

RIVEREAST

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The state's attorney is declining to file criminal charges against former East Hampton Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe related to the harassment complaints lodged against him last year. O'Keefe is pictured here at a town meeting last summer. Also shown, standing, is town labor attorney Mark Sommaruga.

State Declines to Charge O'Keefe

by Joshua Anusewicz

The state's attorney has issued a letter to former Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe, announcing that, upon completing their investigation into accusations from three female town employees and Police Chief Matt Reimondo, no criminal charges will be filed.

The letter, sent by state's attorney Timothy J. Liston, was distributed by O'Keefe to members of the Town Council and the media on Tuesday night. The letter was dated March 21 and was addressed to O'Keefe's attorney, John Donovan.

This announcement comes on the heels of a report from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), stating that there was insufficient evidence to confirm sexual harassment, gender discrimination and retaliation allegations against O'Keefe. In the e-mail distributed by O'Keefe, he states that this is "the fourth 'official' investigative report that has concluded there was no credible evidence to support any of the claims filed against me."

The state's investigation centered on harassment complaints brought by three female town employees to the East Hampton Police last summer. In April 2010, a newly-hired police depart-

ment employee, Elizabeth Shepard, alleged that O'Keefe had rubbed her thigh after he had offered her a ride to her car.

The employees' harassment complaints were initially presented to Reimondo, who then gave them to the town attorney, Jean D'Aquila, to be investigated. Shortly thereafter, O'Keefe cut Reimondo's position, saying the move was for budgetary reasons. However, many felt the cut was retaliation against Reimondo.

Following a summer of heated town meetings, and amid pressure from residents, O'Keefe resigned last September. That same month, the Town Council voted to formally eliminate the police chief position from town ordinances, a decision that was overturned by a town vote in November.

Reimondo, meanwhile, has filed a civil suit against O'Keefe, Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel and Vice Chairman John Tuttle, which is currently pending.

The saga has had no shortage of opinions on both sides, but O'Keefe hopes this might bring about some closure to the issue.

"I hope, based on this latest statement from the Connecticut state's attorney's office, that

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Marlborough Business Park Inches Closer to Reality

by Katy Nally

Marlborough Business Park property owners are now all on the same page – which means venturing onto the next page in this decade-old story has become a possibility.

Homeowners Daniel and Donna Moore came before the Zoning Commission last month to have their two-acre residential lot on Hebron Road re-zoned to "designed business industrial."

Along with the Moore's house, the other 141 acres that make up the business park have all been zoned the same, designed business industrial. The park also includes 76 town-owned acres, 43 acres owned by the development firm Churchill and Banks called the Marlborough Commons and 22 acres owned by the Marlborough Association.

"We're all, in theory, on the same page," Zoning Commission Chairman Scott Miller said this week.

Economic Development Commission Chairman Greg Servodidio said having the Moores elect to change their zone was not something that was anticipated, but it was a welcome change.

"That was the last piece of the puzzle," he said. "We didn't even know it was a possibility."

With all the separately-owned lots becoming commercially zoned, Town Planner Peter Hughes said the next steps would revolve around preparing the town's 76 acres for potential developers. First, he said, the town would get its covenants and deed restrictions, then

discuss a road right-of-way issue with Churchill and Banks and then possibly go to the State Traffic Commission and apply for a highway certificate concerning Route 66 "and/or" the Route 2 exit ramps.

These initial steps – along with streamlining the zoning – take "much of the uncertainty out of the picture" for potential developers, Hughes said.

"Developers are concerned with risk," Servodidio explained. "By putting all the zoning in place we've taken that risk out."

Also, by having all the lots zoned the same, the "statement of public desire is made clear," Servodidio said, and the town can dictate what type of construction it wants to see in the business park.

"It puts the town in a better position to sell the property," Hughes added. "It makes the project more real."

Ultimately, Hughes said, the town would look to sell its lot or partner with a developer.

So far, a few builders have inquired about the business park, including Cabela's, Hughes said.

A preliminary design from engineering firm Milone & MacBroom shows the business park with lots for retail, offices, light industrial use and a hotel. There is also a road that connects Jones Hollow Road to Route 66, as well as dozens of parking areas.

With plans in place, Servodidio said his commission would next focus on, "How do we

See Business Park Page 2



All 143 acres of the Marlborough Business Park are now zoned the same and ready for commercial use. Above is a proposed design from Milone & MacBroom that features lots for retail, offices, light industrial use and a hotel.

O'Keefe cont. from Front Page

the good people of East Hampton will now understand the reality of this whole situation and will move forward in a healthy fashion," O'Keefe stated in the e-mail.

When asked to comment on the state's investigation, Tuttle said he is happy Liston had finally released a statement, stating also that "he is not surprised with the findings." According to Tuttle, the only reason the state's attorney and the ICMA investigations were done was due to claims that the Town Council's initial investigation, with its own lawyer, was biased. He believes fellow council member Sue Weintraub, a member of the Chatham Party, has wasted "time and money on pushing the issue," which he believes is virtually resolved.

"I would hope this is over," Tuttle said. "But, unfortunately, [O'Keefe's] reputation has been marred."

Weintraub admitted that she was not surprised by the findings, either, stating that "the litmus test for criminal sexual harassment is proof beyond reasonable doubt, and this is just 'he said, she said.'" However, she doesn't believe this absolves him of any misconduct.

"This does not prove he's innocent," Weintraub said. "And that goes for the sexual harassment and the retaliation against Reimondo. This is a corrupt, collusive cover-up with a \$170,000 pay out" She also believes

Business Park cont. from Front Page

move this forward to actually get a shovel in the ground?"

Economic Development Commission member Jane Boston said a "key initiative" this year for the commission is to develop its website, marlboroughctedc.com. The site, she said, acts as "the first introduction" to Marlborough for potential developers.

"We need to make sure that we keep the content updated and fresh, include the relevant information [developers] need that encourages them to reach out to us to discuss potential projects and to attract and retain their attention so they spend more time exploring the site," Boston said via e-mail this week.

The Economic Development Commission

that the Town Council's lack of action against O'Keefe and his current stance against Reimondo regarding offensive e-mails sent from his work computer in March 2010 has created a "double standard."

O'Keefe has maintained his innocence since the charges were leveled, and vehemently denies any wrongdoing.

"If the state's attorney felt there was something to the allegations, they would have charged me," O'Keefe said. "They did not. I am innocent. I have said this all along."

Along with the civil suit by Reimondo against O'Keefe, Engel and Tuttle, the allegations are still being investigated by the state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), which looks into discrimination and human rights violations in the workplace. Engel will appear on resident Josh Piteo's talk show *Get Real* next Monday night to talk about the state's attorney's report, as well as the e-mails forwarded by Reimondo. The show will air at 7 p.m. on cable channel 15.

The state's attorney's report "substantiates what the Town Council felt all along," Engel said, "and negates feelings from the summer" that there was wrongdoing. Engel said, looking at budget figures now, cutting Reimondo's position "was a good budgetary move."

would also work on other strategies for marketing the business park, Boston said. However, given the current economic climate, Servodidio said attracting developers to the business park could pose a challenge.

But the sluggish economy had its benefits, as it allowed for preparations like the zone changes.

"This was really the perfect time to get everything squared away," he said. "When the economy picks up... we will have gone through the process."

Or, as Miller put it, with all 143 acres commercially zoned, "you at least cross the starting line."

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I read an interesting – and also disturbing – story in the paper late last week, about proposed legislation in states across the country that would put a whole bunch of new legal, financial, even psychological obstacles in the paths of pregnant women who are seeking to have abortions.

Several states, including Idaho, Oklahoma and Alabama, are considering bills that include banning elective abortions after 20 or 21 weeks of pregnancy. A proposed bill in Ohio goes a step further – outlawing abortions after the first medically detectable heartbeat, which can be in as little as six weeks.

Already signed into law in South Dakota is a bill that would impose a three-day waiting period – the longest such waiting period in the country – on women considering abortions, and would also require said women to undergo counseling at pregnancy help centers that discourage abortions.

And then there are the bills that are more financial in nature. In more than 20 states, bills have been introduced to restrict insurance coverage of abortions.

Why are these proposed bills so disturbing? Beyond the simple issue of them flying in the face of *Roe vs. Wade*, a federal court decision nearly 40 years old, they all seem to imply women seeking abortions are little more than monsters, and they reached the decision to abort their baby as easily and painlessly as they decide what to eat for lunch on a given day.

Nowhere is this more on display than in Texas, where a bill passed by the state House would require that pregnant women be given the chance to view a sonogram, hear the fetal heartbeat and listen to a doctor describe the fetus. The doctor would be obligated to provide the information, although the woman would be allowed to close her eyes or cover her ears (gee, how nice of you, Texas lawmakers).

That's just cruel and unusual punishment for women who have likely already made an incredibly difficult decision. And that's the thing; sure, there may be some women who take abortion lightly, but most take it very seriously. They've already made an extremely difficult decision; why make things more difficult?

One of the chief reasons I'm pro-choice is that I recognize there are different circumstances for every pregnancy. There can be shocking, even heartbreaking reasons behind someone getting pregnant. Life isn't a pleas-

ant 1950s TV sitcom. Pregnancy isn't always a blessed event shared between a happily-married husband and wife; in fact, sometimes there's nothing happy about it, period. Too often, women become pregnant via rape or incest; are they monsters? (By the way, that disgusting Texas bill I just mentioned does not – I repeat, does *not* – exclude rape or incest victims.)

Also, not every pregnancy is free of medical complications. That's something these lawmakers, with their black and white view of things, seem to have failed to recognize. Nebraska already has a law on the books banning most abortions after 20 weeks. Last year, resident Danielle Deaver was told her baby was nonviable. But because she was 22 weeks' pregnant at the time, she wasn't allowed to terminate the pregnancy. So she wound up going into natural, pre-term labor, and gave birth to a baby girl who wound up dying after 15 minutes.

Deaver had already suffered three miscarriages. Why subject her to the cruelty of delivering a baby she had already been told wasn't viable?

Oh yeah, because women who seek abortions are monsters. Except, you know what? They aren't.

* * *

It might not necessarily feel like it outside – in fact, if the weather forecasters were right, it could very well be snowing while you're reading this – but it's April 1 and, more importantly, the start of the baseball season. Well, okay, the season actually began last night, when a handful of games were played, but for the majority of Major League Baseball, it starts today. Personally, I'm thrilled. Also, in the off-season, my cable season finally added SNY (thanks to the cable channel's deal with UConn to show Huskies football and basketball games), so for the first time since 2005, I can watch basically every Mets game on TV. Sweet.

And, to start the season, here's a corny baseball-related joke. A Yankees, Mets and Red Sox fan are climbing a mountain, arguing about who loves his team more. The Mets fan insists he is the most loyal. "This is for the Mets!" he yells, and jumps off the mountain. Not to be outdone, the Yankees fan professes his love for his team. He yells, "This is for the Yankees!" – and then pushes the Red Sox fan off the mountain.

* * *

See you next week.

Andover Resident's Play Sparks Community Theater Revival

by Courtney Parent

After a 45-year hiatus, community theater has returned to Andover in the form of *The Legend of Captain Smith*, a comedic musical murder mystery dealing with a chapter of the town's past.

The idea for a theater revival came from Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Jay Linddy after someone questioned him about Gay City State Park in Hebron being haunted.

"I started doing research and I thought, 'well, maybe I'll write a play,'" said Linddy. "It's called *Murder in Gay City*. . . . While doing that, I continued to research. I wanted something more historical."

It was all a domino effect from there. Due to Linddy's yearning for town history and his knowledge of the two gravestones residing on Boston Hill Road, one for Revolutionary War hero Captain Simon Smith and one for his horse, Linddy decided to research Smith for a possible play. After a bit of research, Linddy found connections to other famous historical figures that had frequented the Andover Tavern on East Street just as Smith had during travel from Rhode Island to Hartford.

After deciding to write a historical play on Smith, Linddy approached longtime friend

James Baran of Windham to aid in the theatrical effort. Baran has directed several plays for local schools and communities

"I've been doing stuff with Jim for years," said Linddy. "So I asked him after he found out I wrote the play *Murder in Gay City* and he was all geared up for that. Then I turned to the historical end of Andover."

The Legend of Captain Smith takes place during the Revolutionary War time period, featuring key historical figures such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Betsy Ross and more. The story circles around Smith's mysterious death in 1778. While some rumors of the war hero's death point to smallpox, others point to foul play.

Auditions were held for both casting and behind-the-scenes help on March 14 and 15. According to Linddy, there are approximately 35 people in the cast, with a few additional stagehands still needed. The cast includes a "wide variety of talent" from participants ages 7 to 77, including former First Selectman Ed Turn, who will be playing a constable sheriff.

Not to be overshadowed by the historical references and humorous anecdotes is the melodious music found within the play. Musical

talent is exemplified through the show's closing number: a Broadway showtune co-written by Baran and Hollywood composer and friend Steve Kaminski. Kaminski is best known for producing popular television shows such as *Desperate Housewives* and *Ugly Betty*.

According to Linddy, Baran and Kaminski have years of experience working together on similar projects. The duo has performed and produced together since 1983. Linddy emphasized the immense talent and experience the duo has brought to the play.

"We've got great, great resources," Linddy said. "Jim has done every possible play you can think of. And Kaminski is big-time Hollywood and great on music."

Proceeds from the play will benefit the Town of Andover's senior citizens, as well as the program Saving Performing Arts by Reaching Kids (SPARK). The program was designed by Kaminski and has been implemented throughout the country. This year will mark the second annual summer performing arts camp running from July 18-30. The camp focuses on developing the creative process and encourages children to take risks in a safe environment.

Linddy said multiple members of the play's cast have taken part in the SPARK program. Three 13-year-old cast members from Columbia participated in the SPARK program in Willimantic last summer, finding themselves in good company with two younger, 7-year-old and 8-year-old eager beavers who also participated in the program.

The play will be performed Friday, May 6, and Saturday, May 7, at 7:30 p.m. both nights, at Andover Elementary School, 35 School Rd. According to Linddy, there will likely be two dress rehearsals prior to opening night, to ensure that everyone feels "very comfortable." The dress rehearsals will tentatively be held Saturday, April 30, and Thursday, May 5.

"We are putting out a quality product," Linddy said. "There's no question there."

Tickets for the Friday show will be \$6 for children and seniors and \$8 for adults, and the Saturday show will cost \$8 for children and seniors and \$10 for adults.

For tickets or more information, call Administrative Assistant Kathy Luntta at 860-742-4036, ext. 219. Tickets will also be available at the town clerk's office and the transfer station.

Colchester Town and Education Budgets Ready for Public Hearings

by Katy Nally

With public hearings right around the corner, Colchester voters can expect to see an education budget of \$36.82 million and a town budget of \$13.68 million.

Two public hearings, on Monday and Tuesday, April 11 and 12, will allow residents to ask questions regarding the two budgets. After hearing from residents, on April 12 the proposals will be sent to a town meeting, which is scheduled for Wednesday, April 27.

As they currently stand, the town and education budgets call for a tax increase of about 3 percent, or a mill increase of 0.78.

“That’s about the cost of doing business these days,” Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said this week.

Originally, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle presented a \$37.18 million education budget, but after a few rounds of cuts, her 3.34 percent increase dropped to a 2.33 percent increase.

Goldstein said he is more comfortable with the Board of Education budget than he was at this time a year ago.

“We do have an increase, but it’s much, much less than last year,” he said. “Given the needs for capital improvements and all that, I think this is a very reasonable budget.”

Last year, voters approved a \$34.05 million education budget (after applying about \$1.93 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), which showed a 3.51 percent increase over the 2009-10 spending package.

As part of the cuts to the education budget,

the Board of Education decided to forgo establishing an “other post-employment benefit” (OPEB) trust this year, which eliminated the original line item of \$232,000. Goldstein said the district’s “pay-as-you-go” method would still be in place for its employees, and the board would look to establish the trust in the future.

OPEB, he explained, is a trust based on an “actuarial calculation that anticipates future liability for certain benefits after employment.” The theory is, by putting away money in a trust, the board actually spends less in the long run.

However, with this budget cycle, there were “too many other priorities,” so the board decided “we could wait a year on that one,” Goldstein said.

The line item for capital projects, which includes an overhaul of William J. Johnston Middle School, fixing dozens of items from rotting door frames, to a cracked urinal to a leaking boiler, was decreased by another \$80,000 last week. It was originally proposed at \$283,800, or 4,334 percent more than the current year’s \$6,400.

Goldstein said the board would still go ahead with its planned renovation projects, but “energy incentive money” would be utilized. He said two projects – Jack Jackter Intermediate School and Colchester Elementary School – had energy incentives built in, and after a recent audit, those funds are now available to use.

Lastly, with more up-to-date health insurance figures, the board was able to save another

\$23,594, Goldstein said.

Despite recent changes, salaries still make up the largest chunk of the education budget, at about \$23.9 million, but the budget also proposes to cut 9.5 FTE of staff. Teaching positions that were proposed to be eliminated or reduced include 1 FTE each from kindergarten, grade five and science at Bacon Academy, 2 FTE from grade four, 0.5 FTE from music at WJMS and Bacon, and 0.5 FTE from WJMS computer class. Also, 2 FTE of paraprofessionals at WJMS and 1 FTE of a paraprofessional from Bacon, and 0.5 FTE of an office professional at Bacon, were proposed to be eliminated.

On the town side, about \$780,000 has been cut since it was originally presented. These reductions affect road improvements, the police department budget and the equipment line item.

Also, contingency was reduced from \$60,000 to \$40,000.

Originally, First Selectman Gregg Schuster included \$800,000 for road improvements, even though, he said, staff has identified about \$2 million worth of needed repairs and improvements. Last month, the Board of Finance cut Schuster’s \$800,000 in half.

Schuster said securing other funding means, such as Town Aid Road (TAR) funds from the state, were discussed with the Board of Finance. Schuster said he was “happy” the road improvement line item was at least increasing from the approximately \$100,000 that was budgeted when he became first selectman.

“We definitely need to spend a lot more on roads. We have to recognize we’re not going to fix the problem in one year,” he said. “While [\$400,000] is not enough, we’re headed in the right direction.”

In the police department budget, Schuster originally proposed to purchase another cruiser and hire an 11th officer. But, after discussions, the town will forgo the purchase of the car this year, and the officer will start halfway through the next fiscal year, on Jan. 1, 2012. Also, with the new resident state trooper at a lower step than his predecessor, Schuster said the town was able to save about \$10,000.

And, like the education budget, the town also decided to forgo funding its OPEB trust, but the pay-as-you-go method will still be in effect. Also, Schuster said since the town’s health insurance claims “have trended very favorably” over the past few years, instead of adding the usual \$50,000 to that line item, the budget calls for \$25,000.

The town also decided to “take advantage of low interest rates” and sign a five-year lease for equipment like pickup trucks and tractors, at a savings this year of \$185,000, Schuster said. Also, the purchase of two lawn mowers was eliminated, saving about \$19,000.

The April 11 and 12 public hearings will be held at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Residents will vote Wednesday, April 27, to send the budgets to a referendum, which is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10.

East Hampton Home Décor Store Offers Treasures, Old and New

by Joshua Anusewicz

Driving through East Hampton Village Center in the past month, you may have noticed the arrival of an eclectic new home décor store. But if you’ve had the chance to stop in at 72 Main St., you know it’s much more than that.

Anything Goes, a store that offers “furniture, artisan wares, and more,” opened last month and has added yet another storefront to the ever-developing Village Center.

Through curious passersby, social networking, and good old word of mouth, the store is quickly gaining popularity.

“We’ve been very happy with the response so far,” co-owner Sherry Pensak said. “There really are no places in East Hampton to buy these things. People like a variety and we offer a lot.”

Pensak, of Marlborough, and her co-owners Pam Schlegel, also of Marlborough, and Sandy Mazzella, of New Milford, said they’ve dreamed of owning a store like Anything Goes for a long time. Pensak, a former business owner and Schlegel, who comes from a family business, said their past experience makes them a good fit to go into this venture together.

The three women have participated in craft fairs and home shows together for several years, as Pensak and Mazzella are avid painters and Schlegel is involved in antiques and restoration. Many of the items on sale in the store have been created by the three women, including lampshades and pillows that Schlegel makes out of designer clothing that companies are prepared to throw out.

If that isn’t creative enough for you, the store also offers purses made out of old sweaters, a dresser hinged together with old piano keys,

and even discarded children’s rain boots converted into flower pots.

“These are things people are just going to throw away,” Pensak said with a laugh.

Most of the furniture at Anything Goes is handmade from recycled material. From unique coffee tables created from cedar reclaimed from old barns, to wind chimes fashioned from organ pipes, there is no shortage of one-of-a-kind pieces to search through.

The store also accepts items on consignment, offering partial compensation when the items are sold. You never know – things buried in your attic, basement, or garage might just be turned into a treasure by these creative minds.

“And we’re always looking for new people to work with,” Schlegel added.

But what may endear customers most to Anything Goes is that almost every item in the store, even the jewelry and cosmetics, is from Connecticut. According to Pensak, the women have made a concerted effort to support local artisans, including those from Marlborough, Hebron, Colchester, and East Haddam.

The women also plan to offer classes within the store, inviting local artists to teach painting, mosaics, clay molding, and more. Pensak said they’ve already scheduled their first painting class, which will be held on May 20.

The owners hope their store will add another element to the village, which has welcomed Anything Goes with open arms. They said the other businesses in the Village Center have helped spread the word, and vice versa, to help spur the revitalization.

“People love to walk around and go into the stores and get fresh air,” Schlegel says. “We’ve felt such a good energy and people are happy



A new store, Anything Goes, joined the Village Center recently and offers one-of-a-kind items like handbags made from recycled clothing and jewelry designed by local artisans. The store is located at 72 Main St.

to see this here.”

Along side the businesses, the Air Line Trail is another welcome draw for customers who venture into the Village Center, the co-owners said.

The store will hold its grand opening on Fri-

day, May 6, and Saturday, May 7, to officially introduce itself to the community, but it’s currently open seven days a week.

Anything Goes is located at 72 Main St.

For more information, go to anythinggoesct.com or call 860-365-5136.

Colchester Police News

3/15: Tyshawn Adams, 31, of 35 Walker Ln., Bloomfield, was charged with driving with a suspended license and reckless driving, State Police said.

3/18: Aurelian Drazewski, 29, of 392 Cabin Rd., was charged with DUI, Colchester Police said.

3/20: A 15-year-old was charged with disorderly conduct, possession of a controlled substance and possession of a controlled substance outside the container, Colchester Police said.

3/20: Ashley Raymond, 21, of 19 Pleasant View Cove, Lisbon, and Matthew Vaclavik, 27, of 125 Townhouse Rd., Lisbon, were both charged with sixth-degree larceny, Colchester

Police said.

3/22: A residential burglary on South Main Street was reported, State Police said.

3/24: Zisis Alevras, 63, of 713 Middletown Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

3/24: Jason Carrier, 24, of 27 Coco Dr., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, Colchester Police said.

3/24: A 17-year-old male was charged with failure to secure a child with proper belts, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, Colchester Police said.

Marlborough Police News

3/22: Gabriel Thompson, 35, of 213 River St., 3N, Waterbury, was charged with DUI and speeding, State Police said.

3/27: Jacob Nixon, 19, of 305 Jones Hollow Rd., was charged with disobeying the signal of an officer, interfering with an officer, using the left lane, DUI, two counts of reckless driving and stop sign violation, State Police said.

Play Hard or Go Home...RHAM Budget vs. Lacrosse

by Courtney Parent

Once again, lacrosse took center stage at the RHAM Board of Education budget meetings this week; however, this time it did not prevent the board from adopting a spending plan.

At a special meeting on Tuesday, March 29, the regional school board approved its 2011-12 budget for \$24.65 million, or 1.79 percent increase. The budget passed by a tight 5-4 vote, and does not feature any new funding for lacrosse.

At a meeting on Monday, March 28, the night prior to approval, Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski presented three budget scenarios revolving around pay-to-play, user fees and lacrosse funding.

The initial agreement for the lacrosse program stated it would be self-funded for three years, at which time the board would re-evaluate it. When lacrosse season starts this spring, it will mark the second year of the program. However, board members at their March 21 meeting began discussing whether the board should partially fund lacrosse, starting with the 2011-12 school year.

In the first scenario Siminski presented Monday, lacrosse would be fully-funded, pay-to-play would be budgeted at \$174,000 and user fees would increase to \$150 per athlete, per season. In the second scenario, there would be no funding for lacrosse, pay-to-play would be budgeted at \$137,000 and user fees would remain at their current rate of \$150 per athlete, despite the number of sports played. Finally, the third scenario represents increased user fees and the half-funding of lacrosse. In this third scenario, pay-to-play would represent \$167,000 and user fees would be differentiated between middle and high school students; \$150 per year for middle school students and either a \$200 one-time fee for high school students or \$145 per athlete per season.

At Monday's meeting, Board of Education Chairman Michael Turner expressed concern over increasing user fees within the pay-to-play structure for the second consecutive year.

"Last year we increased pay-for-play from \$125 to \$150," Turner said. "It would be a significant step up two years in a row."

Board of Education member Thomas Tremont followed suit, voicing his opinions against rising costs as well. However, Tremont directed his focus towards lacrosse funding.

"I still don't see why we're bringing them on board," said Tremont. "We're trying to get the budget down as it is and here we are adding to it."

This year, it is costing lacrosse players \$315 per athlete to participate. That number is in addition to any money that was raised through fundraising said RHAM Principal Scott Leslie.

According to Leslie, the \$315 is the amount needed to participate, while additional fundraising money is put into a student activities account used for new goals, equipment, etc.

Board treasurer Danny Holtsclaw questioned whether there was a way to charge lacrosse separately from the other sports. He pointed out that all the other sports' user fees would increase drastically if lacrosse was even half-funded, while lacrosse would drop from \$315 to as low as \$150.

"Everyone else's cost is going up significantly," Holtsclaw said, "except lacrosse is going down significantly. I think the phase-in is right, but shouldn't begin until [the 2012-13 budget]. We need to stick to the agreement that was made."

Along the same lines, Tremont said that funding lacrosse should have never been a consideration in the upcoming 2011-12 budget, and he appeared to get rather heated with the ongoing discussion over partially funding lacrosse.

"I believe in a person's word," Tremont said.

"We said three years and we'd review it, not three years and we'd fund it. That wasn't our agreement then, boom, all of a sudden it just got thrown into the budget. That's what really irks me; that wasn't the commitment."

Tremont added that his discontent was not specific to the sport, but was simply in regards to adding on an additional financial obligation to an already struggling budget.

"I have nothing against lacrosse," he said. "This just isn't the time to add anything to the budget."

Turner attempted to regain control in the room and get a consensus from the board on partially funding the sport, so they could move forward with specific percentages and numbers that would be funded. However, the board was split Monday between those who were in favor of funding lacrosse and those opposed to it.

Due to the disagreement, Turner drew the discussion away from the topic of lacrosse, moving to a decrease in the cost of textbooks.

According to Siminski, the cost of social studies textbooks had been counted twice in the originally proposed 2011-12 budget, which freed up approximately \$26,000. Also, a delay in the purchase of three texts at the high school and two texts at the middle school allowed for an additional \$20,000. Siminski proposed that the \$46,000 be utilized to fund a half-time computer technician at approximately \$22,500 and for the purchase of seven computer carts at \$21,000.

However, Turner suggested that, rather than using \$21,000 all for laptop carts, purchasing just two laptop carts for \$6,000 and using the remaining \$15,000 to pay off some of the \$120,000 debt associated with the construction of the superintendent's office. He noted that if there was a surplus, additional laptop carts could always be purchased at a later date.

As the board was unable to reach a general

consensus on the subject of lacrosse funding and associated user fees and pay-to-play rates, the issues were tabled Monday.

However, at Tuesday night's meeting, a consensus was reached and the budget was passed by the skin of its teeth in a 5-4 vote, with Turner, Holtsclaw, Vice-Chair James Cherry, Ken Lee and Laura Steiner voting in favor of it and Tremont, Brenda Milhomme, Debra Dee and Dieter Zimmer voting against it. The final passing of the budget was a result of several reductions that were made including a \$15,000 decrease in instructional supplies, a \$7,000 decrease to technology (which will be offset by an increase in the amount Hebron will have to pay), and a \$5,000 reduction to Capital Fund (representing field repair costs).

The board continued by passing a motion limiting pay-to-play fees to \$150,000 and not funding lacrosse. However, that was not a unanimous decision either as seven board members – Turner, Cherry, Holtsclaw, Lee, Steiner, Tremont and Zimmer – voted in favor of it, Milhomme voted against it and Dee abstained.

Siminski explained that the separate votes were needed, as first the board simply needed a maximum amount to place in the budget, but that the cost was an offset that would be covered by user fees. After that, the board went on to decide that the funding of lacrosse would not be included in that \$150,000 max.

"What they did in essence is they approved the user fees for athletics to total \$150,000," Siminski said, adding that the \$150,000 was an offset in the budget. "Then they said they would not fund lacrosse and that lacrosse this year and next year would be strictly parent-funded."

The next time the Board of Education will meet will be for a budget hearing held on Monday, April 11, at 7 p.m. in the RHAM High School auditorium.

Portland Selectmen Reach Agreement on Budget

by Joshua Anusewicz

After two nights of budget deliberations, the Board of Selectmen came to a consensus agreement Wednesday on a proposed town budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The selectmen will formally vote on the spending plan next week.

The board has agreed to cut \$89,120 from the original proposed budget that was presented by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield at a public hearing on March 8. The combined general government and Board of Education budgets now sit at \$29.82 million.

Most of the discussion at the deliberations focused on the proposed \$895,500 lease that would include funds for a new roof at the Portland Public Library, four new police vehicles, and two large dump trucks for the public works department. Several members of the police, fire, and public works departments were on hand to answer questions and to push the Board to upgrade their equipment.

"If you can provide us with better resources, we can provide you with better service," Public Works Director Rick Kelsey said. Kelsey also described the condition of the current equipment, some of which is close to being out

of commission. He also stressed the importance of not waiting any longer, saying that putting off making these upgrades has them in the situation they are now.

The lease would also include \$300,000 for a new roof on Portland Library, which has the original roof that was put on roughly 30 years ago. According to Bransfield, including the roof in the lease helps secure the funds and gives them a chance to pay it off over time without increasing the mill rate and impacting taxpayers.

The board also discussed whether the lease should be paid off in a four-year or a five-year plan, ultimately choosing the five-year option. According to Finance Director Tom Robinson, choosing the five-year plan would allow them to cut \$31,000 from this year's budget. The payments would be \$195,408 per year.

While most of the board was in agreement with the lease, selectman Carl Chudzik was concerned that with the current uncertainty of the state's budget and its impact on taxpayers, taking out a significant loan might not be worth

while.

"In this climate, I'm just worried about taking out such a big bite in one year," Chudzik said. He also questioned the feasibility of "Band-Aid-ing" the problem for one year and waiting until next year to make the decision. But other members stressed the urgency of the situation.

"We've been 'Band-Aid-ing' this for several years, and now we have can't wait any longer," selectwoman Kathy Richards said.

Chudzik and fellow selectman John Anderson also pushed to accept the four-year plan in hopes that the lease could be paid off quicker. According to Bransfield, the effect on the mill rate would be a .41 increase with a four-year plan and a .35 increase with a five-year plan, which is a difference of about a dollar a week.

Another topic discussed was the possibility of auctioning old equipment which, according to Bransfield, could be used to help make interest payments on the lease. Kelsey prepared a list of possible equipment to sell, which includes five police cruisers, two trailers, a dump

truck and an inflatable boat.

If the lease is accepted in the proposed budget, the items would be sold via auction on April 28. Kelsey admits that the town might not get as much as they hope.

"We've waited too long and they might just not be worth much," Kelsey said, including that this winter in particular "put a lot of wear and tear" on the vehicles.

Bransfield believes that waiting longer or putting money aside toward the equipment could put them in a bigger hole, adding that the prices of these items will only continue to go up. She believes that the lease provides the town their best chance at getting the equipment they need while not affecting the citizens.

"My biggest concern is saving taxpayer money while maintaining infrastructure," Bransfield said. "These leases are common practice with other towns and I believe it's the most reasonable approach."

The Board of Selectmen is scheduled to vote on the budget Wednesday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Mary Flood Room at Portland Library.

Norwich Avenue Rollover Injures One

A 2010 Nissan Xterra rolled over on Norwich Avenue Monday, March 21, around 3:53 p.m., after the driver failed to negotiate a curve in the road, State Police said.

Christine Deziel, 40, of Lebanon, was transported via Colchester ambulance to Backus Hospital for "non-incapacitating" injuries, State Police said.

Deziel left the roadway "while negotiating a curve" on Norwich Avenue, about two-tenths of a mile west of Roger Foote Road, State Police said. She then struck a mailbox and a utility pole before rolling several times across the road and stopping in the opposite traffic lane.

She was reportedly wearing a seatbelt, State Police said.

On Tuesday, Deziel was no longer listed at Backus, hospital staff said.

East Hampton Police News

3/15: Maria J. Alipio, 50, of 23 Tuccitto Rd., Portland, was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

3/17: Karrah M. Standish, 23, of 11 Flannery Row, was involved in a one-car accident on Cone Road which subsequently led to her arrest for DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

3/19: A 17-year-old of East Hampton was arrested for fifth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fifth-degree larceny, police said.

3/21: Alison Rawlinson, 32, of East Hampton and Robert Zotter, 64, of Berlin, were involved in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Route 16 and Alden's Crossing, police said. Rawlinson was issued a written warning for failure to grant the right of way.

3/22: Dylan A. Miller, 19, of 255 Rock Landing Rd., was arrested for third-degree burglary and third-degree larceny, police said.

3/8: Chris Burdick, 18, of 206 Wopowog Rd., East Hampton, was charged with criminal trespass, Portland Police said.

3/8: Garrit Pratt, 18, of 44 Chestnut Hill Rd., East Hampton, was charged with criminal trespass, police said.

3/8: Two male juveniles were arrested for third-degree criminal trespass and referred to juvenile court, police said.

3/22: Said Oruczadeh, 24, of 148 Spring St., Middletown, was charged with third-degree

Portland Police News

burglary and third-degree larceny, police said.

3/22: Katie Barry, 23, of 64 Colt St., New London, was charged with third-degree burglary and fifth-degree larceny, police said.

3/22: Troy Roper, 40, of 16 Evergreen Ave., was charged with operating under suspension, police said.

3/26: Leon Naud, 46, of 10 Chatham Ct., was charged with disorderly conduct and second-degree violation of conditions of release, police said.

Hebron Selectmen Adopt \$34.09 Million Budget

by Courtney Parent

After months of paperwork and numbers up the wazoo, the Board of Selectmen approved its 2011-12 budget at a meeting Tuesday, March 29.

The \$34.09 million spending plan represents a \$431,736 increase, or 1.28 percent, over the current year's \$33.66 million budget. The spending proposal also calls for a mill rate of 30.26, an increase of 1.32 mills, which would translate to a tax increase of 4.58 percent.

The vote passed 4-0, with Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Mark Stuart absent from the meeting.

While a final decision was reached at Tuesday's meeting, it was a previous meeting on Thursday, March 24, when all the cards were laid on the table.

The majority of the March 24 meeting revolved around a presentation by the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) committee in which the committee recommended that the cost threshold of an item to be funded through CIP be raised from the current \$5,000 to \$25,000 for the fiscal year 2012-13. According to CIP Chairwoman Anne Fitzpatrick, that would mean that, for at least 2012-13 and possibly 2013-14, funding for CIP would need to be reduced and reallocated to operating budgets until the transition was complete.

"CIP was rocking the boat saying we wanted to raise the threshold to \$100,000," Fitzpatrick said, referring to an initial proposal.

Fitzpatrick told the board that the goal would

be for the threshold to reach \$100,000 within three to five years, and that it would be reviewed on an annual basis. Fitzpatrick noted that if the threshold were reviewed in the early fall, this would allow time for it to be communicated by mid-September for budgeting purposes.

Fitzpatrick noted that the CIP threshold has held steady at \$5,000 since its inception in 1988, with requests going over by a "wide margin" and major purchases getting put on the back burner.

After reviewing the threshold, the CIP Committee suggested floating a bond issue to cover the backlog of projects that had been requested for 2011-12, it was referred to as a "catch-up bond." Fitzpatrick recommended that the bond issue appear on the November 2011 ballot to ensure that the proceeds be available for 2012-13.

In order for the bond issue to appear on a November ballot, the Board of Selectmen would need to have the ballot question set by Sept. 8, and all approvals from the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Finance would need to be completed by Sept. 1. This would mean that the Board of Selectmen would have to recommend a bonding project list, with monetary amounts to the Board of Finance and Planning and Zoning Commission by the beginning of July.

When all was said and done, the final suggestion from CIP was to remain at level funding of \$626,627.

Aside from the CIP figures, the Board of Selectmen discussed keeping the Open Space Land Acquisition fund level with the current year. The fund is currently budgeted at \$100,000, and Town Manager Bonnie Therrien had proposed cutting it to \$25,000. However, several board members expressed a desire to keep the fund at \$100,000.

Selectwoman Gayle Mulligan, meanwhile, said the funding makes the town more attractive.

"We have been continuously decreasing and I would like to see it go up," said Mulligan, "but at least stay at level funding."

However, Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Mark Stuart thought the fund should remain at Therrien's original proposal of \$25,000, saying he thought the board should be more "prudent" and not be "irresponsible."

Before closing the meeting on Thursday and taking home a mound of papers and materials for review, the board addressed the Fire Department budget. Board member Dan Larson pointed out that there were line items within the department that needed to be reviewed further, noting that payroll saw a 9.2 percent increase over last year.

On Tuesday, the board came in rocking and ready to roll. Unlike previous meetings, where there were multiple occasions when all that could be heard was the flipping of pages as board members perused information, Tuesday night was a night of numbers.

Watt and Mulligan led the meeting, reading through the updated figures for each individual line item, pausing just for brief explanations of any slight increases or decreases.

Ultimately, the selectmen agreed to keep open space funding at \$100,000, and to reduce the hours of a part-time secretary position in the assessor's office from 19 hours a week to 15 hours a week. In Therrien's original budget proposal, the part-time secretary position was eliminated; however, upon discussion the board decided to retain the position as it is a revaluation year.

There were also multiple changes within the Fire Department including; adding \$5,000 for turnout gear, adding \$2,800 for air tanks, reducing \$1,055 from payroll and reducing \$6,500 from truck maintenance.

After all items were discussed, the board unanimously approved the 2011-12 town budget, as well as the CIP budget in the amount of \$752,533, with \$626,627 of that amount being funded by the general fund budget.

"I think this is as responsible of a budget as we can give to the voters," Larson said. "I don't know how we can continue to move forward with the town for any less, it becomes a disservice to the town to do it for less."

There will be a public budget hearing on April 12 in the RHAM auditorium. From there the budget will go to referendum on Tuesday, May 3.

Healthy Food Raises Concern in Hebron School Systems

by Courtney Parent

Offering lean meats, vegetables, whole grains and seeds will ensure that school programs throughout the town of Hebron meet your dietary needs.

On top of that, monitoring saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugars when you dine will increase the chances of meeting the state's healthy food guidelines.

The state requires that each school board representing a public school that is participating in the National School Lunch Program certify annually to the state Department of Education whether they will adhere to the Connecticut Nutrition Standards for all food sold to students.

At a Feb. 28 meeting, the RHAM Board of Education voted against participating in the state's Healthy Food Program.

The sole question came from board member Debra Dee, who asked whether the cafeteria lunch program would still be committed to serving healthy food.

Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski assured the board that the cafeteria program would continue to serve healthy food, however, he noted that if the district decided to participate in the Healthy Food Program this would impact fundraising.

The state nutrition standards apply to all sources of food sales on school premises, these include school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias and any fundraising activities that occur on school premises.

Bake sales and other common fundraising efforts would be limited to items such as whole grain and low-fat muffins, soft pretzels and whole wheat mini blueberry loaf to name a few. (The maximum portion size for baked items within the snack and desserts category in the Connecticut Nutrition Standards list of acceptable foods is just three ounces.) The few select cookies which would be permitted would need to be low-fat or whole grain and could be no larger than two ounces. Traditional homemade baked goods such as brownies, fudge and cupcakes would contain too many sugars to be allowed under the state's nutrition standards.

The state offers districts an extra incentive if they decide to adhere to the healthy food standards: an additional 10 cents per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches served in the district in the prior school year.

Although the Hebron Elementary and Gilead Hill schools both participate in the state's Healthy Food Program, there has still been recent question over the quality of the food being

served.

"We do adhere to the State Healthy Food Standards and follow their guidelines religiously," said Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz.

The Connecticut Nutrition Standards focus on limiting the intake of fats, sodium and sugars, moderating portion sizes and increasing the intake of nutrient-dense food products. According to the state Department of Education website, the nutrition standards are based on nutrition science and health recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, MyPyramid, as well as national organizations such as the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and more.

At a Hebron PTA-sponsored information session held Tuesday, March 22, parents expressed concern over the nutritional value of school cafeteria food being served at Hebron Elementary and Gilead Hill School.

According to Cruz, the school is currently running an education update series with the PTA. The month of March was dedicated to an update on Chartwells and the food program.

At the March 22 meeting, a group of approxi-

mately 20 parents were present, along with Gilead Hill School Principal Kathy Veronesi who oversees the lunch program, Chartwells supervisor-on-site Linda Baker and regional manager of Chartwells Mike Edgar. According to Cruz, the conversation revolved around menu choice and what the conceptions are for what classifies as healthy lunch and snacks.

Along with parents and administration was a Chartwells nutritionist who provided answers to questions, as well as, a sample menu. The sample menu included healthy alternatives to the "classic" cafeteria food items such as pizza. According to Cruz, new menu items included whole grain pasta, roast turkey, southwest salad, ham and cheese on wheat bread and chicken Caesar salad to name a few.

The meeting was "very productive," Cruz said, as questions were answered, information was presented and parents were enlightened on offerings such as fat free milk and low-fat yogurt which are utilized by the schools.

According to Cruz, a Wellness Committee will meet in May to address some of the issues voiced by parents including: whether or not snacks are needed on a daily basis, menu variation, focus on local produce and healthier food options.

Three Percent Tax Increase Puts Marlborough Finance Board on Edge

by Katy Nally

Finance board members scrutinized every line item of Town Hall department budgets Tuesday, because, Board of Finance Chairwoman Cathi Gaudinski said, so far "we're looking at over a 3 percent tax increase."

While both the town operations and local education 2011-12 budgets come in with only slight increases, 0.11 percent and 0.88 percent respectively, revenue is down about 6.58 percent, but doesn't include tax collections.

In total, expenditures (excluding the Marlborough levy for the RHAM budget, which was approved by the RHAM board Tuesday; a full story about the budget appears on page X) show about a 1.39 percent increase.

Town debt actually went down about 0.49 percent, and contingency was proposed to be doubled, coming in at \$40,000.

"The budget itself looks good," Gaudinski said Tuesday.

However, revenues overall are decreasing. The line item "cash available for appropriation" took a hit, decreasing about 41.7 percent over the current year.

Gaudinski explained the town keeps about 7.5 percent of its overall budget in the undesignated fund balance to ensure "favorable interest rates when it borrows." For the 2011-12 budget, that 7.5 percent came to about \$1.59 million, which is subtracted from the current fund balance (as of June 30, 2010) of \$1.92

million, leaving the "cash available for appropriation" at \$331,538. This is less than the current year's cash available, which is approximately \$569,000.

Also, local and state revenue, including funds for education, showed a decrease. Local revenue decreased by about \$38,000, or almost 12 percent, state revenue dropped about 7.43 percent, and state revenue for education dipped slightly, at a quarter of a percentage point.

"We're trying to find other areas to cut," Gaudinski said, adding that line items costing a few thousand dollars "might seem like small amounts," but are important to consider.

The budget proposes purchasing three public works vehicles through bonding resolutions, at a cost of \$400,000. The 2011-12 budget includes a \$29,600 line item, which, Gaudinski said, covers a six-month interest payment for the year. The following year, she added, the budget will include funds for interest as well as principal payments for the full year. Another bonding resolution, which was turned down by voters two years ago, was also proposed and includes \$1.6 million for road reconstruction.

When asked which of the three public works vehicles would take priority, First Selectman Bill Black said choosing one over the other wasn't really an option anymore.

"We need to find a way to fund it," he said. "At least give [public works staff] reasonable

equipment to get the job done."

Black said the request for public works vehicles has been "pushed out" during past budget seasons.

Gaudinski said, in previous years, since there were "so many other capital projects," purchasing the trucks was put off.

Included in the capital non-reoccurring line item is \$118,000 that would cover the purchase of another truck to replace an aging 1962 Dodge power wagon as the fire department's forestry vehicle. Also, that \$118,000 includes funding toward revaluation and fixing the leaking public works roof.

Other than public works, the finance board also looked at budgets for the library, tax assessor and collector, town clerk, senior center, fire department and various other town departments at Tuesday's budget workshop.

Based on Governor Dannel Malloy's proposed budget, Library Director Nancy Wood said she expected to see a decrease in state funding for ConnectiCard, a program that provides cash incentives to libraries that service patrons from other towns.

Malloy's decrease would result in about a \$5,000 loss for the library. However, a preliminary "legislative response" budget from the state reduces Malloy's cut to ConnectiCard, resulting in a loss to the library of about \$2,000, Wood

said.

When the library's budget is at a deficit, Wood said the difference is "practically always taken out of materials." Her proposed budget puts the materials line item back at the 2008-09 level, she said.

The library's budget also includes a zero percent increase in salaries, Wood said, and no line item for its possible renovation.

The town recently applied for a Small Cities Grant to make the library compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, which would cover part of a second-floor renovation. However, to cover additional expenses like carpeting, lighting and furniture, other funds will be required that can't be provided through the Small Cities Grant.

The Board of Finance is scheduled to hold two more budget workshops, on Tuesday and Thursday, April 5 and 7, and a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 13. All three meetings will be at 7 p.m. in the Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School library.

The annual public hearing where residents can ask questions regarding the budget is scheduled for Monday, April 25, at 7 p.m. in the elementary school cafeteria.

Residents can vote on the proposed budget Monday, May 9, at 7 p.m., also in the elementary school cafeteria.

Obituaries

Hebron

David Goode

David J. Goode, 85, of Amston, passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 23 at Hartford Hospital. He was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, son of David and Mary (Brierton) Goode.

David was a veteran of the U.S. Navy, serving in the South Pacific during WWII, on the aircraft carrier the USS Langley. His unit received numerous commendations for heroism in battle. David also served stateside during the Korean Conflict before going to work at the *Hartford Courant*, where he spent more than four decades in a variety of positions with the company. He was inducted into the *Courant's* Thomas Green Club, for 25 years of loyal service, in 1977.

David was an avid reader, learner, traveler and movie-goer who loved animals, classical music, the New York Yankees, UConn women's basketball and Navy football.

He is survived by his son, Steven and wife Gretchen-Marie of Amston; granddaughters, Amanda, Alicia and Isabelle; nieces, Mary Martin and Ann Goode and their husbands Jack Martin and John Quinn of Glastonbury; nephew, John Goode and great-niece, Jennifer Good of Atlanta, GA; and the family's dog, Lola.

David was predeceased by his mother and father; brother, Walter Goode and sister-in-law, Sylvia Goode; and beloved dogs, Rex and Molson.

Calling hours were held Sunday, March 27, at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, followed by a memorial service. Burial services will be private, with full military honors.

David's family wishes to thank the staff at Harrington Court Nursing Home in Colchester, and the staff and doctor's at Hartford Hospital, especially those in the palliative care unit, for their kindness, care and compassion.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Our Companions Domestic Animal Sanctuary, P.O. Box 673, Bloomfield, CT 06002.

East Hampton

Kenneth Lawson Sr.

Kenneth Edwin Lawson Sr., 88, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Doris (Brewer) Lawson, died Monday, March 28, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Sept. 25, 1922, in East Hampton, he was the son of the late Frank B. and Fannie (Ingraham) Lawson.

Ken was a devoted husband to his wife Doris for 62 years and to his family. His grandchildren were his pride and joy. Ken lived most of his life in East Hampton and graduated from East Hampton High School in 1940 in its first graduating class. He attended Kansas State School of Engineering for two years while in the Army. As a tech sergeant in the 97th Infantry Division, he was in the Battle of the Bulge. He was in the Army of Occupation in Japan at the end of WWII.

Ken's artistic and technical capabilities were utilized as a toy designer for the Gong Bell Manufacturing Co. and as a model maker for Olivetti Underwood during his years of employment. From 1948 until the present, Ken spent many hours working in his spare time at the Brewer Farm on Mott Hill Road, planting and taking care of the Christmas trees. He was a member of the Treadway Cavanaugh Post 64 of the East Hampton American Legion, and a member of the Connecticut Farm Bureau. Ken was liked by everyone who knew him for his kind and friendly manner.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his sons, Kenneth E. Lawson Jr. of East Hampton and Brent A. Lawson and his wife Barbara of East Haddam; two brothers, Frank B. Lawson and Robert M. Lawson of East Hampton; four grandchildren, Tanya Seay and her husband Hank, Gwen Lawson, Jared Lawson and Stephanie Lawson; four great-grandchildren, Henry Seay IV, Aaron Seay, Colt Seay, Jake Seay; and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brother Everett Lawson.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home today, April 1, from 6-8 p.m., and also on Saturday morning from 10-11 a.m. Funeral services will be held Saturday, April 2, at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial with military honors in Lakeview Cemetery will be held at the convenience of the family.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Heart Association, 1 Union St., No. 301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691-4183.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Harold Lester Ross Sr.

Harold Lester Ross Sr., 69, of Colchester, passed away, Wednesday, March 23, at Middlesex Hospital. Born in Bozrah on May 17, 1941, he was a son of the late Casper and Jessie (Ames) Ross.

He married Gloria Mae Shaw on April 25, 1959, in Fitchville. The couple shared 49 years together before she predeceased him on Jan. 22, 2008.

Harold retired several years ago after having worked as a lumberjack for 43 years with Archie Green and Son in Hebron. He also served for nine years with the Colchester Board of Education.

He is survived by three children and their spouses, Phyllis and Robert Taylor of Bozrah, Robert Ross and Rose Sack of Westchester, Wayne Ross of Colchester; a daughter-in-law, Linda Ross of Colchester (he was predeceased by his son, Harold Ross Jr., on Feb. 18); a brother, Chancy Ross of Norwich; three grandchildren, Samantha Ross, Kimberly Renaldi, Michael Taylor; two great-grandchildren, Lauren and Zachary Renaldi; a special friend, Judy Kudrak of East Hampton; and numerous extended family and friends.

He will be remembered by those who knew him best as being a devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend.

Friends called Saturday, March 26, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service followed that afternoon, with Rev. Ted Dole officiating. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Robert A. Paris

Robert A. Paris, 49, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully in his sleep Friday morning, March 25, in Manchester. Born Sept. 15, 1961, in Hartford, he was a son of the late Emilio and Claire (Legault) Paris.

Bob loved his work as a self-employed plumber, known in and around Marlborough as Gino's Plumbing Service. He also volunteered his services within the Marlborough community. He had an avid love of animals and gardening but most importantly he will be remembered by his family and friends for his big heart and for the care and devotion he extended to his late mother.

Survivors include his longtime companion, Jacki Kelloway of Manchester; a brother, Frank and his wife Debra Paris of Colchester; three sisters, Linda Bartolucci of Niantic, Carolyn Massaro and Michael Jenack, Betty and her husband Larry Maguire of Marlborough; two nephews, Kyle Paris and Spencer Paris-Beattie; and numerous extended family and friends

A memorial service to celebrate his life will be held Saturday, April 2, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, beginning at 10 a.m., with the service at 11 a.m. Burial will be private in the Marlborough Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Mollie (Babek) Kopp

Mollie (Babek) Kopp, 92, came to rest in peace Wednesday, Feb. 2, at her home on Windham Avenue, Colchester, after a brief illness. Born April 7, 1918, she was one of six children born to George and Catherine Kmick and lived in Colchester all of her life.

At the age of 18, she married Carl (Charlie) Babek and had three children: Charles (Charlie) Babek, married to Phyllis (Sefchick) Babek of Colchester; Geraldine (Babek) Dawson, married to Michael Dawson of Colchester; and James (Jimmy) Babek, married to Tencia Babek of Kingwood, TX. After Carl's passing, she later married Franklyn Kopp.

Mollie was a dedicated wife, mother and worker. She spent the majority of her career working for both of the leather factories located in Colchester, Meyer Kashkins and Mestreys Leather.

Mollie enjoyed spending time with her family, especially with her grandchildren: Brian Dawson; Beth (Dawson) Coleman, married to Michael Coleman; Jim Babek, married to Amy Babek; and Annette (Babek) Guasp, married to Ray Guasp. Mollie also loved to dote on her great-grandchildren, Olivia, Matthew, Melanie, Hanna and Aidan, and took pleasure in spending time with her best friend, Regina Butova. Additionally, her hobbies were knitting, crocheting, cooking and doing puzzles.

Mollie is predeceased by her siblings; Frances Sawchyn, Mike Kmick, Anna Kmick, Mary Dawson and Joseph Kmick, her two husbands, Carl and Franklyn; her son-in-law Mike Dawson; and her grandson, Brian Dawson.

A service for Mollie will be held at 2 p.m., Friday, April 15, at the Westchester Congregational Church in Colchester. A reception will immediately follow the service at 54 Waterhole Rd., Colchester.

Donations in Mollie's name can be made to the Humane Society of Connecticut, St. Jude's Children's Hospital or the Colchester Hayward Fire Department

Much love and appreciation is extended to those who helped during Mollie's illness. All of the food, cards, visits, prayers and snowplowing efforts can never be re-paid. Just know that you will not be forgotten – Mollie had a great memory!

Colchester

Anna Villa

Anna (Yetishefsky) Villa, 96, passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 23, at Harrington Court Nursing Home. She was the beloved wife of William Villa.

A longtime resident of Glastonbury, Anna and her husband owned and operated Villa's Orchard for over 30 years. Her pleasures later in her life were going to Mohegan Sun with her husband and bottle collecting; she made many friends at both endeavors.

Besides her husband of 75 years, Anna is survived by her daughter, Patricia Marra and her husband Alphonse of Fairfax, VA; her granddaughters, Michele and her husband Albert Mann of Laguna Niguel, CA; Beth Marra and her husband Kevin Ramey of Centreville, VA; her great-grandchildren Michael and Kaelie Mann and numerous nieces and nephews.

Anna was predeceased by her son, William Villa Jr.; her daughter, Judith Villa; her brothers, Alex, Michael and John Yetishefsky; and her sister, Mary Villa.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Saturday, March 26, at St. Paul Church, 2577 Main St., Glastonbury. Burial followed in Linwood Cemetery in Colchester. Calling hours were held Friday, March 25, at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury.

To leave an online condolence, visit glastonburyfuneral.com.

Colchester

Mathew Jacob Bishel

Mathew Jacob Bishel, 22, of Colchester, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, March 24, at home. Born March 1, 1989, in Middletown, he was the son of Keith and Lisa (Desnoyers) Bishel of Colchester.

He was a 2007 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester, where he was active with the Wrestling and Soccer teams, as he loved all types of sports. Matt was currently finishing his biology degree at ECSU and would have graduated in May of 2011.

He also enjoyed fishing and was a talented marksman. However, Matt will be remembered most for his vibrance, both in the way that he lived life to its fullest and loved his family and friends so very much.

In addition to his loving parents, he is survived by his sister, Danielle of Colchester; his grandparents, Art and Pat Bishel of Colchester and Roland and Kathy Desnoyers of Chester; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by his grandmother, Elizabeth Bishel, and a cousin, Philip Coulombe.

Friends called Wednesday, March 30, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Thursday, March 31, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Interment followed in the Bishel family plot in the Westchester Center Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Bacon Academy Wrestling Team, 611 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

