

RIVEREAST

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Navy Commander Michael Flatley received a hero's welcome in East Hampton last Thursday, as nearly 100 residents gathered to pay tribute. He received a daddy's welcome as well, as daughter Riley, 5, grabbed onto Flatley's leg during the festivities and refused to let go.

## Belltown Gathers to Welcome Home Veteran

by Joshua Anusewicz

Close to 100 East Hampton residents kicked off the Fourth of July weekend last Thursday with a tribute that perfectly fit the spirit of the holiday – by welcoming home one of our country's finest.

Family, friends, neighbors, veterans, town officials and grateful residents lined Chatham Fields Road on a picture-perfect summer day for the return of Navy Commander Michael Flatley, who recently finished his third tour in Iraq. Led by members of the VFW Ladies Auxiliary, a color guard and local Boy Scouts, Flatley and his family marched down the street to his home as those in attendance waved American flags and cheered.

Flatley has been a part of the Navy for 16 years, serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and, most recently, Operation New Dawn, which he has been a part of since August 2010.

"Welcome home, Mr. Mike!" shouted a group of neighborhood children, including one young girl holding a sign that read "We love our troops."

Leading the family were the two oldest Flatley children – Sean, 12, and Kailey, 9 – who waved flags and proudly wore red, white and blue. The third child – 5-year-old Riley – waved a flag and held her mother Emily's hand as Flatley, dressed in his military fatigues, thanked

the crowd.

Right behind the Flatley family was Ann McLaughlin and her grandson, Sgt. Arron McLaughlin. Ann started the Yellow Ribbon Welcome Home Program earlier this year to welcome home the town's soldiers after Arron, a Purple Heart recipient, returned from Afghanistan in 2010.

Inspired by his return, Ann approached the Town Council about honoring the town's soldiers currently serving by tying yellow ribbons around the tree on the island in Village Center. At a ceremony on Memorial Day, each of the families of the four soldiers currently serving was presented with a yellow ribbon that was tied to the tree and will be removed when the soldier returns. Ann also asked residents to welcome home the soldiers by lining their street with flag-waving residents.

Ann only had one word for the ceremony, the program's first – "unbelievable."

"These people who came out today are so great," she added.

When the family arrived at the front of their home, which was adorned with a banner that read "Welcome home Daddy – we missed you," residents gathered around Flatley and an inspiring chorus of "God Bless America" rose from the crowd.

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## Spruced-Up Eagle Rock Defaced in Hebron

by Courtney Parent

Vandalism struck Hebron over the holiday weekend, in the form of red paint splattered on the recently-refurbished Eagle Rock.

The landmark, located on Route 66 near Paper Mill Road, was just repainted and brought back to life by local resident Andy Bordick and his family a little over a month ago, on Memorial Day weekend. However, despite an overwhelming positive response, that did not prevent vandals from defacing the bird.

Despite the vandal's attempt, efforts to remove the red paint have already taken place and the town's eagle is once again glowing with beauty. On another bright note, according to Hebron Resident State Trooper Jim Nolting, someone has "fessed up" to the crime. However, as the Eagle Rock resides on state property and there is no complainant, Nolting said they are currently in the midst of figuring out "where to go from here."

According to local resident Andy Bordick, who took on the task of painting the rock with the aid of his family over Memorial Day weekend, he first saw the vandalism when driving home this Monday, July 4, after a long holiday weekend.

While many were angry over the defacing of the town landmark, Bordick was not. Rather than getting upset, Bordick pointed to his understanding of the "temporary nature of art" by

using his sons as an example.

As is a family tradition, Bordick said he "usually" creates a sand sculpture for his sons, 10-year-old Calvin and 9-year-old Jack, during the Fourth of July weekend. The sculpture takes approximately one to two hours to create, said Bordick. Then Bordick said, after the family spends approximately 15 minutes admiring the sculpture, Jack and Calvin destroy it.

"That rock is not my rock, nor the vandal's rock," said Bordick. "It's a temporary location for that paint. So I wasn't too upset by it. I appreciate that in America, we have the freedom of speech and if someone wants to make a lame attempt at a war protest – which this appeared to be – then they have every right to do that."

Bordick went on to explain that he served 11 years in the United States Navy to support that right.

After seeing the vandalism, Bordick said that Lara and himself had decided they would fix up the rock as soon as time allowed. However, much to his surprise when he arrived on site on Tuesday, two other local residents were already hard at work.

Local residents Robert Nilsen and Efenger Bartholomew (who lives on the property located directly behind the rock), were in the process of hooking up a power washer when

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Eagle Rock, located in Hebron on Route 66, was vandalized with red paint over the Fourth of July weekend. The local landmark had recently been spruced up by area residents.



**Michael Flatley's family joined him for a walk down Chatham Field Road, as onlookers cheered. Flatley is in the rear, alongside his youngest daughter Riley, 5, and wife Emily. In the forefront are his other two children, Sean, 12, and Kailey, 9.**

#### **Veteran cont. from Front Page**

After a few short words from Ann McLaughlin and Town Council members Christopher Goff and Melissa Engel thanking him for his service, Flatley obliged those requesting a speech. He took the opportunity to share his appreciation for the ceremony and explain what the support meant to a soldier.

"I'm honored to see you all here," Flatley said. "To see all of your support is truly heartwarming. I know that as a soldier, we are always pleased to know we have the support of our countrymen and women back home."

Flatley also thanked his family for their support, particularly thanking his wife Emily, explaining that serving one's country and raising a family is a "team effort."

Sticking with the spirit of Independence Day, Flatley also reminded everyone to be thankful for the country we live in.

"We are blessed to be born into this country that we share," said Flatley, who finished his words by saying "God bless America," followed by the military "Hoo-rah!"

At the conclusion of the speech, the crowd broke into a spontaneous and emotional rendi-

tion of the National Anthem, as Flatley held Riley against his shoulder and helped her sing.

Residents then took turns going up to Flatley, thanking him for his service and welcoming him home personally. When someone asked if this would be his best Fourth of July, he took no time replying – "absolutely."

Flatley said he would be spending his first night home "making a fire in the backyard, relaxing and enjoying a beautiful summer night," but he will soon be on the move again. Fortunately, it will not be a deployment; the family will be moving to Texas in August, where Flatley will then be stationed. He said he has not received word on any future deployments.

According to McLaughlin, Flatley will be removing his yellow ribbon at a ceremony later this month as part of a joint ceremony with Senior Airman Nicholas Pawlak, who will return later this month. Also at the ceremony, McLaughlin said she hopes to honor three residents that will leave for service this summer by placing yellow ribbons on the tree.

#### **Rock Defacing cont. from Front Page**

Bordick arrived.

Nilsen said that when he first arrived, Lara was already at work washing the paint off the rock. After telling her he would return in five minutes, Nilsen proceeded to Bartholomew's home (his neighbor whom he had never met) to ask if he could use his water. At that point it became a group effort as Nilsen took charge power washing and Lara continued to scrub off the unwanted red paint.

When asked what made him jump to action, Nilsen said it was the national symbol of the eagle being tarnished – and while surrounded by multiple American flags no less.

"It had to be fixed," Nilsen said after cleaning the rock. "You can't leave it that way. Now it looks like it did four days ago."

While Bordick may not have seen this incident as a reason for resentment, others seemed to disagree. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there is "no reason or rhyme" as to why someone would commit this crime. Therrien also said Tuesday that if the culprit was caught she would ask that they be "prosecuted to the fullest."

Therrien also expressed her sadness towards the Bordick family who had put so much hard work into restoring the face of the eagle.

"The rock looked so bright and the art work

was fantastic," Therrien said. "[It's] just a tragedy on a piece of art that represents our community."

According to Therrien, this is not the first case of vandalism within the town, as there have been problems at Veterans Park as well as one of the other local parks. However, Therrien said no one has yet been caught in connection with the park vandalism.

Hebron Historical Society President Donna McCalla, who had been looking for volunteers to spruce up the 22-year-old Eagle Rock before Bordick approached her earlier this year, expressed her dismay this week at the vandalism.

"All I can say is it is a shame that a beautiful place that welcomes people to our wonderful community was picked for destructive behavior," McCalla said. "I hope whoever is responsible will admit their actions and apologize to the community as a whole."

Bordick said he did not hold any "ill feelings" toward whomever committed the vandalism, and said he would proceed to keep this symbol of the town looking its best.

"The next time someone paints something on there, I'll likely try to touch her up again," Bordick said, "unless of course, the new paint makes it look better!"

### *From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

There was a tragic, rather ironic and very much avoidable death in upstate New York over the weekend. Philip A. Contos, 55, died Sunday in a motorcycle accident, while protesting the state's mandatory helmet law.

While riding his motorcycle in Onondaga, Contos hit the brakes and his 1983 Harley Davidson fishtailed, police said. Contos went over the handlebars of the motorcycle and hit his head on the pavement.

He was taken to Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, NY, where he was pronounced dead.

New York State Trooper Jack Keller told ABC News 9 in Syracuse, "The medical expert we discussed the case with who pronounced [Contos] deceased stated that he would've no doubt survived the accident had he been wearing a helmet."

Contos and 550 other motorcyclists were participating in an annual ride organized by American Bikers Aimed Toward Education (ABATE), a group of motorcycle enthusiasts who, according to [abcnews.com](http://abcnews.com), "lobby for motorcycle awareness and freedom."

Yes, freedom to not wear life-saving helmets if you don't want to. You're also free to stick your hand inside a running lawn mower; does that make it a good idea?

New York is one of 20 states that require all motorcyclists to wear helmets. I've felt passionately for a long time that Connecticut should also have such a requirement, but we don't. In fact, reading about Contos' all-too-preventable death Sunday made me think of a column I wrote in this very space nearly three years ago, advocating a mandatory helmet law in Connecticut. Sadly, the column is just as valid today as it was then (well, except for the mention of then-Gov. M. Jodi Rell). It would've been nice if, by now, we'd enacted a mandatory helmet law. I'm still hopeful that one day, soon, we will.

Anyway, here are my thoughts on the subject, as they appeared in the Aug. 21, 2008, *Rivereast*:

I had to go to Middletown Sunday afternoon, and since it was a nice day (warm, sunny, no rain), I opted to go the old-fashioned way — avoiding the highway, instead going through Glastonbury and Portland, across the bridge and into Middletown that way. It was just a good day for a scenic drive, and apparently many motorcyclists agreed with me, as I passed several bikers while making my way through Glastonbury and Portland. And I was disappointed, though not all that surprised, by just how many of them weren't wearing helmets.

Connecticut doesn't have a state law requiring adult motorcyclists to wear helmets. If you're under 18, you have to wear one. But if you're over 18, it's apparently every man for himself. And from what I've seen, many motorcyclists here in the Nutmeg State opt to just ride without one. I just don't get it. It

seems like it would be common sense to want to protect your head if you're biking down the road at speeds of 40, 50, 60 miles per hour. If you get into an accident, you could go flying.

Studies have shown head injuries to be the leading cause of death in motorcycle accidents. Studies have also proven wearing helmets greatly reduces both risk of death and severe brain injuries if you get into a motorcycle accident. I just don't see what the big deal is here. Is feeling the wind blow through your hair really worth all that?

I also don't get why Connecticut has no law requiring adult motorcyclists to wear helmets. To make teens under 18 wear them, but not adults, is silly. Yes, those under 18 would be less-experienced drivers. But experienced drivers get into accidents too. Just pick up a newspaper or turn on the news. It happens. I mean, if you're going to say motorcyclists can take off their helmets as soon as they turn 18, why not do the same with seat belts? As soon as we turn 18, just stop making us wear them. They're so annoying anyway. And those buckles can get really hot in the summer sun. However, last time I checked, the state seat belt law isn't getting repealed.

I was looking into this matter on the Internet, and came across a chart showing which states require all motorcyclists – not just teenagers – to wear helmets and which ones don't. You might be surprised by the company Connecticut keeps. Or rather, by the company we don't keep. Many of the southern states (Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee, North Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia) all have helmet laws. Our neighbors both to the north (Massachusetts) and west (New York) have them. (In fact, Gov. Rell has commented she's seen motorcyclists cross the border from New York into Connecticut, take off their helmets, and keep on going.) California has mandatory helmet laws. So does New Jersey.

Now, to be fair, there are also states that are like us, with just requiring teens to wear helmets. And there are three states – Illinois, Iowa and New Hampshire – that don't have helmet laws of any kind, for teens or adults. But that doesn't, in my opinion, make it right. If you ask me, they all should have all-ages helmet laws.

One could argue that it should be the responsibility of the individual motorcyclist, that he should be the one making the call in this situation. And I might buy that if I saw the right calls being made more often. But I don't. When driving back from Middletown Sunday, I was in Glastonbury and noticed, on my right side, a bicyclist and, on my left side, three motorcyclists driving down the road. The bicyclist wore a helmet. The motorcyclists did not. Something's not quite right about this picture.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

# AHM Swings ‘Fore!’ Funds

by Courtney Parent

This coming Monday, July 11, AHM Youth and Family Services Inc. will hold its eighth annual Invitational Golf Open at the Blackledge Country Club. This year’s event will begin at 9 a.m. on Monday, with a shotgun start at 9:30 a.m.

AHM’s goal is to raise \$12,000 with all of the proceeds going back to help keep AHM programs operating for the next 12 months for the children and families of Andover, Columbia, Hebron, and Marlborough. The cost to participate is \$125 for individuals or \$400 if you pre-register as a group of four; a total savings of \$100.

The main addition to this year’s event, AHM Executive Director Joel Rosenberg said, was the “new level of giving” to support the golf tournament. In past years, there have been four different sponsorship levels based on the size of the donation. However, this year, there has been an addition of the now largest sponsorship level for donations between \$1,000 and \$3,000, the Leader Board sponsor.

So far, the new addition has proved to be a success, putting AHM well on its way to reaching its \$12,000 goal. Rosenberg said Tuesday there were already five Leader Board sponsors: Ted’s IGA supermarket, Hebron Pharmacy, Americare Medical Supply, Marcus Communications and the Miller family.

“We’re very excited because these are major donors that will make this an even more successful fundraiser,” Rosenberg said.

In addition to its donation, Ted’s IGA will also host an afternoon picnic and send a complimentary hotdog cart out on the course.

As in previous years, the crowd expected is a diverse one, coming from all across Connecticut and some from outside the state. According to Rosenberg, there will not only be avid golfers, but also those who are new to the game.

“There will be businesspeople, retirees, police, educators, people from the corporate community and people from the faith community,” Rosenberg said, “all drawn together to support AHM.”

As of Tuesday, Rosenberg said there were 80 players signed up and he anticipated that number would increase before tournament time on Monday. In past years, Rosenberg said the tournament has seen “great numbers” and if the weather cooperates, the same should hold true this year.

Rosenberg added that, in light of the budget difficulties the state has been experiencing, the fundraiser will be extremely beneficial to AHM’s “overall financial health.”

“I am confident that we will reach our goal and we may be pleasantly surprised,” said Rosenberg.

According to Rosenberg, the annual golf tournament is one of AHM’s four major fundraisers. The other three include an annual telethon, an appearance at the Maple Festival and a fall foliage concert.

Although Rosenberg continues to see increased donations each year, he said he never ceases to be surprised by the ample generosity shown by individuals, families and businesses in the area.



The annual AHM Invitational Golf Open returns next Monday to the Blackledge Country Club. Pictured is a scene of happy golfers ready to “start their clubs” at last year’s event.

And while this event may be to benefit AHM, the youth service bureau won’t be the only winner next Monday. Awards will be given to the top golfers and teams in the male, female and mixed categories. All participants will also receive a courtesy hospitality bag, snacks, and an AHM Golf Tournament shirt.

To enter the tournament, or for more information, call Rosenberg at 860-228-9488.

# ‘Glorious Celebration’ Makes its Return in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

An East Hampton summer tradition has arrived, as the 33rd annual Old Home Days Glorious Celebration takes over the town this weekend. The celebration, which began yesterday, will end Saturday night.

As is the case every year, the main attraction will be the parade, which will begin on Saturday at 11 a.m. at the high school. The theme of this year’s parade – which the Old Home Days website describes as the largest in Middlesex County – is “Cosmic Carnival.” According to Sheila Oakes, one of the parade’s organizers, the theme is meant to be taken anyway the parade-goers see fit. Even she admitted she wasn’t sure what to expect.

“My first thoughts was, ‘What in the world does that mean?’” Oakes said. “But we want people to interpret it how they feel. Everyone has their own idea, and we hope to get some creative people.”

The Old Home Days Association interpreted “Cosmic Carnival” to mean ideas like outer space, Mardi Gras, Rio’s Carnival or colorful designs of the 60s and 70s; the more creative, the better.

Oakes said that joining the parade this year will be new Town Manager John Weichsel, Shriners from Hartford and Springfield, MA, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal and two of Belltown’s newly-minted champions: the East Hampton High School baseball team that won the state title, and Nathan Abraham, who won the state title in pole vault.

Oakes said there will be also be a new addition to the parade and carnival: the Roaming Railroad, a trackless train that shuttles up to 22 riders. The train will participate in the parade, and then will be available to take riders up and down Main Street for several hours after the parade. And the best part, Oakes said, is that it’s free.

Another one of the highlights of Old Home Days is the raffle, which will give away 12 prizes to people who purchase a \$10 raffle ticket. Some of this year’s prizes include a Hasqvarna Riding Mower, a Weber gas grill, gift cards to Stop & Shop and Citgo, an Android cell phone and four tickets to a Yankees game, among others. Only 1,000 tickets will be sold and the drawing will be on Saturday at 8 p.m. at Center School.

There will also be drawings for the East Hampton Police Department raffle for a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and Friends of Lake Pocotopaug’s \$10,000 cash raffle. There will also be over 60 bicycles that were donated by local businesses that will be part of a bicycle giveaway for children 12 and under.

For those that prefer to sit back and enjoy some live entertainment, all three days will provide more than enough to keep patrons satisfied. Acts will range from magician The Amazing Andy kicking things off on Thursday, to crowd favorite and local band Neybas on Friday, to rock cover band Radio Giant closing out the festival on Saturday.

If music isn’t your thing and physical fitness is, the 13th annual Glorious Gallop will take place at 7:15 p.m. tonight. The five-kilometer road race drew over 400 participants last year, and Oakes expects a similar number this year, with runners coming from as far as California. If you haven’t registered, you can do so tonight at Center School up until 6:43 p.m. – the time the last shuttle leaves to take racers to Seven Hills Crossing, the 5K’s starting point. Registration fee is \$15. The race will offer prizes to the top three finishers of each gender in each age group, free T-shirts while supplies last, medals to finishers under 13 and other random awards.

The carnival at Old Home Days will also be bringing back Bowdoin Amusements, which provided the rides for the first time last year. Carnival organizer Melissa Engel said they did “a terrific job” last year and will be bringing back favorites like bumper boats, a giant slide and a Ferris wheel. Engel also said that the carnival will offer a larger assortment of food, providing snacks for all tastes.

“We will definitely be featuring a better selection,” Engel said. “We don’t want any duplicates, so we have a big assortment.” Thai chicken on a stick, which has been a favorite in years past, and its vendor Thai Awesome, will return and will offer a second booth this year with other offerings.



The three-day Old Home Days event has returned to East Hampton. The annual festivities began yesterday and will run through Saturday. One of the highlights is the annual parade, which will take place on Saturday. Pictured is a float from last year’s parade, designed by the non-profit organization Epoch Arts.

President Jim Vick said that there will be a discounted ticket rate this year, with \$15 “all-you-can-ride” wristbands for Thursday and Friday night or half-day sessions on Saturday. “It’s

a real bargain,” said Vick, adding that other festivals will charge as much as \$25 for a wristband.

Vick said that he hopes that all of the work done by the Old Home Days Association is enjoyed by those who visit the festival, and still can’t believe how all of the work is done by so few people.

“It’s pretty amazing what a small group can pull off,” Vick said. “We are excited it’s finally here and excited to see it take off.”

For more information about Old Home Days, visit [easthamptonoldhomedays.org](http://easthamptonoldhomedays.org).

# Hebron Fresh Air Fund Forms Families

by Courtney Parent

Upon pulling into the parking lot of Connecticut Golf Land and Games in Vernon Tuesday afternoon, you could see men, women and children with smiling faces; however, these weren't caused by rounds of miniature golf or swings in the batting cages.

While peering through the parking lot you could also notice balloons, welcome signs covered with glitter, smiley faces and hearts, as well as welcome messages and artwork on vehicle windows. The gleeful gathering was actually for the arrival of 25 children from New York City as part of the Fresh Air Fund.

And of those 25 kids, four were headed for Hebron.

The Fresh Air Fund is a not-for-profit organization that provides free summer vacations to approximately 10,000 New York City youths each year and has provided more than 1.7 million children with the vacation opportunity since its inception in 1877.

Children are selected to participate in the Fresh Air Fund's programs based on financial need. Children are from low-income communities, residing in any of the five boroughs in New York City.

According to Fresh Air Fund's Kim Sztaba, who was present at the Vernon arrival, the program serves children ranging in age from six to 18. Children must be placed with a family for the first-time between the ages of six and 12; from there children can return to the same host family until they reach the age of 18. Sztaba said that while there are some fresh faces in the crowd from year to year, many are "repeaters," who host a child for multiple years.

An example of one such "repeater" family can be found in Hebron at the Verrengia residence. Kelly Verrengia said her family has participated in the program for the past 9 years, hosting now 15-year-old Brianna from the time she was six. (Verrengia serves as assistant to Michelle Byam, the Hebron-area chairperson for the Fresh Air Fund.)

"She's really become a member of the family," said Verrengia.

During her time in Hebron, Verrengia said the things Brianna likes the most are spending time outside in the water and enjoying all of the elements of country living.

"She loves to swim and go to farms," said Verrengia, "the simple things are what she re-

ally loves to do."

According to Verrengia, the experience has not only been beneficial to Brianna, but has served as a learning tool for her three children as well. Brianna has aided in teaching Verrengia's three children – 18-year-old Katelynn, 13-year-old Kylie, and 10-year-old Carter – to enjoy the simple pleasures in life, rather than the "extravagant" ones.

Although Brianna is on a vacation away from the city, she still aids the Verrengia family with the typical household chores and takes turns cooking dinner.

While the Fresh Air Fund summer trips typically last for seven to 10 days, Verrengia said they have extended visits in the past because of the "really good relationship" that has developed between Brianna and the family. And Verrengia's family is not the only one to extend visits; she said she has friends who have even hosted the children for holidays.

Though the program only takes place for a short period of time during the summer months, the relationship formed is one that will last a lifetime. Verrengia said the family stays in contact with Brianna throughout the year, mostly via the telephone. She said she encourages Brianna to "try to use her writing skills, but she prefers to call."

No one understands the strong relationships formed through the Fresh Air Fund program better than Byam. Not only has Byam been engulfed in the Fresh Air Fund system since the age of 8, but her family has served as hosts for the past eight years as well.

When Byam was just a young girl, her mother served as the state representative for the Fresh Air Fund. During this time, Byam said their family had kids in and out "all summer long."

As an adult, after she got married but before she had children, Byam decided to get involved with the fund, interviewing families interested in hosting and escorting children on the trips to and from New York City. (In order to host a child, families or individuals must complete an application process and adhere to at-home interviews.)

Once her daughter, now 16-year-old Brianna, turned 7, Byam decided it was her family's turn to host. It was at that time that they first met Harlem native, Tajonay. Tajonay is now 15 years



Area families gathered in Vernon Tuesday to welcome 25 children from New York City. The families – four of which were from Hebron – were participants in the Fresh Air Fund, a not-for-profit organization that provides summer vacations to New York City youth.

old and has grown up with both Byam's daughter Brianna and her 12-year-old son Brendan.

Byam has taken the one week summer vacation above and beyond anything that could be classified as "typical." Aside from the annual summer visit, Tajonay has come to visit for numerous holidays and celebrations including coming for Easter two years ago, Mother's Day last year, and most recently visiting in May to celebrate Brianna's "sweet 16." Tajonay, along with her mother and three siblings, also spent a Thanksgiving at the Byam household.

However, these are not one way trips according to Byam, as she was invited to visit Tajonay last year and see her home, church, school and other elements of her everyday life.

"I'm with Tajonay and her mother, her biological mother," said Byam, "and she introduces me as her summer mom. I feel like a co-parent."

Byam went on to explain that Tajonay's mother is a single mother of four and often calls her for advice. Tajonay also contacts Brianna

and Brendan multiple times each week, she said.

She went on to describe the special bond shared by all members of the two families. Byam said each year Tajonay's mother sends her a card on "sisters' day," Tajonay's younger brother also visits and has camp-outs with Brendan, and all of the children "love like brothers and sisters, fight like brothers and sisters."

Byam's story of her experience is one of Fresh Air Fund at its finest. In Byam's story, as well as Verrengia's story, the families are more than just hosts and the New York City youth are more than just Fresh Air children; they are all family, plain and simple.

"I got into this thinking I was going to help a child that doesn't have the means to help themselves," said Byam, "but what it has done for my children and my family and my town is far greater than I had ever thought possible. My kids have learned to appreciate the life that they have."

## Portland Selectmen Talk About Culvert Repair

by Joshua Anusewicz

An aging culvert at St. Mary's Cemetery on Marlborough Street (Route 66) spurred a lengthy discussion at Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting.

The culvert in question is for a stream that carries storm water from High Street, across Route 66, and through the cemetery to the Connecticut River. Over 10 years ago, according to First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, the town approved the easement that would allow the water to run through the cemetery and the culvert was constructed.

In the past few years, Bransfield said, the culvert has eroded from consistent "scouring" from debris. Bransfield said that in cases such as this, it is "common practice" to help with the maintenance of the property.

Director of Public Works Rick Kelsey said at Wednesday's meeting that despite an original estimate for the project of \$25,000, the town received only one bid – Faraci Concrete, LLC for \$47,000.

"I was surprised there were not more bids," said Kelsey, who added that the bid was left open for one month. Kelsey said that he believes the culvert is "not in a state where it might collapse," but did say that the summer provides a window of opportunity where the stream is at a lower level.

Richard Faraci of Faraci Concrete was on

hand to explain that the higher bid was tied mostly to labor costs that were not taken into account when the original engineering estimate was submitted. Faraci gave the example that a "strength test" would have to be performed on the deck above the culvert, which would force construction to be delayed almost a month. He said the project would have to be done in smaller sections and that more engineering would most likely have to be done.

When asked about possible alternatives to the original plan, Faraci recommended a corrugated steel pipe that would be five feet in diameter and would be roughly at the price that the town had estimated. Kelsey questioned, however, whether or not the steel pipe could handle the same amount of water flow as the culvert.

Terri Larson, a representative of St. Mary's Cemetery, urged the board to move "expeditiously" to make the repairs, as the culvert has been deteriorating more rapidly. Board member Mark Finkelstein assured Larson, saying that "the town made a commitment...and we will follow through."

For now, the town plans to arrange a meeting between Bransfield, Kelsey, Faraci, and the town's engineer to discuss what course of action to take. Bransfield said that if a lower cost is negotiated or the plans are changed, the Town

Charter allows the board to proceed and not have to re-bid the project.

Bransfield said an update would be presented at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

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The board also took action on several items at Wednesday's meeting, including an Interlocal agreement with Middletown to provide emergency assistance and housing for prisoners.

Portland has had an agreement with Middletown, where Middletown provides police, fire and EMT assistance to Portland, for "a number of years," Susan Bransfield said. The agreement also allows Portland to house prisoners overnight at the Middletown Police Department for \$50 per day.

The board approved 4-1, with Carl Chudzik opposing, a five-year plan that would increase the rate of the agreement 3 percent each year. The "emergency dispatch" line item on the 2011-12 approved budget is \$96,255.

Chudzik questioned the increase, saying it seemed "excessive." He suggested the board shorten the length of the plan, or have Bransfield renegotiate the contract. But Bransfield disagreed, saying that if it were renegotiated, the rate "may come back higher."

"This is not a commodity, this is a service," Bransfield said of the importance of the con-

tract.

Finkelstein added that the cost of the contract, even with a 3 percent increase each year, is considerably lower than the town having their own dispatch office.

The board also approved a contract for building a new roof on the Portland Public Library. The contract is for \$242,800, and Rick Kelsey hopes to begin the renovation in August, adding that roofs "are usually summer projects."

The contract is much lower than the \$300,000 that was estimated this spring. The money for the project comes as part of a bonding agreement that includes over \$600,000 in additional funding for new police and highway department vehicles, which was approved at a town meeting in May.

The board scheduled a special town meeting to approve a plan to raze a vacant one-story building at 170 Marlborough St. The plan is for the building to be rebuilt as a two-story commercial building, and the demolition of the existing building would cost the town roughly \$20,000, Bransfield said.

The special town meeting to approve the plan will be held Wednesday, July 20, at 7:15 p.m., at Portland Library. A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen will follow immediately afterward.

# Portland Resident Publishes Children's Book on Quarries

by Joshua Anusewicz

Kearen Enright has lived in Portland for 17 years, but she admits that up until a few years ago, she knew very little about the landmarks that put the town on the map.

"I'm not sure I had even been to the quarries," she laughed. "And when I did see them, they were so breathtaking."

Nowadays, she might know as much about the brownstone quarries as anyone in Portland. For the past year and a half, Enright has been writing a children's book about the history of the quarries, a project she called a "labor of love."

It was the Brownstone Quorum, a non-profit organization that helps preserve the quarries, that approached Enright with the idea for the book. About two years ago, Enright, an artist/illustrator/wildlife rehabilitator/crafter, was at a craft fair where some of her illustrations and short writings were on display. Brownstone Quorum member Alice Schumacher looked at Enright's work and asked her if she would be interested in writing a book about the quarries.

Despite having limited knowledge of the quarries, and having never written a book before, Enright said she would.

Schumacher said the idea for the book came from interviews that she and fellow member Gert Scully did with residents of the town. The two women asked residents who had memories of the quarry to share personal stories about the quarry. Seeing the effect that the quarry had on older residents inspired the Quorum to educate a new generation and perhaps create some whole new memories.

"If we inform the children of the town about the quarries, they will want to visit and learn more," said Schumacher, who said that the Quorum has also looked into concerts and other events at the quarry and Riverfront Park to draw people in.

Enright spent the past year and a half researching documents, books, and town records to create *Quarry Story: A History of the Brownstone Quarries of Portland, CT*, a 30-page children's book that she wrote and illustrated.

The book tells the story of a 9-year-old Portland girl named Olivia, which Enright based on a friend's daughter, who goes on a walk with her "300-year-old" grandfather at the quarries, and her grandfather tells her the story about the history of the quarries.

Enright said that one of the biggest challenges was making the book appealing to children, but still historically accurate.

"It was a little daunting, writing a fictional story based on facts" she admitted. "I knew I had to make it entertaining, but still accurate."

Although her four children are older than the book's recommended age (9-12 years), she still found inspiration from them. She recalled that, as each child passed through third grade, they learned about the history of Portland and spent time researching it for projects. She hopes that her book could provide students with "another valuable resource" to use when they reach those lessons.

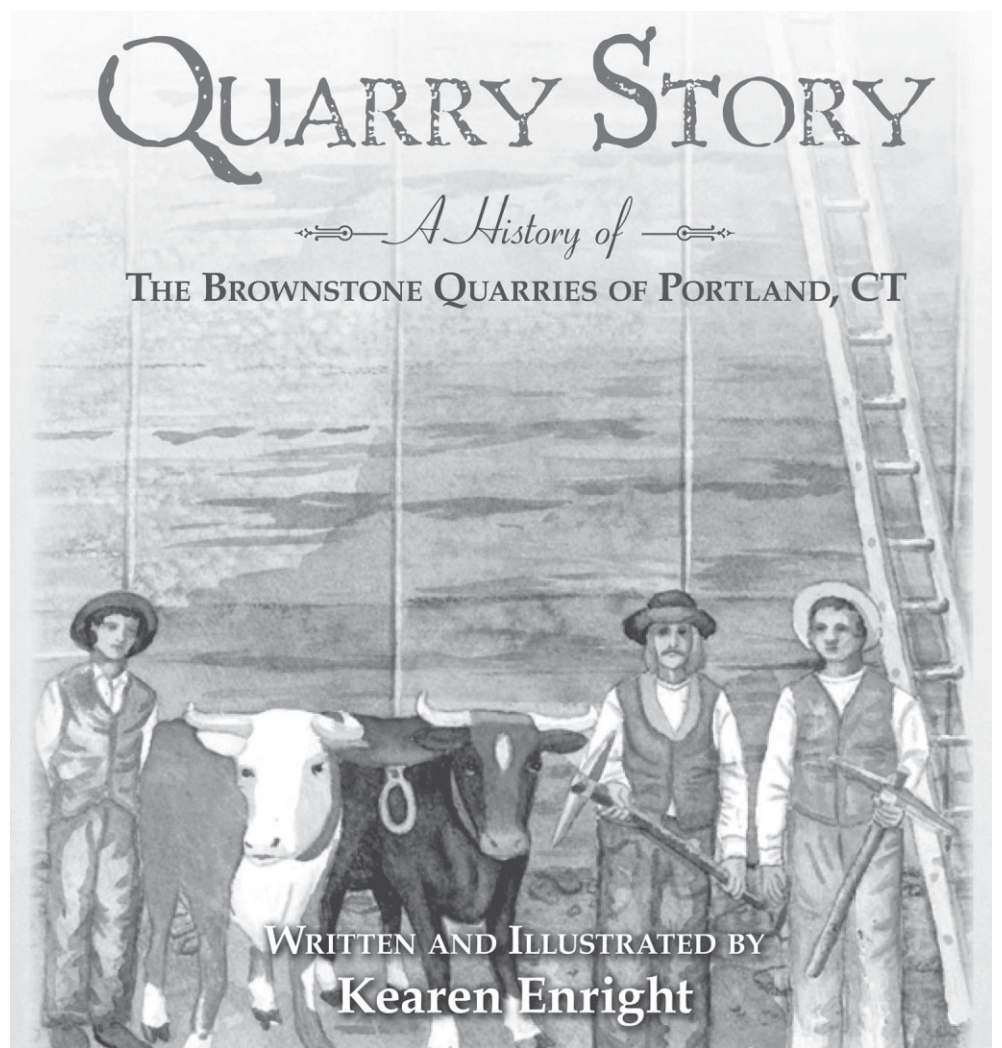
"Hopefully it will make the history [of Portland] more appealing," she said.

And she is wasting no time trying to reach out to children. Enright will be at the Portland Public Library on Wednesday, July 13, at noon, to read her new book to any interested in coming. Enright said there will also be a craft session where the children will be able to turn a piece of brownstone into a pet rock.

Schumacher said that Enright has done "an amazing job" creating the book and that she has already bought 15 copies for family and neighbors.

"I cry every time I read it," said Schumacher, who is originally from Brooklyn, where almost every brownstone building was built with Portland brownstone.

*Quarry Story: A History of the Brownstone Quarries of Portland, CT* will be available at the session, which is free. Copies are also on sale at the Portland Historical Society, Brownstone Discovery Park, Broad Street Books in Middletown and on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). A large percentage of the profit from the book will go to the Brownstone Quorum.



Resident Kearen Enright recently published a 30-page children's book dealing with the town's famous brownstone quarries.

## Marlborough Fire Strikes Parker Road Home

by Mike Thompson

Nobody was injured in a fire that broke out early Thursday morning at a Parker Road home, Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said.

At around 5:15 a.m. Thursday, a call came in reporting a blaze at 23 Parker Rd., a one-story, single-family house, Asklar said.

No one was home at the time of the blaze, Asklar said, and no injuries were reported.

Mutual aid firefighters responded from Hebron, Colchester, East Hampton and Glastonbury, Asklar said. He said firefighters were at the scene for about two hours, though the "initial knockdown" was done within 30

minutes.

Asklar said it appears the fire started in the basement of the home. He said there was structural and fire damage in the basement, and heavy smoke damage upstairs.

The fire left the home "not habitable," Asklar said. There was one person living at the residence; he is currently staying with his son, Asklar said.

As of press time Thursday, the cause of the fire was still under investigation, though Asklar said it did not appear to be suspicious.

## Drinking Driver Gets Into Fight with Cop in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

A recent routine traffic stop led to a physical altercation with a police officer and left a Marlborough man in handcuffs, East Hampton Police said.

Maurice R. Girardin, 38, of 101 South Main St., Marlborough, was arrested Saturday, June 25, and charged with assault on a police officer, interfering/resisting arrest, drinking while driving, driving under the influence, traveling unreasonably fast and risk of injury to a minor. Both the assault on a police officer and risk of injury to a minor charges are Class C felonies.

According to Sgt. Garritt Kelly, shortly after 10:30 p.m., Officer John Wilson stopped Girardin on Lakeview Street, for driving er-

ratically. Kelly said that as Wilson spoke with Girardin, the conversation became heated and Girardin threw a plastic cup of alcohol that was sitting in his console at Wilson.

Wilson then asked Girardin to step out of his vehicle, where a "physical struggle" ensued. Kelly said Wilson sustained scrapes to his arms and leg, but was able to subdue and arrest Girardin.

Kelly said that while this was taking place, Girardin's 15-year-old son was in the car.

Girardin was held on \$5,000 bond, which he posted, and is scheduled to appear at Middlesex Superior Court on Wednesday, Aug. 3, at 10 a.m. to enter his plea.

## Hebron Police News

6/30: Ann P. Doherty, 49, of 199 Anderson Rd., Tolland, was charged with DUI and improper use of high beams, State Police said.

## Colchester Police News

6/23: Christopher Lee, 29, of 139 Crestview Dr., was charged with third-degree assault, third-degree strangulation, risk of injury to a minor and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

6/23: Elizabeth Lee, 27, of 236 Dr. Foote Dr., was charged with disorderly conduct and risk of injury to a minor, State Police said.

6/29: John Mulcahy, 50, of 44 Laurel Ln., Norwich, was charged with second-degree burglary, second-degree criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, criminal attempt, second-degree assault, third-degree assault, threatening and second-degree strangulation, State Police said.

6/30: Amber Cromeeenes, 27, of 25 Victoria Dr., was charged with fourth-degree larceny,

State Police said.

7/2: Raymond L. Gabree Jr., 19, of 860 Middletown Ave., was charged with possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and no front plate, State Police said.

7/3: Paul Deckelman, 29, of 28 Main St., Apt. 3, East Hampton, was charged with fourth-degree larceny, State Police said.

7/5: Steven M. Conary, 29, of 82 Jerome Rd., Uncasville, was charged with public indecency and breach of peace, State Police said. According to police, the arrest stemmed from an incident that occurred May 17 in the parking lot of Stop & Shop, 99 Linwood Ave. Police would not offer further details about the incident.

## Marlborough Police News

6/29: Thomas Filloramo, 62, of 202 South Main St., was stopped on the Exit 13 off-ramp on Route 2, State Police said. Olmeda Perez, 20, of 70 Abbey Rd., East Hampton, was also stopped, behind Filloramo, police said. According to police, Perez moved forward, striking Filloramo in the rear. Filloramo reported having some back pain, but declined on-scene medical attention. Perez was found at fault for following too close, police said.

7/3: An unknown brand LCD flatscreen was reported missing from Marlborough Health Care, State Police said. Anyone with more in-

formation is asked to call Trooper McElroy at 860-537-7500.

7/4: Shortly after 7:30 p.m., Christina Vezzetti, 19, of 607 East St., Hebron, was traveling on Exit 13, on the ramp to Route 2, State Police said. She attempted to merge onto the highway and made an improper turn, striking an illumination pole, police said. Vezzetti complained of minor back pain and was taken by ambulance to Marlborough Clinic. No other injuries were reported. Vezzetti was issued a written warning for making an improper turn, police said.

## East Hampton Police News

6/27: Joseph F. Parlapiano, 29, of 31 Fairfield Dr., Windsor Locks, was arrested for second-degree larceny, East Hampton Police said.

6/28: Elizabeth Dorothy Stevens, 38, of 320C Jeffery Rd., Willimantic and Stanley Mitchell Jr., 37, of the same address, were arrested for first-degree failure to appear, police said.

6/28: Richard Connell, 60, of 9 West High St., was issued a summons for second-degree threatening, police said.

6/29: Samuel A. Shepley, 20, of 15 Triangle Dr., was arrested for third-degree burglary, sixth-degree larceny and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

6/30: Michael F. Bernard, 25, of 29 North Main St., was arrested for fifth-degree larceny, police said.

## Portland Police News

7/1: David Fazzino, 22, of 16 Meech Rd., Middletown, was charged with DUI and disobeying an officer's signal, Portland Police said.

7/1: Andreas Guliani, 20, of 10 Farm Ln., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

7/2: Michael Dewey, 18, of 79 Elm St., Colchester, was charged with possession of alcohol by a minor, police said.

7/3: Kyle Nosal, 21, of 191 Wiese Albert Dr., Higganum, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane, police said.



# Arrest Made in East Hampton Car Break-Ins

by Joshua Anusewicz

East Hampton Police have made an arrest in connection with an investigation into a string of car break-ins that have occurred over the past two months.

Samuel "Austin" Shepley, 20, of Moodus, was arrested Tuesday, June 28, for his involvement in an attempted theft that



Shepley

took place at the Air Line Trail parking lot on Smith Street. Sgt. Garritt Kelly said this Tuesday that the owner of the vehicle being broken into witnessed the crime and alerted the police. When officers arrived, Shepley tried to flee the scene and discard the property before he was apprehended by Officer Kevin Wilcox.

Shepley was charged with third-degree criminal mischief, sixth-degree larceny and third-degree burglary, a felony. He was initially held on \$25,000 bond and was arraigned at Middlesex Superior Court on June 29. He was released on a promise to appear and will enter his plea on Tuesday, July 26, at Middlesex Superior Court at 10 a.m.

The arrest is related to an investigation by East Hampton Police, in cooperation with Colchester Police, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Law Enforcement and State Police, into over 30 separate instances of similar thefts over the past two months, Kelly said.

Many of the break-ins and thefts have occurred in parking lots of state parks and the Air Line Trail properties. Kelly said the offenders seek out "unoccupied vehicles" that are parked in these areas, then "smash a car window and steal items from the cars." Kelly said that the offenders are usually looking for "easy targets," like pocketbooks and wallets that are left unattended while the owner of the vehicle is gone.

Police have encouraged those visiting state parks to not leave valuables within their unoccupied vehicles. They have also warned that, despite this arrest, the chance that Shepley or others will continue to commit the same crimes still exists. Kelly said that "in the wake of the recent crimes," police presence has been increased at local parks.

Kelly said that while there are several other suspects, Shepley was not a suspect in the string of break-ins. He did say, however, that Shepley is a suspect in a break-in that took place the day before at Devil's Hopyard State Park in East Haddam. That case is currently being investigated by the State Police.

According to the state's judicial website, this is Shepley's fourth arrest in the past seven months. In December, West Hartford Police arrested Shepley and charged him with possession of narcotics, a felony. In January, he was arrested by State Police Troop K in Colchester for disorderly conduct. In May, Shepley was arrested by East Haddam Police for third-degree criminal trespassing and sixth-degree attempt to commit larceny. The December and January arrests are awaiting disposition, while the May arrest is awaiting a plea.



Officers investigate a car that Moodus resident Samuel Shepley had allegedly attempted to break into in the Air Line Trail parking lot on Smith Street.

## Obituaries

### Marlborough

#### William D. Prentice

William D. Prentice, 83, of Marlborough, beloved husband of 60 years to Ruth (Scanlon) Prentice, died Thursday, June 30, at Hartford Hospital. Born Dec. 5, 1927, in Manchester, he was the son of the late James M. and Beda (Johnson) Prentice.

He proudly served his country in the Army Air Force during WWII. He was a resident of Marlborough for 52 years and was a communicant of St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough. William had retired from John Oldham Studios where he had worked as a painter.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his three daughters, Karen Eberle and her husband George of South Windsor, Bonnie Prentice of Norwood, MA, and Diane Prentice of Plainville; a sister, Marjorie Meader of Florida; four grandchildren, Nicole and Jason Eberle and Daniel and Katherine DeMur.

He was predeceased by his brother, James M. Prentice.

A funeral liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, July 5, in St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough. Burial followed in Marlboro Cemetery in Marlborough. Friends called at St. John Fisher Church before the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough, CT 05447.

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

### East Hampton

#### Gladys Smith Memorial Service

A memorial service for the late Gladys L. Smith will be held Saturday, July 16, 2011 at Christ Episcopal Church, 66 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, with Rev. Page Rogers officiating.

A reception for family and friends will be in the church Parish Hall following the service.

Smith, a longtime East Hampton resident, died in April at the age of 101. For over seven decades, she was involved in most all aspects of civic, political, school and social leadership in East Hampton.

### Hebron

#### Gaye Keeney

Gaye (Paul) Keeney, 83, of Hebron, formerly of Glastonbury, wife of the late Herbert F. Keeney, died Sunday, June 26, at Hartford Hospital. Born Jan. 29, 1928, in Hartford, daughter of the late Michael and Frances (Easton) Paul she had lived in Glastonbury many years moving to Hebron 10 years ago.

Prior to her retirement, she was office manager for Christie Rigging and Trucking in Glastonbury for 30 years. She was a graduate East Hartford High School, a member of the Gilead Congregational Church, the Eastern Star and was a volunteer at the Bushnell. She enjoyed playing pool at the senior center and playing pinochle and other card games.

She is survived by her children and their spouses: Linda and Franklin Frucce of Hebron, David and Dawn Keeney of Glastonbury, Kimberly and Gordon Rice of Glastonbury; a sister, Michelle Backus of Stafford, nine grandchildren Meghan Frucce, Jonathan Frucce, Nicole Keeney, David T. Keeney, Mason Keeney, Brooke Keeney, Ashlyn Rice, Lindsey Rice, Nicholas Rice; and two great-grandchildren Oliver Frucce and Peyton Frucce.

Funeral service was held Thursday, June 30, in the Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St. (Route 85), Hebron. Burial followed in St. James Cemetery, Glastonbury. At Gaye's request, attendees wore bright colors. Friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Wednesday, June 29.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St., Hebron, CT 06248.

To share a memory, visit [mulryanfh.com](http://mulryanfh.com).



### Portland

#### Richard I. Blauvelt

Richard I. Blauvelt, 83, of South Road, Portland, died Friday, July 1, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital. He was the husband of Julia Hawley Blauvelt. Born in Queens Village, NY, Jan. 30, 1928, a son of the late Joseph C. and Agnes Moore Blauvelt, he was a Portland resident for over 55 years.

He had been an insurance claims adjuster then worked as a private investigator for 20 years before joining and later owning Flocon, Inc. (formerly of Portland) until his retirement. He was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and had served as a member of the Vestry. Richard is a graduate of Bassick High School in Bridgeport and a U.S. Army veteran, having served with honor in the 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment.

Besides his wife Julia, he is survived by his sons, Richard H. Blauvelt and his son Christopher of Portland, and Peter T. Blauvelt, his wife Pamela and children Jillian and Emma of Somers. He was predeceased by his daughter, Jill Anne Blauvelt, his sister, Agnes, and brother, Joseph.

His family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home 231 Main St., Portland, Tuesday, July 5. Funeral services were held Wednesday, July 6, at Trinity Episcopal Church 345 Main St., Portland. The Rev. Steven Ling, priest-in-charge, officiated. Interment will follow in the Swedish Cemetery.

For directions, or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit [portlandmemorial.net](http://portlandmemorial.net).