and friends. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

There was a service Wednesday, Oct. 5, at Marlborough Moose Lodge, 303 S. Main St. Burial will be in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery.

Spencer Funeral Home has care of arrangements. To leave online condolences visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Amston

Robert Arthur Strong

Robert Arthur Strong, 64, of Amston, formerly of East Haddam, passed away after a long battle with complications from diabetes Tuesday, Oct. 4, at Hartford Hospital. Born in New London Oct. 6, 1946, he was the son of the late Robert M. and Artis (Coffey) Strong.

Bob was a good friend, a great family man, and will first and foremost be remembered as a devoted and loving husband and father. He was known for his great sense of humor, patriotism, and outspoken nature. He was a proud veteran of the United States Marines, serving during the Vietnam War. After serving in the military, he worked for Electric Boat and held various other positions throughout his career. He retired in 2007 from Nelson Precision Drilling in Glastonbury.

Bob was a communicant and greeter at Church of the Holy Family in Hebron. He was a history buff and a member of the National Geographic Society. Bob enjoyed listening to oldies music and was an avid outdoorsman. He loved spending time on the Cape and in Maine during the summer months.

Bob is survived by his loving wife of 33 years, Kathleen (Scanlon) Strong; daughter, Danielle Strong of Brookline, MA; his brother-in-law, Robert Joseph; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a sister, Diane Joseph.

Friends may attend calling hours Saturday, Oct. 8, from 9-10:30 a.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Funeral Mass will follow at the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron at 11 a.m. Burial to follow at the Pleasant View Cemetery in Lyme.

Donations in his memory may be made to benefit Type 1 Diabetes at jdrrf.org.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

