

RIVEREAST

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Winter Bash Coming Up... The Marlborough Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization will have its annual Winter Benefit Bash Friday, Feb. 10, starting at 7 p.m., at Angelico's Lake House Restaurant in East Hampton. In addition to an auction, there will be a photo booth, DJ, door prizes and more. For ticket information, call Meredith at 860-295-8911. Shown here is Marlborough Elementary School Principal Scott Nierendorf with some of the PTO-donated items for last year's auction.

Hayn Asked to Resign from Finance Board

by Bailey Seddon

In a surprising turn of events this week, Colchester First Selectman Gregg Schuster asked Bruce Hayn, who was arrested last week on arson charges, to step down as vice chairman of the Board of Finance.

In a statement issued shortly after Hayn's Jan. 16 arrest in connection with a fire last fall at his Norwich pellet fuel company, Schuster said he would not ask the longtime finance board member to resign "at this time," and would "wait and see what happens." Because Hayn is an elected official, and not appointed, Schuster does not have the authority to remove him from the finance board.

However, in a letter to Hayn sent Monday, Schuster said he was "respectfully asking for your immediate resignation from the Board of Finance."

"I know you must be going through a difficult time right now and I am a strong believer that everyone is innocent until proven guilty," Schuster wrote. "However, I also believe that due to your circumstances, a cloud now hangs over the Board of Finance and the town."

Schuster went on to note that the 2012-13 budget process is beginning, and said Hayn's position on the board would become a distraction during that time.

Hayn, 54, of 31 Sashel Ln., is charged with

first-degree arson, first-degree criminal attempt to commit arson, second-degree false statement and insurance fraud, Norwich Police said.

According to Norwich Police Sgt. Peter B. Camp, during their investigation into the Oct. 27, 2011, blaze, officers discovered security footage from outside the building. The footage showed Hayn attempting to start a fire there the previous night. After the failed attempt Hayn went back the next night, and "this time it caught fire," Camp said. Camp added the video showed him walking toward his business twisting up paper towels.

Shortly after, said Camp, "you could see smoke and particulate matter in the camera." The fire quickly intensified and police could see "flames flickering off the sides of a box truck" on the premises, Camp said. At some point after Hayn leaves the camera fails, likely because the fire reached the camera, Camp said.

"It was pretty obvious" from the video that it was arson, said Camp.

Camp said Hayn initially lied to police, but after interviewing him again, about three or four weeks ago, "at one point he admitted to starting the fire" and signed a sworn statement to that effect.

Hayn was also charged with insurance fraud

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Firefighter Reflects On Near-Death Experience

by Joshua Anusewicz

"You would never know," said Todd Ghent with a smile. "Everyone says that."

What everyone is talking about is what happened one year ago this Sunday, when Ghent, a lieutenant with the Portland Volunteer Fire Department, was involved in a propane explosion that caused second- and third-degree burns across his face and head that nearly ended his life.

Today, however, he's right – you would never know. The burns have mostly healed and Ghent has returned to the things that he loves to do – spend time with his family, golf and even fight fires.

"Everyone was trying to tell me to take it slow," he said. "But sometimes, you have a job to do, even if it's just as a volunteer."

It was that attitude that kept Ghent alive during the explosion, which reads like something out of movie. The incident took place Jan. 29, 2011, at a duplex on Summer Street. Ghent and his partner, Tim Goff, responded to a call for a propane leak caused by a backhoe hitting an underground tank and were the first ones on the scene. After putting on his gear, Ghent took the task of "metering the area" to find the source of the leak. He said that in these situations, once

the source is found, the firefighters will spray water on the leak to dissipate the gas.

When Ghent walked to the front door and knocked on it, he said that the level on the meter was normal. When he took a step back, however, the meter spiked. "I said to myself, 'I need to get out of here,'" he recalled. "And then - kaboom."

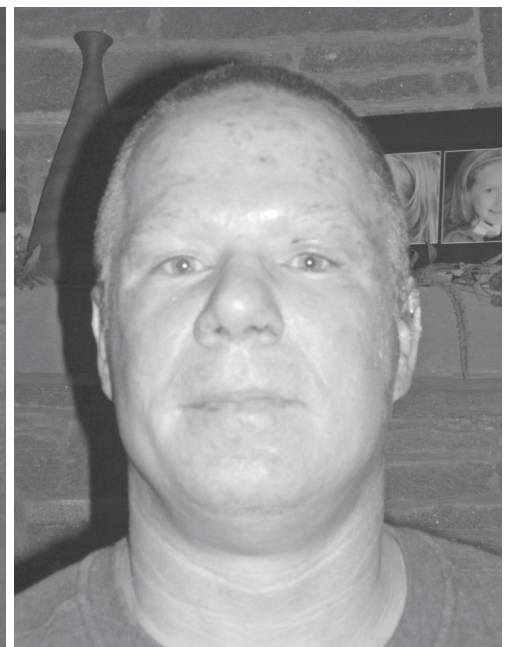
It was what Ghent and Fire Chief Bob Shea called "a perfect storm," and to this day, no ignition source has been found. The force of the explosion knocked Ghent down and engulfed him in flames. Ghent said he tried to get up three times but was overcome by the heat and the ice in the driveway.

"I didn't know where to run, everything was orange," he said. "It got to the point where I wanted to die. The pain was unbelievable."

Holding his breath as long as he could, Ghent said he summoned the only image that could keep him going: his wife, Renee, and his 15-year-old daughter, Amanda. "They gave me that extra oomph," he said, smiling.

Shea recalled talking with Ghent just minutes before he arrived at the fire. "He had just told me 'everything is fine, I'll see you when you get here,'" Shea said. "When I got there, I

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Portland firefighter Todd Ghent suffered second- and third-degree burns across his face and head in a Jan. 29, 2011, propane explosion. At left is Ghent shortly after the explosion. At right is how he looks today. Very few scars and only a tinge of redness remain on his face.

Hayn cont. from Front Page

because he filed a claim with his insurance company, Travelers, and they “made initial good faith payments” of \$25,000, said Camp, which Hayn cashed.

While Hayn admitted to his guilt, Camp said “this was not an easy arrest for us... because of his position in the community” and his charity work.

“It’s just tragic,” said Camp.

Hayn, who has been on the Board of Finance for almost 27 years, is well known for his role as the builder in *ABC’s Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. Hayn and others from Colchester and Hebron helped the Girard family of Voluntown rebuild their home after it was destroyed by a fire in 2007. According to a previous article by the *Rivereast*, Hayn and others worked for six days on the project, which normally would have taken six months. Hayn was among 3,500 volunteers who worked on the project.

According to the town charter, in the event of Hayn’s resignation, the board has 60 days to appoint a new member by a majority vote. The

new member must be of the same political party as the resigned member and will hold the position until the next election cycle.

Board of Finance member Thomas Kane said he is new to the board and has only attended three meetings, only one of which was with Hayn. He said he’s not sure how it would impact the board if Hayn remains as vice chairman. Hayn “has a long history of being on the board... his experience if he resigns will be missed,” he added.

Town Clerk Nancy Bray said that as of Wednesday, Hayn had not submitted a letter of resignation to her office.

In addition to being charged with arson, Hayn is also involved in a lawsuit against the builders involved in another charity project in Griswold. According to published reports, Hayn is suing several companies for 14 injuries he sustained when a section of roof fell on him in 2009 while working on the project.

Hayn did not return calls for comment for this story.



The propane explosion on Jan. 29, 2011 destroyed a duplex on Summer Street in Portland. No ignition source was ever found.

Firefighter cont. from Front Page

saw him sitting in the bed of a truck, waiting for an ambulance to show up.”

With a LifeStar helicopter unavailable, Ghent was transported to Hartford Hospital via Hunter’s Ambulance, and was quickly flown to the Burn Center at Bridgeport Hospital from there. Ghent said his head had swollen almost five times its normal size and he could not hear or see. Shea and other members of the fire department, including Todd’s brother Tommy, were quickly by his side after quelling the blaze.

His family, however, was a different story. His wife and daughter were in Vermont on a ski trip while he stayed home to plow snow. When they received the call about what had happened, Ghent said they took “the ride from hell” as fast as they could to see him.

“I was so scared for them and for everyone else that I didn’t have time to worry about me,” Ghent said. “That helped get me through.”

Ghent spent two days in the hospital, and left with a lot of uncertainty, not knowing how quickly, or even if, he would heal. Once home, he went through the arduous process of “scrubbing” his skin every day to avoid scabs from forming and growing under his skin, and from infections.

“It was unbelievable,” he said, with not-so-fond memories. “That was worse pain than the burns.” That process went on for two weeks, with Renee often helping with painful cleaning. Today, very few scars remain, and only a tinge of redness remains on his face.

As the healing process wore on, talks began to turn to when he could return to work. The original prognosis was that it might take up to a year, or worse - he could never be a firefighter again. But true to form, Ghent fought through

it and after just four months, with the approval of his doctor, was back in uniform.

“To see him heal, and come back, is a true testament to how great of a guy he is,” said Shea, who is also one of Ghent’s closest friends. “He certainly proved how strong he is, and how strong his family is. They are an incredible group.”

Ghent’s courage has not gone unnoticed by either his fellow firefighters or residents of Portland. This past year, Ghent received the Firefighter of the Year Award by the town and presented Medal of Valor pins to the firefighters who attended to him before the ambulance arrived, possibly saving his life.

“The other members have been phenomenal,” said Shea. “It’s part of what we do, as a family and a brotherhood.”

And not many days have gone by where Ghent hasn’t spoken with locals who have wished him well or shared how happy they were to see him back. “The response has been overwhelming, just incredible,” Ghent said.

But things have returned to normal for Ghent and his family over the past few months. Recently, he left his job in the tree service industry and started his own company, Ghent Tree Removal in Portland and continues to golf. Due to the damage to his skin and the fact that he spends a lot of time outside, he said that he does have to wear a hat and sunscreen to protect himself.

It’s a small price to pay to do the things he loves.

“I’m in control of my own destiny now,” he said. “I was living life to the fullest prior to what happened, and I’m not going to change.”

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

The Oscar nominations were announced on Tuesday. As always, there were some surprises, both in terms of people and films nominated and those *not* nominated.

The nominees for Best Picture were: *The Artist*, *The Descendants*, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, *The Help*, *Hugo*, *Midnight in Paris*, *Moneyball*, *The Tree of Life* and *War Horse*.

I wasn’t all that shocked by the inclusion of any of the films on the list. *The Help* was a little surprising, not because it wasn’t a good movie – it most certainly was – but it came out, as far as Oscar films go, a relatively long time ago (it had its premiere in August; most Academy Award hopefuls debut around October or later, the thinking being they’d be fresher in the Academy’s mind come nomination season). Plus, it made a whopping \$169 million, and in recent years commercial hits and Best Picture nominees haven’t always gone hand-in-hand.

If there were still only five nominees, there’s no way *The Help* would’ve made it. But the expansion to up to 10 (there are actually nine films nominated this year) has made it possible – well, it’s always been possible; this just makes it more likely – for more than just the usual, smaller-run, limited-engagement films to make the cut. I think the Best Picture race is better for having been expanded; it always helps to have more movies that people might have actually seen, not just read about.

No, there were no big shockers in the Best Picture race. I was, however, surprised by some of the acting nominees – or non-nominees. Chief among the snubbed was, in my opinion, Charlize Theron for the lead role in *Young Adult*. I just saw this movie last weekend, and thought it was terrific. A dark comedy, with a lot of genuine laugh-out-loud moments, the movie is also pretty depressing, and shrouded in an overall feeling of bleak despair. I would have liked to have seen some nominations for it on the creative side, such as screenplay, but I basically expected Theron to get nominated for her role as the incredibly sad Mavis Gary, who is pretty much stuck in a state of arrested adolescence.

Theron did an absolutely fantastic job in the movie, and I was genuinely surprised she wasn’t nominated.

I was also surprised Jonah Hill *was* nominated, for his supporting part as Peter Brand, the stats nerd assistant general manager in *Moneyball*. Hill did a solid job in the part, but there was nothing really memorable about the portrayal. The part seemed to consist mostly of him quietly reacting to whatever

wild ideas were coming out of the mouth of Brad Pitt’s Billy Beane. (Pitt, meanwhile, did a very good job in the movie, and I was glad to see he was nominated.) It was a nice foray into drama for Hill, but, really, I think a lot of people could’ve played that part. Nothing really stood out.

Also surprising from Tuesday’s nominations: only two songs were nominated for Best Original Song. Yes, two! The Best Song race has a rich pedigree of familiar, stand-the-test-of-time classics, from “Over the Rainbow” and “Mona Lisa” to “The Power of Love” and “My Heart Will Go On.” I realize in recent years the number of nominees has fluctuated (there were only three in 2008, and only four last year), but having just two songs; that’s ridiculous.

Anyway, of the two, I’d have to go with “Man or Muppet” from *The Muppets*. Of course, it helps that I’ve actually seen *The Muppets* (whereas I never saw *Rio*, which produced the other nominated song), but that really was a good song, probably the best in that film, which was full of enjoyable tunes (and overall was a pretty great nostalgia trip).

Well, good nominees or strange ones, I’ll be watching the Oscars regardless. The show will air Feb. 26 on ABC.

* * *

Like many of you, I spent last Sunday watching football – first the Patriots-Ravens game and then the Giants-49ers. Both were marked by amazing finishes; the Patriots game ended with the Ravens’ kicker blowing a how-could-you-miss-that? 32-yard field goal, and then the 49ers had an almost-as-improbable (okay, not quite; it was 32 yards!) fumble in overtime to send the Giants on their way.

But on the drive home Sunday night from a friend’s house, where I had watched the games, I found myself thinking about none of those teams. Instead, my thoughts went to Mike Piazza.

Piazza, the legendary Mets catcher, happened to be at a New York Knicks’ basketball game the night before, and a TV reporter caught up with him and conducted a brief interview. Among the questions was, what was his prediction for the following night’s Giants-49ers game?

Piazza’s response? Giants, 21. San Francisco, 17.

What was the final score? Giants, 20, San Francisco, 17. Pretty darn close.

So, there you have it. Mike Piazza’s not just the greatest-hitting catcher of all time, he’s a pretty good football prognosticator too.

* * *

See you next week.

Hebron Finance Director Moving On

by Geeta Schrayter

Less than a month after appointing an interim town manager, Hebron’s selectmen had to fill another position with an interim after receiving a letter of resignation from Finance Director Lisa Hancock.

Hancock, who has worked for the town since August 2010, accepted what she calls an “advantageous offer” for a position in Tolland.

In an email to Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt and Board of Finance Chairman Michael Hazel, Hancock cited finances as a deciding factor.

“This was a very difficult decision for me,” she wrote, “but the financial improvement was something that I just could not pass up.”

Hancock worked as Hebron’s finance director for \$85,000. The position in Tolland comes with a salary of \$100,000.

She mentioned the fact she’s a single parent, and said “the additional salary, benefits and less meetings will be better for my family needs.”

Despite the close occurrence with the departure of then-Town Manager Bonnie Therrien, Hancock was clear in telling Watt and Hazel the two events are unrelated.

“Prior to me applying for this position I did not realize that Bonnie would also be leaving the town,” she said, adding she realizes the timing isn’t the best, but she had “no control over

the situation.”

“I will do whatever I can to make this transition a smooth one,” she wrote in her resignation letter from Jan. 11.

Hancock noted efforts she’d made such as improving accounting record issues and addressing a list of requirements for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) “will help a new Finance Director obtain and report financial information more efficiently in the future.”

Additionally, she mentioned several policies had been updated which would also improve the system.

She explained in her email she’d mentored Financial Administrator Elaine Griffin as much as she could and said Griffin knew “I will only be a phone call away.”

At the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on Jan. 19, Griffin was appointed interim finance director, and Watt addressed the situation.

“I know that you, as a single mom, were seeing this opportunity as one that would benefit you, and we do wish you well,” he said. “We know that this has been in the works for a while.”

Hancock’s last day with Hebron was today, and she begins work in Tolland on Jan. 30.

New Traffic Pattern Expected on Arrigoni This Weekend

by Joshua Anusewicz

With the first stage of the project to renovate the Arrigoni Bridge close to completion, motorists can expect a new lane configuration starting tomorrow, Jan. 28.

According to the state Department of Transportation (DOT), the eastbound and westbound travel lanes will be separated as work begins on the middle two lanes of the bridge. The eastbound lane – which runs into Portland – will be relocated to the south side of the bridge onto the newly-installed deck, while the westbound lane – into Middletown – will remain in its current location.

The DOT announced that the sidewalk on the south side of the bridge will remain closed during the second stage, as additional work is completed on the railings. The sidewalk on the north side will remain open for pedestrians.

The stage change is slated to begin at 2 p.m. on Saturday, the DOT stated, and is expected to be complete by Sunday morning, weather permitting. During this time, the DOT has advised that motorists can expect alternating one-way traffic to be in effect, so that the portable concrete barriers can be shifted to the center lanes.

The start of the second stage comes almost two months later than the late-November target date that was set at the beginning of the project. But despite the delay, the DOT has said the \$16.94 million project is still right on schedule to be completed this November.

“It’s going well; no problems or snags,” said DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick. “We are still on schedule to finish on time.”

Nursick added that weather concerns were “built into the schedule,” and the particularly dry winter has “been really helpful.”

He also understands that, weather-wise, they’re not out of the woods yet. “We’ve had very good luck thus far, because it’s been a very mild winter,” Nursick admitted. “But I don’t want to jinx it. It’s always a big variable, and it just can’t be predicted.”

As for the traffic concerns in the area of the bridge, Nursick said it continues to be “flowing a lot better than expected,” which he credited to the courtesy of the drivers. He said that because of the steady flow of traffic, the DOT has not needed to utilize additional police presence in the area.

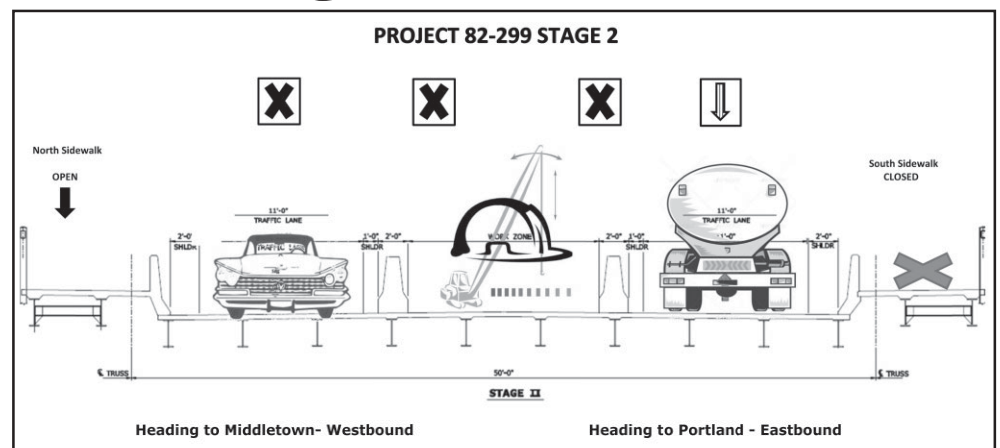
“We really appreciate the cooperation of the public,” said Nursick.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield was equally pleased with the local residents, who she said have been “respectful of others” while driving over the bridge.

“Some days have gone smoothly; some other days can get a little slow,” Bransfield said of the traffic. “But it’s been better than expected.”

She said the town has received questions and concerns about the project from Portland residents and residents of other towns in the area, and said she has responded to most of them. She said that if she has been unable to answer the questions, she has forwarded them to the DOT.

Bransfield said Portland Police have done “a very good job” controlling the traffic in the area, and have addressed the matter of vehicles going underneath the bridge to avoid the traffic, which was a concern she mentioned in October. Since drivers have been using the roads under the bridge as “a shortcut,” Bransfield said police have been instructed to only allow a certain amount of cars to enter the bridge from that road at a time. She said this has kept traffic flowing more smoothly on Route 66 and has



Beginning this weekend, traffic on the Arrigoni Bridge will be shifted to the north and south lanes as renovation begins on the two middle lanes. This work is expected to be completed in May, and then the project will shift into the third stage to renovate the north lane of the bridge. The Department of Transportation expects the entire project to be completed in November.

discouraged some drivers from attempting the shortcut.

The state of the businesses in the area has also been a concern, and Nursick said the DOT has been conscientious in keeping the businesses on Main Street in Portland and Middletown abreast of the status of the project. He said the DOT and the project coordinators have been attending meetings of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce in Middletown and trying to “mitigate the impact on the local community.”

“We’re doing the absolute best we can do,” Nursick said. “Aside from the safety of the drivers, the businesses are at the top of the list of concerns.”

The reality is, Nursick said, that with the scope of a project this size – one of the busiest crossings of the Connecticut River – everyone has to remain “cautiously optimistic” the project will be completed on time, with as little effect on residents as possible.

“This work has to be done, there is no way around it,” Nursick said. The bridge was built in 1938 and, structurally, has remained mostly the same. Three years ago, the DOT rated the bridge condition a three out of 10.

Now, the project moves into its next phase that is expected to be completed in May. The project, which is being funded completely by the state, is being built by the Middlesex Corporation of Littleton, MA and the DOT.

Weichsel Responds to East Hampton Police Issues

by Joshua Anusewicz

Since a new Town Council was elected and Interim Town Manager John Weichsel returned from medical leave in November, issues regarding the East Hampton Police Department have loomed over the town, with officers, elected officials and private citizens seeking action. This week, Weichsel addressed many of these issues in hopes of reaching a conclusion to the ongoing controversy.

Many of these issues surfaced over the past several months, as the town’s police union and members of the department spoke critically of Police Chief Matthew Reimondo and his handling of the police department. Much of the criticism stemmed from Reimondo’s decision to suspend Sgt. Michael Green (who has since returned to work) and a comprehensive investigation conducted by an outside party, attorney Eric Daigle, which found major deficiencies in the police department’s policies and procedures.

During that time, the police union president, Officer Michael Salafia, submitted a petition to the town requesting Green’s return and “no confidence vote” in Reimondo, both signed by the majority of the police department. Because of the union’s actions, Anne McKinney, who was serving as acting interim town manager at the time, began a separate investigation into the matters at the police department.

But in November, just several days after the election of a new Town Council, Weichsel returned from medical leave, leading some residents to believe that newly-elected Chairwoman Sue Weintraub had “fired” McKinney to avoid the police department issues from becoming

public. At the subsequent Town Council meeting, McKinney read her report and implored Weichsel to look into the complaints against Reimondo and the issues at the department.

Additionally, former councilor Christopher Goff requested that Weichsel investigate possible “mismanagement of departmental resources” and financial issues that Salafia had included in his “no confidence vote.”

Following these complaints, Weichsel has worked with Reimondo, Salafia, Green, Town Labor Attorney Pat McHale, and Union Attorney Douglas Hall to reach a solution to the complaints and “quietly resolve the issues,” he stated at Tuesday’s Town Council meeting.

On Thursday, Jan. 19, Weichsel submitted a document to the council that outlined and explained the measures taken for each of McKinney’s findings, which included “vehicle use,” “overtime in Portland,” “policies and procedures,” and “low morale.” Weichsel said that Reimondo had responded to each item in a detailed report that was “over an inch thick.”

Weichsel stated that most of the items were resolved and required “no further action,” but added that the matters of “policies and procedures” and “low morale” were in the process of being resolved. The policies and procedures, which Daigle had also been critical of in his report, are planned to be resolved in a new case management system and a complete policy manual, Weichsel said.

“This should help the officers in the department,” he stated. “I believe that more precision in these matters will help on the matter of mo-

rale.”

Also on the topic of morale, Weichsel acknowledged the claim that officers were in “fear of retaliation” from Reimondo. To that end, Weichsel explained that employees are protected by their union, the town manager, and the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration if they feel they are being retaliated against.

“Frankly, I recommend that the IBPO (International Brotherhood of Police Officers) meet with its EHPD members to make sure that they know their rights,” he stated. He continued to state that he had been working with Reimondo and Salafia to address that matter of morale and “incremental changes” had been achieved. “If we can move forward with a cooperative spirit, much of the morale problem can be eliminated,” he added.

Regarding the request from Goff to investigate possible financial mismanagement, Weichsel praised the work of the town’s finance director, Jeff Jylkka, who he said informed him that there was no evidence of “gross mismanagement of departmental resources.”

“There are problems in the police department but they are not financial,” stated Weichsel in a letter to Goff on Jan. 9. “Having some sort of investigation in this area would be counterproductive. Instead I intend to work with Chief Reimondo and the union to try to remedy these problems.”

Also during the past month, Weichsel was able to reach agreements to reinstate the practice of allowing EHPD officers to work overtime projects in Portland and reduce the sus-

pension of Green from 10 unpaid days to five.

The matter of overtime projects in Portland was addressed in a grievance by Salafia, who claimed that Reimondo’s decision to revoke that practice violated the state’s Municipal Employees Relations Act (MERA). By reaching the agreement, the grievance was withdrawn and officers are able to work overtime projects in Portland, as long as the work doesn’t take precedence over work in East Hampton.

Green’s suspension was reduced after he filed a grievance to challenge a 10-day suspension levied by Reimondo for conduct unbecoming of an officer. The agreement withdraws the grievance and reduces the suspension, reimbursing Green for five days of base pay.

With the steps that have been taken over the best few weeks, Weichsel said he has begun to see gradual improvement at the police department.

“I think things are a little better than before,” Weichsel said Wednesday. When asked if he believes that these decisions will continue to resolve some of the issues, he stated, “That is my hope.”

Some residents have expressed disapproval with the decisions Weichsel has made regarding the police department and believe the problems have not been resolved. When asked his thoughts on residents who have responded negatively to his handling of police matters, Weichsel said that he believes he has been “behaving in a professional manner.”

“With respect to the citizens, I can’t be guided by those thoughts,” he added.

EH Council Revisits Clear-Cutting on Lake Pocotopaug

by Joshua Anusewicz

The Town Council Tuesday revisited the matter of clear-cutting at 68 Spellman Point Rd., which has recently been the subject of a third-party investigation.

The matter was first brought to the council in December by resident Judson Landon, who lives across the street from the lot in question. Landon, a former member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said he believes the lot violated zoning regulations and that the clearing of the lot will cause harmful runoff to run into Lake Pocotopaug, which sits less than 100 feet from the foundation of the new home.

Landon stated the lot was approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission, which, via the state, has the authority to allow for building on the lake. He added, however, that the town's planning and zoning commission and Conservation Lake Commission were not aware of the lot being cleared.

But according to a Dec. 21 letter from Jim Carey, the town's building administrator, to Interim Town Manager John Weichsel, the applicants, Mary Ann and James Hubert, did appear before the inland wetlands commission and the Conservation Lake Commission, and no issues were raised. Carey told Weichsel he did not "recommend any action regarding this matter

at this time."

At a Town Council meeting on Jan. 10, Chairwoman Sue Weintraub presented the council with a proposal to conduct a third-party investigation into the lot by land use consultant John Pagini. She stated that if the building was within 100 feet of the lake, it would need to obtain a special permit from the Planning and Zoning Commission. (Carey refuted this point in his letter to Weichsel, stating that this was called a "buffer," which did not apply to the property on Spellman Point Road.)

Weintraub's decision drew harsh criticism from some council members, which continued at this week's meeting. After Weichsel announced that the investigation was "moving right along" during his town manager report, councilor Barbara Moore stated that she had spoken with the chairperson of the planning and zoning, inland wetlands, and lake commissions recently and they expressed their displeasure that the council was getting involved.

"We as a council have not gone to our commissions, and it's not right to treat them that way," Moore said.

Moore then made a motion to postpone the investigation until the commissions had a chance to look over the property.

Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. also opposed the in-

vestigation, adding that the state does not allow the legislative body of the town to overrule the decision of the town's zoning commission.

"We're walking a fine line," Hintz said.

Councilor Kyle Dostaler disagreed with Moore and Hintz, saying it would "be a mistake to stop" the investigation. "These issues have been going on for far too long," he said.

Weintraub agreed, stating that the town had spent over \$150,000 over the past few years in an attempt to keep the lake clean. "The clear-cutting is an ongoing concern and this is something that will help us move forward positively," Weintraub said.

"What are you trying to accomplish at Spellman Point Road?" Hintz asked.

Weintraub responded, "We need to see if a precedent was set here, if the zoning regulations say differently," she said.

Councilor Derek Johnson agreed with Weintraub. "I think this is to the advantage of the town," he said. "If it's systemic we need to be made aware of this."

The council brought Moore's motion to a vote, which did not pass with a 3-3 vote (Vice Chairman Glenn Suprono was not in attendance).

During public remarks, several residents weighed in on the matter, including resident Susan Fielding, who lives in the area of the lake.

She supported the idea of the investigation, particularly by a "neutral party."

"This is not an isolated case," Fielding assured the council.

Resident Irene Curtis also supported the investigation. She stated that she lives across the lake from the property and noticed that all of the topsoil had been stripped. She also added that the building's "footprint was larger [than the previous structure]."

Some residents, however, were not in support of the investigation. Resident Anne McKinney stated that not taking the matter to the commissions was "undermining the people who have served for so long."

"You're subjecting the town to lawsuits," McKinney said. "It's an insult to the people on these boards."

Resident Rita Gibbons agreed, stating that council was "closing the door after the horse had been let out of the barn." She added that the town should focus an external investigation into the police department, which she believes the four Chatham Party council members have "shoved under the rug."

The next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 14, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

Former EHMS Teacher Pleads Guilty to Child Porn Charge

by Joshua Anusewicz

Richard Hendricks, a former East Hampton Middle School computer teacher, pled guilty to one count of receipt of child pornography in federal court in New Haven last Thursday, Jan. 19.

According to David B. Fein, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut, Hendricks, 31, of Horse Hill Road in Ashford, will be sentenced on May 8; Hendricks faces a minimum prison term of five years and a maximum term of 20 years and a fine of up to \$250,000. He has been in jail since his arrest last June on possession of child pornography charges.

According to court documents and statements made in court, an investigation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations (ICE HSI) identified that Hendricks had used his credit card to purchase access to the live online viewing of minors in the Philippines performing sexual acts in 2009-10.

On June 6, ICE HSI agents seized two laptop computers, one desktop computer and two external hard drives from Hendricks' residence. Further investigation revealed that Hendricks used these computers to receive more than 600 images and 50 movie files of child pornography, including images of children under the age of 12, and images portraying sadistic or masochistic conduct or other depictions of violence, according to a release from the U.S. Department of Justice.

According to the release, the investigation into Hendricks' computers also revealed numerous images and videos of his students. The release states that although many of these files were related to Hendricks' duty as the school's yearbook advisor, investigators discovered that Hendricks "secretly took voyeuristic photos and videos of female students in his classroom." It also states that Hendricks took these files home and "manipulated some of these

images to enhance their visibility, and used a software program to attempt to visualize the private areas of clothed girls."

The release also states that during the investigation, the parents of children that were identified in the photos and videos were notified and, with parental consent, agents conducted interviews with the children.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office, along with ICE HSI and our other investigative partners, are committed to protecting children, the most vulnerable segment of our population, from harm," said Fein in a statement. "A teacher should share this same commitment. The type of illegal activity this defendant engaged in represents an extreme violation of trust and a heinous crime that merits the serious attention of our office."

Connecticut State Police and the East Hampton Police Department assisted in the investigation, and the case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ray Miller and Deborah Slater. East Hampton Public Schools did not conduct a separate investigation on the matter, but did provide psychological support for the students.

"We are pleased that this very troubling event is coming to a conclusion and are so appreciative of the support and professionalism of the Homeland Security team and U.S. Atty. Ray Miller," stated a release from East Hampton Public Schools this week. "We will continue to provide support in our schools for any child who has concerns."

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden could not be reached for additional comment on the matter this week.



Richard Hendricks

Colchester Police News

1/17: Ramon Hardnett, 36, of no known address, was charged with first-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

1/17: Alexander Ortic, 25, of 300 Timber Falls, Blakely, PA, was charged with first-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

1/18: Colchester Police are investigating a robbery that took place on Ivy Court. The resident reported she left her home around 9 a.m. and when she came back an hour later found that someone had taken numerous electronics from her home.

1/18: Mark C. Syphers, 25, of 174 Lake Dr., East Hampton, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

1/18: Zachary Stennett, 26, of 124 Cabin Rd., was charged with DUI, distracted driving and a cell phone violation, State Police said.

1/18: Michelle M. Adams, 40, of 7 Ivy Ct., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of a controlled substance, State Police said.

1/20: Raymond E. Greenwood, 60, of 82 Knights Ct., Southington, was charged with DUI, improper parking and insurance coverage failing to meet the minimum requirements, State Police said.

1/20: Jose O. DeJesus, 39, of 39 Stagecoach Rd., Windsor, was charged with improper parking and DUI, State Police said.

1/22: Nicholas Peters, 26, of Apt. 2A Westchester Hills, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

1/22: Dean Ouellette, 24, of 41 Mill Lane West, was charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, insurance coverage failing to meet the minimum requirements, operating a motor vehicle when license is suspended, failure to drive right and possession of a controlled substance, State Police said.

1/23: Joshua Winiski, 29, of 44 Balaban Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

Correction

In the Police News on page 16 of the Jan. 20 *Rivereast*, John R. Forbes IV was listed as living at 72 Skinner St. However, East Hampton Police said this week it has come to their attention that is not his address.

Forbes IV has no certain address, police said.

Portland Police News

12/27: Alex Niver, 27, of 107 Lebanon Ave., Colchester, was charged with evading responsibility and unsafe backing, Portland Police said.

1/17: Scott Weidt, 37, of 101 Prospect St., Enfield, was charged with sixth-degree larceny and third-degree criminal trespass, police said.

1/19: Colin Kilpatrick, 29, of 16 Middle Haddam Rd., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

Hebron Police News

1/20: An altercation occurred between two juveniles on a school bus on Scarboro Road, which subsequently led to their arrest, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

1/20: Terence E. Burkins, 25, of 28 Townley St., Apt. 1B., was charged with DUI, speeding and a license plate violation, State Police said.

1/23: Police are investigating a reported credit card fraud on East Hampton Road. The victim reported about a month ago she gave out her debit card information over the phone, and someone then used that information to make illegal purchases, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

1/10: Matthew Steven Cerasoli, 21, of 347 Keeney St., Manchester, was arrested for DUI and possession of narcotics, East Hampton Police said.

1/11: Jason Michael Pinney, 31, of 78 Mott Hill Rd., was arrested for fifth-degree larceny, police said.

1/12: Jason Pangretic, 32, whom police had no certain address for, was arrested for violation of a restraining order and criminal trespass, police said.

East Hampton Holds Forum on Search for New Manager

by Joshua Anusewicz

Last Thursday at East Hampton High School, roughly 30 residents braved the snowy conditions to attend the Town Council's first public forum, with the topic being the qualities, character and experience they are looking for in a new town manager. The forum was the first in a planned series that will give residents the chance to voice their opinions and suggestions on a range of community issues.

During the campaigns for last November's municipal elections, most Town Council candidates agreed that finding a new town manager was the top priority for the town. The town has been without a steady town manager for the last several years, and has often been a topic of controversy amongst residents.

With that in mind, the council utilized another idea from the campaign trail – public forums – as a way to gain input from residents.

At the recommendation of Chairwoman Sue Weintraub, the forum was facilitated by Mark Pellegrini, the director of planning and economic development for the Town of Manchester, who has assisted local governments to implement the vision and needs of communities for over 25 years. Weintraub said her hope was that holding a forum with Pellegrini would be the first step in finding the best candidate possible.

"I'm confident that with the opportunities that East Hampton has to offer, we will attract some stellar candidates," Weintraub said.

Along with town moderators Dale Maynard and Paul Hoffman, Pellegrini kicked off the forum by urging the residents to be "constructive, positive, respectful" and to welcome the opinions of others.

"Say what's on your mind and contribute and the town council will consider that while searching for a town manager," he added. "This is a brainstorming meeting."

Pellegrini broke the forum down into three questions for the residents to answer: "What professional, technical skills and experience should the town manager possess?" "What are the personal qualities and character traits desired in the town manager?" and "What are the main issues the new town manager will need to resolve in the short term?"

The first question that was raised regarding experience was first answered by resident Fran Klein, who believes that the individual should have a master's degree in business or govern-

ment and "at least 10 years" of experience as a town manager.

Patience Anderson, a member of the Board of Finance, agreed on the experience part, but recommended that the experience should be in "a more rural, small town and not a big city."

"The scale of the problems, solutions and resources is different," she added.

Resident Angela Sarahina recommended that the individual should "understand positive growth to benefit the community." When asked to elaborate by Pellegrini, Sarahina emphasized the importance of growth in economic development.

For personal qualities, residents suggested the traits that most would want out of a manager — "motivator," "honest," "approachable," "principled," "accountable," and "decisive" were just a few.

With all of the suggestions, Pellegrini joked, "It shouldn't be hard to find this person." He also pointed out that there will be certain traits that seem "contradictory," a good indicator of "the challenge the Town Council faces."

Regarding the main issues the individual will need to resolve, the residents mentioned many of the same topics that were raised during last fall's campaigns. Resident Cindy Abraham stated that an important issue would be "establishing trust with the town, the town employees and the Town Council."

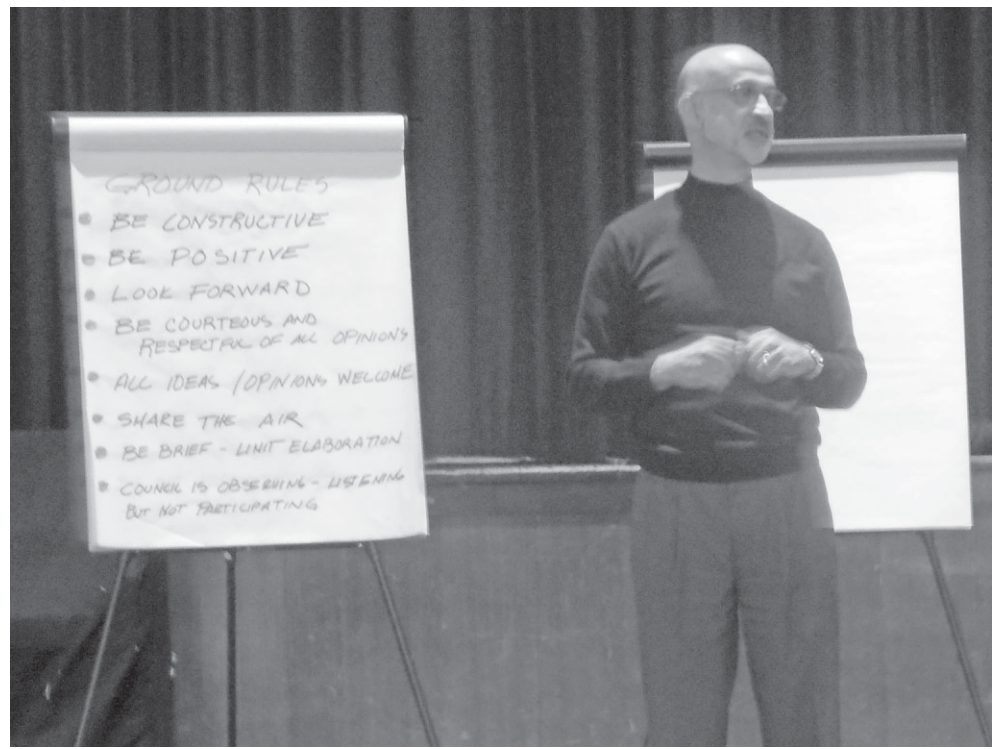
Mary Ann Dostaler, a member of the Board of Finance, stated that a main issue is the town facilities, which she believes have been overlooked, particularly the high school renovation project.

"The plans have sat there and haven't been addressed," she added.

Bill Marshall, a member of the Board of Education, included that the individual will need to help "improve employee morale," which he simply described as "bad."

Other recommendations included reviewing staffing levels, developing a long-term master plan, and reviewing ordinances and the Town Charter.

While the residents shared their suggestions, members of the Town Council in attendance sat quietly as Pellegrini recorded the ideas on pieces of large white paper that were posted on the wall of auditorium. These ideas were consolidated and handed out to the council at its meeting on Tuesday. (The list will also be available on the town's website, easthamptonct.org.)



At last Thursday's public forum, residents took the opportunity to share their thoughts on what the town should be seeking in its search for a new town manager. The forum was facilitated by Mark Pellegrini, the director of planning and economic development for Manchester, who compiled the residents' ideas on sheets of paper.

Also in attendance was current Interim Town Manager John Weichsel, the longest-serving town manager in the country, with 56 years of experience. At the conclusion of the meeting, he took the opportunity to comment on what the town should look for in a town manager.

"No model is the right model," he admitted. "I like to think of a city manager as a jack of all trades and a master of none. They should be generally familiar with all aspects of public administration."

Weichsel agreed that the educational background is of importance, but added that the town should avoid candidates that have worked mostly in the private sector. He also said that the individual should be "proficient in budgeting and familiar with labor relations," which is where he said he has spent most of his time as of late.

Another important trait Weichsel mentioned

was that the individual should be "non-partisan." Weichsel, who has been unaffiliated throughout his career, stated that this is part of the "town manager code" and part of the professionalism the individual should show.

At Tuesday's Town Council meeting, Weintraub said last week's gathering was "a great start for our first forum" and added that it was a "great turnout." Councilor Barbara Moore agreed, adding that she was "happy for all of the people that came out" and called it a "good start."

The council also went over a checklist and a timeline regarding the town manager search, which is expected to be completed in April. Weintraub asked all of the councilors to review the list from the forum and to start drafting their own profile for a candidate to provide the consultant that will be contracted to perform the search.

Library Urges Marlborough Residents to Take Survey

by Bailey Seddon

Richmond Memorial Library is asking residents to participate in a survey to help with the library's new long-range plan.

The survey began Jan. 10 and was composed by the library committee. Nancy Wood, the library's director, said the survey is intended to see what Marlborough residents think about how the library can best serve them. The survey asks residents if they use the library and how often they use it and also, if they don't use the facility, why not. The survey also queries people about where they get their reading and listening materials – if they get them from the library or other sources. The survey also asks how residents would like to learn about library events or news.

Wood said the survey is intended to be quick, with only 10 multiple-choice questions in all. Copies of the survey are available at the library, 15 School Dr., and the survey can also be completed online, at richmondlibrary.info.

The biggest problem, said Wood, is trying to gather information from non-library users.

"That's a concern that we have," she said. There are about 6,000 people in Marlborough, she said, and of that, 2,500 hold library cards.

Some family members might share a single library card, but there is still a portion of the population that do not hold library cards. As a result, Wood fears a significant number of people might be left out of the survey.

However, Wood was happy to report that the Richmond Memorial Library has the highest per capita use of any other library in the Hartford area, and that each library card holder uses an average of 22 library items per person, per year. Wood said Marlborough is an educated town that "understands the value of a public library." She is hoping this will translate into better survey results.

The survey and new long-range plan are being undertaken because the library hasn't had a new plan since 2005. Wood said the outdated plan was based on a proposed improved facility, which was voted down at town referendum in 2006. The improved facility would have tripled the size of the library, making it more of a community center. After the referendum was defeated, Wood said, "the plan became obsolete."

Richmond Memorial Library opened in 1987 and "nothing has really been done" to it since

then, she said. Following the 2006 referendum defeat, Wood said there have been other attempts to improve the library, such as a Small Cities grant the town applied for last year, which was denied.

"We have been sort of treading water" waiting for a grant to expand the library, Wood said, and with the passage of time, a new plan was in order.

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski said the previous administration had applied for a Small Cities grant in 2011 in the hopes of bringing the library into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This would have included putting in an elevator and expanding the upstairs "to provide additional spacing" and be more useful to those with disabilities.

As far as applying for grants in the future, Gaudinski said the Board of Selectmen is refocusing its grant applications for Small Cities grants for housing rehabilitation in the town.

"That's where the focus is," to help moderate income families by making their homes energy-efficient and code-compliant, Gaudinski said.

Gaudinski said she is glad the library is hav-

ing a survey to find out "what the library patrons want for services." Gaudinski said with the rising use of technology it is important to see what people use and how they access such things as books, magazines and movies. Gaudinski said she knows Richmond Memorial Library is dealing with a huge collection of items and a lack of space and she hopes the survey will "provide information that won't require as much space, in terms of shelf space."

Wood said a new proposal would give the library a new direction and focus. For instance, she said, the library was designed to house a collection of 26,000 resources, such as book and DVDs. Right now, the library has a collection of 50,000 and is "filled to the gills," Wood said.

The new plan will depend on what input the library gets back from its survey. Wood said the committee might also hold a focus group to get a better idea of what the public wants. The library committee is hoping to compile all the information and develop a proposal by June, she added.

The last day to complete the survey is Jan. 31.

Marlborough Parents Express Concern with Class Size Guidelines

by Bailey Seddon

Parents raised concerns last Wednesday, Jan. 18, about proposed new class size guidelines during a Community Communications meeting with the Board of Education at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School.

The meeting was called to give residents an opportunity to interact with school board members – something they normally can't do during a regular board meeting (as board members do not typically respond to residents during public comment sessions at meetings).

Board members Mimi LaPoint, Shannon Bielaczyc, Louise Concodello, Carole Shea and Corinne Chappelle took part in the meeting.

The guidelines parents expressed concern with were made from statistics from the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) after it visited the elementary school and reviewed enrollment projections for the next couple of years. According to its website, NESDEC is a private, not-for-profit educational organization that focuses on “planning, learning and teaching/professional development, executive searching and research and development.”

After visiting the school, NESDEC determined the elementary school could see as many as 20 fewer students next year, and in five years enrollment would be about 600. Enrollment at the school is currently 655. Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz said the trend is affecting other districts as well. Hebron and Andover have even greater projected enrollment decreases, he said.

In a letter to Sklarz with information on the enrollment trends here, Donald Kennedy, a demographic specialist for NESDEC, said the two

main factors impacting enrollment in Marlborough are steady declines in birth rates and, “to a lesser degree,” a drop in population resulting from the downturn in the real estate market.

From 1996-2005, Kennedy wrote, Marlborough had an average of 70 births per year, but more recently the rate has dropped to between 61 and 69 births per year. The drop, coupled with the real estate downturn, means fewer people in Marlborough and fewer children enrolled in the town's schools. As a result, the school board developed class size guidelines to budget for the enrollment changes.

As of now, there is an average of 18.4 students in each kindergarten class; 17.6 in each first-grade class; 19.8 in each second-grade class; 20.4 in each third-grade class; 18.2 in each fourth-grade class; 20.8 in each fifth-grade class; and 19.8 in each sixth-grade class.

The new proposed class size guidelines would call for 16-21 students in each section of kindergarten and grade one, 18-23 students in grades two through four and 20-25 students in grades five through six.

At the meeting Rich Storrs, the father of a kindergarten student, said he is very happy overall with his son's education, adding that his son is “having a wonderful experience” at the elementary school. Storrs said his family moved to Marlborough because of the “quality of education,” and he was concerned the proposed class sizes could impact it.

“It's never popular to raise taxes” to add more teachers, but increasing class sizes is not the answer, Storrs said. As an East Hampton Middle School teacher, Storrs said he knows how difficult it can be for a teacher to have too many

students and the best way to improve the educational experience is with smaller classes. Storrs said he knows the “elephant in the room” is the cost of adding teachers, but is something the community needs to discuss.

Storrs' wife, Jessica Porteous, worried about the board possibly cutting teachers at her son's school in reaction to the enrollment figures.

“My big concern is losing staff there,” she said.

Another parent, Brenda Bula, said she also is concerned about the proposed class guidelines. She said she volunteers frequently at the elementary school and sees how hard it can be for teachers when classes get too large.

“This community prides itself on its excellent and award-winning school system,” Bula said. She urged the board not to change the class size guidelines, adding that while she is aware of the tough financial decisions that must be made in a difficult economy, she does not want to see education suffer as a result.

Concodello said not having guidelines could be worse; that class sizes could end up getting “out of control” if there is no standard. “It protects the school and the students that are coming in,” she said. Bula said she and other parents agree there should be guidelines, but the issue is what those guidelines should be.

“I think it is helpful to know what surrounding towns have” as a comparison, Bula said.

Resident Cliff Denniss, who serves on the Board of Finance but said he was speaking as an individual, said he understands parents' concerns about class sizes, but that it is “all a part of the whole picture of a budget process.” Denniss noted the budget process will be going on for the next couple of months, and said

“staffing is part of any budget.”

Members of the board agreed and reminded residents that the class size guidelines are still being hammered out. They are intended to give the board an idea of how to budget for coming years.

LaPoint said the guidelines are just “another way to streamline everything” in the budget and stressed that they are still a “work in progress.” Shea added that Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School is still a great school and the board wants to make sure it stays that way.

“We have the highest math scores in the state,” Shea said. She also said some classrooms may be larger than others, but they would be staffed accordingly.

Concodello said there have been guidelines in the past that the school has not always followed. She said this year the board could have had four classes for the 99 students in sixth grade, but it opted to have five because they felt it would be better for the students to have smaller class sizes.

In a phone interview, Board of Education Chairwoman Betty O'Brien said the NESDEC information is very accurate in determining how many students are going to be attending school in coming years.

“We need that information” going forward with the budget, she said. She emphasized what other board members said, that the class size guidelines are “not mandates,” but a reference point to see what class sizes should or could be.

However, O'Brien said those guidelines could change, depending on the needs of students.

“It just helps you in the projection,” she said.

Colchester Selectmen Hear Update on Bullying

by Bailey Seddon

An update on a bullying survey administered last year to adults and students in town highlighted discussion at last week's meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Members of the town's Anti-Bullying Task Force attended the Jan. 19 meeting to talk about the survey, which was given out in April of 2011 to 1,998 community members and students in grades five through 12. Diane Hettrick, who established the task force, and Valerie Geato, director of Colchester Youth and Social Services (CYSS), presented the results.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Hettrick said the goal of the task force was to raise awareness about bullying and that by doing so, Colchester will “become a community that does not tolerate bullying.”

Hettrick said bullying can take the form of verbal, physical and cyber abuse and that bullying peaks in middle school. She also said that while parents and administrators may hear about some of the bullying that occurs in the school, information is only “the tip of the iceberg,” and that bullying is likely worse than most adults realize.

Of the adult residents that responded, 58.6 percent said they felt bullying is “somewhat to a big problem,” and that most of it takes the form of verbal bullying. Survey respondents said they felt a person's appearance was likely the most obvious target of the abuse.

Hettrick next presented the results of the student portion of the survey. Seventy-one percent of the students said they had never been bullied. When asked what they thought was the source of bullying, 45.2 percent said they believe it is based on the victim's appearance. Also, another 33 percent of the students said

they did not report bullying when they saw it or experienced it, whereas 30.6 percent said they have tried to stop bullying.

Geato told the selectmen bullies tend to be “popular kids.” The more popular a student is, she said, the greater the likelihood that person will feel the need to bully and make themselves feel better about themselves, she said.

The survey will also be the focus of CYSS' next Community Conversation, scheduled for Wednesday, April 4, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Bacon Academy. CYSS held a Community Conversation on substance abuse earlier this month, and Geato said the bullying conversation will follow much the same format, with organizers presenting information on the survey to parents and their children and then holding separate conversations with each group.

Geato said the survey and Community Conversation are important ways to help stop bullying. This is why the Anti-Bullying Task Force and Local Prevention Council are in the process of joining with the Youth Advisory Board to make a new group. This new group will meet the first Tuesday of every month at the Youth Center, from 5:30-7 p.m. Geato said the Anti-Bullying Task Force and Local Prevention Council used to meet separately, but has since combined their efforts to work on ways to prevent bullying.

“At the heart of it, we really had the same objectives in mind,” Geato said.

Likewise, the Youth Advisory Board's objective, she added, is to make the community safe for kids. So together, she said, they can “be a stronger force.”

“Bullying is taken very seriously at the youth center,” Geato said. “Staff is trained to respond

to any situation that requires intervention.”

Hettrick – whom Geato credited with bringing the issue “to the forefront” and making CYSS aware of bullying in the community – agreed, saying it is important that students have a positive school and community climate.

“You want the best situation possible for each child,” she said.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster asked Geato and Hettrick if they knew what impact bullying has on students. Hettrick said it affects them academically and socially, and noted that some bullying victims nationwide have even gone so far as to commit suicide.

“[Students] cannot put their best effort forward if they are constantly worried about being bullied,” she said. Even their homes are no refuge from bullying, she added, because of cyberbullies who verbally abuse kids on the Internet and through text messaging.

“The bullying has followed them home,” Hettrick said.

Geato added that for many students, being ostracized by their peers can be the worst type of bullying.

When they completed their presentation the selectmen thanked the two women for the report and for the work they do for Colchester's youth.

“Thanks for the great presentation,” Schuster said.

* * *

During the citizen comments portion of the selectmen's meeting resident Merja Lehtinen said she attended a town meeting where members of a commission were acting “inappropriately” toward residents who spoke during the meeting. Lehtinen would not identify at the

meeting which commission it was – although Schuster said this week she was referencing a Jan. 18 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Lehtinen told the selectmen she observed commission members snickering and mocking residents as they spoke.

“We are paying people to disrupt our taxpayers,” Lehtinen said. (Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission are not paid.) She said she was very concerned that citizens could not stand up and make a comment without being ridiculed.

“Colchester has changed,” Lehtinen told the board. She went on to say that she had always been proud of Colchester and the way members of boards or commissions acted towards residents. She said she would tell other towns about how friendly and open commission and board members are. However, after this meeting, Lehtinen said, “I was so disappointed” in the board.

“I just think we would be so much more successful if we were friendly again,” she said.

Lehtinen said after hearing the presentation on bullying going on between children, adults in the town also need to look at how they treat each other.

“Maybe we need to change ourselves,” she said.

In the phone interview, Schuster said he could not comment on the issue, because it is a personnel matter, except to say it was being looked into.

“I look into all citizens' complaints,” he said.

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is Thursday, Feb. 2, at 7 p.m., in Town Hall.

Colchester Teaching Jobs Would be Lost Under New Budget Plan

by Bailey Seddon

At least a dozen full-time jobs would be eliminated under the \$37.88 million schools budget proposed this week by Superintendent of Schools Karen Loisel.

Loiselle presented her 2012-13 spending plan, which calls for a 2.92 percent increase over this year's budget, to the Board of Education at its meeting Tuesday. She said the increase is the result of "small external forces" that are exerting pressure on the school system, including unfunded mandates, a decrease in federal funding, declining enrollment, increased health insurance and energy costs, as well as lagging state aid, Loiselle said.

She stressed that the reduction in jobs would require the layoff of just one full-time teacher. The remaining jobs would be lost through retirements and the close out of one-year positions.

"We had to look at everything and make hard decisions," said Loiselle.

During a PowerPoint presentation to the board, Loiselle said the budget calls for the elimination of 12.7 full-time employees, 12.2 due to enrollment decreases in the district and 0.5 from program cuts.

The two biggest reasons for the budget increase next year, said Loiselle, are the rising costs of health insurance and the loss of one-time funds the district got last year under a federal jobs bill. Health insurance rates are on the rise here, she said, because there has been a significant increase in medical claims over the last year or so.

"We couldn't have had a worse 13 months" in health insurance claims, said Loiselle. She said the school budgets its health premiums based on prior years' claims. For the 2011-12 budget year the board allocated \$3,931,578 for

employee health insurance. The 2012-13 proposed budget is \$4,668,482, a \$736,904 difference.

Despite the jump, Loiselle said the school still saves a significant amount on health insurance premiums by having a "self funded" medical plan, meaning the district pays most of the health care bills directly. The low rate of claims in previous years, she added, has saved the district \$5.6 million in a little over four years.

The other major factor in this year's proposed budget increase results from the loss of the federal jobs bill funds. In this year's budget the district is getting an extra \$550,000 under the federal program. Loiselle said the grants were given to communities in an effort by the federal government to stem a rising tide of teacher layoffs in Connecticut. Loiselle said the board knew the funds were for a one-time use.

Board of Education member Mike Egan said the district "took advantage of [the funds] while we could." Egan also said he believes the government only disbursed them for one year because officials believed the economy would pick up next year. However, he said, "the gap is a lot wider than anyone else anticipated."

Another example of "external forces" Loiselle mentioned was declining enrollment in the schools, which means fewer teachers will be needed next year. Loiselle said the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projects there will be 106 fewer students in the district in the 2012-13 school year.

Loiselle said enrollment is dropping here because of lower birth rates and a declining population. She said numerous districts across the state are experiencing the same thing. While layoffs would be painful, she said it may be

necessary.

However, Loiselle also mentioned the positives in her budget proposal. Loiselle said the proposed budget sustains, among other things, summer school for students with special needs, athletics, clubs and student support services. She also said while grade eight science, math and social studies has gone from 60 to 45 minutes of instruction a day, language arts has gone up to 90 minutes.

Another positive is that of the 10 groups the budget is broken into (such as tuition, transportation and salaries); five will see spending cuts of about 50 percent, four will see a 40 percent increase in spending and one remains unchanged.

"We are doing well," Loiselle said. "We are running cost-effectively."

She also said Colchester is below the state and District Reference Group (DRG) when it comes to per pupil expenditures, based on the latest information from the Strategic School Profile. The DRG compares towns of similar socio-economic status and found that Colchester spends \$11,194 per student, \$1,491 less than the DRG average of \$12,685. Because of this, the district is saving \$4.7 million a year on per-pupil spending. Loiselle and Ron Goldstein, the school board's chairman, said the district has worked hard to achieve the savings.

"That's an indication for the cost-effectiveness" of the board, said Goldstein.

Loiselle said budgeting can be hard because of the current economy and the continued expectations of schools by the state. In her presentation she outlined these as having "unfunded support." One of these is the Common Core State Standards, which will mean an in-

crease in the costs of teacher and paraprofessional training. Loiselle said she thinks the standards are good but it can be difficult when they are unfunded. Loiselle and Goldstein said the state used to provide 50 percent funding of such programs but no longer does.

"It's very frustrating to know what to do and not have the resources to make it happen," said Loiselle. "The [budget] process this year was excruciating," she said. However, she said the board will continue to do what it can with the resources and "work hard to meet these increasing expectations." Goldstein agreed.

"We have a good value in our education system here," he said.

Board of Finance member Rob Esteve, who is a liaison to the Board of Education, said he was "pleasantly surprised" by the proposal. He said he knew what the town had to do, and Loiselle and her administrative team "made a lot of tough decisions to reach that number." He went on to say that this year's presentation was even better than last year's.

Board of Education member John Reever thanked Loiselle for all her work, saying as a new member to the board her presentation made it a lot easier for him to understand the process.

Tuesday's meeting was the start of many planned budget discussions by the board. The next meeting will be Feb. 6, with a town and board education budget forum Monday, Feb. 6, at 7 p.m. at Cragin Memorial Library.

The next Board of Education meeting will be held Wednesday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. at Jack Jacter Intermediate School, 215 Halls Hill Rd., in room 120.

Work for Turning Lanes in Hebron Continues

by Geeta Schrayter

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting last Thursday, Jan. 19, an update was given on the work being done to make Route 66 safer.

During a Jan. 5 selectmen's meeting, various seniors expressed their concern over the lack of turning lanes on the road, and their desire to have one put in at the turn onto Loveland Road. The selectmen and Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney told the residents the town would be taking steps to contact the state and see what action could be taken.

At last week's meeting, Tierney said John DeCastro, Special Services Section Manager with the Bureau of Highway Operations at the state Department of Transportation (DOT) had been contacted and supplied with a request to petition for turning lanes.

Tierney said a response was received and the DOT had come out and looked quickly at the area.

"There's a criteria regarding turning lanes," he said, adding that he wanted to get "some sort of response for tonight," so he had sent the provided criteria back to Tom Fenton, the town's consulting engineer, who supplied the next steps.

One of the steps was the appointment of Tierney as the town's legal traffic authority, which had been done earlier in the meeting.

Tierney said he and Fenton were going to draft a letter to send to DOT, and more recent accident data had already been supplied.

"The state doesn't move as fast as we do," said Tierney. "I think we got a lot accomplished in just the two week period... I'm going to keep the Board of Selectmen along with the concerned citizens, and the delegates from [The Village at Loveland Hills Condominium Association] apprised" of what's happening.

"I just think we need to go through the process," he said, adding that he'd "come back with a report on the findings and will proceed in that manner."

Resident State Trooper Dan Greenwood was present at the meeting, and Selectmen Chair-

man Jeff Watt asked if there was anything that could be done from a short-term standpoint.

Greenwood said he'd address the constables and part-time help to let them know there was a specific area that needed extra patrolling, but said they already tend to monitor the area coming into town, close by Loveland Road.

"Usually our presence does slow people down, but other than that there's not much else we can do," he said.

Board of Selectmen member Gayle Mulligan inquired whether there was a way to bring a radar speed sign into the area, and Greenwood said they'd been discussing the possibility, and he would put in a request at Troop K to see if it could be used.

"I'll look into that and see if I can get it," he said.

George Sellman, president of The Village at Loveland Hills Condominium Association, thanked the selectmen for their reaction to the issue.

"We appreciate it," she said. "It's very meaningful to us."

Sharon McKenna, who was involved in an accident at the turn, when she was hit from behind by a truck, was also present at the meeting and said "I appreciate everything that you're doing too."

Changes to the Senior Center Dial-A-Ride fees were also announced at the meeting.

Laura Bennett with the Commission on Aging, said that after much discussion, the commission agreed to drop the fees from senior's homes and Stonecroft senior housing to the senior center, but would continue to have a fee of 50 cents one way for trips throughout town. Additionally, \$1 would be added for medical trips to outlying towns, to bring the fee to \$2.50 each way.

The changes were in response to the loss of a grant last year "of about \$5,000" said Bennett, "so we're just trying to balance that with the fees."

Senior Services Director Sharon Garrard explained an annual formula grant had been received from the DOT for the past five years, but that had been cut from the state budget.

Garrard went on to say people frequently coming to the senior center at the library found the fees "burdensome" so the Commission on Aging asked for them to be discontinued effective Feb. 1.

In regards to the \$2.50 fee for out-of-town medical trips, Garrard said, "We were actually getting comments that was a steal - to pay \$5 for a round trip to Hartford and it's a door-to-door service. So the sentiment was if we increase by 50 cents each way people would still be very receptive."

"It kind of balances overall," added Bennett. Additionally, she continued, there are scholarships available for individuals who are lower income.

Garrard said six scholarships had been provided to date.

"I think we did hear some rumblings [about the changes]" said Bennett, "but we also heard a lot of positive 'yeah, I'm willing to pay my way' kind of comments."

Watt said he appreciated the issue being examined, and said "we need to be very sensitive of the fact that we need to look out for [the seniors]," and said the results of the changes would be revisited again in six months.

Also at the meeting, Finance Director Lisa Hancock provided the selectmen with the status of the 2011-12 budget. In a memo to the selectmen from Jan. 18 she explained revenues looked to be on target. The revenue budget is \$34,088,139 and collections as of Dec. 31 were \$18,431,298.

Hancock said at the meeting approximately 51 percent of the budget had been expended. The revised expenditure budget is \$34,453,056 with \$17,493,329 expenditures as of Jan. 18.

She said Tropical Storm Irene and the October nor'easter had impacted the budget, but the

mild winter experienced so far this year could "absorb the cost."

Some shortfalls were estimated in both areas, but it was anticipated there would be revenues from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of about \$50,000 for the two major storms, which would help offset the revenue shortfalls estimated at \$49,678.

Also at the meeting, the selectmen appointed Financial Administrator Elaine Griffin as the town's interim finance director. Hancock is leaving Hebron for a position in Tolland (a related story appears in this week's issue). Her last day in office is today.

The annual interest rate for the Tax Abatement Ordinance was also reviewed at the meeting, and the decision was made to keep it the same as the year before.

Last year's rate was 1.5 percent, and selectman Brian O'Connell said he thinks the rate is fair.

"That rate would still be, in my opinion, very fair," he said. "We're not losing out on anything... it's a fair rate given all the market rates right now."

Watt agreed, saying, "I think that if we can keep it at the 1.5 percent I'd really like to do that."

Selectman Mark Stuart also added a higher rate would be contradictory to the point of the tax abatement program.

"The whole idea behind the abatement ordinance is to help people having trouble with their taxes," he said.

Additionally, Watt said information on tax abatement should be "publicized on a regular basis" so "the word may get out a little bit earlier," and taxpayers take advantage of the program.

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting is Thursday, Feb. 2, at 7:30 p.m., at the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St.

Hebron Elementary School Sign Dedicated

by Geeta Schrayter

During a morning assembly at Hebron Elementary School Wednesday, a dedication ceremony took place for the sign in front of the building touting its 2010 recognition as a Blue Ribbon School.

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz explained the meaning of the event to the students, saying “I’m here to talk to you about something very special and very important.”

Along with the students, numerous parents and guests were present and introduced by Cruz, including Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea and members Maryanne Leichter and Tina-Marie Blinn; Board of Finance member Malcolm Leichter and Board of Selectmen member Brian O’Connell – “see how important you are?” she said to the students after mentioning O’Connell’s name.

“The story started about a year ago...” she began, sharing with the students how a trip had been made to Washington D.C. for the National Blue Ribbon Awards Ceremony where the school’s plaque and flag were received.

“The reason we got that flag and plaque is because you’re really special,” said Cruz.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program “honors public and non-public elementary, middle and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels or have made significant progress and helped close gaps in achievement...” the National Blue Ribbon Schools

website explains.

Every year, the U.S. Department of Education looks for schools “where students attain and maintain high academic goals.” The schools are selected by various student achievement measures and “characteristics known from research to exemplify school quality...”

“Did you know this award is only given out [to a school] once every five years?” said Cruz. “That’s how special you have to be.”

After the school received the Blue Ribbon Award, Cruz said she received a call from Hebron resident Mark Young with the Forever Young Foundation who said the school needed a sign to show it had earned the award.

“He and his foundation, called the Forever Young Foundation, donated quite a bit of money to Hebron Schools because we didn’t have any money to put up the sign,” she said.

The sign was put up in December, and Cruz stated she was proud of the students and the work their teachers had done as well as the support of their parents.

“I’m so proud of you,” she said. “So today we just wanted to share those words with you and do a formal ribbon cutting ceremony to dedicate the sign.”

Bridget Varnum and Brendan D’Amaddio, recipients of the Superintendent’s Awards, held the blue ribbon across the stage in front of a large photo of the sign, while Cruz and Princi-



After Wednesday’s ribbon-cutting ceremony, numerous students were awarded Character Education Certificates, as part of a routinely-scheduled assembly on respect.

pal Amy Campbell snipped it in the center, followed by the cheers of the audience.

Afterwards, Shea and Cruz presented

Campbell with an additional sign to display somewhere else around the building, “for her first Blue Ribbon School” said Cruz.

Hebron Residents Speak Out on Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

The proposed budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year has been an item on the Hebron Board of Education agendas for several weeks, and the meeting last Thursday, Jan. 19, was no exception.

During public comment, numerous residents voiced their thoughts on aspects of the budget, including all-day kindergarten, class size and certain proposed cuts.

At the beginning of the meeting, residents Claudia Riley, Maura Baker and Lynn Fraga spoke in support of expanding all-day kindergarten.

Riley advocated the expansion due to rising expectations for students with the adoption of the common core standards.

“Whether a child receives 2.5 hours or 6 hours [of instruction] per day, the expectation of mastering core standards remains the same,” she said. “Unless we fix this, some children will pay the price – too much to learn in too little time...”

Baker said she thought it was the right thing to do, since early childhood education is “incredibly important.”

She went on to say one of the biggest advantages is the flexibility it provides.

“Given seven hours to learn instead of three, the kids are able to be kids in kindergarten – they’re able to be 5- and 6-year-olds,” she said.

However, Baker also expressed concern over the community’s reaction to the proposed expansion, which proved to be controversial when the board proposed it in 2010.

“I think if you don’t share information about this there will be a problem,” she said, adding there was a lot of misinformation about all-day kindergarten when it went to referendum in 2010.

Baker said the board has “a responsibility, if you put this in the budget, to really talk about what happens in all-day kindergarten” with the community.

Fraga presented herself as another advocate, citing stress as a major reason.

“That’s a lot of stress to put on [the students] to sit there and focus and to achieve the expectations that we as adults have put on them” in the amount of time a half-day provides, she said. “We need to provide the opportunity and a very positive learning environment to achieve that.”

Resident Loretta McDonnell also spoke in favor of all-day kindergarten but said now may not be the appropriate time to implement it.

“Personally I’m in favor of all-day kindergarten,” she said, but added it was necessary to look at the financial conditions in town.

“I think one foreclosure is one too many,” she continued. “If you look at the statistics we have a high number of foreclosures and liens.” She also cited increased use of the local food pantry and the need for heating assistance as a sign of financial struggles.

“While all-day kindergarten is very important and I think we are moving towards it,” she said, “I’m not sure that right now, and this year, is the time for it.”

Other residents were also present to express support for the half-day kindergarten program, as well as the ability to choose between the two.

“I just wanted to say there are some people out there that are interested in the half-day option,” said Sheryl Lage.

Kim Cooke agreed. “I am a mother of an incoming kindergartener and I am in support of a half-day kindergarten,” she said, adding, “I know there are other mothers that I’m friends with that are also in support of it.”

Resident Suzanne Thompson admitted she was “torn” between the two, but said she wanted to be able to choose.

“I feel like, as a parent, I would like the ability to choose, and I feel like a lot of people do feel that way,” Thompson said.

Thompson went on to say she had a son she put into the lottery for full-day kindergarten but he didn’t get in.

“But he’s doing just fine,” she said. “I think parents evaluate their children and what their needs are, and I really put a lot of stock in what mom and dad think.”

Discussion between board members took place later in the meeting, and Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz addressed the possibility of offering both options by explaining out of 87 parents that registered their child for kindergarten so far, five wanted a half-day session.

“It really wouldn’t make sense to have a half-day class for five children – but I think it’s still early” and there may be more registrations, said Cruz.

She added she’d like to work with the five families and “make [full-day kindergarten] work for those children.”

At the end of the meeting, additional residents added to the budget discussion. Joline Swanson spoke in support of half-day kindergarten, while Thompson said that “as a parent, to me, it’s more important that my child is in a small class – whatever that class may be.”

One presented option for kindergarten class sizes next year showed six sessions, each with 15.8 students. The Board of Education guide recommends kindergarten class size be under 18.

But another option brings the number of classes down to five.

Lage spoke again, saying she was “disappointed in the lack of discussion on class sizes for kindergarten” during the meeting, and added she “really would like to see consideration for not going down to five teachers.”

“I would just ask for some discussion, if you’re moving forward with the full-day model” on keeping six teachers and classes small, she said.

The altered form of the budget presented by Cruz at the meeting brought the proposed increase down to 1.8 percent from the original 3.89 percent.

Board of Education members had been asked what they wanted to see as a percentage increase at the Jan. 12 meeting, explained board chairwoman Kathy Shea, and on Jan. 19, they were asked once again.

The numbers given ranged from zero percent to under 2 percent.

“I don’t think anything over 2 is going to fly with voters,” said board member Maryanne Leichter.

Board member Tina-Marie Blinn agreed, saying the board wasn’t wasteful, but adding, “my thought would be to stay under 2 [percent].”

Lage expressed concern over the given numbers, and said, “I’m all for being fiscally responsible, but I’d be very concerned with the ramifications of a zero percent increase.”

Resident Heidi Nilsson agreed. “I’m worried that you’re not asking for enough money,” she said. “I know you’re being fiscally responsible but you can’t keep cutting year after year after year.”

Nilsson went on to say that “please just ask for what you need. There’s no fluff to cut – you cut it a couple years ago.”

Thompson spoke again, and expressed concern over some specific areas that could possibly be cut – an after school writing program that’s improved CMT writing scores for boys, and funding for different non-fiction materials.

“I support anything that gets boys reading and writing,” she said, adding possibly cutting non-fiction reading material was “just like a knife to the heart,” as the mother of three boys. “That’s what boys love,” she said, adding if the board considered getting little boys to read and write important, that they “consider keeping those materials available.”

Budget discussion will continue over the next few weeks.

Also at the meeting, the decision was made to search for a new assistant principal to fill the vacant position left after Amy Campbell became principal. A motion was made to fill the position through June 2013, after which the board would discuss restructuring administration. The motion passed 5 to 1, with Dominic Marino against, and Amy Lynch-Gracias abstaining.

The next Board of Education meeting is Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. at Gilead Hill School.

Obituaries

Colchester

Nancy F. Buckley

Nancy F. Buckley of Naples, FL, a former resident of Colchester and Old Lyme, passed away unexpectedly Monday, Jan. 9. She was born Feb. 15, 1942, in Middletown, a daughter of Joseph and Angelena A. (née Pellegrini) Ferrigno.

She received her master's degree in education from the University of Connecticut and two bachelor's of science degrees from Eastern Connecticut State University. She was an educator in the Norwich School System for 27 years and retired from the school system as principal of the John Moriarty Elementary School. She had been a resident of Naples since 2000, coming from Old Lyme.

Nancy was a career educator, devoted to her family, students and the care of her mother. She was a member of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Delta Kappa Gamma and served on the state Board of Higher Education. After moving to Naples, she worked at the Bentley Village Care Center as a companion assistant for the last 10 years.

She is survived by her loving husband of 44 years, Kevin W. Buckley; son and daughter-in-law, Denis P. and Kim C. Buckley; one grandson, Quinn A. Buckley and her mother, Angelena A. Ferrigno all of Naples, FL; She is also survived by her two sisters, Lenora (John) Bear of East Hampton and Barbara (Alan) Kiley of East Haddam, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. Memorial contributions may be made to Seton Scholarship Fund for Catholic Education, 201 Broadway, Norwich, CT 06360, Att: RLB, or to Dominican Nuns, 335 Doat St., Buffalo, NY 14211.

Portland

Roy J. Beach Sr.

Roy J. Beach Sr., 68, of Cromwell, formerly of Portland, husband of Elsie (Ray) Beach passed away Saturday, Jan. 21, at home. Born March 11, 1943, in Boone County, KY, he was the son of the late Ralph and Sarah (Webster) Beach.

He was a self-employed contractor, and was a U.S. Navy veteran having served during the Vietnam era.

Besides his wife, he leaves his sons, Roy Beach Jr. of Middletown, and Mark Beach and his wife, Dawn of Middletown; daughters, Faye Kelly and her husband, Patrick of New Britain, Billie-Jo Beach and her fiancé, Randy Ortiz of Cromwell and Peggy-Sue Clouser of Cromwell; brothers, Henry Beach of Dunlap, TN, and Clifford Beach of Independence, KY; sisters, Allena Jordan of Florence, KY, Ruby Vickers and Jennifer Huneycutt both of Covington, KY, Cheryl Brown of Williamstown, KY and Linda Hartman of Highland Heights, KY; grandchildren, Steven Beach, Tyler Barker, Nicole, Kayla, and Shiann Ortiz, Hunter and Morgan Beach and Luke Catania, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Jan. 25, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial was in Skinnerville Cemetery in East Hampton. Relatives and friends called Wednesday before the service, at the funeral home.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

East Hampton

Paul Francis Goodney

Mr. Paul Francis Goodney, 63, of Durham, passed away Friday, Jan. 20, after a courageous seven-year battle with cancer. He was a native of Worcester, MA, the son of the late Francis and Ruth Hennessey Goodney. He moved to Durham in 2003 from East Hampton with his wife, Linda.

Mr. Goodney retired after 37 years as a dedicated employee from the State of Connecticut as a director for the Workers Compensation Commission. His favorite pastimes were riding his Harley and making many new friends on his various journeys.

He is survived by his wife, Linda Goodney; two sons, Philip Goodney and Christopher Goodney; one daughter, Lauren Griswold; four step-daughters, Tammy Moore, Diane Chase, Suzanne Keenan and Elizabeth Anderson; one brother, Bruce Goodney; three sisters, Nancy LaRochelle, Karen Quinlivan, Mary Griffin; and 16 grandchildren.

Services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Diabetes Association, PO Box 11454, Alexandria, VA 22312.

Online condolences can be made at hudsonfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Elizabeth Theresa Bourque

Elizabeth Theresa (Taylor) Bourque, 86, beloved wife of Emile, passed away Sunday, Jan. 22, at Marlborough Health Care Center, with her loving family by her side. Born Dec. 16, 1925, in Hartford, she was a daughter of the late George and Alice (Quinn) Taylor.

Betty was a communicant of St. Andrew's Church in Colchester, where she also served with the Ladies Guild. She enjoyed life's simple pleasures.

Besides her loving husband of 41 years, Elizabeth leaves a son, Richard Stabile and his wife Lynne of Newington; a daughter, Linda Rentler of Vernon; a brother, Charles Taylor and his wife Betty of Manchester; four grandchildren and their spouses, David and Debbie Hockenberry, Michael and Lauren Stabile, Carrie Rentler, and Lorry Cornelio; 10 great-grandchildren; two stepdaughters, Louise Ouellette Quirion and Michelle Bourque, both of Lewiston, ME; four step-grandchildren; five step great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family and friends.

She was predeceased by a brother, George Taylor; a sister, Dorothy; and brother-in-law, Joe Pepin; and sister, Janice Stepien.

Friends attended calling hours Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The celebration of the funeral Mass followed at St. Andrew Church in Colchester. Burial will be in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 279 New Britain Ave., Suite 5, Kensington, CT 06037.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

William Henry Schwarm

William Henry Schwarm of East Hampton passed from this life Thursday, Jan. 19, at Hartford Hospital, surrounded by his loving family. He died after a long, valiant battle with kidney cancer.

Bill was born in Hartford June 14, 1940, to the late Bernard Frances Schwarm and Virginia Elizabeth Blake. He was a graduate of East Hartford High School and Central Connecticut State College. He served in the U.S. Army from 1958 to 1963 and was stationed in Heilbronn, Germany, for most of that time. He was employed by the Metropolitan District Commission for many years as a maintenance supervisor.

Bill leaves his wife of 46 years, Patricia, their son Michael, his wife Lisa, and their children Jacob and Bethany; their son David, his wife Sherry, and their children Amber, Kelley and Hayden; their son Robert, his wife Darlene, and their children Austin, Sarah and Andrew; a sister, Virginia Ann D'Onofrio; and a special family friend, Marlene Herman. He also leaves one aunt, Ruth Blake, several very special cousins, several nieces and nephews. He leaves several close friends, including Jim Adams, who was like a brother to him.

Along with his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, Richard Blake Schwarm.

Bill was a member of the Colchester Fish and Game Club, and The Quaker Hill Rod and Gun club. He enjoyed taking care of his home, shooting skeet with "the fellows," hunting and fishing, watching UConn basketball, vacationing in Hawaii; but most of all he enjoyed his family.

A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 28, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church, East Hampton. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Colchester Fish and Game Club (to be used to sponsor a youth program), c/o Frank Kozikowski, Skeet Chairman of the Colchester Fish and Game Club, P.O. Box 5, East Glastonbury, CT 06825, or the Harry and Helen Gray Cancer Center, Hartford Hospital, Fund Development, 80 Seymour St., P.O. Box 5037, Hartford, CT 06102.

The family wishes to thank all of the doctors and medical professionals who were involved in Bill's care, especially Dr. Jeffrey Kamradt who was a real partner in Bill's five year battle with cancer. They would also like to thank his Visiting Nurse, Eve, other members of the Hartford VNA and the wonderful group who looked after him on CB2 at Hartford Hospital. His wife, Pat, would also like to thank Bill's and her families, friends and neighbors who have been so supportive during this stressful time.

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

Marlborough

Barbara Evertson

Barbara Sager Evertson, 94, of Marlborough and a former lifelong resident of Moravia, NY, passed away Friday, Jan. 20, at the Marlborough Health Care Center. Born in 1917, Barbara was one of three children born to George and Pearl Sager.

She was predeceased by her two daughters, Elaine and Virginia, brothers Kennard and Jack, as well as her husband Clarence.

She leaves behind two sons and their wives, William and Karen, residing in Connecticut, and David and Sandra, residing in Texas, and a grandson Ian.

Barbara had many ties to the Moravia community where she resided until the last several years. She taught school in Moravia before becoming a bookkeeper for The Moravia Body Shop, a family business. Barbara was active in the Moravia Congregational Church, the Election Board, Indian Mound Cemetery Association and The Owasco Valley Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star.

Barbara delighted in friends and family and maintained years of correspondence with those far afield.

As per Barbara's wishes, her ashes will be returned to Moravia's Indian Mound Cemetery for placement in the family plot at the convenience of her children.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Barbara's name may be made to East Hampton Congregational Church, P.O. Box 237, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

East Hampton

Charles Dougan

Charles Dougan of East Hampton, beloved husband of Barbara Dougan, passed away peacefully Sunday, Jan. 22, at Middlesex Hospital. Born in Meriden Aug. 18, 1947, he was the son of the late Clarence and Hazel (Mottram) Dougan.

He served in the Vietnam War from 1969-1970.

Charlie was an avid reader and with Barbara traveled extensively throughout Europe, the British Isles, Mexico and Canada. He was an aficionado of music, art, interior design and gardening. He loved to cook and frequent restaurants of international cuisine.

Along with his wife, he is survived by his sister Ann LaRussa and her husband Anthony of Wallingford, his brother-in-law Ned Grayeb and his wife Kathy of Cheshire, his nephews Brendan and Keith Grayeb and Michael LaRussa and his niece Kate.

There are no calling hours. A private Mass will be celebrated in his honor at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice Program, c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Richard J. Michaud

Richard J. Michaud, 58, of East Hampton, passed away Monday, Jan. 23. He leaves his devoted partner of 32 years, Richard McDonough.

He is also survived by three brothers, Roger, Daniel and John Michaud; two sisters, Theresa Boutwell and Carol Lavey; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Rich was predeceased by his parents, Eugene and Jeannette (Boucher) Michaud.

He grew up in Hartford and attended LaSalette Seminary in Altamont, NY, from 1972 to 1974, while training for the priesthood. He received an associate's degree in surgical technology from the Greater Hartford Community College. He was a dedicated and much loved nurse at UConn Health Center for the last nine years and previously worked at several greater Hartford hospitals and surgical centers in various fields.

Rich was an enthusiastic and energetic gardener and rock wall builder. One of his loves was tending the woodlands surrounding their acreage and harvesting logs for heating their country home. He was a unique joy, constant inspiration and friend to all who knew him.

A memorial service will be held at Second Congregational Church, 52 Middle Haddam Road (Route 151), Middle Haddam, at noon Saturday, Feb. 18.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions to the Second Congregational Church.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Mary Durkin Johnson

Mary Durkin Johnson, 94, of East Hampton, widow of the late Donald R. Johnson, died peacefully Thursday, Jan. 19, at Marlborough Health Care. Born Oct. 30, 1917, in Scranton, PA, she was the daughter of the late John and Agnes (Horan) Durkin.

Mary had lived in East Hampton for more than 62 years and was retired from Pratt & Whitney, where she had worked as an office clerk.

She is survived by her four sons, Donald J. Johnson of East Hampton, Jesse J. Johnson of New Hampshire, Wayne Johnson of Coventry, Scott Johnson of East Hampton; two daughters, Maureen Peoples and her husband Richard of East Hampton, Bonnie Reyes of Hartford; 13 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

The family would like to express their gratitude to Marlborough Health Care, especially to Christine, who took special care of Mary during her time there.

A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Saturday, Feb. 4, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

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

East Hampton

Howard Underwood Bush Jr.

Howard Underwood Bush Jr., 67, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Patricia "Pat" (Agnew) Bush, died Tuesday, Jan. 24, at his home, surrounded by his loving family. Born July 25, 1944, in Hyannis, MA, he was the son of the late Howard U. and Dorothy M. (Smith) Bush.

Howard was a graduate of Haverford College in Pennsylvania and had worked as an IT specialist of the Aetna Insurance Company for 28 years until his retirement. Howard and Pat had lived in Glastonbury before moving to East Hampton in 1979.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his daughter Stephanie Ann Bush of Newtown, his foster daughter Denise Babineau of Summerville, SC, a sister, J. Patricia Barron of Tennessee, two grandchildren Brandon Thomas Johnson and Amanda Virginia Johnson.

The family will receive friends at their home at 11 Old Middletown Ave., East Hampton, today, Jan. 27, starting at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit or the Middlesex Hospital Oncology Department c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457, or to the American Cancer Society 825 Brook St. I-91 Tech Center Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Hebron

Robert D' Ambrosio

Robert D' Ambrosio, 63, of Palm Beach Gardens, FL, formerly of Hebron, passed away Thursday, Jan. 19. He was born in Hartford on Aug. 30, 1948, to Olympia (Coiro) and the late Vito D' Ambrosio.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his wife DeLoris, his daughter Dawn Denton and her husband Darin of Florida, stepdaughter Mallissa Harden of Florida; grandchildren Antonio, Dominick, Chadwick and Nicole, brothers William D' Ambrosio of Hebron, Patrick D' Ambrosio of Georgia and John D' Ambrosio of Florida; and sister Isabella St. Pierre of Florida.

Donations may be made in his memory to Hospice of Palm Beach County, 5300 East Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL. 33407, or visit hpbcc.com.

To offer online condolences, visit us at aycockfuneralhomejupiter.com.

Colchester

John Hutchings

John Hutchings, 91, of Preston, husband of Barbara Meehan Hutchings, died Sunday, Jan. 15, at Harrington Court Healthcare in Colchester. Born in Amherst, MA, on July 30, 1920, he was the son of Herbert Colby Hutchings and Aurelia Wentworth Hutchings.

He married Barbara W. Meehan in Providence, RI and on Nov. 2, 2011, they celebrated 68 years of marriage.

John was a veteran of World War II who left the University of Massachusetts in Amherst during his junior year to join the Army and served from 1942 to 1946. After the war, he continued his education and worked as a metallurgist for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford. John then was employed by McWilliams Forge Company in New Jersey where he worked as quality control manager. Later in his career, he returned to Connecticut and worked as an engineer at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics in Groton until his retirement in 1977.

His happiest days were spent in his garden overlooking the hills of Preston.

He is survived by his wife and his children, Alan and Laurie Hutchings, Barbara and Bobby Dean Landreth and Bruce Hutchings. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Amy, Suzanne and Zachary Hutchings, and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brothers, Herbert Colby Hutchings and Robert Wentworth Hutchings.

His services and interment will be privately held at the convenience of the family, which asks that donations be made in his memory to the Preston Volunteer Fire Company, 412 Route 164, Preston, CT 06365.

Labenski Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.

Colchester

Doris C. Wiggins Todd

Doris C. Wiggins Todd, 77, of 20 B Plumtree Dr., Norwich, died Tuesday morning, Jan. 24, at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was born in South Attleboro, MA, on Oct. 28, 1934, the daughter of the late Fernand and Pauline (Claeys) Poncin.

Doris was last employed as a machine operator at the former King-Seeley Thermos Co. before retiring. She enjoyed ceramics, knitting and quilting. Her two granddaughters were the greatest love of her life.

On March 31, 1979 she married William A. Todd Jr. in Norfolk, NY. He died April 3, 2011.

Survivors include one daughter, Nancy Franklin of Norwich, one stepson William A. Todd III of Nashua, NH; her two granddaughters, Jillian and Sara Franklin; her five step-grandchildren, Jack Sweeney, William A. Todd IV, Anna Sweeney, Dillon Todd and Madeline Todd.

She was predeceased by her stepdaughter, Madeline Amy Sweeney.

Calling hours at the Guillot Funeral Home, 75 South B. St., Taftville were Thursday, Jan. 26. A memorial Mass will be celebrated today, Jan. 27, at 11 a.m., at St. Peter & Paul Church in Norwich. Burial will be private.

Portland

Herbert W. Coman Jr.

After winning many battles with cancer, Herbert W. Coman Jr of Portland lost the war and marched on to meet his maker Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the age of 81.

Herb was born in Ledyard on April 16, 1930, the son of Herbert Coman Sr. and Fannie (Sanger) Coman. He lived his early years in Norwich. Herb began to hunt and fish at a young age and his love of the outdoors continued throughout his life. He hunted the woods of Connecticut and his fishing included waters as far away as Chibougamau, Canada where he fished with family and close friends for many years. He attended Norwich Free Academy. He was a standout athlete and excelled in the sports of basketball, baseball and boxing. He graduated from NFA in 1948.

Herb and Nancy met working together at Norwich State Hospital and were married on June 8, 1954. Herb joined the Connecticut National Guard in 1948. He entered as a private in the 745th Gun Battalion in Norwich. He served as battery commander of the Nike Ajax missile sites in various locations across the state. During those years he attended numerous military schools in El Paso, TX, Georgia, Mississippi, including the prestigious Army Command and Staff College in Colorado. He retired in 1985 as Chief of Staff obtaining the rank of Brigadier General after 37 years of service.

Throughout his distinguished military career he earned numerous decorations and meritorious service medals, including the Connecticut Long Service Medal, Ct Emergency Service Medal, Outstanding Unit Service Award. Herb's spirit for his country and love of the guard was carried forth as his four sons served as members of the CTARNG.

Following his retirement, Herb and Nancy began to spend their winters in Florida where he developed his love for golf. He served as President and Historian of the Inner Circle Golf Club in Delray Beach, FL.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 57 years, Nancy (Brink) Coman, daughters, Beth Rau and husband, Dennis C. Rau of Portland, and Deborah Rooth and her former husband and friend, Curtis C. Rooth of Portland, sons, Mark Coman and wife, Ilene of East Haddam, John and his wife, Sandra Coman of Portland, and Matthew Coman of Middletown. He was the beloved grandfather of 10 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren, with a sixth due to arrive in March. He is also survived by sisters Joan Allen of Danielson, and Isabelle Bemis of Hampton, several cousins, nieces and nephews as well as close friends, Brigadier General Nathan G. Agostinelli, CTARNG, and Colonel Howard Belinsky, US Army.

He was predeceased by a sister, Fannie Coman Tedeshi; two sons, Herbert W. Coman III and Scott Charles Coman; and granddaughter Katie Rau of Portland, who was a firefighter with the Portland Volunteer Fire Department.

Relatives and friends may call today, Jan. 27, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., from 3-7 p.m. A private burial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 28, at the Coman Family Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center, 536 Saybrook Rd., Middletown, CT 06457.

The family would like to thank Dr. Fogarasi and staff at the Cancer Center, Joe Bordonaro and his staff at Bordonaro's Pharmacy and Sue from the Hospice VNA for their prompt and compassionate support. Herb will be missed as a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend.



Marlborough

Lisa Tollis

Lisa Tollis, 31, of Coventry, formerly of Marlborough, died Monday, Jan. 23, at Hartford Hospital.

Born Aug. 21, 1980, in Hartford, daughter of Sabino and Ivana (DeChellis) Tollis of Marlborough, she had lived in Coventry for the past five years. Lisa graduated from Quinnipiac University and worked for Ameriprise.

Besides her parents she is survived by a sister, Giulia Tollis and her husband Ken Otto of Orlando, FL; a brother, Luigi Tollis of New York, NY; her grandparents, Giulia and Luigi Tollis of Berlin; her aunts and uncles, Adele and Mansour Karimian of Rocky Hill, Anna and Tony Lepore of Ontario, Canada, Maria Tollis of Italy, Emilio DeChellis of Italy; and several cousins.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 28, at 11 a.m. in St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. Friends may call on the family at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, today, Jan. 27, from 4-8 p.m., and Saturday morning from 9-10 a.m.

Lisa was a tremendous supporter of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation; throughout her adult life, Lisa volunteered her time on numerous occasions to the cause, including several "3 Day" walk events.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Connecticut Affiliate, 350 Church St., Hartford, CT 06103.

To share a memory, visit mulryanfh.com.

Colchester

Alfred J. Landry

Alfred J. Landry of 136 Hunters Rd., Norwich, passed away Saturday, Jan. 21, at Harrington Court, Colchester.

Born in Norwich on June 6, 1926, he spent his first 15 years on Fishers Island, NY where he learned to love the sea. He joined the U.S. Air Force and became a medic, transporting injured soldiers by train back to hospitals in the U.S. He played semi-pro football for the Norwich Bulldogs and the Danielson Black Hawks as a quarterback. He worked at E.B. as a sheet metal worker and later he owned Frank's Autobody Shop.

He leaves his wife Mary and son Matthew, and his 10 children with his former wife Kay, Mary Latham, Dennis Landry, Theresa Strickland, John Landry, Thomas and Mark Landry, Eileen Perry, Lorainne Long, Maureen Mikolajcik; 17 grandchildren; three brothers; two sisters; and nieces and nephews.

"A Silent Hero," A Veteran died today. He lived a long life, in a quiet simple way. Not a word was ever spoken, about the Great War. A proud medic was he, his country couldn't ask for more. In retirement he enjoyed college sports on TV, but his greatest passions were woodworking and the Sea. I watched the master, work with old boards he found, I will never forget, sailing on the Tortuga in the sound. His skin was rough and his hair turned gray, results of hard work, he did everyday. Then a terrible disease took over his mind, it robbed some of his memories before he died. He lived 85 years, some would say a very long life. He raised a large family with a prior wife. We'll see you in the heavens, when it is our turn to go. For now sleep gently, Al – you will always be our silent hero. In loving memory of Al – Bill Donaldson.