

RIVER EAST

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East Hampton resident Jaclyn Fitzgerald was found dead last Friday inside her Namonee Trail home, shown here. A prime suspect in the case committed suicide just two days after police found her body.

Three Seniors Graduate from Local Band

by Katy Nally

Bruce Phelps takes a deep breath and sighs when he considers saying goodbye to three members of his band, the Modern Riffs.

But Phelps has taught those three members a lot during their time with the jazz/rock/blues band and, come August, they'll move on in the music world.

Phelps, a Marlborough resident, began the mentoring band the Modern Riffs in 2008, and now it includes seven high school students and another adult, Kim DuBois, of Colchester.

The result is a modern family, which meets every Sunday to perfect their groovy sound.

But there's about to be some turnover within the Modern Riffs, as three high school seniors – two who have been with the band since the beginning – will leave the band this summer for other musical endeavors. Eileen Cannon, who is lead vocalist and plays the flute, was accepted to the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford to study musical theater, and Alex Anfuso, who plays the tenor sax, was recently accepted to Northeastern University and plans to study the music industry. Matt Angelo, the band's keyboardist, said he doesn't

have definitive plans yet, but intends to continue playing the black and whites.

Other band members include DuBois on bass, Corinne Cannon on trombone, Anne Michaud on trumpet and backup vocals, Greg Matunas on guitar, Connor McCaffrey on drums and Phelps plays alto sax.

"It's been really good," Eileen said after the band's practice Sunday. "I'm going to miss it."

The hard part will be saying goodbye, Phelps said.

"Yes, we'll look for new members," he said dejectedly. "It's kind of an unpleasant thing to think about. ... You do get attached to them."

Despite having a few members leave, the Modern Riffs still has plenty of spunk left, which residents can experience for themselves tonight at the Jazz in the Pocket Concert Series at the Charter Oak Cultural Center in Hartford from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

And the band will remain at full force until this summer.

The three parting members recalled some of their favorite moments with the Modern Riffs this week.

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East Hampton Woman Found Dead in Home

by Katy Nally

The quiet neighborhood on Namonee Trail was violently awakened early Friday morning, when police came knocking to investigate a missing persons report – but the case took a turn for the worse later that day.

Around noon last Friday, Feb. 25, police found 24-year-old Jaclyn Fitzgerald dead in her home at 30 Namonee Trail. According to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Fitzgerald's death was a homicide caused by asphyxiation due to strangulation.

A "person of interest," who was identified as Fitzgerald's on-again, off-again boyfriend, committed suicide just two days after Fitzgerald's body was found, East Hampton and State Police said. Oscar Wojtanowski, 22, whose last known address was 283 Faith Ct., Newington, jumped from the fifth floor of the Riverview Parking Complex at Mohegan Sun. He was transported to Backus Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Last Thursday, Fitzgerald's sister filed a missing persons report with the East Hampton Police around 11:30 p.m., Chief of Police Matt Reimondo said. Being twins, Fitzgerald and her sister "spoke at length quite frequently," Reimondo said, so she became concerned after not hearing from her sister.

East Hampton Police tried to locate Fitzgerald that night. Early last Friday morn-



Jaclyn Fitzgerald
Photo via Facebook

ing, Reimondo said, police were able to enter Fitzgerald's home through an unlocked window, and noticed "indications that there might have been a struggle," though he wouldn't elaborate on these "indications."

Reimondo said East Hampton Police did not locate Fitzgerald's body "on the first walk through," and the State Police Major Crime Squad was called in. Around noon on Friday, State Police entered 30 Namonee Trail with search warrants and found Fitzgerald, Reimondo said.

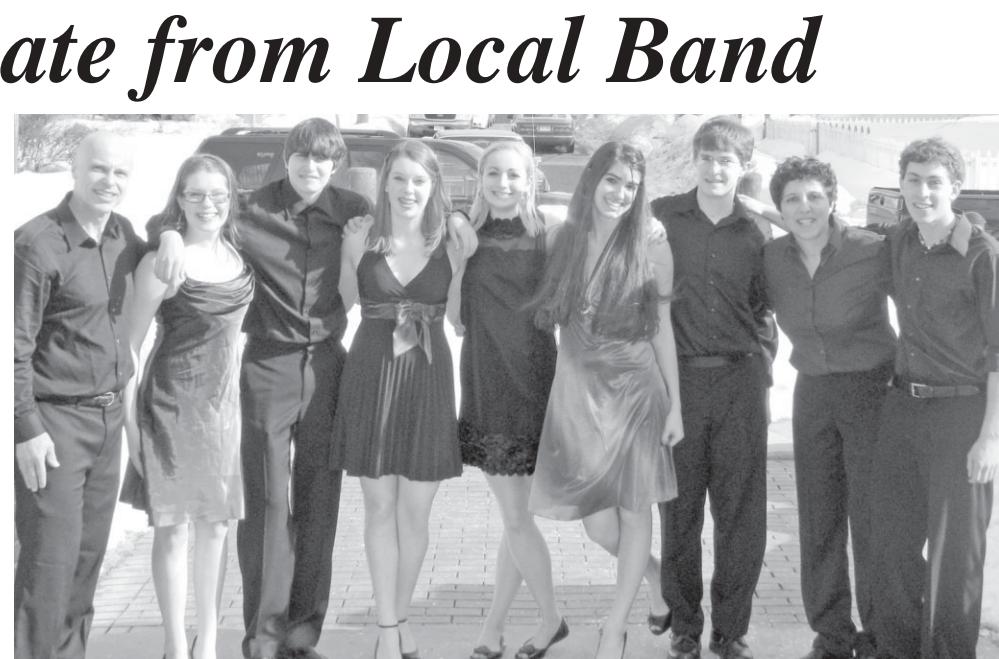
On Feb. 27, around 8:15 p.m., State Police from Troop E in Montville responded to a medical emergency at Mohegan Sun, where they found Wojtanowski. The investigation revealed Wojtanowski had jumped five floors and landed on the first floor alley near the casino garage entrance. His cause of death was determined to be from massive blunt force trauma.

Fitzgerald had been living alone, Reimondo said, but a neighbor, Dave Bobbi, said he'd met Wojtanowski and spoke with him on several occasions since Fitzgerald moved to East Hampton.

Bobbi, who lives catty-cornered to Fitzgerald, said she and Wojtanowski were "broken up constantly."

The two were together in 2009, when

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The Modern Riffs, a mentoring band made up of two adults and seven high school students, will perform tonight at the Jazz in the Pocket Concert Series in Hartford. Pictured from left are band founder Bruce Phelps, Corinne Cannon, Connor McCaffrey, Eileen Cannon, Anne Michaud, Alex Anfuso, Greg Matunas, Kim DuBois and Matt Angelo.

Woman cont. from Front Page

Wojtanowski threatened Fitzgerald's then-roommate who filed a complaint with police. In June of that year, Wojtanowski was convicted of second-degree breach of peace. According to an affidavit on file at Enfield Superior Court, Rocky Hill Police applied for a warrant that February to charge Wojtanowski with second-degree threatening and disorderly conduct after he told Fitzgerald's roommate he was going to "bash her face in."

The affidavit says Wojtanowski was looking for Fitzgerald, but threatened her roommate after she said she didn't know where Fitzgerald was. Wojtanowski also told the roommate he "went to jail for beating up his ex-girlfriend" and was cursing and yelling in the hallway to her apartment, according to the affidavit.

Rocky Hill Police verified that Wojtanowski had prior arrests for second-degree threatening, first-degree harassment, first-degree stalking, breach of peace and violation of a protective order.

According to the state judicial website, Wojtanowski pleaded guilty to the 2009 charge of disorderly conduct and received a one-year suspended prison sentence and a two-year conditional discharge.

Bobbi said Fitzgerald moved to Namonee Trail about two years ago. He said he would help Fitzgerald out from time to time with her Corvette or remodeling her home. Bobbi said Fitzgerald, an exotic dancer at the Gold Club in Hartford, "thought she was gonna make her little castle" in East Hampton.

The entire neighborhood on Namonee Trail has been shaken up by Fitzgerald's death, Bobbi said.

"It's scary," he said. "You don't expect something like this to happen. ... It's sad – 24 years

old."

Fitzgerald's Facebook page has been flooded with supportive statements from friends and family since her passing.

"I miss you sweet little angel you are forever in my heart and on my mind," Marissa Lynch posted to Fitzgerald's wall this week.

"This isn't fair Jaxx, you had so much going for you and you were such a strong, independent, beautiful woman," Veronica Hackerr wrote. "I've been listening to your voicemail over and over...I'd do anything to hear that voice again; and hear it say that you're ok and happy...I just hope you're happy wherever in heaven you may be."

Reimondo said East Hampton Police have been working with Fitzgerald's family "to keep them in the loop as best we can."

"They're struggling with this, which is understandable, and we're assisting them to the best of our ability," Reimondo said.

Al Ciraldo, owner of the Gold Club, said employees have begun accepting donations for Fitzgerald's family.

"We want to help out anyway we can," he said.

Fitzgerald was a friend to many employees at the Gold Club and word of her death rattled those close to her, Ciraldo said.

"It was horrifying," Ciraldo said. "She was such a nice person; she was so young."

Ciraldo said Fitzgerald was as an independently contracted dancer, who worked at the Gold Club about three or four days a week for the past several years. Ciraldo said he only knew Fitzgerald as an employee, but called her "a wonderful person."

"She was just a beautiful person to be around," he said. "She was very friendly. I can't say enough good things about her."

Seniors cont. from Front Page

Eileen said she always enjoyed performing the "What a Wonderful World" duet with Phelps, as he does quite the Louis Armstrong impression. Though he doesn't showcase his vocals often, "once in a while I break loose," he said.

The duet hit especially close to home when Phelps and Eileen sang it at her father's homecoming party when he returned to Marlborough after serving in Iraq.

For Alex, playing her tenor sax with the Modern Riffs was her only opportunity for a musical outlet, after a scheduling conflict forced her drop band at Bacon Academy.

And Matt said he appreciated the "gigging opportunity" the band provided.

The Modern Riffs are an area favorite at a variety of local venues, with its unique set-list that highlights straight jazz tunes as well as old favorites.

Anne said the band's songs range from the '30s to contemporary music.

With a strong horn and rhythm section, the Riffs belt out rock classics like Santana's "Black Magic Woman" and "Oye Como Va," but also nail smooth numbers like Duke Ellington's "Take the A Train" and Sheryl Crow's "Everyday is a Winding Road."

"We keep that jazz orientation and add stuff that's fun to play," Phelps said.

So far the band has performed at the Greater Harford Festival of Jazz, the Hoop City Jazz Festival and the Hebron Harvest Fair, as well

as other local spots like the Marlborough Tavern, the Marlborough Congregational Church and the Goff House. Following tonight's performance, the next show for the Modern Riffs will be at the Marlborough Tavern – a favorite venue for several band members – on Saturday, April 9 at 8 p.m.

"There's so much energy there," Alex said. "Mr. Spellman [co-owner of the tavern] likes us," Anne chimed in.

"That's always a lot of fun," Phelps added. "The place is packed when we're there."

He said Modern Riffs' reputation has enabled them to book such gigs, even as other, more established bands, vie for the same spots.

"The part that I'm proudest of, is they do very well with it," Phelps said. "It's very tough; you have to compete with other bands out there."

Especially in this economy, Phelps continued, "there's more bands out there than gigs."

But the Modern Riffs must be doing something right, as its following has grown since its inception, and fans cram venues like the Tavern. In fact, Alex said her network of supporters "is getting a little embarrassing at how big it is."

Tonight's show, Jazz in the Pocket, begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Charter Oak Cultural Center, located at 21 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford. For more information call 860-249-1207.

For a full schedule of the Modern Riffs' upcoming shows, visit the band's website, modernriffs.com.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Like a lot of you probably did, I watched the Oscars last Sunday. I enjoyed the show, and was rather surprised when I read the reviews the next day. Apparently just about everyone thought James Franco and Anne Hathaway were terrible hosts.

Franco in particular acted as if he was on something, a lot of people said. As someone who's seen a lot of James Franco stuff over the years – dating back to the wonderful and all-too-short-lived *Freaks and Geeks* – I can tell you that's just kind of how he is; he tends to have this slightly-stoned look about him. That doesn't mean he is, however (in fact, Franco has said he hasn't smoked pot since he was in high school); he just kind of has that demeanor.

While I thought Franco seemed to work as host, Hathaway was a little better. She appeared to have more of a stage presence, and also showed off her musical talent. Hathaway can really sing (and did a better job than fellow actor-singer Gwenyth Paltrow, whose performance during the Best Song nominees portion of the show was fairly bland). Apparently, Hathaway's on tap to play Judy Garland in a biopic of her life. She's got the look, and as we saw Sunday, she definitely has the pipes.

Now, the awards themselves were kind of uneventful, with the big ones going to who everyone seemed to think the big ones were going to go to. And as is often the case, the Best Picture trophy went to a film that I haven't seen and in fact never even heard of until the Golden Globes a couple of months ago: *The King's Speech*. This seems to happen to me fairly often; in fact, a look online at recent Oscar results reveals that the last time I saw a Best Picture winner before it actually won Best Picture was in 2006, when *The Departed* won. (I had also seen the Best Picture winner from the year before, *Crash*, although I try not to think about it actually winning that award; geez, that movie stunk.)

* * *

This week's fool politician (I'm going to try not to make this a regular feature; but the Internet just makes it so easy to find when these guys are being so, so stupid) is Georgia state Representative Bobby Franklin. Last week, Franklin introduced a bill that would make abortions in Georgia completely ille-

gal, and would also criminalize miscarriages. In fact, both miscarriages and abortions could be punishable by death. Yes, by death. Any "prenatal murder," as the bill labels it, would be a felony and carry a penalty of life in prison or death.

As appalling as the bill's treatment of abortion is, its handling of miscarriages is even worse. For the bill says that the only way a woman who miscarries wouldn't be a felon is if she can prove there was "no human involvement whatsoever in the causation" of the miscarriage. The "human involvement" part is left nice and vague, with no clarification as to what exactly that means. That's key, because nobody really knows what causes miscarriages. According to the American Pregnancy Association, causes can range from chromosomal abnormalities and hormonal problems to malnutrition and excessive caffeine use to age of the mother and "maternal trauma." And that's by no means an all-inclusive list.

Simply put, the association says, "The reason for miscarriage is varied, and most often the cause cannot be identified." So if you can't prove the cause, how can you prove human involvement played a role? (And for that matter, how can you prove it didn't?) The fact of the matter is a miscarriage is a very sad event that is unfortunately all too common; the American Pregnancy Association that most healthy women in their childbearing years have a 15-20 percent chance of carrying. So that's potentially one in five pregnant women Rep. Franklin wants to make into criminals and send to jail and maybe even execute. Smooth move, Mr. Franklin.

Fortunately, Franklin's bill is just so cruel to women that I see no way it passes, even in Georgia. There's no way a woman's going to be given the death penalty for having an abortion or the unmitigated gall to miscarry. But the fact that Franklin even proposed it is sick – and shows a rather unsettling lack of understanding of human pregnancy. I mean, you'd think a politician would do his homework before sitting down and drafting a 10-page piece of legislation. Well, okay, maybe you wouldn't think that. But it would be nice if he did, don't you think?

* * *

See you next week.

Hebron Grand List Growth, Though Small, Exceeds Expectations

by Courtney Parent

The Grand List for the year ending Oct. 1, 2010, showed a 0.809 percent increase from the previous year, Town Assessor Robert Musson said this week. And while the growth may be scant, town officials this week seemed pleased with it.

The nearly \$7 million increase brought the Grand List total up to \$868,272,830. A \$7 million increase may sound small in relation to an \$868 million Grand List, but it is a larger increase than was seen the last two years. The list for 2009 grew 0.65 percent increase from the 2008 list – a list that itself had grown just 0.164 percent from the 2007 Grand List.

The Grand List represents the assessed value of all of the taxable property in town. The Board of Finance uses the list to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The rate is determined by dividing the town's budget for the next fiscal year by the Grand List total. Residents can calculate their taxes by multiplying their total assessments by the mill rate. One mill is equal to \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Hebron's current mill rate is 28.94, meaning if residents have a home assessed at \$200,000, they pay \$5,788 in taxes on it.

The Grand List is broken into three categories: real estate, personal property and motor vehicle. Overall, there was a .499 percent in-

crease in real estate from October 2009 to October 2010. The change represents a \$3,914,040 increase and brought the real estate total to \$787,584,170. Musson credited the increase primarily to new construction.

"We haven't seen any large number of new houses," Musson said. "Most of it has been sheds and additions, new family rooms in the basement and things like that. Nothing of substantial increase."

Motor vehicles increased by 3.635 percent, or \$2,361,610, bringing the motor vehicle total to \$67,328,410. Musson credited the motor vehicle increase to a recent stability in the retail sector of the industry.

"In the past couple years we've seen motor vehicles fluctuate and even decrease in a lot of cases," Musson said. "Right now manufacturers aren't pushing leased vehicles and flooding the market when vehicles come off lease. Things are a little bit more stable for the motor vehicle retail sector and that's helped stabilize the retail prices."

Finally, personal property brought the smallest dollar increase, \$693,365, but it also went up by the largest percentage of 5.474. According to Musson this increase was due primarily to three cell tower sites that reside in town.

Director of Finance Lisa Hancock explained that a recent change in State Legislation now

requires towns to include cell towers and other forms of telecommunication equipment on Grand Lists.

"The State of Connecticut used to bill the providers in the past and then they would pay the town directly based on the state billing," Hancock said. "The state will no longer be doing this except for AT&T equipment. So it is a shift in revenue source. In the past it was budgeted as a separate revenue item and now it is included under our tax collections instead."

Overall, the .809 Grand List increase proved to be a pleasant surprise for the town. Finance Director Lisa Hancock commented that with the economy in its' current state any notable increase in the Grand List was not anticipated.

"I was a little bit surprised," Hancock said. "I did expect some increase because of changes to the personal property area, but really wasn't expecting this large an increase. Not that .809 is that large."

Therrien also pointed to the struggling economy as a major factor in the Grand List total.

"I was pleased with the Grand List outcome," said Therrien, "only because with the economy the way it is, any increase is a positive."

Similarly, Musson shared a positive outlook on the increase, saying the percentage had exceeded his expectations.

"I wasn't really expecting anything over a half of 1 percent. This is better than what I thought we'd get so I'm pretty happy," said Musson. "If you look at some of the other towns I'm sure there are some in better shape, but there are probably a lot in worse shape. I think we came out pretty good."

The top 10 taxpayers for real estate were: Blackledge Country Club Inc. with a net assessment of \$3.29 million, Foote hills Farm Inc. at \$2.12 million, Village Shoppes LLC at \$2.12 million, Hebron Properties LLC at \$1.54 million, B.I.S.S. Inc. at \$1.49 million, Dogwood Place Inc. at \$1.25 million, Hebron Country Manor LLC at \$1.19 million, Blackledge East LLC at \$1.01 million, Holland Deborah Etal at \$934,560, and Robin Malkasian at \$931,250.

Connecticut Light and Power was the overwhelming top taxpayer for personal property at \$5.92 million. The rest of the top 10 included: The Connecticut Water Company at \$1.55 million, Ted's Inc. at \$342,240, Blackledge Country Club Inc. at \$296,190, Hebron Pharmacy Inc. at \$238,020, Drake Petroleum Company Inc. at \$222,530, CIT Technology Financing Services Inc. at \$187,360, AT&T Mobility LLC at \$186,760, Hebron Center Dentistry LLC at \$144,900 and McCollum D.W. Fish Realty Inc. at \$123,140.

How 'Bout Those State Champion Fencers in Andover?

by Courtney Parent

Andover teen Cecilia "Tobi" Jayawickrema showcased her fencing skills last Saturday, Feb. 26, winning a gold medal in women's epee at the 2011 High School State Championship.

The statewide competition included a field of 80 girls and 120 boys who competed in four events; individual boys foil, individual girls foil, individual boys epee, and individual girls epee.

(The main difference between foil and epee lies in the target area. In epee the target area is the entire body, while in foil the target area is restricted to the back and torso.)

The competition took place at Hopkins Day School in New Haven.

Cecilia, a junior at East Catholic High School, started fencing about five years ago. According to Cecilia she was in search of a new sport when someone directed her toward fencing.

"I was looking for something new, someone suggested fencing so I tried it and liked it," she said.

Cecilia trains at the Sword in the Scroll Academy in Willimantic under the instruction of coaches Drew Page and Steven Martin. According to Page, the fencing program at the Academy has been up and running since 2006 and Cecilia is the only remaining fencer from the beginning.

Despite it being the first state competition she had ever competed in, the unfamiliar aspect for Cecilia was not the competition in itself, but rather her competitors.

"I wasn't used to fencing girls, so it was really different," Cecilia said.

Coach Page explained that there is only one other female fencer at the Sword in the Scroll and since she's only 12 years old, Cecilia fences against her male counterparts.

"She fences guys. That's it," Page said laughing.

Throughout the state competition, Cecilia lost just one bout. Her solo loss, in the preliminary rounds, landed her a fourth place seeding for

the direct elimination rounds. During the early rounds, bouts are played to five points, in the later elimination rounds bouts are extended to 15 points.

Cecilia stayed calm and collected under the pressure, defeating two of her opponents in sudden death overtime matches, in which the first person to score a point won. Though she never expected a championship going into the day, Cecilia said after a few wins the thought entered her mind.

"A couple bouts in, after I had won," Cecilia said, "I felt like it was a possibility."

Page said after the first point was scored in the championship match, it was just a waiting game.

"Something happened, as soon as Tobi got the first hit on the other girl it was over," Page said. "You could just see it. We just had to wait for time to run out."

With that, Cecilia won the match, and took home the gold.

Fellow Sword in the Scroll fencer, Nick Norstrom, of Coventry, also earned recognition for his efforts in the state competition, walking away with a sixth place finish. Nick is a junior at Coventry High School and Saturday's event was also the first state competition he competed in.

"I had never been so I didn't know what to expect," said Nick, "but after I watched a few bouts I thought I might have a chance to do well."

Nick has been fencing for just two years this spring. Page said Nick was sixth going into the elimination rounds and held his position.

What makes Cecilia's and Nick's accomplishments so notable, according to Page, is that neither East Catholic nor Coventry High have their own fencing programs. Unlike the majority of their competitors from schools such as Guilford and Hopkins, which have daily after-school practices, Cecilia and Nick only have two practices a week.



Cecilia "Tobi" Jayawickrema, left, and fellow fencer Nick Norstrom both won medals at a high school fencing competition last weekend. They are pictured with instructors from Sword in the Scroll, Drew Page, left, and Steven Martin.

"Tobi has probably fenced longer, but sheer practice time doesn't even come close," Page said.

Both have limited match experience, competing in just three to five local and/or fundraiser tournaments prior to the state championship. However, at these tournaments the competition includes a much broader range of participants than those at the state championship. Many involved fence against opponents of not only a different gender, as Cecilia was accustomed to, but also of a different age bracket.

"Nick actually had to face me at a competi-

tion," Page said.

For those high school fencers competing for their schools rather than as individuals, the state team competitions will take place tomorrow, Saturday, March 5 at East Lyme High School.

For Cecilia and Nick the next step is simply preparation for the 2012 championship. According to Page, Nick's goal will be to move up in the ranks with the possibility of winning a state championship, while Cecilia's goal will be a repeat championship win.

"In Tobi's case," Page said, "she just needs to defend next year."

Andover Grand List Climbs 1 Percent

by Courtney Parent

The Grand List for the year ending Oct. 1, 2010, showed a 1 percent increase from the previous year, Tax Assessor John Chaponis said this week.

The total net assessment for this year's Grand List was \$280.38 million, an increase of \$2.79 million over last year's total.

The Grand List represents the assessed value of all of the taxable property in town. The Board of Finance uses the list to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The rate is determined by dividing the town's budget for the next fiscal year by the Grand List total. Residents can calculate their taxes by multiplying their total assessments by the mill rate. One mill is equal to \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Andover's current mill rate is 27.60, meaning if residents have a home assessed at \$200,000, they pay \$5,520 in taxes on it.

The list is broken into three categories: real estate, personal property, and motor vehicle.

Overall, there was a 0.5 percent or \$1.28 million increase in real estate from October 2009 to October 2010. The increase centered around numerous small renovations rather than

large construction projects, Chaponis said.

"It was not due to any one large residential or commercial project," Chaponis said, "but rather a culmination of a larger number of properties receiving smaller increases for improvements made to their properties that increased the values."

Motor vehicles increased from \$247.48 million last year to \$248.76 this year, an increase of 3.7 percent or \$843,230. According to Chaponis, this increase was no big surprise with other local towns having similar increases right around 3.6 percent. He said the main reason behind the increase was due to taxpayers who upgraded to new vehicles or added an additional vehicle.

The largest percentage increase came from personal property, which spiked 8.5 percent or \$444,810 since the 2009 assessment. The spike resulted from new accounts and taxpayers investing in new equipment, according to Chaponis. Despite knowing where the increase had come from, he said it was still not one that was anticipated.

"Barring purchasing any new items, these

assessments can decrease from year to year," Chaponis said. "In other words, it grew 8.5 percent when a 5 percent decrease is not unusual."

Chaponis explained that personal property value is determined by a group of depreciation tables similar to those used by the Internal Revenue Service.

The Grand List proved to be a pleasant surprise to Chaponis who said he had anticipated a flat Grand List since there had been no major residential or commercial developments and the value of personal property generally depreciates.

"I was a little surprised with the increase. I've heard of some towns with decreasing Grand Lists and many with little to no increase."

However, First Selectman Bob Burbank didn't view the 1 percent rise as much of an increase, and wasn't surprised at the end result.

"We didn't expect the Grand List to grow very much because of property values and there wasn't any big construction," Burbank said. "I was happy that it wasn't a decrease."

The top 10 taxpayers for real estate were:

Whispering Hills LLC at \$887,200, B&B Realty Co. at \$828,800, Martin Marshall at \$789,200, Hillside Self Storage Center LLC at \$694,200, Hatem Pamela B at \$615,200, Post Ellen D Trustee at \$520,240, Andover Plaza LLC at \$499,200, Slattery Beth Ann at \$482,600, Maier Allen L at \$466,600, and Minicucci James M and Kathy A at \$466,100.

In terms of personal property, Connecticut Light & Power was the top taxpayer with an assessment value of \$2.68 million. The following nine include: Algonquin Gas Transmission LLC at \$484,520, Scott Electrocrafts Inc. at \$175,080, AT&T Mobility LLC at \$152,570, Southern New England Telephone at \$152,290, 7-Eleven Inc. at \$145,390, Kenney Neil & Kathleen \$131,250, Andover Septic Tank Company Inc. at \$123,380, ICA Donuts LLC at \$77,630, and Andover Landscaping LLC at \$67,120.

If there are no reductions made to the Grand List by the Board of Assessment Appeals, a mill will represent \$280,379.28.

The 2010 Grand List mill rate will not be certified until after the budget is approved.

Marlborough Library Continuing Down Path to Renovation

by Katy Nally

Richmond Memorial Library took another step in its fast track to renovation Tuesday when selectmen awarded a bid for engineering and design plans.

Capital Studio Architects' bid of \$37,000 was awarded and the contract includes engineering and design plans, preparing bid documents and services, and construction administration.

On Feb. 22, a search committee including Town Planner Peter Hughes, Library Director Nancy Wood, First Selectman Bill Black, Selectman Joe La Bella and library board members Deb Bourbeau and Mike Quincy recommended the town proceed with the \$37,000 bid after hearing four other proposals. Capital Studio's bid was the lowest, by far, as the highest bid was \$129,500, and coming in second to last was a bid of \$81,000.

Capital Studio's bid was "a sign of the times right now," Black said.

"There are firms that want to keep busy and keep that cash flow coming," he said.

Capital Studio is the primary contractor for the town of East Hartford and has experience in renovating libraries, Black said.

After the committee's recommendation, the library board unanimously voted Feb. 23 to fund

the \$37,000 from its reserves.

The engineering and design plans must be submitted with the town's application for a Community Development Block Grant, which is due to the state June 3. Under the umbrella of that program is Small Cities funding, and that is specifically what Marlborough is targeting.

The town is in the process of applying for the maximum offered through this grant, at \$750,000, which will be used to make the library handicapped-accessible.

Black said Tuesday the renovations would include an elevator with a surrounding staircase attached to the right side of the building (if facing the front), a second egress with a ramp out the North Main Street side, two restrooms on the second floor above the now-children's section and upgrades to the meeting room, including widening the doorways.

The Small Cities funding can only be used for renovations to municipal buildings if the money will make them compliant with current American Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

"It's pretty broad in terms of what ADA will allow as long as it's an accessibility issue," Larry Wagner, who is managing the application, said.

Wagner explained about \$13-\$14 million comes to the state for "small cities" (under 50,000 residents) as part of the Community Development Block Grant program. Towns apply on a competitive basis for grant money in one of four categories. In this case, the town will apply for ADA improvements with an "upfront" application that includes engineering and design specs, he said.

Typically, Wagner said, proposals are awarded the full amount requested, except for last year when funding was cut by about 10-15 percent. However, towns were allowed to apply for the remaining balance the following year.

This year's funding is also contingent on Congress, Wagner said.

"Everybody's proceeding with the numbers they have available," he said.

Once proposals are submitted in June, the state usually announces its decision the following October. Then the money is awarded in December or January and the town has two years to complete the project.

Town Planner Peter Hughes said the library renovation entails about three to six months' worth of work.

Residents and town officials who spoke at a public hearing Tuesday said the improvements can't come soon enough.

Wood said she would be unable to employ a handicapped person in the current building, because of how the staff desk is situated and the size of certain doorways. Wood and the library board have three goals for the renovation: to make the entire building accessible for all its users by following current ADA guidelines, to create more space for the library's collection as well as activities, and to carry out the renovation at a minimal cost to taxpayers.

Library board member-at-large Jim Cherry told selectmen he supported plans to renovate the library, as it's a vital resource for Marlborough's neediest residents. Cherry said food bank clients are "constant users of the library."

"They need our facilities," he said. "Our library is just undersized for our needs and theirs."

The public hearing regarding the library renovation was extended to Tuesday, March 15, to be held before the regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen's meeting at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

East Hampton School Board Adopts \$26.61 Million Budget

by Joshua Anusewicz

The East Hampton Board of Education adopted a \$26.61 million budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year at its meeting Monday.

The budget represents an increase of \$729,295, or 2.82 percent, from current year spending.

Certified salaries, which make up the largest part of the budget, saw a minimal increase up to \$13.29 million, up 0.8 percent from last year. A substantial increase was also seen in medical insurance, which rose 8.7 percent to \$3.99 million.

Some board members expressed concern about raising the budget and look for areas to make cuts, but most members feel there are few areas where cuts can be made.

"We really can't do much if you look at the budget," board member Carol Lane said. "We need to maintain a responsible attitude toward what these kids need."

According to the report, four categories – certified salaries, classified salaries (\$3.42 million), medical insurance, and pupil transportation (\$1.48 million) – make up 83.4 percent of the budget total. With these areas being of major importance, Chairperson Michael Vasquenza warned against making cuts that could harm the students.

"We are advocates for education," Vasquenza said. "Cutting things too quickly to cut costs never made sense to me."

Board member Don Coolican, the only member to oppose the 2.82 percent increase, asked for the board to consider a 1.4 percent increase. According to a chart distributed by Coolican,

the percent increase in the East Hampton education budget has grown roughly 60 percent in the past five years and is more than double the size of the percent increase of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CPI is a statistical estimate that measures changes in the price level of consumer goods and services purchased by households.

According to Coolican, when the education costs exceed the CPI, they compound interest and each year, residents are forced to pay more in taxes. He worries that even though students will benefit in the short term, they will have to pay the price later.

"This doesn't just go up for one year, it goes up forever," Coolican said. "Our kids will have to pay for this eventually."

Coolican also brought up that the student population has dropped 5.7 percent in recent years, but the number of employees has gone up, with the school district hiring 48 new teachers since 2005. According to Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden, most of these hires have been to accommodate students with special needs. Most of the special needs teachers, she says, are not certified and are paid less than certified teachers.

Golden also mentioned that the school district has received \$622,250 as part of a reimbursement grant for special needs students. The budget allows for \$40,000 to be spent on each special needs student, but the grant reimburses 77 percent of the total spent over what the budget allows.

The budget will now be presented to the Board of Finance at a March 11 meeting for approval.

* * *

Also at the meeting, District Language Arts Coordinator LuAnn Hardacker provided an update on the work of Nena Nanfeldt and Kristina Elias-Staron, two consultants that have been funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

According to Hardacker, the consultants have provided support to teachers through professional development, classroom coaching, mentoring, model teaching, administrative assistance and suggested improvements to the Connecticut Mastery Test and Connecticut Academic Performance Test. She admitted that it took time for some consultants to get integrated, but found that they were ultimately well-received and gained a good rapport with teachers.

The report shows that students have begun to show improvement in literacy, classroom participation and test scores. According to the report, "students read material at their appropriate age levels, fewer students were in need of remedial services coming into grade one, and CMT reading gains were noticeable at all grade levels."

The funding for this program is part of the stimulus package approved by Congress that provided \$115 billion for education. Hardacker hopes that the program can continue for a "few more years."

A discussion also took place about the possibility of changing the law that a school year must last 180 days. The proposal, brought up by Coolican, would adjust the law from having a minimum number of days to a minimum number of hours.

The minimum number of hours, which is currently 900, is easily met by East Hampton, Coolican said, which spends almost 1,000 hours in school during the school year. He said he believes that the state should allow individual districts to decide how the school calendar should be controlled, which he believes would have prevented the superintendent from canceling April vacation because of snow days.

Coolican believes that if there were severe weather problems, the school could lengthen some school days by 10 to 20 minutes to fulfill the number of hours needed. This would not only protect school vacations, he says, but scheduled senior events at the end of the year, such as graduation.

Coolican has already contacted state Representative Gail Hamm and the state Board of Education. He also plans to draft a letter to send to Gov. Dannel Malloy.

School board members said they would also need to speak with faculty members to see if they would be willing to support such a change.

"We would certainly need some input from the people teaching," Debra Robinson, the school board's acting secretary, said.

Colchester Officials Pleased By Grand List Growth

by Katy Nally

The 2010 Grand List spelled unexpected good news for Colchester taxpayers this year.

Over the 2009 list, the total increase was about 1.53 percent, or \$19.6 million, which equates to about \$500,000 in additional tax dollars.

"Although this is not the growth we have experienced in better economic times, it is good news that Colchester has seen some growth while many other communities are flat or in decline," First Selectman Gregg Schuster said in a press release.

Tax Assessor John Chaponis said the Grand List growth was actually more than the \$19.6 million, but \$2.5 million was removed from the original total of \$21.1 million for Board of Assessment Appeals corrections. Chaponis said the \$2.5 million "is in anticipation of removed assessments due to some new exemptions."

Last year, \$1 million was removed from the Grand List total for appeals.

He explained there are two exemptions for veterans – one at the federal and the other at the state level – that have an application date that comes after the Grand List is filed.

The list is separated into three parts: real estate, personal property and motor vehicle. This year, totals for each category saw an increase. Real estate went up the least, at about 1.35 per-

cent, or \$15.41 million; motor vehicle rose about 3.57 percent, or about \$3.73 million; and personal property increased the most percentage points, at about 7.99 percent, or \$2.54 million.

Chaponis said the increase in real estate was because many properties all received small increases.

He said personal property saw a large increase because mobile taxable equipment was discovered. Chaponis explained equipment that moves to different towns from year to year was found to be in Colchester for this tax year, including an MRI machine valued at \$1.4 million.

The Grand List represents the net value of assessed property in town, and is used to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The rate is determined by dividing the town's budget by the Grand List total. Residents can calculate their taxes by multiplying their total assessments by the mill rate. Currently, the mill rate in Colchester is at 25.07, Chaponis said. (A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So, for example, a person with a house assessed at \$200,000 pays \$5,014 in taxes.)

All told, this year's budget will include about half a million in revenue generated from taxed

property, which is about seven times as much revenue that came from Grand List growth in 2010.

"Last year, we had essentially no growth, which really hurt us," Schuster said.

The 2009 Grand List provided about \$68,000 in additional tax dollars. Chaponis said the minuscule growth over the 2008 list, at about 0.2 percent, was still significant given the state of the economy.

Schuster said the growth from this year's list is "hopefully an indication of better times to come."

So far, it seems the Grand List is an indication of a more temperate budget season.

Schuster said this year was the opportunity to determine "what things do we want to spend our money on." His proposed town operations budget comes in with a 6.6 percent increase, with the anticipation, and the hope, that it will be cut down. Schuster said the proposal was capital- and road-improvements-heavy.

The budget proposal cuts the health department – as Colchester will soon join the Chatham Health District – but no other positions. The budget also includes funding for two new positions, a part-time youth and social services coordinator and an 11th police officer. Schuster said the officer's salary was offset when the

Board of Education agreed to fund the school resource officer position.

The Board of Education's budget is currently at \$37.06 million, showing a 2.99 percent increase. The proposal does not cut programs or sports, but it does eliminate 9.5 FTE of teachers and paraprofessionals.

Once the budgets are finalized and passed in a few months, they will be used to calculate the new mill rate.

The top 10 real estate taxpayers in town are: Country Place of Colchester at \$10.55 million, SS1 Colchester at \$8.10 million, Genesis Heath Ventures at \$4.27 million, White Oak Development at \$3.85 million, S+S Worldwide at \$3.83 million, GAIA Colchester at \$3.77 million, GND Too of Colchester at \$3.39 million, Sharr Realty at \$3.32 million, City of Norwich at \$3.16 million and the Keystone Shoppes at \$3.07 million.

The top 10 personal property taxpayers in town are: CL&P at \$10.11 million, Alpha Q at \$2.68 million, Stop & Shop at \$1.33 million, AT&T Mobility at \$1.29 million, S+S Worldwide at \$1.27 million, Northwoods of Colchester at \$722,000, The Connecticut Water Co at \$687,000, Alliance Healthcare Services at \$541,000, Health Resources of Colchester at \$507,000 and Maxi Drug at \$443,000.

Salaries, Capital Projects Focal Points at Colchester Budget Forum

by Katy Nally

Town officials said next year's budgets will come down to capital projects versus services, but residents threw in another factor at a budget forum Wednesday – salaries.

Residents had their first of many chances to voice opinions about the proposed 2011-12 budgets Wednesday night, and teachers' salaries were of some concern for a few in attendance.

A \$37.18 million education budget was first presented by Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle as a 3.34 percent increase, or about \$1.2 million, over the current fiscal year. However, at a special Board of Education meeting Tuesday, \$124,660 was eliminated from the budget, bringing the overall figure to \$37.06 million – an increase of about 2.99 percent.

By establishing a trust to fund "Other Post Employment Benefits" the board was able to save \$104,000.

On the town side, First Selectman Gregg Schuster created a \$14.49 million budget proposal that is capital- and road-improvements-heavy. The increase currently sits at 6.6 percent, but, Schuster said, he expects and hopes it will be cut down as boards and committees examine the budget. This way the spending package can reflect "the highest priorities" for taxpayers, he said.

And that was the goal of Wednesday night – to hear feedback from residents about where the town, and school system, should spend their money.

At a forum of about 45, only a handful of people spoke.

Tom St. Louis, chairman of the Youth Services Advisory Board, asked town officials to consider more funding for human services to make it at least 1 percent of the overall budget.

"I think it'd be a real victory to at least show one penny for every dollar," he said.

Board of Finance Chairman Bruce Hayn said officials were looking to hear from residents on whether the budgets should fund capital projects or services.

"We've always focused on services, which is why we're so far behind on capital," he said.

Resident Jim Kelly said he would want to see capital projects funded over some raises certain teachers are expected to receive. He asked Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein how he could justify funding raises for teachers that tally 15 to 17 percent.

Based on the 2011-12 salary schedule for Colchester teachers, those with six-year degrees moving from step 11 to step 12 will receive a 15.67 percent step increase. And for the 2012-13 schedule, that same move would yield a 17.41 percent step increase.

Goldstein said the reason for this raise was twofold. First, it "allows for the recognition" of experienced teachers who have been in the district for many years. And, secondly, he noted a "mathematical quirk."

Since the 2009-10 school year, salaries from steps one to 11 have remained the same and not seen a general wage increase. So, the gap between steps 11 and 12 has widened, making that step increase somewhere between a 13 and

15 percent raise for the 2011-12 pay schedule.

In future talks with the teachers' union, Goldstein said "we're going to talk about it, and we're going to address it."

Salaries make up the largest chunk of the education budget at 63.3 percent, or \$23.90 million, with benefits coming in second at 14.4 percent. Even though salaries are the bulk of the education budget, 9.5 FTE of staff was still proposed to be cut.

Besides highlighting which cuts to make, Hayn once again asked those in attendance to think about where the town should invest.

Resident and former selectman John Malsbenden said it should be the town's undesignated fund balance.

The current year's budget took \$300,000 from the undesignated fund balance, leaving the total at about 5.75 percent of the overall debt at the start of the fiscal year. The year prior, \$220,000 was taken from the fund balance. Schuster's proposed town operations budget for 2011-12, however, does not include money from the undesignated fund balance.

Both the town and the education budgets include increased funding for capital projects, which, officials said, have been ignored for too long.

On the school side, in a more than 4,000-percent increase, the capital outlay budget, at \$283,800, covers much-needed improvements at William J. Johnston Middle School and smaller items at Bacon Academy and Jack Jackter Intermediate School.

Schuster's budget includes \$800,000 for road improvements, which is about a 166 percent increase over the current year. In the past, he said, the road line item has been at \$600,000, but it has been chipped away at over time.

"We need to build that back up," he said.

The Public Works Department identified about \$2 million worth of roadwork, but Schuster said he cut that figure down.

Schuster's proposed capital projects include about \$50,000 to use a Geographic Information System to create a map of Colchester so potential developers can pinpoint the exact location of certain areas.

Also, about \$147,000 for replacing aging equipment, and about \$5,000 for open space purchases.

The town operations budget includes the elimination of the health department and its two employees, as the town will join Chatham Health District, but it makes no other cuts to staff.

A part-time youth and social services coordinator was added for about \$15,000, as well as an 11th police officer. Schuster said the Youth and Social Services Department has been "stretched thin," and the police officer's salary was offset when the Board of Education agreed to fund the school resource officer.

Budget workshops will begin Monday, March 7, at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

Throughout the process, residents can submit questions and comments through the town website, colchesterct.gov.

AHM Budget Approved for Next Fiscal Year

by Courtney Parent

Even though the Marlborough Board of Finance voted against it, AHM Youth and Family Services' proposed budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year has been approved.

The budget proposed by AHM included \$152,200.73 for Hebron, \$82,999.98 for Marlborough and \$40,517.29 for Andover. These numbers represent around a 2 percent increase for each of the three municipalities. The municipal cost sharing portion of the AHM budget represents 28 percent of the \$1,001,227 proposed 2011-2012 budget for the youth service bureau.

The Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance in each of AHM's three towns vote on the municipal cost portion of the budget. Five of the six boards need to approve the spending in order for that portion to pass.

At its Feb. 9 meeting, the Marlborough Board of Finance did not approve the suggested bud-

get for the town. There were three 'yes' votes for the proposal, one 'no' vote and two abstentions. According to Marlborough Board of Finance Chairwoman Cathi Gaudinski, the town charter requires that all votes must pass by four votes rather than a majority vote.

The \$82,999.98 suggested budget would be a \$929.35 increase over the Marlborough portion of the current year's AHM budget.

"The concern was over the 2 percent increase, even though it's small," Gaudinski said. "When you are used to seeing 1 percent increases, it makes a difference," she said.

Both Hebron's Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen approved the budget, as well as the Marlborough Board of Selectmen and the Andover Board of Finance earlier this month.

As of Tuesday, AHM had received four of the five votes necessary to pass that portion of

the 2011-12 budget. According to AHM Director Joel Rosenberg, since the youth service bureau's founding in 1983 there has only been "one occasion, possibly two" to his recollection, when the municipal cost sharing portion of the budget did not pass and had to be re-evaluated.

As it turned out, no re-evaluation would be necessary. On Wednesday, March 2, the Andover Board of Finance gave AHM its sixth and deciding vote. According to First Selectmen Bob Burbank, the board voted unanimously to accept the proposed budget. The vote represented AHM's fifth vote in favor of the budget, therefore passing it.

If the Andover Board of Selectmen had not voted to approve AHM's cost sharing portion of the budget, AHM's Board of Directors and the municipal leaders from each town would

have to come back together to discuss what could be cut or where additional funds could be raised.

According to Rosenberg, grants and revenue derived from outside sources provide more than half of the bureau's funding.

"More than 50 percent of the revenue that supports the bureau is from private foundation grants, state and federal grants, private contributions and fundraisers," said Rosenberg.

AHM is one of the state's 99 youth service bureaus. According to Rosenberg, they offer over 40 different programs and serve over 6,000 people in the three towns. And what makes it unique and aids in the success of its programs is that it is a private regional non-profit, he said.

"The AHM board and staff appreciates all the support we get," Rosenberg said. "It's a community partnership to make this work."

East Hampton Mother and Daughter Coping with Breast Cancer Together

by Joshua Anusewicz

Patt Bush hates her wig.

She was devastated the day she lost her hair. Only eight days after her first chemotherapy treatment, Patt was watching the news on her couch when she reached back to itch her head and a large clump of her hair came with it. She ran her fingers through her hair and most of the rest fell out.

"I ran into my husband's arms and just sobbed," Patt said. "I didn't know I was going to lose it so soon."

It seems trivial that she would worry about the style of her wig considering her predicament, but maintaining a good sense of humor and keeping it light, she says, is a must.

After finding a lump in her breast, Patt, 63, of East Hampton, was diagnosed with stage 2A invasive ductal carcinoma with lymph node involvement, a form of breast cancer, last August. In November, she received a modified radical mastectomy on her right breast and a simple mastectomy on her left breast. She started her "journey," as she prefers to call it, through chemotherapy and radiation in January. She will continue her treatments for eight more weeks.

"Everyone knows someone who has been affected by cancer," Patt admitted. According to a 2007 study done by the American Cancer Society, 11,714,000 people in the U.S. are living with cancer. A woman having the most common type of breast cancer isn't that rare.

What makes Patt's journey unique is that she has company. But instead of being stuck in the middle seat between a snoring businessman and crying baby, she is surrounded by people she knows quite well.

On the day Patt found the lump in her breast, her daughter, Stephanie Johnson, 41, was diagnosed with stage 1 invasive ductal carcinoma, the same breast cancer her mother now has. She had a bilateral mastectomy and reconstruction and started chemotherapy in December.

"When you get cancer, it's just yourself and you feel you can handle it," Patt said. "But when it's your child, you're just devastated."

Stephanie, who grew up in East Hampton and now lives in Newtown, has two children of her own: Brandon, 13, and Amanda, 8. She admits that having to share the news with them was difficult.

"Their view of cancer was that it was terminal," Stephanie said. "Fortunately, [the doctors]

found it early and I was never that sick. It was easier for them." She completed her chemotherapy treatments on Feb. 15, but will continue taking oral medications for five years to help decrease the production of estrogen.

Through their treatments, the two women have been inspired by the patriarch of the family, Howard, 66, who was diagnosed with stage 4 non-small cell squamous carcinoma, a form of lung cancer, in December 2008. Howard has never smoked; in 2004, he had pneumonia that caused an infection in his right lung. When doctors put in a chest tube to try and fix the infection, his left lung collapsed. Several months later, Howard began feeling fatigued and started to lose weight. After scans turned up negative, a check of the scar tissue in his lung was deemed cancerous.

"They gave him six months to live," Patt remembered. "That was 25 months ago."

Howard is still receiving treatment, as the cancer has moved into his hip and clavicle. He has recently graduated from homecare nurses and is able to function, though slowly, in everyday activities.

Since the onset of Howard's cancer treatments, he and Patt have used the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center in Middletown for their treatments. The center offers all oncological services, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments, as well as offering social workers, family counselors, and nutritionists to help improve the quality of life for all patients.

"They don't sit behind the desk; they sit next to you and talk to you like they care," said Patt, who has worked as a registered nurse at Pediatric Associates in Marlborough since 1985. "It's not hard to see that they are good people."

Through the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center, Patt learned of "Project Pink," a makeover and fashion show for breast cancer survivors put on by the Middlesex Hospital Comprehensive Breast Center and the Center for Survivorship. This statewide program asks for breast cancer survivors to submit their stories of their diagnosis to win a free makeover, choosing the top 10 entries to participate.

Patt, who already planned to attend the event, entered on a whim and didn't expect to win. Not only was she chosen, but Stephanie was chosen to participate with her.

"We couldn't believe it. I never win anything," Patt laughed.



Patt Bush



Stephanie Johnson

Project Pink is being held Thursday, April 14, at 5:30 p.m. at Wadsworth Mansion in Middletown. The tickets are \$30 per person and include hors d'oeuvres and wine. The outfits will be custom-tailored by Astrid Couture in Killingworth, while the wigs and makeup will be styled by EG Salon in Middletown.

Stephanie said she can't wait to see her mother walk down the runway and feel good about herself.

"I'm so excited for her having a chance to feel good and be happy with the way she looks," Stephanie said. "It's going to be a blast."

There will also be a silent auction at the event, with such items as a basketball signed by the University of Connecticut Women's Basketball team, a football signed by Wes Welker of the New England Patriots, a baseball signed by John Lackey of the Boston Red Sox, jewelry, interior design consultations and many others.

According to Sarah Jeffrey, the grants and special projects coordinator for the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center, there will also be a documentary about all 10 women who were selected, which she believes will be a powerful tribute to breast cancer survivors.

"We can learn so much from these women and their stories," Sarah said.

She also said that out of the 100 available tickets, over half have already been sold, and urged people who want to attend to be proactive and help out for a great cause.

"Any little bit helps," Patt said, adding that the financial toll of the treatments is one of the hardest parts of the journey.

Aside from help from the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center, Patt also credited members of the community with helping her and Howard with everyday tasks, including shoveling her three-acre property this winter. She was particularly surprised by the outpouring of help from her daughter's friends, who still live in East Hampton. She received e-mails, phone calls and text messages on several occasions asking if there was anything they could do to help, she says.

But no support has been as strong as the support from family members, who carry on their journeys alongside her.

"Even though we are going through different treatments," Patt said, "we know that our experiences can help each other."

The journey continues...

For more information on Project Pink and to purchase tickets, visit middlesexhospital.org/events-and-calendar and search Project Pink, or contact Meghan Burgess at 860-358-2046.

Portland Parks and Rec Outlines Upcoming Goals

by Joshua Anusewicz

The Portland Parks and Recreation Commission Wednesday delivered a presentation to the Board of Selectmen highlighting its work over the past four years and its plans for 2011.

Commission Chairman Ralph Zampano said its most important goal for the year will be to implement a long-term "master plan" for Parks and Recreation facilities, most importantly enhancing their existing properties.

The top priority, according to Zampano, is the development of Riverfront Park on Brownstone Avenue. The commission went over the upgrades that have already been made to the park, including an access road, parking lots, sidewalks, park signs and new trees and bushes. In 2011, the commission plans to add a pavilion and bathrooms, with electricity and running water.

Another priority of the commission is developing a 23-acre parcel referred to as the Goodrich Property. The land is currently in the planning phase, with the property being surveyed. The plan for the property is to build two full-size soccer fields, three baseball/softball fields, a concession stand, walking trails, a play-

ground, and an outdoor basketball court.

Zampano told the board that most of the projects have been held back because of financial strains due to the economic downturn.

"Our focus has certainly shifted from our main properties because of the economy," Zampano said. He said a lack of grants and Local Capital Improvement Program (LOCIP) funds have caused a delay, particularly at the Brownstone School playground.

"Schools aren't available for LOCIP funds and with the uncertainty of Brownstone School, we've been holding back," Zampano said.

The commission announced it has \$245,000 of the \$265,000 needed to fulfill its 2011 goals. It will attempt to attain the other \$20,000 through the town's capital improvement funds, state programs, or other grants. However, Director of Parks and Recreation Sean Dwyer says they've learned to temper expectations as to what improvements they can make.

"We've had to make an effort to look at the big picture of what is best for the town," Dwyer said. "We have to look at what we can realistically accomplish."

* * *

At a special town meeting held prior to the selectmen's meeting, residents voted unanimously to renew a lease agreement with the Middlesex YMCA on land that is currently used for soccer fields.

The agreement will last for three years, beginning on March 1 and ending on Feb. 28, 2014. The lease is of no charge to the town, according to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

* * *

A yearly audit was also presented to the Board of Selectmen by CCR, an accounting firm out of Glastonbury. The audit was performed to check on the town's financial statements and to make sure that all state and federal funding was being spent correctly.

The audit was broken into four parts: financial statements, compliance and internal control, state single audit, and federal audit. All four were deemed clean according to Rob Howard, a partner in CCR's assurance services department.

The report also showed that the town's asset

exceeded their liabilities by \$62 million and that the long-term debt of the town had gone down \$9.2 million.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield commended Finance Director Tom Robinson for the work he did in the past year. The finance director is responsible for collecting the town's tax dollars before they are dispensed to pay for town services, according to Portland's website.

A motion was also passed to have CCR perform the audit for Portland next year.

* * *

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield also proclaimed that next week, March 6 through March 12, will be Girl Scout Week in Portland.

Next week marks the 99th anniversary of the Girl Scouts. The organization was founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Ga.

Bransfield urged the town to "thank your town Girl Scouts next week and all year long for all of the work they do in the community."

Also, for those of us with a sweet tooth, Girl Scout cookies will be on sale beginning March 5 at booths throughout the state.



Creativity and critical thinking earned 12 students a spot at the Connecticut Invention Convention in May.

East Hampton Students Headed to Invention Convention

by Joshua Anusewicz

Center Elementary School has announced the 12 students that will represent the school at the 28th annual Connecticut Invention Convention (CIC) on Saturday, May 14.

The event, which takes place at Gampel Pavilion on the University of Connecticut campus in Storrs, invites over 650 students from more than 100 local competitions around the state to compete. According to its website, the CIC describes itself as a "non-profit educational organization dedicated to the goal of promoting creative problem solving and enhancing critical thinking skills."

The event draws more than 4,000 people, the website says, including representatives from businesses and schools to answer questions about the engineering profession. There are also opportunities for the students to meet representatives who can market, promote, and manufacture the inventions.

At Monday's Board of Education meeting, the students were given awards for being selected. Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden and Center School Principal Donna Turchi were onhand to present the awards.

"It was very hard to judge because everyone did such a nice job," Turchi said. "We are very proud of this group of students."

The 12 students selected were: Haneen Fiazuddin for a project entitled "Shine Boots," Lauren Kasperski for "Connect Your Hair," Luke Schroeder for "Tasty Bite," Nicolas Gioielli for "The Skurf Board," Molly Conklin for "Movie Snacks on the Go," Ben Planeta for "Camera Cop," Sarah Caramma for "Raynauds Defender," Jonathan Terry for "The Reversible Heated Hoodie/Rain Jacket," Kelley Williams for "The 2-in-1 Salter and Shovel," Emma Cook for "Stop Sensor," Emily Pedevillano for "The Cell Saver" and Emma Donohue for "Solar Signs."

Portland Resident Critically Injured After Struck by Car

by Joshua Anusewicz

A 23-year-old Portland woman sustained critical injuries after being struck by a drunk driver last Thursday near Central Connecticut State University, according to New Britain Police.

According to the New Britain Police Department, Kimberly Tyrseck was walking on Paul J. Manafort Drive near the CCSU campus when she was hit by a Volkswagen Jetta at 1:05 a.m., Feb. 24. Tyrseck was immediately taken to St. Francis Hospital in Hartford.

New Britain Police said the car was driven by Jessica Parr, 23, of Canton. She was charged with driving under the influence, her second offense in the past year. Carr posted \$5,000 bond and is scheduled in court again on March 9. The New Britain Police are still investigating the incident and more charges are pending against her.

Though she has been at St. Francis for over a week, her condition has begun to improve, according to her uncle Tony Lombardo, who says it's been a long week.

"I wouldn't wish this on anybody," Lombardo said. "But she's a tough little girl and she's going to pull through."

On Tuesday, Tyrseck was able to stand and walk for the first time since the accident, Lombardo said. She was also able to recall her own name, but, Lombardo said, she wasn't able to stay coherent for long.

A representative from St. Francis Hospital said Thursday that she is no longer in intensive care but would not comment on her injuries.

Tyrseck has been an employee at Portland Restaurant on Main Street for several years, where she's made many close friends. Her fellow employees say it hasn't been the same without her.

"We all miss her and her good mood and smiley face," said Shana Beaulieu, Kim's friend and Portland Restaurant employee. "Our regular customers miss her, too. It's been hard on



Kimberly Tyrseck
Photo via Facebook

all of us."

A fundraiser has been planned at Portland Restaurant to help her pay for medical expenses. The event will take place on Sunday, March 27, from noon-5 p.m. There will be a 50/50 raffle, a buffet and all tips made by the staff will be donated to Tyrseck.

Live music will also be provided by Lombardo, who is the lead singer for the band Tony Rome and Swagger, who will be joined on several songs by Kim's brother, Rob. Lombardo said that all the proceeds from the event will go to Tyrseck.

"She's just a kid and doesn't have a whole lot," Lombardo said. "It's been amazing to see the community get together like this. I get goose bumps just thinking about it."

Tickets for the event will be \$25, \$10 for children under 10, and free for children under 5. For more information, call Portland Restaurant at 860-342-2636.

Proposed RHAM Budget Calls for 2.17 Percent Increase

by Courtney Parent

Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski presented a \$24,745,851 budget for the 2011-12 year to the RHAM Board of Education Monday night.

The proposed budget represents a \$525,512 increase, or 2.17 percent, over current year spending.

While the \$24.75 million budget is Siminski's preferred spending plan, he also presented two other budget scenarios, per the school board's request: a "mid-level" budget of \$24,589,727, a 1.525 percent increase over the current year, and a \$24,220,339 proposal, which would be a zero percent increase from the current year.

The major budget assumption that Siminski pointed out to the board was that the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant will be fully funded by the state. This is estimated to equal approximately \$421,000, going up significantly from last year when it was \$304,000. According to Siminski, if funds do not come through, the money would have to be reallocated from a different line item.

Siminski said the main goals of the \$24.75 million budget are to continue to provide the same level of programs, to preserve teaching positions, to address the legal requirements of special education, and to address requirements of Response to Intervention, which is often referred to in Connecticut as Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI). Siminski also hopes to identify and use all cost-saving measures possible.

A few factors that will be impacting the 2011-

12 budget are negotiated salary increases, the cost of heating oil and bus fuel which will both be over \$2.50 and an increase in high school enrollment. Enrollment at RHAM High School is projected to increase by approximately 70 students in the upcoming school year, which means an additional \$861,700 in necessary funds. Siminski said the current per pupil cost at RHAM is \$12,310.

RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie told board members he could offer them enrollment projections now, but said waiting until April would likely lead to more accurate numbers.

"I can have projections done as soon as you need them," Leslie said. "But keep in mind changes may be made to them."

Siminski said the RHAM Board of Education will hold meetings throughout March and beginning of April to present the proposed budget to the public. The board will then decide on a budget figure to take to public hearing, after which the board would vote on whether to send the figure to referendum.

The next scheduled meeting to discuss the proposed 2011-2012 budget will be held on Monday, March 7, at 6:30 p.m. at Andover Town Hall, 17 School Dr.

After hearing Siminski's budget proposal, the board briefly discussed the 2011-12 school calendar. The first day of school will be Monday, Aug. 29, with the last day being Tuesday, June 12, 2012. Wednesday, June 13, through Friday, June 22, have been reserved as make up days, with a disclaimer that any additional days needed will be taken from April vacation.

Fire Destroys Two-Family Home in Portland

by Courtney Parent

Two families were left homeless after a fire engulfed their home Wednesday.

Shortly before 2 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, the Portland Fire Department was dispatched to a three-story home located at 19 Fairview St., off Main Street.

Upon arrival there was heavy fire on the left side of the house, but no one was injured, according to Fire Chief Robert Shea.

First-floor residents noticed the smell of smoke and began yelling to an individual on the second floor before exiting, Shea said. The individual on the second floor heard the shouts, but heavy smoke blocked his pathway down the stairs to the front door.

According to Shea, the man was able to get out of a second-floor window onto the porch roof. Everyone else in the home was able to get out the front door.

Shea said firefighters had a difficult time extinguishing the fire. He associated this with two specific elements; the type of structure and the wind.

"It was a difficult fire," he said. "The structure was a very large, compartmentalized, two-family home. The wind was very gusty, which added to the spread of the fire."

According to Shea, shortly after arriving the fire had compromised the staircase and

the flooring. The Portland Volunteer Fire Department was then forced to fight the fire solely from the outside.

"At that point, once everyone was out, we weren't going to jeopardize anything," Shea said.

The fire was so intense it required a second alarm, bringing additional manpower from surrounding towns. Shea said the department also had the assistance of the town water supply, which was a great help.

It was difficult with limited personnel, Shea said, but he was pleased with how well they were able to contain the fire and prevent it from causing excess damage to neighboring properties.

"The houses are pretty close there, but there was no damage to the neighboring houses," Shea said. "There was some damage to vehicles, but I don't think it was anything major."

Both families contacted relatives about housing arrangements and were offered assistance through the American Red Cross. Shea said both families were "taken care of for the evening."

As of press time, the cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Two-Car Accident on Route 85 in Hebron

Two women were transported to the hospital after colliding on Route 85, last Tuesday, Feb. 22, State Police said.

Both Margaret Arnold, 66, of Amston, and Jessica Huhn, 18, of Hebron, were listed as possibly injured by police, and transported via Hebron EMS to the Marlborough Clinic.

Around 7:35 a.m., Arnold was traveling

northbound on Route 85, near the intersection of Route 66, and Huhn was traveling southbound on 85.

According to police, Huhn attempted to turn east onto Route 66 and struck Arnold's 2007 Toyota Camry, causing front-end damage. Huhn's 2000 Ford Focus also sustained front-end damage.

Hit and Run at Hebron Xtra Mart

State Police are looking for a man who struck another vehicle in the parking lot of the Xtra Mart on Route 66 last Tuesday, Feb. 22, around 7 p.m.

A white man, approximately 50-60 years old, described as having a white or grey "scruffy" beard, reportedly hit a 1995 Nissan Maxima belonging to a Marlborough resident, State Police said. The Maxima had minor right-side damage. No injuries were reported.

The man fled the scene in an older two-door grey hatchback, State Police said.

Any witnesses are asked to contact Hebron Resident State Trooper James Nolting at 860-537-7500.

Route 2 Accident Near Exit 20

An Uncasville woman went to the hospital Monday, Feb. 28, after slamming into a cement wall near exit 20 on Route 2 around 12:29 p.m., State Police said.

Jaclyn Martin, 18, was listed as possibly injured, according to police, and was transported via Colchester EMS to Backus Hospital.

Martin was traveling westbound, about two-tenths of a mile past exit 20, when she swerved onto the right shoulder for "unknown reasons" and struck a cement wall, State Police said.

She totaled her 1998 Pontiac Sunfire, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

2/22: Kayla Cassidy, 18, of 165 Robbins Rd., Kensington, was charged with three counts of conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny and sixth-degree larceny, Colchester Police said.

2/25: Danny Spaulding, 28, whose last known address was listed as 83 Colchester Commons, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, Colchester Police said.

2/25: Brian Gardner, 19, of 376 West Rd., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, Colchester Police said.

2/25: Ryan Derringer, 52, of 438 Lebanon Ave., was charged with harassment, Colchester Police said.

Obituaries on Following Page

Hebron Police News

2/22: Richard Keefe, 51, of 13 Jackman Rd., Amston, was charged with DUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, failure to meet minimum insurance requirements and disobeying the signal of an officer, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

2/23: Orlando Rivera, 47, of 8 Laurie Pl., Waterbury, was charged with DUI and speeding, State Police said.

Colchester Resident Killed in East Haddam Crash

A Colchester resident was killed when his motorcycle hit a car on Route 82 in East Haddam Tuesday, State Police said.

Thomas Murphy, 53, of 456 Parum Rd., was traveling east on Route 82 in the area of Tater Hill Road when he crossed into the westbound lane and was struck by a pick-up truck being driven by Raymond Willis, 75,

of East Haddam, State Police said.

Murphy, who was wearing a helmet, sustained fatal injuries, State Police said. Willis was not injured.

State Police are continuing to investigate the accident.

Murphy's obituary appears this week on page 8.

East Hampton Police News

2/18: Seth Hall, 20, of 126 Bear Swamp Rd., was arrested for second-degree failure to appear, East Hampton Police said.

2/19: Regina M. Lawrence, 24, of 120 Gravel St., Meriden, was arrested for DUI, operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, failure to display a marker plate, failure to drive right and operating a motor vehicle without a license, police said.

2/19: Nicholas Riedel, 29, of East Hampton and Maureen Hawkins, 72, of East Hampton, were involved in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Route 16 and Holly Drive, police said. Riedel was issued a written warning for following too close.

2/22: Meghan Lillian Chapdelaine, 26, of 5 Blish Rd., Marlborough, was arrested for possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and failure to drive right, police said.

Portland Police News

2/23: Alexander Velasquez, 34, of 547 Maple Ave., Hartford, was charged with theft of plate, traveling too fast for conditions, and operating unregistered motor vehicle, Portland Police said.

2/26: Bryan Wilson, 18, of 19 Tuccitto Rd., was charged with speeding, improper use of marker plate, operating unregistered motor vehicle and insufficient insurance, police said.

2/26: Patrick Smith, 41, of 13 Middletown Ave., East Hampton, was charged with speeding, police said.

2/26: Thomas Etheridge, 18, of 36 Lyman Rd., was charged with second-degree threatening, third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

2/27: Clarence Gould, 47, of 49 Dobson Circ., Middletown, was charged with second-degree threatening and second-degree criminal mischief, police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Jacqueline Fantasia

Jacqueline A. Fantasia, 77, of East Hampton, passed on Saturday, Feb. 19 at home with her family and friends by her side.

Daughter of the late Elsie Metro, she leaves her devoted brother, Michael J. Metro, and her children to whom she devoted her life. She leaves behind Peter Fantasia of North Carolina, Richard Fantasia of Windsor, John Fantasia of East Hartford, Sally Fantasia of South Windsor, Susan Fantasia and Sandra Fantasia of East Lyme; adoring grandchildren, Jennifer Fantasia, Richard Fantasia, Maria Fantasia, Erin Pascoe, Sherrine Fantasia, Ashley O'Reilly, Brittany Featherstone, Michael Wall, Erik Donofrio, Dylan DelaCruz; and several great-grandchildren.

Jackie spent most of her career in the banking business, before retiring from Northeast Utilities and Connecticut Yankee working in human resources.

No one was ever a casual friend to Jackie; she took each person into her heart with a welcoming smile and a quiet but stalwart spirit that inspired respect and loyalty along with abiding love. She leaves many great friends.

Jackie had many interests and enjoyed topics that broadened her knowledge about the world around us. She researched causes and was always well versed in social and environmental issues and the like. Some of which included the Third Age Initiative Greater Hartford Leadership, East Hampton P&Z Commission, Middlesex County Master Gardeners, Russell Writers, CT Special Olympics, N.O.W., and the Red Hat Society. She was an ombudsman for the elderly, a freelance writer for local newspapers, served as treasurer on the South/Southwest Elderly Housing Corp. Board of Directors and an officer of her condo association. Her latest endeavor as a master gardener was planning and working a model community garden where the produce is donated to Amazing Grace Food Pantry, 860-347-3222, in Middletown. Donations on Jackie's behalf would help to continue this cause.

A memorial service is scheduled for Monday, March 7, at 4 p.m., at St. Patrick's Church, East High Street, East Hampton, with a reception immediately following.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Harold Strong

Harold W. Strong, 84, of East Hampton, died Tuesday, Feb. 22 at his home. Born May 15, 1926 in East Hampton, he was the son of the late Herbert and Pearl (Lock) Strong.

Harold was a lifelong resident of East Hampton, having owned the Strong Flower Shop for many years before his retirement. He then worked for Geato's Flower Shop in Portland for many years.

Harold was a former member of the Lions Club, the Chamber of Commerce and had been active in the East Hampton Seniors and the Old Home Day Celebration.

He is survived by his two sons, David Strong and Joyce Patno of East Hartford, and Tim Strong and Sandy Hudson of East Hampton; a brother, Herbert Strong of Florida; four grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Linda Burba and his brother, Russell Strong.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, March 1 in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Friends called at the funeral home on Tuesday.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Dorothy Keefe

Dorothy R. Keefe, 83, of Colchester passed away on Sunday, Feb. 27, at Harrington Court Genesis HealthCare with her loving family by her side.

She was born on May 6, 1927 in Middletown, the daughter of Arthur and Catharine Pleaska Stebbins.

Dorothy worked for many years as a medical secretary. She loved to read and was an avid bridge player.

Surviving are two sons, Robert B. and his wife Maggie Keefe, Gary A. Keefe and his girlfriend Kristin Ahrens, all of Colchester; her daughter, Sharon and husband Doug Ashcom of Lebanon; two brothers, Arthur and wife Carolyn Stebbins of Villages, FL and Luke Stebbins of Alberta, Canada; two grandchildren, Jody Keefe Yasich and Paul M. Ashcom; several nieces and nephews.

Funeral service will be held on Saturday, March 5, at 11 a.m., at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, with visitation one hour prior to her service.

Burial will take place in the spring. Memorial donations may be made to the Cragin Library in her memory.

Portland

Helen Pierce Westergren

Helen Pierce Westergren, 94, of 24 Foley Rd., Portland, died at Wadsworth Glen Health Care Center in Middletown Friday, Feb. 4. Helen was born May 12, 1916, in Waterbury, the daughter of Arthur and Goldie (Harvey) Pierce.

She was a graduate of The Gilbert School in Winsted, Class of 1934, and Torrington Secretarial School. Married in 1939 to Arnold E. Westergren, who died in 1991, she will be forever remembered by her family as wise, loving and completely devoted to each of them. She was a talented musician, avid reader and treasured friend to many. Helen was employed at Trinity Episcopal Church in Portland and, for over 30 years, the First Church of Christ, Congregational, in New Britain, where she retired in 1997 as church administrator.

She is survived by her children, Gary Westergren and his wife, Michaeline, of Sanbornton, NH, Kurt Westergren of New York City, Lisa Murray and her husband, John, of Boulder, CO, and Clifford Westergren and his wife, Patricia, of Portland, as well as by 10 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, one great-great grandson and her dear friend, Mari-Claire Charba of New York City.

In addition to her husband, Helen was predeceased by a sister, Maybelle Anderson.

Family services were private, with interment in the spring at the Swedish Cemetery in Portland.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in Helen's memory may be sent to Zion Lutheran Church, 55 William St., Portland.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

Colchester

Frank Ozimek

Frank A. Ozimek, 93, of Colchester, beloved husband of Elise (Hugens) Ozimek, passed away Tuesday, March 1, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born on Jan. 28, 1918 in Colchester, a son of the late Joseph and Annie (Rzesop) Ozimek.

He and Elise were married on March 3, 1945 in Brunssum, Netherlands and they made their home in Colchester, not far from the family farm where he grew up.

Frank was a decorated veteran of the U.S. Army during World War II and was a life member of the Adler-Boluck Post 6990 VFW in Colchester. He was a communicant of St. Andrew Church and a life member of St. Joseph's Polish Society in Colchester.

Prior to his retirement in 1981, Frank was a rural carrier in Colchester for the U.S. Postal Service for 37 years. He loved to tinker with anything mechanical, but his true passion and devotion was for his family.

Including his beloved wife of 66 years, Frank leaves a son and three daughters, Frank and Theresa Ozimek of Haverstraw, NY, Ceciel and Barry Setterstrom of Andover, Lisa Ozimek of Summit, NJ and Annemarie Ozimek and fiancé, Kevin Williams of Colchester; three grandsons, Jack Ozimek and his wife, Kathleen, Andrew Ozimek and Greg Krach; two great-grandsons, Loki and Logan Ozimek; a brother, Stanley Ozimek of Manchester; a sister, Veronica Snyder of Waterford; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

He was predeceased by five sisters, Mary Mestre, Mollie Urcan, Julia Skowronek, Frances A. Connors and Anna Ozimek; and three brothers, George, Joseph and Alphonzo Ozimek.

Friends may call starting at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 5 at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd, Colchester, before processing to St. Andrew Church for the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at 10 a.m. Committal with full military honors will follow in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave, Colchester 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Hilkka A. Lehtinen

Hilkka A. Lehtinen (nee Lind Kokkonen), 89, passed Sunday morning, Feb. 27, at Middlesex Hospital surrounded by the valiant CCU staff who tried to save her with gentle grace. Her daughter Merja was by her side.

She leaves behind her youngest daughter, Merja, with whom she made her home in Colchester; her eldest daughter, Erja Mackin; grandchildren, Deana Sakowski, Triina O'Rourke, and Eric Siluk; great-grandchildren Clayton, Joshua, Sean (currently serving in the U.S. Navy) and Todd O'Rourke (currently serving in the U.S. Army National Guard); sons-in-law, Nicholas Mackin and Michael Siluk; her sister, Anja Aaltonen; and nieces, Raila, Tiina, Leena, Sirkku, Irmeli; a nephew, Pekka; and numerous cousins and friends here and abroad, including Tom and Ok Johnston.

She was predeceased by her infant children, Arthur and Marja, and an adult daughter, Tarja.

Born in Mikkeli (St. Michael's), Finland on Oct. 16, 1918, the former medieval capital, Hilkka's family had farms, summer homes, and timber tracts there for more than 800 years. She was formally educated to take over a private company, Kokkonen OY, which was devastated by Soviet bombs during World War II.

She fell in love with the late Finnish Air Force fighter pilot, Osmo I. Lehtinen, whom she married Oct. 16, 1943, at the Mikkeli Cathedral. She was an Evangelical Lutheran and partook of Holy Communion.

Hilkka was the daughter of businessman Otto V. Kokkonen and the former Hilja Lind, a newspaper co-founder and circulation manager of one of Finland's leading newspapers. Hilkka was raised by Ida Torniainen, who also raised her mother Hilja and her daughters, Tarja and Erja.

Educated at the private Mikkeli Girls' School, Hilkka graduated from the Mikkeli Yhteiskoulu, and the Mikkeli Professional School. Although accepted at both the Helsinki Art Atheneum and Teachers College, she instead did graduate work at the Helsinki Business School, where she was among the first women to receive business-management education. She was an accomplished high-jumper and tennis player.

Her education and study abroad were twice interrupted by Soviet invasions, so she joined the Finnish military, where she was further trained as a certified cartographer and assistant meteorologist, and guided troop movements. She served at the military base of the late Finnish president, Field Marshall General Mannerheim, with whom her family was closely connected to.

After the war she emigrated from Finland with her husband and two children and with the assistance of the late Congressman Lester Holtzman and Senator Robert Byrd, was welcomed as a citizen by Connecticut's Second District Congressman Horace Seelye-Brown, Jr.

She embraced life as an American housewife and working mom, maintaining her career and becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen. From 1954 to 1962 the family commuted from New York to Pachaug Pond in Connecticut every weekend, always stopping in Colchester en route. Since 1962 the family lived full time on Pachaug Point and later in Colchester.

Her career began in the United States as an interpreter for the Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, where she frequently accompanied FBI officials on interviews and interpreted in the court. She was a loan analyst for First National Citi Bank in Manhattan, and later joined Travelers Property and Casualty as a commercial lines rating analyst, retiring in 1984.

Lifelong interests – including oil painting, botany, weather prediction, cooking, and baking – enriched the lives of her children. Hilkka was a Girl Guide and a Girl Scout, supporter of the Audubon Society, U.S. Military Family Assistance, former associate member of the Lyme Art Association, Salvation Army, Finnish-American Heritage Society, and a member of Lotta Sverde.

Services will be on Saturday, March 5. The private viewing is at Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester from noon to 1 p.m. The public funeral is at Colchester Federated Church on Main Street at 2 p.m.

Marlborough

Blanche L. Frappier

Blanche L. Frappier, 92, of Marlborough and formerly of Putnam, widow of the late Edward A. Frappier, passed away Sunday, Feb. 27, at Apple Rehab in Colchester. Born Aug. 2, 1918, in Putnam, she was the last surviving of the six children of the late Pierre Emile and Eva (Guerin) La Grandeur.

On Nov. 27, 1941, she and Edward were married at St. Mary Church of the Visitation in Putnam, where she was a longtime communicant and member of the choir. Together, they shared 53 years of marriage before he predeceased her April 17, 1995.

She will be remembered for her love and devotion to her entire family.

She is survived by three children and their spouses, Annette and Earlan Bradstreet of North Windham, Jeanne and Ronald Boulay of Marlborough and Charles and Celeste Frappier of North Grosvenordale; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents, husband and siblings, she was predeceased by a grandson.

Friends called Thursday, March 3, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will assemble at 10 a.m. today, March 4, at the funeral home, before the celebration of the funeral liturgy at 11 a.m. at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Rte. 85), Hebron, with Fr. Michael S. Smith, officiating. Graveside services will be observed at 3 p.m. today at St. Mary Cemetery, 218 Providence St., Putnam, with Fr. Ed Dempsey officiating.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Church of the Holy Family Organ Fund, P.O. Box 146, Hebron 06248.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Thomas Aquinas Murphy Jr.

Thomas Aquinas Murphy Jr., 53, of Colchester, beloved husband of Theresa (Cote) Murphy, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, March 1, as a result of a motorcycle accident. Born Dec. 14, 1957 in Hartford, he was a son of Thomas and Marilyn (Erikson) Murphy Sr.

Tom was a construction welder for Pratt & Whitney for 25 years before his retirement. He was also a licensed arborist, running Marlborough Tree for 30 years with his dad before closing in 2002.

Tom loved life, especially when he was riding his motorcycle or having fun at his beach house with family and friends. On May 24, 1980, he and Theresa were married at St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough.

In addition to his parents, and his loving wife of 30 years, he is survived by his treasured daughter, Kelly; his brother and sister-in-law, Robert and Rochelle Murphy of Marlborough; two nieces, Erica and Erin Murphy; a great nephew, Quentin; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by his sister, Kathleen.

Friends may call 5-8 p.m. today, March 4, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service will be observed at 7:30 p.m. today.

The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 5, directly at St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Food Bank, 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Oil Painting by S. Wakeen

