

RIVEREAST

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The new school year at RHAM High School will start next Monday, Aug. 29. This past Tuesday, however, incoming freshman filed in for orientation. The newbies are shown here signing in.

The Dawn of a New RHAM Day

by Courtney Parent

During the winter months, children kneel by their bedside to pray for a snow day. With Hurricane Irene's anticipated arrival, now students may be praying that her strength result in a "hurricane day" on their first day of school.

While many adolescents are enjoying their last week of freedom and would not mind an additional delay, others have already made guest appearances at RHAM, as they gear up for the start of the 2011-12 school year next Monday, Aug. 29.

This past Tuesday morning, Aug. 23, the previously-empty hallways filled with students embracing their freshmen year and celebrating the beginning of their reign as seniors.

As those infamous bright yellow Twinkies rolled up, eager teens climbed down the bus steps and began their first walk toward adulthood—a walk from the curb to the RHAM High School doors. Upon entering, the incoming frosh were warmly welcomed by RHAM Peer Helpers and officially began their career as high school students.

Meanwhile, in a common area on the second floor of the high school, another group of students commemorated their years at RHAM thus far. Members of the Class of 2012, stood proudly, laughing and smiling, paint brushes in hand, as they put their John Hancocks on the wall.

Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski said that RHAM is not only welcoming the fresh new faces of incoming students, but also new staff members. Specifically, Siminski said there are eleven new staff members for the 2011-12 school year.

Siminski named multiple items that faculty and staff will be focusing on in the upcoming school year. First, Siminski pointed to the state's adoption of a national "common core curriculum."

By the year 2014, he said students will "get away from the CAPT and CMT" tests and there will be a new test in their place. Siminski said implementing the common core curriculum and preparing for the new test will require a lot of time this year.

Sticking to a similar focus, Siminski said, emphasis will be placed on tracking student progress in the upcoming year, to see what students' abilities are and where student skill sets fall short. Specifically, Siminski pointed to the middle school CMT curriculum which he said has multiple strands, each of which progress could be tracked from.

Additionally, Siminski said there is a new act on bullying, which will be implemented in the school this year. The new act on bullying is the result of a bill that was passed by legisla-

See Dawn Page 2

Engel Asks to Re-Open Investigation

by Joshua Anusewicz

With an investigation of East Hampton Police Sgt. Garritt Kelly already underway, Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel has submitted a request to Interim Town Manager John Weichsel for an external investigation into Kelly's actions at a council meeting last November.

In a letter sent to Weichsel last Wednesday, Aug. 17, Engel submitted the request, which includes signatures from Town Council Vice Chairman John Tuttle, council member Barbara Moore, and residents Pete Brown and Dave and Bunny Simko. The letter also requests an external investigation into the initial investigation by Police Chief Matthew Reimondo.

The request stems from an incident at the Nov. 23, 2010, Town Council meeting, where Engel alleges that Kelly did not respond to requests by Engel to escort a resident back to his seat after he exceeded the three-minute limit during public comment. The Town Council had requested police presence at the meeting "to help maintain order," Engel said.

According to Engel, resident Bill Marshall "refused to stop speaking after his allotted time" after Engel had asked for him to stop. Engel said she and then-Town Manager Robert

Drewry "repeatedly" asked Kelly to escort Marshall back to his seat. Kelly, Engel alleges, did not respond and, as a result, "mayhem escalated" as members of the council and audience asked Marshall to be seated.

The minutes from the meeting state that Marshall's comments exceeded the three-minute time limit, and that Engel then reiterated the time limit and asked Kelly to remove anyone that exceeded it.

Several days after the meeting, Engel, Tuttle, Moore and the Simkos formally submitted complaints against Kelly to Drewry, requesting an external investigation because of Reimondo's pending lawsuit at the time that included Engel and Tuttle. According to Engel's initial complaint, Kelly did not comply with the Freedom of Information Act, Sec. 1-232, which states that if a "meeting of a public agency is interrupted by any person or group of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting unfeasible and order cannot be restored by the removal of individuals who are willfully interrupting the meetings, the members of the agency...may order the meeting room cleared and continue in session."

Engel claims that Kelly also violated Rob-

erts Rules of Order, where the council appoints a "Sergeant-At-Arms" that has the authority to remove people from meeting at the request of the chair.

In Reimondo's investigation, which was completed in May, he states that "no formal written description of duties regarding [Kelly's] presence" at the meeting was discussed, and that he had spoken with Drewry and confirmed that "police presence would be for criminal violations of the Connecticut General Statutes only." He also states that the council never appointed a "Sergeant-At-Arms."

"I have found that at no time did any officer of this department violate any section of the rules and regulations," Reimondo concluded. For the investigation, Reimondo gathered information from the tape recording of the meeting, as well as statements from Kelly, Sgt. Timothy Dowty, who was present at the meeting, and Sgt. Michael Green, who was appointed "Sergeant-At-Arms" at previous council meetings.

On May 24, Engel submitted a letter to Weichsel, stating the results of the investigation were "not satisfactory" and asked that the Nov. 23 incident and the investigation by Reimondo be "reinvestigated by a third party."

In June, Weichsel did consult legal counsel, requesting an opinion from Atty. Lisa S. Lazarek from the law firm of Kainen, Escalera, and McHale of Hartford. After reviewing the complaints from Engel, Lazarek determined that considering the atmosphere in East Hampton at the time of the Nov. 23 meeting, Kelly's actions were "disrespectful at a minimum and possibly insubordinate...to blatantly ignore a reasonable request to restore order." She also states that initially having the incident investigated by a third party "would have been the safest bet."

However, Lazarek recommended not to discipline Kelly "for conduct that occurred many months ago," as it would be difficult to establish just cause. She also states that it would "cost the town money to defend with no guarantee of success while yet again ensuring unwanted media attention." She ultimately recommends that the town must "[wipe] the slate clean" to move forward from last year's controversy and that reinvestigating the events "would not appear to be consistent with that goal."

In Engel's most recent request, she states that See Investigation Page 2



Members of the Class of 2012 also came to RHAM on Tuesday, and happily autographed a wall in a second-floor common area.

Dawn cont. from Front Page

tion in July, which requires schools to submit a school climate plan addressing the issue of bullying by Jan. 1.

Constructionally, Siminski said RHAM is looking to implement both a math resource staff member and a reading resource staff member to work with students through the Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) program.

“We’ve got a plan in place to see how effective that is,” said Siminski.

Scientific-Based Research Intervention (SRBI) was created in response to traditional approaches which would simply send children to special education without identifying the problems. In July 2009, SRBI became a state mandate, requiring each school district in the state to have a “systematic approach for implementation of support.”

SRBI is a three-tier system that emphasizes successful instruction for all students. The system includes targeted interventions for students experiencing learning, social-emotional or behavioral difficulties.

Tier 1 represents the core curriculum, instruction, overall school climate and behavioral support for all students. Tier 2 includes short-term

interventions for students experiencing difficulties who have not responded adequately to the Tier 1 core curriculum and instruction. Tier 3 involves more intensive or individualized short-term interventions for students who fail to respond to Tier 2 interventions.

Additionally, Siminski pointed to budget concerns and the loss of federal jobs money, which he said represents approximately one percent of the budget. Siminski said they will begin looking at the one percent deficit this fall to properly prepare.

In terms of enrollment, Siminski said the high school will see an increase while middle school numbers will remain the same. The high school is anticipated to have approximately 1,150-1,200 students, which Siminski said is “above design capacity,” while the middle school will have an average count of approximately 600-630 students.

However, Siminski said for record purposes, official enrollment numbers aren’t available until Oct. 1. For now, Siminski described the enrollment numbers as “one of those wait and see things,” adding a comical remark that staff would “count noses on the first day.”

Investigation cont. from Front Page

too much time has passed because “Reimondo failed to perform his investigation in a timely manner.” She also states that the town’s desire “to ‘wipe the slate clean’ does not indicate a desire to ignore unprofessional, unethical and potentially dangerous behaviors of its police officers...nor condone a poorly investigated, seemingly very partial report from its chief.”

On Wednesday, Engel admitted that she agreed with “some of the findings [from Lazarek], but not the conclusions,” as she feels it wouldn’t set a good precedent to not investigate the incident further.

“[Lazarek] recommends that we just mend fences,” Engel said, “but there’s not a fence that I would mend that would overlook something like this.”

Engel said she hopes an investigation will show “Kelly’s behavior was inappropriate, because it was,” and that Reimondo’s handling of the investigation be put under scrutiny.

Moore said Wednesday that Kelly’s alleged

actions were “not what I’d expect from one of our top officers.” She described his demeanor as “condescending” and said that the request was not unreasonable.

“We didn’t ask [Kelly] to escort [Marshall] out of the meeting,” Moore said. “We just asked him to be seated.”

Moore said that she hopes for “some kind of reprimand” for Kelly that will go into his personnel file.

On Wednesday, Weichsel said that the town was “contemplating the matter, but no action has been taken as of yet.”

Last week, it was confirmed last week by Weichsel that Kelly is currently under investigation by a third party after inappropriate e-mails from Kelly surfaced recently. The e-mails appear to be sent while Kelly was at work, but that has yet to be confirmed.

Reimondo and Kelly could not be reached for comment.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

The lawns have been mowed. The floors have been mopped. The walls have been given a fresh coat of paint. Yes, area schools are ready for next week’s influx of students.

And here at the *Rivereast*, we’re ready too; this week is our annual back-to-school issue.

In this week’s edition, in addition to the normal news, parents will find school information galore: School lunch price details, school hours, open house dates, deadlines for filling out those little medical cards students need to submit, and much more. And, as always, each town will feature school bus route schedules. (Just a quick little disclaimer about those bus routes: we get them directly from the school systems in our towns; we don’t compile them ourselves. So parents who don’t see their child’s stop listed or have other concerns should call their respective school systems. We wouldn’t be able to offer a whole lot of help.)

Also, reporters Courtney Parent, Joshua Anusewicz and Bailey Seddon all have stories about the upcoming school year in each of their towns.

I’ll be the first to admit I’m not thrilled to see the summer draw to a close; I very much enjoy the warm weather. But, generally speaking, teachers and administrators love this time of year, and it’s easy to understand why. In addition to it being a return to what many of them went to college for – educating students – there’s just something about the start of a new school year. It’s full of such promise, and excitement.

So best wishes to the teachers, and students, as they embark on new beginnings. Here’s to a great new year.

Elvis Presley was in the news last week, as it was the anniversary of his death. This week, the King made his way back into news stories — this time for a different reason, though. Jerry Lieber, who co-wrote such Elvis classics as “Hound Dog,” “Jailhouse Rock,” “Trouble” and “King Creole,” passed away at the age of 78.

If you’re an Elvis fan, you may have heard the allegation over the years, as have I, that “Hound Dog” was one of those songs Elvis “stole” from black people and made it into a hit for himself. (This was a charge I never gave much thought to. I mean, did Elvis borrow some from the so-called “black sound” of the mid-1950s? Sure. But the sad truth is 1950s America was unfortunately still a very segregated place, and Elvis performing “black music” probably exposed the sound to many people that otherwise might not have heard it.) But, as my friend Tom, who’s more of a music historian than I am, informed me this week, that allegation isn’t really accurate.

Lieber was a 20-something white Jewish guy when he and Mike Stoller, another 20-something white Jewish guy, wrote “Hound Dog.” The two of them then sold the song to bandleader Johnny Otis – who was also white. Otis did supply the song to the black artist Big Mama Thornton, who made it a number one hit on the rhythm and blues chart.

Elvis then learned of the song – but not through Big Mama Thornton’s version, but rather a slightly-altered rendition performed by the Vegas lounge act Freddie Bell and the Bellboys, a group of Italian-Americans from Philadelphia.

Yes, the true story of how “Hound Dog” came to be is a part of, as Tom put it, “the beautiful, twisting paths of race and culture as they are lived in the United States.”

And now, one piece of that story is gone. Along with his songwriting partner Stoller, Lieber penned a number of hits. In addition to the aforementioned Elvis hits, they co-wrote “Stand by Me” and “On Broadway” for The Drifters, “You’re So Square, Baby, I Don’t Care” for Buddy Holly, “Charlie Brown,” “Poison Ivy” and “Yakety Yak” for The Coasters, “Is That All There Is?” for Peggy Sue, and a bunch more. Most songwriters would be thrilled to author or co-author just one song that was a decades-enduring classic. Lieber had many more than one.

Among fans of classic music, he’ll be missed.

While it might not rank up there with “Where were you when Kennedy was shot?” or “Where were you when 9-11 happened?”, I’m sure everybody had a story to tell Tuesday about what they were doing when the earthquake struck.

As everyone knows by now, a 5.8-magnitude quake struck Mineral, VA, a town about 35 miles northwest of Richmond, shortly before 2 p.m. The rumblings of the quake soon spread north, and were even felt in Canada.

At around 2 p.m. Tuesday, I was sitting at my desk at the *Rivereast* offices on Nutmeg Lane in Glastonbury when I noticed the shaking. I actually just assumed it was related to the construction work they’ve been doing nearby. They’re going to be building a new magnet school, and have been doing demolition and other related work for months, which has occasionally caused the ground beneath me to shake.

So at first, I thought that’s what this was – that the construction crew was doing some especially big moving and shaking now. But before long, one of the staff members here went online and discovered that, sure enough, this was an earthquake.

I was shocked; earthquakes generally don’t happen here, and when they have, they’ve usually been so minor I haven’t even felt anything. This was a different story; I definitely felt this one. I just thought it was related to the new school.

As the day went on, I learned that, while government buildings around the state were evacuated, there was no real damage and thankfully no injuries. For most of us, it just created a fun little story to tell others – where were you when the earth started shaking below you? After all, it’s an experience most of us – in Connecticut, anyway – don’t get to encounter all that often.

See you next week.

Bright Floors Paving the Path for Bright Futures in Andover

by Courtney Parent

The hallways of Andover Elementary School may not be hearing the pitter-patter of footsteps just yet, but they are shining like the sun.

With the 2011-12 school year officially commencing this Monday, Aug. 29, Superintendent of Schools Andrew Maneggia said faculty and staff have been hard at work preparing for students arrival.

All this week, Maneggia said the school has been open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., allowing teachers to come in at their convenience to prepare their classrooms. Custodians have also been busy bees, cleaning and making minor improvements to the schools interior appearance.

"The school is clean and ready to go," said Maneggia.

According to Maneggia, the 7 a.m.-8 p.m. flexibility was made possible by starting a second custodial shift the week prior to the start of school, rather than strictly having a daytime shift. Maneggia said this was implemented a few years ago to accommodate teachers' schedules and has been a great benefit.

"Most of the teachers have been in and out," said Maneggia. "They can't get ready in one day."

In addition to providing teachers ample opportunity for classroom preparation, Maneggia commended the custodial staff for doing a "good job...literally cleaning from ceiling to floor."

Though Maneggia said the school is sticking to its programs and policies utilized in past years, the school has seen some physical changes over the summer months in anticipation of the 2011-12 school year. Specifically, he said, the driveways have been sealed, the

gutters have been fixed after the winter storm damage, the gymnasium has been painted, carpets have been cleaned and the kick plates on the door have been refurbished.

"So the area looks like brand new," said Maneggia.

Turning to the heart and soul of the school system, Maneggia complimented the teachers for their preparation efforts.

"The teachers have done a great job and that's what it's all about, right," said Maneggia.

One of those aforementioned mind-molders is special education teacher Debby Rodriguez. Rodriguez described this week as the "last big breath" before the school year begins.

"It's always exciting to see [the students] come back," said Rodriguez. "They get excited too. They like the routine and want to see their friends."

"Plus, moms like to see them go back too," Rodriguez added with a laugh.

In addition to seeing "how tall [the students] have gotten" and other physical changes, Rodriguez said she enjoys seeing them not only return but move forward within the school. Rodriguez explained that at Andover Elementary, pre-kindergarten through second grade classrooms are downstairs, while third grade through sixth are upstairs. While they may still be in the same school, Rodriguez said it is a "big deal" when students get to "go to the upstairs wing."

In a similar tone, fellow teacher Courtney Strelkel expressed excitement about the upcoming school year as well. "I'm ready," she said Tuesday while working away in her third-grade classroom. Strelkel added that she was "very excited about[her] small class size." Strelkel ex-



This classroom at Andover Elementary School is ready to be filled with students. The new school year starts next Monday, Aug. 29.

plained that she is down three students from last year and down nine students from her "old district" in Massachusetts, where she worked prior to coming to Andover.

This coming Monday, Aug. 29, will mark the first day of school for Andover Elementary stu-

dents. Teachers started their school year yesterday, Thursday, Aug. 25 with a general orientation meeting and were scheduled to have a staff development day today. Next week, the elementary school will extend its hours until 11 p.m.

New School Year is Almost Here in Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

Those who have looked at the calendar recently might have done a double take. But don't think your eyes are deceiving you – it really is time to go back to school.

Next Wednesday, Aug. 31, Portland schools will open their doors to students from kindergarten to 12th grade to begin the 2011-12 school year.

"We're looking forward to the first day of school," said Board of Education Chairman Chris Phelps. After a 2010-11 year that saw vast improvements in the district, Phelps said the main goal will be to "continue maintaining the strength" in all of the schools.

One of the biggest "strengths" over the past year was the district-wide Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) scores. The district showed improvement at almost every level on both tests, including the district's first-ever 100 percent proficiency, in sixth-grade math on the CMTs. Phelps said the key to continued improvement will be maintaining a "strong curriculum."

Eileen Katz, the principal at the Gildersleeve School, agrees a strong curriculum will continue to improve test scores. She said the strategy is not the dreaded "teaching to the test," but rather "embedding" the information into the curriculum.

At Gildersleeve, Katz said a new addition to the school will be "electronic student portfolios," which will be available to all teachers to track a student's progress. Katz said that the school will implement a strategic reading that will be consistent throughout the school and will track the reading development of every student.

There will also be a fascinating new wrinkle – the addition of cameras in the classroom that will allow teachers to record students' presentations, reading habits, and even snap pictures

of student work to add into their portfolios. This will give teachers and administrators – and eventually parents, Katz said – the ability to chart the students' progress.

Katz said there will be also be a new math program integrated from kindergarten through sixth grade, which will include a new textbook and accompanying computer program that will introduce students to technology in math.

"It's just another tool for further learning," Katz said. Phelps said there would not be a lot of new technology in Portland schools, but said that that recent upgrades – like SMART Boards – will continue to be worked into the curriculum.

As for the high school, Principal Andrea Lavery announced that the school received funds from the Wagner Scholarship Fund, which was used to purchase 56 new computers for Project Lead the Way, an engineering program at the school. Lavery said the scholarship was a private donation; the scholarship lasted for 30 years and, per the terms of the donation, after the 30 years were up, the remaining funds were split evenly between the high school and Portland Public Library.

Lavery said that computers at the high school that were still in good shape were sent to Brownstone Intermediate School.

There will also be two new important initiatives in the high school this year, Lavery said. The first will be student workshops on cyberbullying, as the state has begun to crack down on bullying in the schools. Lavery said there will be a workshop for the entire high school in October with Portland Police.

A district-wide initiative will be the improvement of reading and writing skills. Lavery said that more classes will involve writing; she quipped that students shouldn't be surprised if they have to write a paper in physical education.



The classrooms at Brownstone Intermediate School are fully dressed, but are empty – for now. The new school year starts next Wednesday, Aug. 31.

While other schools in the area are seeing a large turnover of teachers, Portland will be maintaining a good amount of their staff. Phelps said this is not uncommon, as most teachers in the district spend a good amount of their career there.

"Not only is it a good place to learn, but it's a good place to teach," Phelps said. He also marveled at the improvement of the schools, "even giving the challenging financial times."

Despite seeing no increase in the education budget for this year, the district was able to maintain roughly its same academic structure from the past year.

But no matter the changes or lack thereof, the doors will open next week for all 13 grades. Students will be a welcome sight in the empty hallways, as yet another school year begins.

"I think we're all looking forward to having the kids back in the building," Lavery said.

Horror-Palooza Headed for Hebron

by Courtney Parent

As the sun sets and New England Horror Writers peacefully sleep, the ghosts, ghouls and zombies in their narratives continue to creep.

This year, the Hebron Harvest Fair will see a new theme at one of its booths: scare and shock, compliments of the New England Horror Writers Association (NEHW). The association will make its first-ever fair appearance at the annual event, which will run from Sept. 8-11 at the Lions Fairgrounds on Route 85.

NEHW was founded in 2001 and provides peer support and networking for horror and dark fantasy authors in the New England area. Depending on the writer, mediums vary from novels to short stories to screenplays to comic books. Along with providing support and networking opportunities, NEHW hosts and attends a variety of events from book signings to group panel discussions at conventions. The association currently has about 250 members.

Director of Publicity Jason Harris said the association has been hard at work trying to set up events where NEHW writers have the opportunity to meet the public, sign books and sell books. And that is exactly what they plan to do at the Hebron Harvest Fair.

"We're really looking forward to the Hebron Harvest Fair," Harris said.

According to NEHW secretary Stacey Longo, the NEHW booth will be decorated accordingly with a table cloth with bloody hand prints, a skull and crossbones floor mat, skeletons and more. However, Harris quipped, members won't be dressed in costume attire as they "don't want to scare away people from the booth."

Aside from the association's horror writers, Longo said guests will have a special treat to look forward to: the appearance of paranormal investigator Nathan Schoonover on Saturday, Sept. 10, and Sunday, Sept. 11. According to Longo, Schoonover is "one half of the *Ghostman and Demon Hunter* radio show" and was a host on A&E's *Extreme Paranormal*.

In terms of writing, the association's collection includes everything from anthologies to comic books to full novels. Longo exemplified NEHW's writing variety by pointing to sibling duo and RHAM High School Class of 1991 graduates, T.J. and Jason May, who write and illustrate horror comic books; and the

association's co-chair Tracy Carbone, who is a young adult writer.

In addition to being a member and secretary of NEHW, Longo is also a writer adding to the variety of styles. Specifically, Longo has written short stories and zombie stories, which she said she finds particularly comical as she used to be a humor columnist.

According to Longo, the majority of the association's writing centers on zombies and ghost stories. She said serial killers aren't big as they are too lifelike and there are "already enough writers who write true crime." Longo added that vampires are not big right now either; however, she did say they have "cycled twice in my lifetime."

Other big sellers in the horror writer world are stories that revolve around the classic marital spat. Despite her warm affection for her husband (Harris), Longo said that it is her stories about the "disgruntled housewife that puts her husband's dog through the wood chipper" that receive the best reviews.

Though he never drafted any stories on wedded bliss as his wife did, Harris said he has written stories about serial killers in the past. However, he said he will "have to wait for the cycle to come back around" before writing any more stories on that topic.

While Harris isn't currently writing any stories which would make the hair on the back of readers' necks stand up, he does share a love for horror with his wife. That love, is one which they have instilled in their two pet cats, naming them Pugsley and Wednesday after the characters from *The Addams Family*.

Harris, who took over as director of publicity approximately eight months ago, said the association is currently looking to "do more" and get authors' names and books known. "In this last year, it's become better," he said. Longo immediately let out a chuckle and explained that "he's expanded his role and really tried to get our presence known" – and that Harris' comment wasn't meant to be a dig at the previous director of publicity.

One recent effort to get the association's presence known was on Aug. 13 when members appeared at the Zombie Walk for Hunger in Enfield. (The walk was to raise money for the Enfield Food Bank.) At the walk, NEHW sold



New England Horror Association writer Kristi Petersen Schoonover, right, tries to stay in character, while being "attacked" by zombie, Mary Hale at the Zombie Walk for Hunger in Enfield earlier this month.

their writers' products, while enjoying delights for the eyes and ears.

Many participants appeared in full head-to-toe zombie costumes equipped with fake blood and torn clothing, while strutting the zombie walk. According to Harris, one individual even came dressed as Beetlejuice.

"Some of the costumes were absolutely amazing," Harris said.

Many of the "zombies" provided entertainment, as they gathered for a musical movement, performing the dance to Michael Jackson's *Thriller*.

Looking ahead, Longo said members have multiple events to look forward to during the next couple months. Aside from their appearance at the Hebron Harvest Fair next month,

they will also be attending the Rock & Shock convention at the DCU Center and The Palladium in Worcester, MA, from Oct. 14-16 and AnthoCon at the Best Western Wynwood Hotel in Portsmouth, NH, from Nov. 11-13.

This year's fourth annual Rock & Shock convention will feature a film festival showcasing the "best Independent horror films from around the world," according to the website, rockandshock.com. Meanwhile, the first-ever AnthoCon, hosted by Shroud Publishing, is a "Speculative Literature Convention" that will include writing workshops, panel discussions and author signings.

Longo added that NEHW is also looking forward to the release of its anthology, *Epitaphs*, which is scheduled for Nov. 11.

Preparing Hebron Students to Become '21st-Century Citizens'

by Courtney Parent

As the nighttime air cools and the hooded sweatshirts re-emerge, it can only mean one thing: the last weekend of summer vacation is upon us.

With the first day of school scheduled for this Monday, Aug. 29, Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said technology is on the horizon for students at Gilead Hill School.

Cruz said technology is important for all ages, and she plans to infuse a "tremendous amount" of it in both Gilead Hill School and Hebron Elementary this year to transform students into "21st-century citizens."

"My goal has been that every child would have access to cutting-edge technology," Cruz said.

Specifically, Cruz is currently making efforts to purchase SMART Boards for the third grade classroom. There have been a savings of approximately \$17,000 since Cruz has been acting as Special Education Director since the end of June. At an Aug. 11 Board of Education meeting, Cruz proposed using those savings to purchase new SMART Boards, but the issue was tabled until the board's Sept. 15 meeting.

In terms of additional new technology, Cruz pointed to PowerSchool, a new student database that the school system will begin to implement this year. The database will be phased in over the next two to three years; this year, the focus will be on training teachers on how to use the grade book and attendance features and eventually rolling all student data into the system.

One aspect of the system, which will be implemented at a later date, is the parent portal, which Cruz said allows parents to go online and track their child's progress and check grades.

"It will make our work much more transparent," said Cruz, "and we're thrilled about that."

Cruz added that the database will provide a

"seamless transition" when students move on to RHAM, as RHAM also uses the system.

In addition to technology, Cruz said there are three other main areas that will be focused on at Gilead Hill School and at Hebron Elementary this year including staff collaboration, placing an emphasis on common core curriculum and implementing a school climate plan on bullying.

First, Cruz stressed the importance of staff collaboration. She said the district has made "enormous progress in training of staff, maintaining and hiring highly-qualified staff." Now, she said the key is to focus on teamwork of those qualified staff members and create opportunities for open and honest communication.

According to Cruz, emphasis on the "common core" is a direct result of a deadline given by the state government to execute a "curriculum that aligns with common core standards."

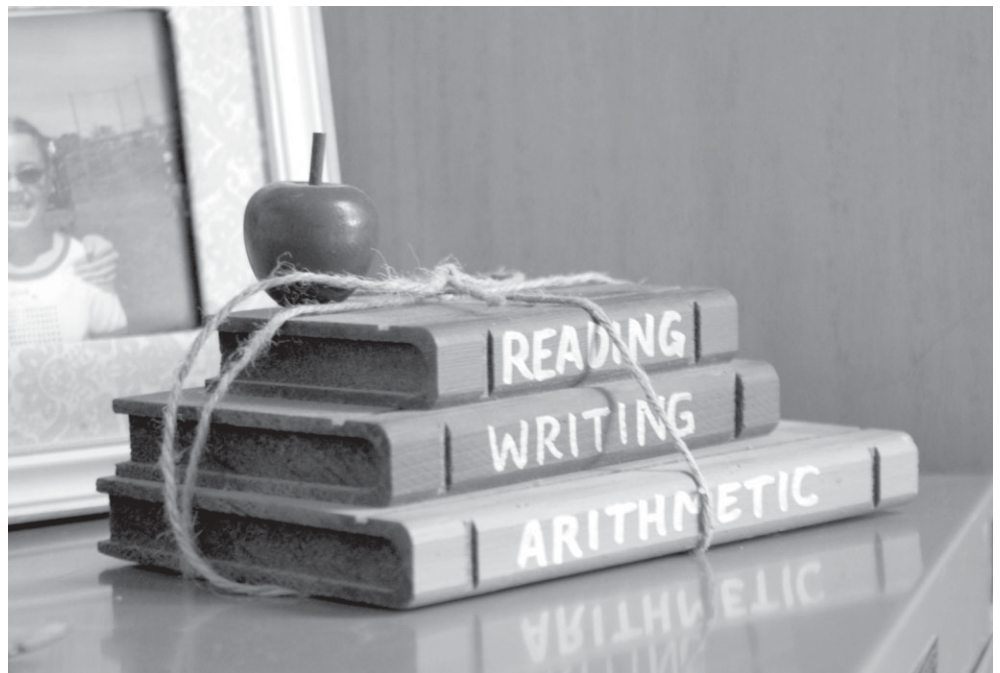
Cruz said this includes the "rewriting of curriculum and providing resources and training." Cruz added that there is a feeling of "urgency" on this issue.

The last of the four main focus areas is in relation to a bill passed by legislation in July on school bullying. Cruz said as a result of that bill, the schools are required to submit a school climate plan on bullying by Jan. 1, which they will be hard at work drafting.

Turning to the preparation side of the spectrum, Gilead Hill School Principal Kathy Veronesi said there is "always more to do" as faculty and staff aim to show their "eager little learners" that they are "as excited as [the students] are."

"Actually, [the students] might be a little nervous," said Veronesi, "so we hope that our preparedness and obvious enthusiasm makes them more comfortable."

While the main goal of all schools is the same, to instill our youth with knowledge, Veronesi said the focus at Gilead Hill School



It's time once again for the three 'r's. The new school year in Hebron will start next Monday, Aug. 29.

differs from other schools geared toward older students. Specifically, Veronesi pointed to the apprehensiveness many students feel when separating from their parents.

"Gilead Hill faculty and staff members are incredibly talented in connecting to young children," said Veronesi, "and helping them to feel safe and confident in approaching new social, emotional and academic situations."

In terms of physical appearances, Cruz said that Gilead Hill School is receiving a face lift, with a roof replacement currently underway (anticipated to be completed by today, Aug. 26) and solar panel installation in the near future. Cruz anticipates that the brackets and tracking

that the solar panels will be placed on will be put in position within the next two weeks and that the actual solar panel installation will be completed around the November time frame.

According to Veronesi, Gilead Hill School teachers began their school year this past Wednesday, Aug. 24, at which time Cruz acknowledged faculty and staff for their "amazing enthusiasm, effort and accomplishments."

Students will make their return this Monday, Aug. 29, and Veronesi said the staff is excited.

"At Gilead we have faculty members that range from novice to veteran and we all still get butterflies in preparation for the first day," Veronesi said.

Colchester Schools Getting Ready for Start of Year

by Bailey Seddon

While kids are cramming all the summer activities they still want to do into the couple of days they have left, teachers and school administrators are busy putting the finishing touches on their plans for the 2011-2012 school year.

Colchester's four schools will all start up next Wednesday, Aug. 31. Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said there are several things the school system has planned for the coming year. The first is the commitment to continue two-way communications between the school and parents. One of the ways in which the school can continue these lines of communication is that parents can now decide what the best way to get information is. They can choose between voice recordings, e-mail or text messages when news breaks in the school.

"The old system did not let us differentiate" between e-mail, text and voicemail, and now they can choose, said Loiselle. They can also choose what is most important and where certain information goes. For example, for emergency notifications, parents may prefer a call or text, but for a newsletter, they may rather receive an e-mail or even a text containing a link to the newsletter.

Another form of communication that is changing is the phone system. In past years, there hasn't been a way for a parent to leave a voicemail for teachers. However, a new system is now in place so that parents can leave voicemails for whichever teacher they wish to speak to.

"That's really key" to good communication, Loiselle said.

Also, Loiselle said, the school system is trying to be more proactive in terms of listing school and district events on the calendar on the Colchester Public Schools' website, colchesterct.org.

"We want to make sure the community knows what we are doing and have advanced information about events," she said. "You are going to see a lot more information in a much more consistent format." She also said parents can now download the calendars onto their cell phones.

New building projects are also on tap for the coming year, Loiselle said. One of these projects includes repairs made to the heating system at Bacon, so the school is more energy-

efficient. There have also been ceiling tile replacements in most buildings, to get rid of dust and improve air quality, and the Bacon Academy driveway replacement is also completed for the new school year.

There are also new teaching and learning initiatives planned for the school system. These include the purchasing of new technology, such as new software in the libraries so students and teachers can access resources from home. The curriculum is also being transitioned, to align with new Common Core state standards; there are already 46 states that have these standards, which Connecticut just adopted, said Loiselle.

"It's important to have high expectations for all children," she said. Loiselle said she felt the Colchester school system already had a rigorous program and it will now become even more so. The Common Core standards are "going to be a big area of focus this year," she said. These initiatives are going to start in kindergarten and go up to 12th grade. This way, Loiselle said, kids will be "ready for college or the work force" by the time they graduate.

"We've got a lot on our plate, but we are excited about all our initiatives," Loiselle said.

Bacon Academy Principal Jeffrey Mathieu is also excited about the 2011-12 school year. There are just under 1,000 students attending Bacon this year, around the same number as last year. The first day of school at Bacon is conveniently called "First Day," and is unlike any other school day. Students start by getting together in the gymnasium where they watch a video made by students, of activities from the last school year. They then go to shortened 18-minute classes where they meet with their teachers.

After lunch there are integrated activities outside; teams of four from all different grades play games on the fields. Each of the four groups has a different T-shirt, which the students had previously fundraised to get. After the games it's back to the gym, where there will be a dance team, cheerleaders, a dance contest and games.

"It's an opportunity to reunite kids," said Mathieu.

"First Day" has been going on for about six or seven years, Mathieu said. He said it gets the students "excited about the school" then they can "celebrate the school year instead of dreading the first day."



William J. Johnston Middle School will soon be bustling with schoolchildren once again. The new academic year starts next Wednesday, Aug. 31.

Some of the new additions to the school are a marine biology class, which was added to give kids more options for their science electives. There was also a new electric scroll sign added out front, which was a gift from the 2011 graduating class. The students raised money fundraising by holding tag sales and car washes. Mathieu said he is also happy about the new phone systems in the schools; this way he said the school will "have more communication with community and parents."

Over at the middle school, teachers are ready for students. "We are excited about students coming back," said William J. Johnston Middle School Principal Christopher Bennett. "The school gets filled with an energy" that is missed in the summer, he said.

The number of students at WJMS has remained the same as during the 2010-11 year, with just over 700 students. However, there is a new assistant principal, Jennifer Olsen. Olsen had previously been the social studies curriculum coordinator for Tolland.

"We are very excited to have her on board," Bennett said. Olsen is replacing Janet Lockman, who has moved on to the Glastonbury school systems, and who "will be greatly missed," said Bennett.

In addition to the new assistant principal there are two new teachers, Christopher Bartles for eighth grade science and Lynn Goodwin for sixth to eighth grade chorus/general music.

The middle school has also been honored for making Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP. This is because the school got high CMT scores in math and reading. The target for math for the CMTs is 91 percent and for reading is 89 percent. WJMS got 97.2 percent in math and 95.2 percent in reading, as a whole. "That's pretty terrific," said Bennett.

In the future, Bennett said, he hopes to get the special education math scores raised on the CMTs. The state goal is 82.6, and WJMS was at 74.6. "That's really good, but it didn't hit the target," and the school hopes to do better next year, he said.

Colchester Selectmen Interview More Commission Candidates

by Bailey Seddon

The Board of Selectmen kept busy at its meeting last Thursday, Aug. 18, as it interviewed more candidates for the new Building Committee and Agricultural Commission.

The Building Committee is charged with overseeing the proposed renovation of William J. Johnston Middle School to incorporate the senior center. The project is still in its planning stages and nothing as of yet is concrete, but First Selectman Gregg Schuster has said he hopes that, when the renovation is done, the school will be able to add not just the senior center but also Youth and Social Services. Schuster said this should help the town save money because they will be able to shut down the current senior and youth centers and combine them.

The first round of interviews for the committee took place at the Aug. 4 selectmen's meeting. Several more hopefuls were queried at last week's meeting. First up was Sharon Murphy Boski, a parent with one child in high school and one in middle school. As a substitute teacher, Boski felt that she had "an idea of how [schools] function." Boski said she wants to make sure that the needs of the school and the students are getting met and feels that she could help the committee achieve this. She also added that, as a performing artist, she is "especially interested in the music and art spaces." She said she also feels that communication with teachers, during the construction process, is very important.

Theresa Hendricksen, a 26-year resident of town, was also interviewed. Hendricksen is currently on the Commission on Aging, and also served as chair of the Senior Center Study Group, a group that was formed in 2009 with the charge of determining three things: whether the senior center should be a standalone facility or a joint/multi-purpose center, what type of populations the center would serve and what services would be provided.

Hendricksen has also visited other communities and seen how they had developed their senior centers. She said she feels one of the most important things, when the construction is underway, is safety of the building for the children and advocacy of the space.

The next interviewee was Paul Picard, who volunteers for many different things around town, including the Lions Club. Picard brings a lot of experience to the job; he has been in the trade for 35 years and has done the mechanical work on a dozen schools since 1999. He is also the general foreman for a mechanical company and was on the pre-K through Grade 2 Building Committee at Colchester Elementary School in the mid-2000s. "I fit in a building committee," Picard said.

"You want somebody who knows about the trade, that's me," he added. Picard also said he has "seen a lot of money wasted on things that just don't have to do with education," and he wants to ensure that does not happen.

Also interviewed was resident William Sullivan, who has been in construction for years and said he is "just interested in providing services for the town." With his background in construction, Sullivan said he felt he had something to offer to the committee. He said one of the most important things to him would be "overall foresights for a project." This would include keeping the job under budget, said Sullivan, and making sure the mechanical system for the school was running smoothly.

Resident Anthony J. Tarnowski was also interviewed. He said he would bring a historical perspective to the committee, having lived in Colchester for many years and served on building committee for renovations to the old Bacon Academy in 1980-81. Tarnowski is a project manager with A-Z Construction, which does work in both industrial and commercial settings. "I'm quite familiar with that type of work," he said.

Tarnowski was another of the few who had read the senior center report. He said one of the most important jobs of the committee would be to talk to educators about what the committee should be doing, to see what is most important. "I'm not going to be teaching in there, they are," said Tarnowski.

The last citizen to be interviewed was Thomas A. Tyler, a professional engineer with a master's degree in civil engineering. Tyler lived in Washington, DC, for 20 years, and moved to Colchester six years ago. He said he and his family "specifically moved to Colchester because of the schools." He mentioned that to both himself and his wife, who is a lawyer, education is very important. "As a parent you want your kids to go to a good school," he said.

One of the skills Tyler feels he could bring to the committee is budgeting, he said. Tyler said he has worked as a manager in engineering for many years and is therefore "well versed" in multimillion dollar budgets. When asked, Tyler also said he had read the senior center report.

Also slated to be interviewed at last week's meeting was resident Joseph A. DeLucia, but he was not in attendance at the meeting.

The selectmen interviewed just one person for the Agricultural Commission: resident Alex Savitsky. Savitsky said he has been involved in agriculture for his whole life. He said he felt it was a shame so many farms of the past have faded away, and he said he wants to be on the commission to help pique interest in agriculture.

Also, Savitsky said he felt it was important to get kids interested in agriculture. When asked how he would initiate kids' interest Savitsky said he would go to the schools to talk with kids to, "show them where their food comes from, and maybe generate a little interest."

Schuster said the selectmen plan to appoint

members to the Building Committee at their next meeting, which will be held Thursday, Sept. 1, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall. However, he said there is no timetable for when the Agricultural Commission will be formed, as not enough people have expressed interest in being on it. The selectmen's intention was for the commission to be composed of five regular members and two alternates.

Also at the Aug. 18 meeting, the selectmen discussed the issues of vandalism and loitering on the town green. Schuster said the board had talked with the town attorney as well as the police and came up with a few ideas. One was that the police could put red tape up every night so that people could not enter the green. However, Schuster felt this would be a bit much. "I'm not sure we want to do that every single night," he said.

He said the board was still exploring its curfew and loitering policies to try to get more options. Nevertheless, Schuster said, trying to police people for a curfew is "something that is just a little bit tricky," as there are currently not enough officers in town after midnight to keep up with patrolling the area.

He brought up the possibility of making curfew for people under a certain age, but said they are still looking into it to see if it is discriminatory.

Schuster next mentioned the boards' anticipation for a ceremony for eight firefighters and police officers from England, who will come to town the second or third week of September to visit. The firefighters and police officers are from Essex County in Colchester, England, and is the sister department to the fire company here in town.

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting is Thursday, Sept. 1, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

Drug-Sniffing Dogs Coming to Bacon?

by Bailey Seddon

Though it hasn't yet been determined exactly when the school will start using them, there may be some new, four-legged additions to the Bacon Academy scene in the future: drug-sniffing dogs.

Over the summer, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle brought it to the attention of the Board of Education that, while it is part of school policy to have such dogs, the school system has not employed them yet. Loiselle said Colchester Police had "asked that we consider utilizing drug dogs."

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein noted, "It's already been part of our policy that we can use them [the dogs] if necessary."

Using drug-sniffing dogs is "yet another tool in the toolbox" of fighting drug abuse, Loiselle said. Previously, the school had used breathalyzers at major school functions, such as proms, and this had gone well; no students came to the dances inebriated, Loiselle said.

It has yet to be decided when exactly Colchester would begin using the dogs. Loiselle said she is hoping to be able to observe the drug-sniffing dogs in another school this fall, to help gather more information about them. The dogs can only be used to search for substances in lockers or cars, not on people.

"We would see it more as a prevention tool," said Loiselle. She said she would hope, with the threat of such a tool, students would realize the community is taking drug use seriously. Loiselle said the board would work hand-in-hand with police, specifically Colchester's resident trooper supervisor, Mark Petruzzi, as well as state police, which would handle the dog training.

While there is no plan of action as of yet, Petruzzi said the police would work with the school administration and the Board of Education "to figure out how it would actually work." The searches, he said, would be random occurrences and would happen based on the way the

policy will be written. The policy will be worked out between the school and the police. Petruzzi said he has worked in other offices where there were plans for police dogs to be used in schools, but has not yet been part of a search himself.

Petruzzi said the idea of drug-sniffing dogs at Bacon "would put the thought in people's minds that [they could be caught]," so kids will hopefully decide to not bring any drugs on school property.

Loiselle said the school wants to bring in the dogs in such a way that is not disruptive to students. There will also be a Board of Education meeting to answer questions students, parents or teachers may have. However, since there's no timetable in place for using the dogs, a date for this Q-and-A with the community has yet to be determined.

The board is hoping all this will "help kids make good decisions," Loiselle said. "We want to have a sense of what is going on in their lives."

"We are looking into all our options, but nothing has been decided at this point," said Bacon Academy Principal Jeffrey Mathieu. "We plan to continue the dialogue...to bring in resources and educational experiences for students."

The idea to utilize the dogs came following "Summer 101," a seminar the Board of Education held in June at Bacon Academy, for students in 12th grade. The school board wanted to make sure the soon-to-be-graduates would continue to make the right choices, even though they'd no longer be in the confines of the school, Goldstein said.

More than 100 people – both kids and adults – attended the seminar. The students and parents were separated from each other during points of the seminar; this was done so the kids could feel comfortable talking about issues they might not necessarily bring up in front of their parents, and vice versa.

The seminar featured safety videos, panel



Drug-sniffing dogs may be coming to Bacon Academy at some point in the future; a timetable for beginning to use the canines has yet to be determined.

discussions – one for students and one for parents – and a booth detailing local summer activities. In addition to school officials, members of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department and Colchester Youth Services, a member of the Drug Enforcement Agency, a substance abuse counselor and others were on hand to help inform parents and students.

"It went very well," Mathieu said of the seminar. He added that drug prevention is so important because "it's not a school issue; it's a community issue."

Goldstein agreed the seminar went well, and said "it made it easier for [parents] to discuss the topic with their child."

The Board of Education has decided to hold four more seminars during the 2011-12 year, due to the positive feedback it received from both parents and students. Loiselle said the seminars will be presided over by the Youth Prevention Council, which the town website describes as "a group of concerned and committed members of the community who meet monthly to increase public awareness focused on the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse. Members include: teens, parents, concerned citizens, school representatives and town officials."

A date for the first drug abuse seminar of the new school year has not yet been determined.

Marlborough Principals Look Back at First Year

by Bailey Seddon

With the start of the new school year just around the corner, Scott Nierendorf and Dena DeJulius recently reminisced about their first years as principal and assistant principal, respectively, of Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School.

Both administrators began at the school in the fall of 2010. Nierendorf filled the vacancy left by recently-retired Loraine Giannini, while DeJulius replaced the departing Maylah Uhlinger.

The two had accomplished education resumes before coming to Marlborough. Nierendorf had previously worked as a sixth grade teacher, then assistant principal in West Hartford, and had also worked for the Capital Region Education Council in Hartford, where he had managed a technology group.

DeJulius worked in the Manchester public school system for 15 years before coming to Marlborough. She had been a math curriculum supervisor for kindergarten through 12th grade and had worked for three years on an accelerated math program and she was also involved in special education. The year before coming to Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall, DeJulius was the assistant principal at Illing Middle School in Manchester.

Nierendorf said the community and staff were supportive of both he and DeJulius from the start. He expressed his "appreciation for the staff and parents" that helped the two of them get used to the school. He also praised the town for making education a priority, with good teachers and administrators.

"We get people around the table and find a solution," Nierendorf said.

The two newcomers were also grateful that they got along and worked so well together from the start. This was apparent as they both laughed and joked with each other throughout their recent interview with the *Rivereast*. They both said

they felt communication, not just with residents but also with each other, is very important.

Nierendorf said DeJulius stays "calm, cool and collected" when attempting to solve problems. DeJulius laughed at this, attributing her calm demeanor to being the mother of four boys. Whatever the reason, though, this outlook has helped DeJulius to address conflicts in a professional and respectable manner, Nierendorf said.

DeJulius, who is not just the school's assistant principal but also its special education director, said the 2010-11 year "went by fast" but well. She said she spent the year trying to be an "active observer" to learn about the people, teachers and school.

"Dena is an amazingly fast learner," said Nierendorf. There were the problems many people new to a job face, ranging from simple things like figuring out where the paper and notebooks were to learning the school's policies and procedures. Luckily, said DeJulius, the staff was a big help to the newcomers, who went out of their way to be of assistance.

"That makes for a positive work environment," DeJulius said.

DeJulius noted, though, that she's glad she won't be feeling the uneasiness she felt at this point last year, when she was new to the school. She said she'll be starting out her second school year in Marlborough on a much more comfortable note.

Some of the goals that the principals are working on this year are the continuation of "a community that works together every day," Nierendorf said. He said he feels this culture is already there and wants to make sure it stays this way. DeJulius agreed, saying she also wants to "keep it a positive school climate."

Nierendorf and DeJulius also want to continue to have the citizen of the month. Teachers in each class nominate a student that they feel



Scott Nierendorf, left, and Dena DeJulius recently looked back on their first years as principal and assistant principal, respectively, of Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School.

best deserves the honor, from first through sixth grade. Each of these chosen students gets to have lunch with the principal and vice principal. They get to have pizza, veggies, fruit and skim milk.

What Nierendorf and DeJulius were most proud of and excited to continue is the school's theme of PRIDE: Polite, Responsible, Independent, Determined and Empathetic. The PRIDE logo was already in the school before the new

principals got to Marlborough, but Nierendorf and DeJulius added in the words to make it a theme. Every month, the school has PRIDE assemblies.

It is "daunting and exciting at the same time," Nierendorf said, to stand in front of the entire school and talk with them about PRIDE, he said.

PRIDE is important, Nierendorf said, for "creating and sustaining a positive culture."

New School Year Just Around the Corner in Marlborough

by Bailey Seddon

Kids may be enjoying their last few days of summer and trying not to think about the first day of school, but it's right around the corner – and Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School is ready for it.

In the last 10 years, said Principal Scott Nierendorf, the number of students who have attended the elementary school has stayed relatively the same, around 670. Nierendorf and the school's assistant principal, Dena DeJulius, said they do not want to implement too many changes; they just continue to work on the good aspects of a school they are still getting used to. However, there are a couple of things they have adjusted this year.

Student safety is one of the most important aspects of their job, said Nierendorf. This year, they are going to ensure that safety by changing the student drop-off system. About 90 percent of students take the bus; the rest are dropped off. Up until now, parents have dropped off in the front of the school, and then had to wait behind the long line of busses to get out.

Parents have gotten frustrated enough by the wait that they've done some "creative driving," Nierendorf quipped, and this could have resulted in injury to themselves and others. Now, however, Nierendorf said, parents will go to the west side of the school, drop their kids off, and go through the parking lot out back and around to the front. The walk for the kids into the building is the same and this should help ease traffic a little.

"We are hopeful that it will be an improvement," Nierendorf said, "There is no perfect

solution," but hopefully this is the best for everyone, he said.

Another addition to the school is the Science Technology and Math, or STEAM, room that has been added, to help children continue to build on their knowledge of math and science. The room will help the students with "inquiry-based learning," said Nierendorf. The room is bare as of now, but come school time there will be new chairs, a high-definition projector system, new microscopes and many other such tools to help children learn.

"It's a room that's evolving," said Nierendorf.

The Marlborough Education Foundation helped make the room possible by fundraising. "They tap into the generosity of the community," Nierendorf said of the foundation, adding that its members are "wonderfully-dedicated folks."

Parents will be happy to know that this year there is a new and easy-to-use program for them to order their child's school supplies, called EduKit. The Parent Teacher Organization, said Nierendorf, did a lot of research into an easier way that parents could do their back-to-school shopping, instead of having to go out and do the shopping themselves. Nierendorf gave credit to parent Claudine Polochanin, who is on the PTO and was "a real driver for this," he said.

How it works is that teachers put out a list of the school supplies that are needed and parents can opt to have the school buy all the supplies through EduKit. They arrive about a week or two before school starts and parents can pick them up. It costs about \$30-\$35 per student. So

far, about one-third of the school is choosing to buy school supplies this way. Parents, said Nierendorf, are "thrilled with it."

While there are the changes that administrators have implemented in the school, there are also existing procedures that they want to continue. Last year's CMT scores, for the sixth grade, were near the top end in the state.

"We are quite pleased," said Nierendorf. "That's a celebration."

Nierendorf said the school wants to make sure students continue to excel. "We still have to provide that support," he said. Part of this continuation will come from the school's scientifically research based intervention program, or SRBI. The school, said Nierendorf, will "continue to refine our practices around that," for students in all grade levels.

Another goal the school is trying to meet is a state initiative called the Common Core State Standards, or CCSS. The purpose of the new standards is to have common standards across all states. This has the school moving towards national standards in math, reading, writing and science. It is going to take about three years; this year, administrators are going to see where there is a fit between state and Marlborough standards and each year the teaching will be adjusted to try to fit the state standards. CCSS will help the school see what kids should "know and do at each grade level," Nierendorf said.

The school is not just taking initiative with school work, but also with the lunch program. The 2011-12 school year will see a "new and improved" healthy food program, the purpose

of which will be "improving the healthy choices for kids," Nierendorf said. Administrators looked at different lunch programs and took suggestions until they found a program they thought would work best. With this new lunch program comes a "frequency card;" with every four lunches a student buys, they get the fifth one free. Students just need to have their card punched each time they buy hot lunch. DeJulius and Nierendorf said they feel the frequency card will work well because it is convenient for parents and also gives kids the option of a healthy school lunch.

Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz said he also feels like the school has come a long way with technology.

"We really are a technology-advanced school by now," Sklarz said.

Sklarz also referenced the STEAM lab, which he said has brought Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall to the "forefront of science in elementary school. ...[It is] something we are pretty excited about."

The school is also trying to make some changes to keep with the state Core Curriculum, especially with science and math, he said. "We are trying to be ahead of the curve on that," said Sklarz. Administrators and teachers are also using CMT scores to help continue what the school is doing right and make improvements.

"Our scores are some of the best in the state," Sklarz said.

The first day of school at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School is Monday, Aug. 29. The school day starts at 8:15 a.m.

Haddam Neck Fair Celebrates 100 Years in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

Labor Day weekend will ring in another edition of the Haddam Neck Fair, but this year's fair will be particularly special, marking the fair's 100th anniversary.

To celebrate hitting the century mark, there will be several special events to commemorate the occasion, including one that fair organizers can't wait for – fireworks.

"We've never done them before, so we're excited," said Vice President Bob McGarry. The fireworks will be featured on Sunday night "at dark."

Another special anniversary event will be free admission to the 100th car through the gate each day. There will also be a 100th anniversary baking contest and art contest.

On sale, there will be a picture book commemorating the 100 years of the fair. Angela Sarahina, a member of the board of directors, said the book is about 80 pages and will be on sale for \$15. The money will go to support next year's fair, Sarahina said.

The four-day fair will feature many of the same events that regulars have grown to remember at the fair; many of the same events seen at your typical agricultural fair. Truck pulls, oxen pulls, and horse pulls will all be featured, as well as lawnmower races and a dog agility competition.

However, there are several events you might not be too familiar with. Sunday will feature a "Redneck Strongman" competition, where men will see who can lift hay bales, sling tires, and carry car transmissions. There will also be a "Beard Contest," where beards over 1 inch in length will be judged by neatness, fullness, and

length.

There will also be a truly original event – the parade of oxen. Sarahina said that this event took place at the original Haddam Neck Fair in 1911. Featuring time-tested events like this, Sarahina said, is what keeps people coming back.

"I've been going since I was a child, and the changes have been so minute," Sarahina said. She even remembers entering her daughter in the "Baby Contest," for best looking child, over 20 years ago.

Sarahina added that some of the reason that the fair has changed over the years is that some events have been taken away. A former favorite – the "greased pig" – was removed years ago, Sarahina said, because of the danger to the animals. But each time an event is removed, "another new event is put in its place," she said.

Also, for those who may not have braved the rain to run the Old Home Days Glorious Gallop 5K road race, the fair will feature the Haddam Neck Fair 5K road race, which will take place on Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

The fair, which is run completely by volunteers, is no small-town festival. According to McGarry, the fair regularly draws between 30,000-40,000 patrons every year, which he said is "quite the undertaking for a community of only about 600."

Like every year, there will be rides for all ages and a wide array of concessions that feature traditional "fair fare." Live music will also be featured throughout the weekend.

The fair will begin on Friday, Sept. 2 and run until Monday, Sept. 5. General admission



A truck pull will be one of the sights at the Haddam Neck Fair, which will return next weekend. This is the 100th year of the event.

per day will be \$7, only \$6 for seniors (over 60). For three-day admission, the cost is \$18, only \$15 for seniors. A weekend pass, which includes Friday, is \$23, only \$19 for seniors. Admission for children under 12, parking, and

bleacher seating are all free. There will also be special wristbands for rides, which give unlimited rides for that day.

For more information on the fair, visit haddamneckfair.com.

Belltown Schools Start Next Week in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

As students were squeezing the last few days out of summer vacation and parents were making last-minute trips to Staples, members of all four East Hampton schools were hard at work this week, getting their classrooms ready for the first day of school next Tuesday, Aug. 30.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden is one person that has been working hard this summer to integrate a slew of new teachers and new technology that will be introduced this school year. According to Golden, the district will introduce 14 new faculty members this year across the four schools, which includes a shifting of principals at the East Hampton Middle School and East Hampton High School.

With the departure of Dr. Linda Berry as principal at EHHS, John Fidler, the former principal at EHMS, has been moved in to take her place. Taking Fidler's spot at the middle school is Nancy Briere, the former EHMS assistant principal.

"They are already adjusted; they have great experience with the school and it's been a natural fit," Golden said. "We've had a very smooth transition."

Fidler began as the principal at EHMS in 2008, but spent 14 years at EHHS prior to that as a teacher, coach and athletic director. He said this week that he is looking forward to "being an instructional leader and working with everybody at the high school." Fidler has also been joined by a new assistant principal, Michael Dalton.

Briere served as assistant principal at EHMS for only one year, but has worked within the district for 25 years as both a teacher and an administrator.

Fidler said this week that he is "very proud" of what he's seen over the past few years with student progress, including Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) scores from last year. When asked about his "primary goal," he said that he will be looking for more of the same.

"I plan to work with teachers to improve instruction," Fidler said. "We can keep finding ways to get even better."

There will also be new technology introduced at the high school and the other schools; at Monday's Board of Education meeting, Tom McMahon, the district technology administra-

tor, gave a presentation outlining some of the new advancements.

At the high school, "thin clients" will be introduced. These computers, which will be in the library and the business laboratory, allow for one server to run several other computers on the table. It also allows each of the students at the table to work on the same mainframe, as all of the terminals are connected to the one server.

McMahon also said there will be a revamped wireless system at the high school, which also helps run the new "point of sale" system that has been installed in the cafeteria.

Fidler said that all of the new technology will have practical uses that he believes will help the students' progress.

"It's not just technology for technology's sake," Fidler said. "We plan to use it as a tool."

Within the district, McMahon said that all of the computers have been re-imaged and updated with the newest software. There will also be 23 new Epson interactive whiteboards, a projector with a virtual pen that is similar to a SMART Board.

Donna Turchi, principal at Center School, said that "about half" of her classrooms will be equipped with the interactive whiteboards and that teachers have already begun training to use them.

But perhaps the biggest technological change to the district is the development of a new district website, which McMahon said should be live next week. The website, easthamptonps.org, will allow for easier access on tablets and smart phones, McMahon said, and will also allow for easier e-mail access for teachers when they are not on the school's network.

The site will also have a link to district's new Twitter account, @EHPublicSchools, which will be updated for news like school closings.

At the meeting, Board of Education Chairman Michael Vasquez said he was amazed by how far the technology has come in the school, particularly with the new website.

"Five years ago, all we heard was about how outdated our technology was," Vasquez said. "To see all of this, it's nothing short of miraculous."

Academically, Golden also discussed the development of a "professional learning com-



East Hampton High School is ready to open its doors again. The new school year will start next Tuesday, Aug. 30.

munity," which is a data program that will allow the entire district to track a student's progress as they go through the school system. Golden said that this type of analysis is "all done by hand right now," but now will be located in one place and will be accessible to all teachers.

Fidler said the high school and middle school will feature teacher websites where parents will be able to access their child's grades, which Fidler referred to as "a constant progress report." This will be available later this fall, Fidler said.

The district has also been satisfied with the recently released Connecticut Mastery Test and CAPT scores. Golden said the Board of Education will begin to discuss the scores in October, but that she was "very happy with the improvements in almost all scores."

"It's the sign of a trend, we hope," Golden said.

Turchi said even though the scores have improved, she said that the students "can always do better." She said that the goal is always to "prioritize" which areas need to be focused on when looking at the scores and work harder to improve in those areas.

On a school spirit note, EHHS will introduce a varsity football team. The team, which was a junior varsity last year, will combine with Vinal Tech in Middletown and play its home games at Palmer Field in Middletown. The team was in danger of getting cut, Fidler said, with the recently proposed state budget cuts, but the team has already begun practicing for the season.

While students may be clinging on for a few more days, the schools are ready to be open for business. And at least one person can't wait for the kids to be back.

"I love the first day of school," Turchi said. "It never gets old."

Takin' a Ride With the Cops in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

The members of the East Hampton Police Department probably wouldn't equate themselves to the forces that patrol larger cities like Hartford or New York. But take a look at the police log or articles in the *Rivereast* each week and you'll see the 14 members of the EHPD are kept quite busy.

Even when officers aren't on patrol, don't expect to see them hanging out at the station, playing cards and waiting for calls; there's a lot of work to be done.

Last Friday night, Aug. 19, I got to spend a few hours with officers John Wilson and Matthew Hanlon, to see exactly what a typical night with a patrol officer is like.

At my arrival at the station, I was greeted by Wilson and Hanlon – the two officers on patrol for the night – and given a tour of the station. Offices for the Chief Matthew Reimondo and his sergeants greet you as you walk in, then as you take a left and pass the locker room, you enter a room with multiple desks for the officers on the EHPD.

Along one wall is several computers, where the officers spend a lot of time typing up reports and entering information. Wilson said sometimes it can take a few hours to type re-

ports, making sure all of the information is entered correctly. But, Wilson said, the station is in the process of upgrading their software, which should ease the process of writing the reports.

After a quick look at the holding cells and the room where offenders are processed, we headed out to the cruiser. I rode along with Wilson, a six-year veteran of the EHPD, who would be patrolling the area to the west of Main Street for the night. Hanlon took the eastern part of the town and the car with the computer system inside.

"John can't read," Hanlon said jokingly about his reason for getting the computer.

Not long after we set out near the Village Center, Wilson received a call from Hanlon to assist on a traffic stop on Route 66 near CVS. When we arrived on the scene, the driver of the vehicle was asked to step out so Hanlon could search his car. According to Wilson, the man was pulled over for not having a front license plate, but Hanlon suspected the man was in possession of narcotics.

A quick search, however, turned up nothing. After a little bit of cruising around town, we

received our second call, albeit a simple one: house alarm. Although Wilson admitted that the alarm was probably set off accidentally, the officers are obligated to respond to the call. As we arrived, the homeowner was already present, letting Wilson know that everything was alright.

After meeting up with Hanlon for a quick food break at Subway, we headed back out for a quick sweep of the high school. As Wilson was shining his light through the parking lot, our first real call came through from the dispatcher, which is located at the State Police Barracks Troop K in Colchester – someone was unresponsive with a needle still in their arm.

With that, we were off. I would not advise going as fast as we did on the back roads to Haddam Neck Road.

We were the first responders on the scene; Wilson quickly grabbed his medical bag and went into the house. Soon after, Hanlon arrived, with volunteer paramedics from East Hampton and Haddam Neck following quickly behind.

With the emergency personnel on hand, they were able to get the man into the ambulance to be treated. Wilson said that although he was unresponsive, he was still breathing and had a

pulse. He said that it appeared the needle contained heroin.

It occurred to me that it must be difficult for two officers to patrol the entire town, particularly when an incident happens in a remote area like Haddam Neck Road. Wilson said that the department has been particularly short lately, with a few people either on leave or recuperating from injuries. He said that if another incident were to happen on the other side of town during that call, one of the officers would have to attend to it and leave the scene.

After the scene was cleared, we headed back to the station to drop me off. Wilson and Hanlon would continue their shift until 12:30 a.m., with a new officer coming in at midnight to relieve them. Wilson said that the "junior guy" is stuck with all of the midnight shifts, as the department works on seniority.

As I left, Wilson and Hanlon jumped on their computers to get to work on the report for our incident. Maybe they got them done without interruption; maybe they got another call that delayed the reports even longer.

Either way, the work never ends at the East Hampton Police Department.

Another Car Break-In Arrest in Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

In what seems to be becoming a weekly occurrence, Portland Police have arrested another person involved with a car break-in, Sgt. James Kelly said.

Michael Dazat, 24, of 594 Main St., Middletown, was arrested early Saturday, Aug. 20, for breaking into a vehicle on Main Street. Dazat was charged with two counts of sixth-degree larceny and was later released on a non-surety bond.

Kelly said the incident occurred around 1 a.m. on Saturday, when officers were dispatched to the home on Main Street near Church Street. The homeowner, Kelly said, reported that someone had broken into his vehicle and had stolen an iPod.

Because the theft had happened within the past two hours, Kelly said officers maintained patrol of the area. At roughly 2:30 a.m., Kelly located Dazat carrying a backpack in the area of Main Street and Russell Street. An investigation revealed that Dazat's backpack contained an iPod and radar detector, both of which belonged to the homeowner who called

the police, as well as a GPS unit and cell phones. The owners of the GPS unit and cell phones were located by the police on Main Street, Kelly said.

This is not Dazat's first larceny-related instance; in November 2010, he was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of a controlled substance in Middletown. Further investigation at Dazat's residence revealed he was in possession of items stolen in burglaries in both Middletown and Portland, according to published reports.

According to the state's judicial website, Dazat had already been arrested and found guilty of sixth-degree larceny in September 2010, where he was sentenced to a 90-day suspended sentence. He eventually received a one-year conditional discharge.

Kelly reminded residents "not to leave their valuable items in plain view in motor vehicles which are parked outside and to always lock the vehicle." In the thefts that have taken place this summer, which now number over two dozen, the vehicles have been unlocked.

Colchester Police News

8/19: James Wallington Jr., 43, of 54 Crouch Rd., Amston, was arrested for second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

8/20: Darrell White, 38, of 248 Broad St., Norwich, was charged with DUI, unsafe passing and distracted driving, Colchester Police said.

8/20: Kevin Kendrick, 40, of 9 New London Rd., was charged with interfering, State Police said.

8/21: Christen Smith, 31, of 5 Stanavage Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right,

State Police said.

8/21: Ronald Webster, 51, of 11 Francis St., Ellington, was charged with DUI and failure to maintain lane.

8/22: Kathleen Killarney, 52, of 22 Rt. 87, Andover, was charged with two counts of sixth-degree larceny and two counts of obtaining a controlled substance via fraud, State Police said.

8/22: Robert Kempesta, 50, of 264 Westerly Ter., was charged with first- and second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

8/17: James A. Januszewski, 46, 70 Linden St., Torrington, was charged with operating a motorcycle without a motorcycle license, DUI and speeding on a highway up to 85 m.p.h., State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

8/12: Peter J. Dumond, 52, of 56 Barton Hill Rd., was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

8/12: Karen Libeson, 38, of 24 No. Main St., was issued a summons for disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

8/14: David M. Canfield, 52, of 64 West High St., was involved in a one-car collision on Route 66. Canfield was issued a summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

8/16: Michael Cannata, 31, of 70 Colchester Ave., was arrested for risk of injury and third-degree assault, police said.

Obituaries

Portland

Lucinda R. Ruffino

Lucinda R. Ruffino, 54, of Portland, wife of the late Sebastian “Noot” T. Ruffino Sr., died Friday, Aug. 19, at UConn Health Center. She was the daughter of the late Franklin Sr and Winifred (Fiske) Burr. Born Dec. 25, 1956, in Middletown, she lived in Portland for most of her life and was also an avid horse lover.

She is survived by a son and daughter-in-law, Sebastian T. Jr. and Elizabeth Ruffino of Portland; two brothers, Franklin Burr Jr. of Rocky Hill and William Burr of Las Vegas, NV; two sisters, Linda Guertin of Sterling and Sharon Burr of Norwich; two grandchildren, Paige and Amy and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Aug. 24, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial was private. Relatives and friends called Wednesday at the funeral home, before the service at the funeral home. To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the UConn Health Center, 263 Farmington Ave., Farmington, CT 06032, Attn: Development Office MC No. 4032, or to the Ray of Light Farm Inc., 232 Town Rd. (Route 82) East Haddam, CT 06423.

Colchester

Christina G. White

Christina G. White, 73, of Colchester, beloved wife of James, passed away Saturday, Aug. 20, at the Connecticut Hospice in Branford. Born Nov. 9, 1937, in Fauldhouse, West Lothian, Scotland, she was a daughter of the late James and Helen (Galloway) Cook.

After raising her family, Christina had worked at S&S Worldwide in Colchester for 13 years before her retirement. Christina had a beautiful singing voice and loved listening to music as well as gardening and cooking.

In addition to her loving husband of 45 years, she is survived by two daughters and their spouses, Elaina and Gary Charbonneau of Ellington and Wendy and James Stewart of Norwich; two grandchildren, Zachary and Amanda Charbonneau; two sisters, June Brown of Scotland, UK and May Cook of Glastonbury; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by four siblings, Jeannie McLelland, Jessie Griffin, Helen Cannon and Billy Cook.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. Donations in her memory may be made to the Connecticut Hospice, 100 Double Beach Rd., Branford, CT 06405.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Cobalt

Don Warley

Donald “Don” Lee Warley, 45, of Clover, SC, formerly of Cobalt, died Saturday, Aug. 20, at his home in Clover.

Don was a son of the late Robert Warley and Barbara Hayes McDonald. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army and was a truck driver.

He is survived by wife, Jayne Glenn Warley of Clover, SC; daughter, Angela Morgan of Bowling Green, SC; son, Chad Lackey of the home; brother, Robert Warley and wife Tuesday of East Hampton; stepmother, Louise Warley of East Hampton; two stepbrothers, Brian Kelly, Tom Kelly; stepsister, Deborah Kelly and three grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, Don was preceded in death by his brother Kevin Dale Warley

The funeral was held Wednesday, Aug. 24, at Bratton Funeral Home in York. The Rev. Mike Lowery will be officiating. Visitation was held one hour prior to the funeral service. Burial was private.

Bratton Funeral Home is serving the Warley family.

Marlborough

Stephen F. Rand

Stephen F. Rand, 46, formerly of Marlborough, passed away quietly Sunday, Aug. 21, at his home in Northampton, MA. Steve was born in Boston, MA, on April 14, 1965, the first son of Sandra (Brickhill) Rand of Marlborough and the late Alan R. Rand.

In 1983, after graduating from RHAM High School in Hebron, Steve moved to New York City to attend the School of Visual Arts. After two years of pursuing his interest in the visual arts, his love and enthusiasm for music drew him to Northampton, MA, where he founded two highly-influential rock groups, The Loneliest Christmas Tree and The Caroline Know.

Steve moved back to New York City in the ‘90s and called Brooklyn his home for many years. In 2000, he resurfaced with a new band, Stephen Rand and His Magic Ponies, and a new album titled, “The Blushing Bachelor”. Steve returned to Northampton in 2005 and reformed his seminal rock band, The Caroline Know, and performed a number of shows in Massachusetts and New York throughout his remaining years. Steve was also well known by many for having a quick and snappy wit, an engaging personality and a deep love for friends, family and animals.

He is survived by his mother; brother Terry and his wife, Karianne; and his beloved niece, Kira, who came into this world two and a half years ago, shining a big, bright light of love on his heart.

A celebration of his life will take place today, Aug. 26, at Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Friends called starting at 1 p.m., before a Celebration Service at 2 PM.

In lieu of flowers, family and friends are suggested to make a contribution to the college fund for Kira. Contributions should be made to: Kira Rand, c/o Liberty Bank, 29 Wm. F. Palmer Rd., Moodus, CT 06469.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Lorraine Robida Carson

Lorraine Robida Carson, formerly of Portland, died peacefully in Dallas, TX, on Aug. 4. She was predeceased by her parents, Leon and Beatrice Robida, her husband, Matt Carson, and her brother, Fred Robida.

She is survived by her loving daughters, Kelly (Ed) Bernight and grandson Nick, Kathy Cales and grandchildren Chase, Chelsea, Charly, Ethan and Devlin, Carol Carson and granddaughters Ashley, all of Dallas. She is also survived by her sister, Pauline Pelkey (Richard) of Portland; her brother, Ray (Gloria) of Hartford; her sister, Doris (Ed) Gyllenhammer of Old Saybrook; and many nieces and nephews.

She will be missed by all.

A memorial service will be held in Dallas on Sept. 16.