

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Home Again... With the help of his wife Carrie, 22-year-old Marine Corporal Jacob Kvasnik of Colchester had the pleasure of untying a yellow ribbon tied around a tree on the Veterans Town Green last Sunday. The move signified his return home from seven months in Afghanistan. See related story and another photo on page 12.

Dog Boarding Camp Applicant Pulls Plans

by Melissa Roberto

The dog boarding camp proposed for Bull Hill Road in Marlborough – which has been the subject of much discussion in town in recent weeks – is not going to happen, as applicant Mark Cave has decided to not move forward with the project.

Zoning Commission Chairman Kevin Asklar made the announcement at last Thursday's meeting of the commission.

Cave, the owner of two Country-Dogs Boarding Camp facilities in Virginia and Pennsylvania, had wished to turn one of the horse stables at Lynn Wolf's property at 15 Bull Hill Rd. into a dog boarding camp. His company converts horse boarding facilities into dog care businesses that care for dogs on a long-term basis.

The Town of Marlborough received Cave's land use application on Sept. 12, and since that time, residents of both Marlborough and Colchester – as a portion of Wolf's property is located in that town as well – have expressed interest in the project. Residents packed a public hearing on the proposal last month, and again filled the Town Hall meeting room for the Dec. 6 Zoning Commission meeting.

Many who spoke at last month's hearing expressed displeasure with the proposal, and were worried that approval of this application would pose four major conflicts in the neigh-

borhood: excessive dog barking, an increase in traffic, dog waste management, and a decrease in property values.

The Nov. 15 public hearing featured a standing-room-only crowd of at least 120 people. Members of the public listened to Cave's proposal and then had the opportunity to voice their concerns, and a majority of the feedback was negative.

Zoning Commission member Richard Banbury – a member that has served for one year and also served in the 1990s – said that during his time on the commission he has never seen as large of a crowd as the Nov. 15 hearing.

"I was glad to see that many people willing to come in to tell the Zoning Commission reasons why they objected the proposal," he said of the hearing.

But it was the Dec. 6 meeting that finally provided residents with some answers. Some attendees gasped as they heard the news of Cave's withdrawal, which terminated the application altogether.

In addition to the withdrawal of the applicant, Asklar and other members of the Zoning Commission shared their own concerns regarding the application and the community's reaction to it during the Dec. 6 meeting.

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Hebron Celebrates Longtime Superintendent

by Geeta Schrayter

On Monday night, Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz bid a fond farewell to the community she's been a part of since 2005.

Hebron Public Schools faculty and community gathered for a farewell fete for Cruz in the activity room at Gilead Hill School. Holiday tunes played in the background while mingling attendees enjoyed light hors d'oeuvres and a cake that wished Cruz "good luck." Cruz herself floated about the room, talking with different individuals and giving out hug after hug.

The event was held to recognize Cruz's seven years as Hebron's superintendent – a tenure which officially came to an end today; she starts next week as the superintendent of schools in Plymouth. But her time in town won't be forgotten, and several accomplishments were mentioned that will remain as a lasting legacy long after the sound of Cruz's typically high-heeled feet stop echoing through the halls.

Accomplishments mentioned included the schools' partnership with China, which began when Cruz took a trip there in 2007. That partnership strengthened when a group of faculty, students, relatives and community members journeyed to Lin Yi Elementary School this past April, and then, just last week, a group of Chi-

nese students and teachers paid a return visit.

In addition, Hebron Public Schools can now boast of having all-day kindergarten which was implemented this year, and a School Readiness Program. The latter is a grant program that provides funds for the school to offer 18 preschool slots to low-income families.

Support for technology was mentioned as well, and in an article Cruz wrote for the November issue of the *Hebronian*, she mentioned there are now SMARTboards in every classroom, and keyboarding is taught to all students in grades two through five.

In addition, during Cruz's time in town, the expectations have been raised for teachers as well as students, those in attendance Monday said.

"People are always talking about raising the bar for kids," said special education teacher Diane Hall, "but she's raised the bar for teachers."

"She'll be greatly missed," added sixth grade teacher Paula Graef.

"There have been a lot of special accomplishments, like all-day kindergarten," Cruz said Monday. "But what I'm most proud of are the teams built in the schools that work together."

See Superintendent Page 2



Hebron Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea presented Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz with a pair of earrings Monday night, at a celebration honoring Cruz, who is leaving to be schools superintendent in Plymouth.

Holiday Shopping Guide Inside

Dog Boarding cont. from Front Page

"I really do appreciate the people from Bull Hill in Marlborough and Colchester for their concerns," he said. "My biggest issue with this application was [receiving] unsolicited letters to my home, my personal address, threatening me."

All of the commission members received anonymous letters to their home addresses. Asklar told the public that his wife wanted him to quit the commission because of the threatening letters.

Zoning Commission Vice Chairwoman Susan McFarland agreed with Asklar as she raised some of the letters she received in the air. She sarcastically added that receiving the threatening letters at her home made her want to approve the application.

The anonymous letters informed commission members that pictures of their cars and license plates had been taken. "It's a horrible thing," she said to the crowd. "Just picture yourself getting home from a long day and you open your mail and you have hate mail which you did nothing to request."

Town Planner Peter Hughes said there has been "obnoxious, unbelievable behavior" since the public became informed of the application.

Resident John Keating in the crowd fired back in response to the commission, asking, "Why are you lecturing us when you put us in this position?" Keating was one of multiple residents that hired attorneys to oppose the dog boarding camp.

Peter Hughes confirmed that the Zoning Commission followed the necessary required process for special use applications, which is to file a public hearing within 65 days after a special use application is received.

"You wasted our time, and you're chairman of the Chatham Health District!" Keating yelled to Hughes, blaming him for holding a public hearing for an application that was incomplete.

Asklar confirmed that Cave submitted an incomplete application. However, Hughes in-

formed the public that "every special use application requires a public hearing whether it's complete or not."

The heated discussion at the Dec. 6 meeting was put to rest as Colchester resident John Appleby expressed his appreciation for the commission's dedication to the application and apologized for the trouble they endured, such as the anonymous letters sent to their houses.

"It's disappointing that as a small community it has to get to this point where people are taking that kind of extreme measures to get the point across," he said.

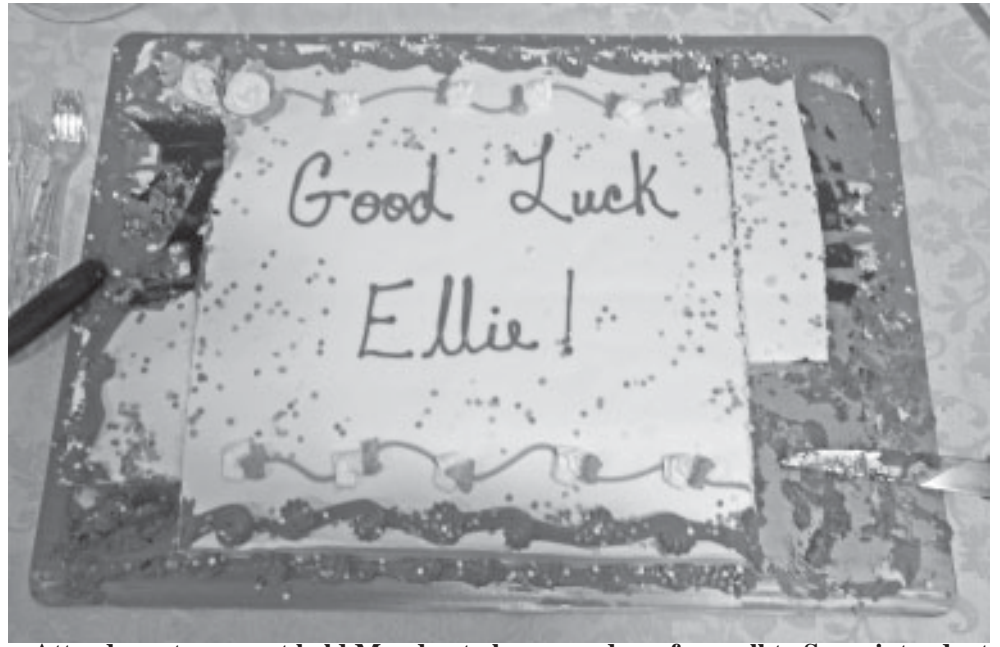
Hughes also confirmed that "there would have been no way to act in a positive manner due to the complete lack of information" of Cave's application. He added that Article 5 of the zoning regulations require the applicant to provide a site development plan, which Cave did not provide.

Although Cave was unable to be reached about his decision to withdraw his application, Banbury said he was "not at all" surprised by Cave's decision. Banbury said he "personally" believed that Cave's decision to pull out was probably made after "90 percent" of the public comments made during the hearing opposed the idea.

During Cave's proposal to the public during the hearing, he said that he did not want to "sugarcoat anything." While providing information about what he planned to do, Cave said that if his business moved in and the residents were "up in arms about it, then it would be a bad move for us."

Wolf's property at 15 Bull Hill Rd. is considered residential property, Hughes confirmed. However, a special use permit that was approved in the early 1970s permits horse riding activities and "commercial stable riding lessons."

Wolf could not be reached for comment for this story.



Attendees at an event held Monday to honor and say farewell to Superintendent Ellie Cruz enjoyed cake and hors d'oeuvres as they thanked Cruz for her dedication over the past seven years and wished her well.

Superintendent cont. from Front Page

"I feel this group will find a way to overcome any obstacle, no matter what," she added.

Gilead Hill School Principal Kathy Veronesi, who will step in as acting superintendent upon Cruz's departure, said she was "grace under fire," adding, "the bigger the crisis, the calmer she is."

Veronesi added Cruz had an urgency to make things happen, and said there was much that wouldn't have occurred without her.

"And that is Ellie Cruz's legacy," she said. "And it will live on."

"I'll miss her terribly," said Board of Education Chairman Kathy Shea. "The community was very lucky to have her."

Board members Maryanne Leichter and William Moorcroft felt similarly.

"I'm sorry to see her go, but excited for her new opportunities," said Leichter. "She was a great leader to the community."

Moorcroft said the average length of time superintendents typically stay with a community is about three years. In light of that, he thanked Cruz "for a tremendous amount of years."

"I think her leadership was outstanding," he said, adding Cruz and her team "from teachers to administrators has really done the district well."

"We have challenges ahead – there are big shoes to fill, but the board is up for the challenge," he said.

Along with the board, other members of the community – like AHM Youth and Family Services Director Joel Rosenberg, RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski and state Rep. Pam Sawyer – were present to recognize Cruz's work.

Rosenberg called Cruz a "huge supporter" of AHM and all of the school-based family resources. He said she was a "champion of partnership" with AHM, and a "shining example of participation."

"She's going to be missed," he said. "She's set the bar really high."

Siminski said he enjoyed working with Cruz during her time in Hebron and wished her the best in her new district.

"May the wind always be at her back," he said.

And Sawyer, who presented Cruz with an official citation from the General Assembly that recognized her work and dedication to the community, said the fact that Hebron Elementary School was recognized as a Blue Ribbon School "is telling that there is a support network from the superintendent down."

"Hebron's crushed" by her departure, she stated, but her new district is "blessed."

As the evening came to an end, Cruz stood before those present and said, while she couldn't possibly shed another tear, she was "deeply grateful" and glad the Board of Education took a chance "on a very green, young person" in hiring her.

"Thank you for your kindness and all of the things you've done for me," she said. "I'll never forget you."

And although the halls will now be without the clacking of Cruz's heels and her bright smile as she makes the "bittersweet" change over to Plymouth, she said she'll always keep her eyes on the community.

"I'll keep my eyes turned to Hebron to see all the things you do," she said, adding lightheartedly, "So email me. Let's keep in touch."

East Hampton Council, Fire Department Battle Over New Engine

by Joshua Anusewicz

Spilling over from a discussion at its last meeting, the Town Council Tuesday reviewed a proposal from the East Hampton Fire Department to purchase a new fire engine that would replace an aging unit the department plans to retire.

According to Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, the proposal came from the Fire Commission, but more specifically a committee tasked with researching and making recommendations on the purchase of a new or used engine. Though the Board of Finance had not made a recommendation on the town's course of action for purchasing a fire engine, as is generally the process, the matter was discussed by Maniscalco and the council, as well as the numerous fire department and commission members in attendance.

Maniscalco explained that the fire truck committee had presented him with a proposal to purchase a "demo" fire engine – an engine that is not specifically brand-new, but has never actually been used to fight fires – at the cost of \$540,000 with "all of the bells and whistles." With a "demo" unit, Maniscalco explained, the town would not have to put the proposal out to bid, as long as the town manager found the unit to be "a good value." That, however, hasn't been the case, he explained.

"It's been a difficult task, to say the least,"

Maniscalco said. He explained that since he received the proposal, he has spoken with other area fire departments who have told them, in their opinion, that the asking price for the fire engine was anywhere from \$30,000 to \$100,000 too high.

What Maniscalco determined would be the best course of action is "moving forward with the bid process," which would give the town a number of fire engines to review at various price points. Maniscalco said he would be approaching the finance board to find out how the engine could be funded, most likely by a bonding agreement. "I think we can get a very good deal," he said.

The board agreed that sending the truck out to bid might be the best option, but added that the town needed to move quickly to obtain one. "I won't waste any time," Maniscalco assured the board.

Some of the board members felt, however, that the board should wait for the opinion of a consultant, a topic that was brought up at the council's last meeting. At that meeting, councilor Ted Hintz Jr. opined that the council should hire a consultant to review the town's fire department to find out what the department's biggest needs are before making any changes or additions. Hintz maintained this opinion on Tuesday, stating that the purchase of a new en-

gine was "directly tied" to the idea of hiring a consultant.

"Maybe we need two engines – who knows?" said Hintz, hypothetically. "We need to make sure that we have all of the proper equipment to protect the citizens of the town."

Councilor Kyle Dostaler agreed. "Plus, the consultant could make the process move a little more quickly," he said.

The entire conversation didn't sit well with the fire personnel in attendance, many of whom felt that the purpose of the fire truck committee was to, essentially, perform the bidding process for the town by researching and proposing the unit that was best for the department.

Needless to say, the men made their displeasure known. "To say I'm disappointed would be an understatement," said Captain Marty Swan. "We came up with a set of specs [specifications], these 10-12 members of the fire department. They all fell within this \$510,000-650,000 price range, and by waiting and going out to bid, you're not going to save any money. You're going to come back with the same numbers."

"This truck fits our needs and fits the town's needs," Swan continued.

"I'm rather disappointed, too," said Richard Dufour, chairman of the Fire Commission. "We

were under the impression that we'd be able to move forward without the Board of Finance."

But Maniscalco reiterated that this was only true if he determined that it was a good value. "I'm having a hard time doing that, balancing what is best for you [the fire department] and what is best for the town and the taxpayers," he said.

Mike Rich, one of the members of the committee tasked with proposing a new fire truck, said he felt that \$540,000 for the "demo" engine was "a good price."

"If we do go out to bid, hopefully we don't just go with the lowest bidder for a truck that doesn't meet our qualifications," Rich said.

The council assured the fire personnel that it understood the need for a new fire engine and expected to move quickly to begin the process of finding a suitable unit for the department at a good price for the town. "I think we're all in agreement that you need a new engine," said Town Council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub. "We're all aware."

The matter is expected to be discussed at the council's next meeting after the holidays.

* * *

The next regular meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 8, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

Local Teens Making ‘Dynamic’ Music at RHAM

by Geeta Schrayter

In different forms of popular culture, a teen band is stereotypically depicted as a group – usually guys – that practices in garages and basements, to the chagrin of their parents. They’re often shown in leather jackets with attitudes and a tendency to shrug aside education and authority.

But in the basement of a home in Hebron, five RHAM Middle School students who fit the above description only in the fact that they’re teenagers can be found working on their instruments and singing.

The students – two boys and three girls – make up the band By Chance. As Hebron residents, the members – Olivia Knightly, 14, on bass; Seraphina Marino, 13, on fiddle and vocals; Jacob Ouellette, 13, on drums; Claire Russo, 13, on vocals; and C.J. Yapp, 14, on vocals and guitar – said they’ve known each other from a very young age, and have had an interest in music for about as long.

The group came to be earlier this year after C.J. and Jacob, who had already been playing together, decided they needed to expand upon their music. As a result, they recruited their friends Olivia, Seraphina and Claire, and held their very first rehearsal in February – and so far, so good.

“It’s fun to be with kids who have the same passion,” said Jacob.

“It’s a really good turnout,” C.J. said of the band’s formation.

On Monday night, as the kids practiced in Seraphina’s basement, there wasn’t a single leather jacket in sight. And instead of being told to “quiet down” by an annoyed parent calling down the stairs, three of the member’s parents were present to offer their support and suggestions. According to them, all of the members are “good kids.”

“They’re such good kids,” said Lisa Yapp. “They’re excellent students and athletes.”

Leslie Knightly said she thought the band was “awesome” and called their musical inclination a good outlet.

Dominic Marino, who helps mentor and “sculpt” the group, agreed.

“It’s a good outlet for them,” he said. “I at-

tach myself to things that work,” he furthered, “and this works.”

He called the band “dynamic,” with a good combination of instruments, and said their music was “country style, bluegrass-y-pop.”

By Chance covers popular songs by artists such as Taylor Swift and Lady Antebellum, and has a couple of original tunes that were written by Seraphina. Her first song was titled “That’s Just Me,” while the second, which they played Monday night, is called “Notice Me.” Moving forward, the plan is for more originals and enough songs for the group to create a CD.

Although setting their sights on an album may at first seem like a lofty idea for such a new band, a glance at their track record shows they’re raring to go. They’ve already got quite a few performances to their name, and last month an interview with The River 105.9-FM DJ Renee DiNino was aired on iHeart Radio.

It only took a month after the band’s first rehearsal, where they learned “Sparks Fly” by Taylor Swift, for their first performance to take place at the Columbia Leos Club Talent Show to benefit the American Cancer Society. Three months later they played two songs at the seventh grade awards assembly at RHAM Middle School, and as summer started up their performances only increased.

The band has since played at The Music Bureau in Salem, the Hebron Harvest Fair, the Avon Block Party and Loco Perro in East Hampton. To date, the majority of their events have been in support of charities, and the kids said that’s mainly what they’ll focus on in the beginning, and then build off of that.

As far as challenges starting out, the members said the only real one they have is in regards to time.

“We’re busy, so we have to find time [to practice],” explained Jacob.

“All of us do sports and other activities, too,” added C.J.

But somehow, they manage to get together enough to know about 13 songs so far, with practices usually taking place once or twice a week. And even though being in a band together means the kids see each other quite often, it hasn’t been enough to cause any rifts.



The band By Chance has had a number of performances since their formation in February, and tonight they’ll be opening up for Dino and the No-Names at a Hurricane Sandy benefit concert. Pictured from left are Seraphina Marino on fiddle and vocals, Olivia Knightly on bass, Claire Russo on vocals, Jacob Ouellette on drums and C.J. Yapp on guitar and vocals.

And when they *do* get annoyed with one another, Olivia explained the key to getting through it is laughter.

“We get through it by making fun of each other,” she laughed.

“We start cracking jokes,” Jacob furthered.

Awareness of the band has spread via word-of-mouth and as the group continues to perform – and their next performance is scheduled for this very evening. “By Chance” is set to open up for Dino and the No-Names – another Hebron band that features Seraphina’s older brother Dino – at a Hurricane Sandy benefit show. The concert takes place from 7-9 p.m. at Marlborough Congregational Church, 25 South Main St, Marlborough. Admission is \$5 per

person, and all of the proceeds will benefit victims of the hurricane.

While some may wonder about the abilities of a group of kids who are so young, Marino was quick to say the students’ instrumental abilities and song quality was “much higher than their age” might suggest – and the music By Chance performs is something people of all ages will enjoy.

“Good music is good music,” he said. “It goes beyond age.”

“These are great kids with big hearts and musical gifts to share together and to give back to the community,” Jacob’s mother, Robin Lane, added in an email. “I know they are together for a reason and not entirely by chance.”

Portland Students Learn Internet Safety, Cyberbullying

by Joshua Anusewicz

With applications like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram available in the palm of our hands, using the Internet to connect to people we know has never been easier. But when it comes to younger people, who are consistently joining social media well before they reach even high school, it’s connecting with people they don’t know that is a cause of great concern.

Last Friday morning, Portland’s middle and high school students took part in a presentation that looked to alleviate some of that concern by educating students on the dangers of the Internet. The program was presented by Scott Driscoll, a 24-year veteran of law enforcement that currently runs Internet Safety Concepts, a local company that meets with groups to teach them how to use the Internet safely and how identify and handle cyberbullying.

As a law enforcement professional, Driscoll explained that he gained considerable experience in Internet crime investigation; these investigations included things you’d see right out of *Dateline*, including undercover online investigations, possession and distribution of child pornography, bullying and harassment, and identity theft. While he explained his experience and what he has been involved in during his career, many of the students paid close attention to what Driscoll had to say.

When Driscoll fired up a PowerPoint presentation, however, displaying the symbols of various social media outlets, the group transformed into what you’d expect that early on a Friday morning: excitedly chattering, giggling and squirming in their seats.

“That’s why I’m here,” Driscoll said with a laugh. Driscoll then explained how an individual’s “digital footprint,” which essentially tracks everything you do on your computer, tablet or phone, never truly goes away. What you post on social media, the video chatting that you participate in, and even the emails you send “can be hurting you and your future,” Driscoll explained.

With social media, Driscoll showed the students exactly how easy it is to find out information on an individual. Using screenshots from a Facebook account he created to monitor Internet safety measures, Driscoll showed the group how, using “check-ins” and “geo-tagging” from applications like Facebook and Instagram, simple it is to find the exact location of an individual at that exact time. He also explained that many young people have hundreds or thousands of “friends” on Facebook and Twitter, many of whom they don’t know, and that something as innocuous as a picture of a student with a school sweatshirt on can give one of those people information on where you live and go to school.

“We all need to think about this,” Driscoll implored the students, many of whom were taken aback by how simple it would be to gather information on themselves. Driscoll also explained that the dynamics of programs like Facebook have changed – the average user is currently 38 years old, he said – and related a story to the group about a man that he arrested through an undercover Internet investigation. Posing as a 13-year-old girl, Driscoll was able

to catch the man; after taking the man in for booking, Driscoll questioned the man, asking him his thoughts on social networking sites like Facebook.

When talking about that, Driscoll said, the man’s attitude changed from scared to confident. “He said, ‘It’s like a dream come true,’” Driscoll said, adding that it still gives him “chills” discussing it to this day. “It gives them information on their targets and allows them to groom their victims.”

Driscoll also discussed the rise in cyberbullying as social media has become more prevalent. He explained a personal story of how he was bullied when he was young, even having to change schools to avoid constant torment from other students. That, too, has changed, he explained.

“Back then, the bully wasn’t going to come to my house,” he said. “You guys don’t have that luxury.” He explained that many states, in the light of recent tragedies of teen suicides related to bullying, have cracked down on cyberbullying, making it an offense punishable by law.

To combat cyberbullying, Driscoll told the students to be more proactive. He told the story of a local teen that came forward after a similar presentation to share that a friend was being bullied and was considering suicide. He said that because the friend stood up, the girl who was considering suicide was taken to the hospital and received the necessary treatment, averting a potential tragedy.

“I don’t know about you guys, but that’s a

hero,” Driscoll said of the friend that came forward. “If you know someone, get involved.”

As for getting involved, Portland schools have begun to do their part to help students with various resources to curb bullying and unsafe use of social media. Middle school principal Scott Giegerich explained that students have begun attending monthly meetings about the subjects in hopes that talking about the issues, and perhaps airing concerns they have, will improve the climate of the school.

“It really teaches them that, hey, this is serious,” Giegerich said, “and we hope that what they hear really sticks with them.”

Mary Pont, the director of the town’s youth service department, explained that just by listening to the students and allowing them to talk about their issues can often be the best remedy to a problem.

“They have a lot to say; they’re smart kids,” Pont said. “We hope that this gives them a moment to stop and think.”

Pont explained that youth services has coupled with the school district and the police department to act as an additional resource for students in town that need help or are looking for someone to speak with.

“It’s a hard topic and not a lot of people want to talk about it,” Pont said. “But even if we can get just one kid to talk, we know that it does work.”

For more information on Internet Safety Concepts, you can visit their website at internetsafetyconcepts.com.



Enthusiastically waving miniature American flags, the students from Brownstone Intermediate School proudly welcomed the Wreaths Across America program on Tuesday morning. The wreaths made several stops across Connecticut on their trip from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery, where they will be laid on the graves of veterans this weekend.



In preparation for the program, Brownstone students made a wreath of their own, made from the outlines of each student's hand, that was hung on the front door of the school auditorium.

Memorial Wreaths Return to Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

For the second straight year, a group of Portland schoolchildren were visited by Wreaths Across America, a program that transports wreaths from Harrington, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia during the holiday season each year.

Over the past few weeks, students from the Brownstone Intermediate School taught the importance of remembering our veterans in preparation of over 5,000 wreaths that were brought to their school on Tuesday morning.

The students' reverence for veterans was noticeable as you walked toward the auditorium where a portion of the program was held. Near the entrance, a large board was posted with numerous pictures of veterans and current service members titled "Wall of Heroes." The individuals included on the board featured fathers, grandfathers, brothers, sisters and cousins from all branches of the military, who had served as far as back as World War II to those currently serving. The sheets of paper also explained why these individuals were heroes, with words like "brave," "freedom" and "sacrifice" standing out as the main themes.

As the students filed into the auditorium, a sense of excitement could be felt from the children, many of which chose to wear red, white,

or blue; some even went a step further, with patriotic face paint or hairstyles. The students proudly led the room in our Pledge of Allegiance, which was followed by "The Star-Spangled Banner" performed by the Portland High School band.

Donning bright red, Brownstone Principal Laurie Boske explained the importance of remembering veterans, channeling the late former President Ronald Reagan to show how freedom is kept alive by those who serve.

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction," she quoted. "We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

To show respect for veterans, Boske reiterated the three words that shape the central mission of Wreaths Across America: remember, honor and teach. "Remember the fallen, honor those who serve, teach the value of freedom," Boske stated.

As Boske spoke, each student was handed a small American flag to wave, which they did proudly and enthusiastically. When she asked

all of the veterans in the audience to stand, they were met with an equally enthusiastic applause.

"It's important for our young students to understand that many of the people we see every day are veterans," Boske said, motioning to the veterans in attendance. Perhaps nobody would know that better than Boske herself, whose husband, a former Marine that died last year, is interred at Arlington National Cemetery. She explained what Wreaths Across America meant to her – that she felt that her "family was personally honored by this special program."

The sound of sirens soon floated into the auditorium from the street outside, signaling that the convoy carrying the wreaths was arriving. Led by the Patriot Guard Riders, the 18-wheeler containing the wreaths pulled up to the curb, where the students were soon standing to greet the visitors.

Under the bright, late morning sun, the high school band continued with a melody of patriotic songs, which was followed by a stirring rendition of "Taps." Led by Pattie Ptak, a Patriot Guard Rider and Wreaths Across America volunteer from Seymour, and Skip Petras, a local veteran and Patriot Guard Rider, a handful of wreaths were handed out to local officials: one wreath was handed out to First

Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, who will place the wreath on the front of Town Hall; one was handed to Reg Farrington of the Veterans Affairs Commission, to be placed at the town's veterans memorial; and one to Boske, which will be placed at Brownstone.

And as a special surprise for Boske, Petras produced an additional wreath, given personally to her to hang on her home. The emotional moment drew a large round of applause from the students, who seemed to be grasping the importance of veterans quite quickly.

As the program drew to a close and the students dispersed to recess or lunch, the American flag located in front of Brownstone waved proudly in the breeze above those who had just received wreaths, acting as a beacon of patriotism to what had just transpired on the ground below. For the second year in a row, Portland's appreciation for veterans shone brightly Tuesday morning – "we were so impressed, we wanted to come back to Portland!" Ptak said of the return – as it has many times before. And as thousands of wreaths make their way across the country, to their final destination near our nation's capital, many other communities will learn the program's mission, as well – to remember, honor and teach.

Golden Bids Farewell at Final East Hampton BOE Meeting

by Joshua Anusewicz

Monday's Board of Education meeting marked the final meeting for Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden, who will retire at the end of the month after close to six years of serving the school district.

"It's been an honor and a privilege," said a smiling Golden to the school board members. "I've been able to work with wonderful board members that have provided continuous support."

Golden, 64, announced in March of this year that she would be retiring from her position at the end of the year. She cited her desire to travel and spend time with her family as her reason for stepping down, bringing her 42-year career in education to a close. A Clinton resident, Golden served as the assistant superintendent of schools in Wethersfield prior to arriving in East Hampton.

Within the district, Golden's fingerprints can be seen at all four East Hampton schools, where

test scores have improved, student and teacher achievement has grown, and new technology has been integrated into the curriculum. Just recently, East Hampton was named to the AP Honor Roll, a distinction that recognizes schools for achievement in advanced placement classes, which is a testament to Golden's commitment to a district that not long ago had zero advanced placement classes.

Golden's impact has not been lost on the school board, which has worked closely with the superintendent to help the district reach many of these achievements.

"Thank you for your leadership," said Board of Education Chairman Mark Laraia, who admitted that he originally ran for the board for the opportunity to work with Golden. "You have the ability to lead, but also have the ability to have people help you lead. I wish you all the best of luck in the future."

"You've been wonderful for this district,"

said Vice Chairwoman Joanne Barmasse, who, along with Glenn Gemma, has sat on the board since Golden was hired. Barmasse also presented Golden with flowers and an East Hampton High School blanket as a parting gift from the board.

"Best one we've ever had," said longtime board member Don Coolican, who has served in a contrarian role on the board while still maintaining a respectful and loyal relationship with Golden over her tenure.

With Golden's retirement becoming official on Dec. 31, the board is now working feverishly to appoint an interim superintendent that will serve for 2-6 months as the board looks to hire a permanent superintendent that will be integrated into the district in the spring. The board has announced that it received 31 résumés for the permanent post and was able to narrow down the candidates to eight, who were interviewed beginning last week. The candidates

were interviewed by a "screening committee" consisting of Barmasse, Laraia, and board members Scott Minnick, Carol Lane and Bill Marshall; high school principal John Fidler; middle school principal Nancy Briere; high school teacher Matt Warner; middle school teacher Jody Dumeer; business manager Karen Asetta; and residents Amy Conklin and Deb Robinson.

According to Coolican, chairman of the board's personnel committee, three candidates were reviewed this week for the interim superintendent position. The board, Coolican said, plans to appoint one of the candidates to the interim position at a special meeting on Monday, Dec. 17.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 14, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

Hebron Residents Remember ‘One of the Pillars of the Community’

by Geeta Schrayter

For many, the holiday season is a time of cheer. Festive gatherings, decorated malls, delicious food and laughter with friends and family abound. But for some, the loss of a loved one can turn this time of year quite bittersweet. Such is the case with the family of Anne Emt and all those who knew her.

Emt, 80, who has lived in Hebron for over 50 years, passed away Nov. 20. But the thing with Emt is, she did much more than just live in town. She was involved in her community as well and, as the town’s very first female firefighter, she paved the way for others.

Her daughter Christine Franklin shared this week that when her mother first joined the department, there wasn’t even a ladies’ restroom at the station.

“She’s really paved the way for women in town to be involved in the fire department,” Franklin said.

Bruce DeGray, who’s been a member of the fire department for 53 years, agreed.

“At the time, there weren’t too many female firefighters in the fire service throughout the state,” he said. “It was something new.”

DeGray, who said he’s known Emt for about 45 years, recalled responding to a call with her and mentoring her in how to put out a brush-fire.

“That’s the first time, I believe, that she was on a fire call, and I just happened to be the one that was there,” he said.

DeGray said he’ll remember Emt as being cordial and well-liked.

Selectman Dan Larson has known Emt since he became involved with the fire department in 1980, and he called Emt “a very nice, very professional person.” Larson said Emt was always quick to respond, no matter the time of day. He said she’d throw on her fire gear and show up even in the middle of the night.

“She was always willing to be a part of the solution,” he said.

Town Manager Andy Tierney called Emt “one of the pillars of the community,” and said

through her community involvement and volunteerism “she’s set the bar so high, it won’t be topped for a long time.”

In addition to her work with the fire department, Emt was also an emergency medical technician – something Franklin said caused quite a few jokes considering her last name and the position’s acronym are the same. One might say that’s a sign Emt was meant to be involved with emergency services, but that’s far from the only thing she’s known for.

Fire Chief Fred Speno was voted into the fire department on the same day as Emt – April 17, 1976 – and he furthered Franklin’s statement regarding Emt’s name.

“She was an EMT and her last name was Emt, so we kind of made fun of that,” he said. “But she was always good to work with. I respected Anne. We worked well together and I watched her kids grow up in town along with my kids. She was a part of the community.”

While there are always some people who are resistant to change, Speno said, everyone was open to a female joining the department that day in ‘76, and it helped that everybody knew Emt.

“Before joining the fire department I worked with her and her husband coaching midget football and softball,” he said. “Most folks in town knew her.”

And Speno said while her involvement in fire service “was always good,” and Emt was always willing to help, it’s her sport involvement that she’ll be most remembered for.

“Unfortunately fire service is not remembered except for when you have an issue. Other than those times folks don’t really remember the fire department that much,” he said. “But in sports the impact is far larger because a lot more people are involved.”

And in sports, as with the fire department, Emt helped pave the way for female participation. Speno said she had strong feelings towards girls’ softball, and worked hard to make sure they had fun even during a time when female sports weren’t taken too seriously.

“Especially 25-30 years ago, girls’ sports weren’t really looked on as a big deal. I remember going to some games with coaches and teams and that’s it,” Speno recalled. “There was very little support. I remember how hard [Emt] worked in making sure the girls had some fun too.”

Speno said he thought sports were her first love – “I think that was her big love,” he said.

But of course, Emt’s biggest love of all would have to have been her family. On Tuesday, her eldest daughter Linda Strickland said her mother was a “wonderful, wonderful person” who played a big part in her kids’ lives.

“She stayed home with us a lot when we were growing up. I remember that... there are so many good things to say about her,” Strickland said.

Emt raised her children along with her husband Eric – which includes two sons Carl and Stephen, along with Strickland and Franklin – on a 31-acre farm in town.

Franklin shared her mother loved animals, and they grew up with horses, goats and “all kinds of animals.”

The family would harvest hay – Strickland said her mother could drive a tractor as good as any man – and make maple syrup from trees on their property.

“I remember having the trees tapped,” recalled Franklin. “I remember her making maple candy too. That was a lot of fun.”

One of the family’s goats was even a mascot for the RHAM football team at one point.

“We used to throw him in the back of the truck and bring him to the football games,” said Franklin.

Strickland said she was proud of her mother for standing up, “being a strong lady” and teaching Strickland to respect others and treat people how she’d like to be treated.

“She taught me a lot,” Strickland said. “She was a very independent person and I learned a lot of my independence from her.”

Strickland added her mother had a positive



Anne Emt

approach to things and was always willing to help people “in the blink of an eye.”

“I’m very proud to be her daughter,” she said. “Very proud.”

When DeGray shared his memories of Emt, he noted she was made grand marshal of the parade when the department celebrated its 75th anniversary two years ago. The honor included riding through the parade in the town’s antique fire truck – and DeGray was right there with her.

When Emt was laid to rest on Nov. 24, she was given that honor once more. Franklin shared her mother’s casket made the journey from the church to the cemetery in the same antique fire truck, and upon arrival, the last call was made over the radio.

“I think she would have been very proud of all that,” Franklin stated. “The fire department has just been incredible for the family.”

And, undoubtedly, many people in Hebron feel the same way about Emt.

Suspect Arrested for Two Separate Thefts in Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

A Middletown man was arrested earlier this month for his involvement in two separate residential break-ins, Portland Police Sgt. Scott Cunningham confirmed this week.

According to Cunningham, police arrested Michael Aletta, 27, of 42 Evergreen Circle, Middletown, on Tuesday, Dec. 4 and charged him with two counts of third-degree burglary, two counts of third-degree criminal mischief, third-degree larceny, fifth-degree larceny, seven counts of theft of a firearm, and criminal possession of a firearm. These charges stem from both theft-related incidents in question.

The first incident, Cunningham stated, occurred Thursday, Sept. 27, at a home belonging to his grandfather located at 19 William St. Cunningham said that Aletta allegedly broke into the home and took several electronic items, including a television and a computer; these items were eventually recovered at an area pawn shop and were returned to the owner.

The second incident took place the following day, Friday, Sept. 28, at a home located at 6 Strickland St.; Aletta, Cunningham said, was a friend of the homeowner’s son and was familiar with the house. Aletta allegedly broke into the residence and “rummaged” through the bedroom and living room, Cunningham said, eventually stealing seven guns.

Following the Sept. 28 theft, Cunningham said police were able to obtain eyewitness identification of Aletta’s vehicle and contacted his parole officer; at the time, Aletta was out

on parole after spending time in jail for a drug-related charge. Aletta’s parole was revoked and he was arrested by Middletown Police several days after the break-in.

After being taken in by Middletown officers, Aletta was interviewed by Portland officer Fran Ahlquist, and denied taking part in the Sept. 28 theft of firearms. Cunningham said Aletta told Ahlquist that the firearms were stolen by a group of individuals from Middletown. However, a subsequent search of the residences that Aletta mentioned to police turned up empty, so police charged Aletta in connection with the incident.

Following his interview with Ahlquist, Aletta was then interviewed by Portland officer David Bond, who questioned Aletta on his involvement in the Sept. 27 burglary. Cunningham said that Aletta admitted to his involvement in this incident.

Warrants were applied for in both incidents and Aletta was arrested on Dec. 4, remaining in police custody. According to the state’s judicial website, Aletta has pled not guilty to all of the charges and is scheduled to appear in Middletown Superior Court for pre-trial proceedings on Tuesday, Dec. 18 at 10 a.m.



Michael Aletta

Investigation Continues in Jini Barnum Murder Case

by Joshua Anusewicz

East Hampton Police are continuing their investigation in the murder case of Jini Barnum, a local woman whose remains were found in Glastonbury in September.

According to Sgt. Garritt Kelly, who has been assigned to lead the investigation, the case is “still moving along,” as the department continues to wait for the report from the state medical examiner’s office. Kelly said this process “used to take four to six weeks” to complete, but the office is currently seeing a considerable backup in cases.

Barnum, 30, was found dead Sunday, Sept. 9, in a shallow grave located off of Windham Road in a remote area of Glastonbury near the Meshomasic State Forest. The state medical examiner deemed her death a homicide caused by traumatic asphyxia from neck compression, or strangulation.

At the time her body was discovered, Barnum had been missing since July 29, after she left her home late that night after an argument with her boyfriend, Anthony Garofalo. Barnum was reported missing by Garofalo when she did not return home the following

day. Several weeks after her disappearance was reported, East Hampton Police announced that a criminal investigation had been opened based on how long Barnum had been missing.

Since the disappearance, public opinion has been that Garofalo, 38, should be the main suspect in the investigation. Garofalo, who is currently in jail for probation and parole violations, is a convicted felon and registered sex offender, stemming from a 2001 incident where he was found guilty of kidnapping and raping a deaf woman he met at a bar in Hartford. In 2002, Garofalo was sentenced to eight years in prison for the crime.

Police, however, have remained tight-lipped about any suspects, and would not answer questions related to any one suspect.

Barnum was a native of Washington state but moved to Connecticut several years ago. She was an active member of the Middletown Eagles organization and a mother of two, including an infant daughter that she had with Garofalo. According to Kelly, the daughter is currently in the custody of Garofalo’s family.

Hebron Residents Mourn Loss of Jim Derby

by Geeta Schrayter

If you're a resident of Hebron, the chances are you've known – or at least heard of – James Lawrence Derby Jr. You may know him as just "Jim Derby." And even if you don't know the name, the odds are the face is familiar. Derby, known for his smiling face and friendly demeanor, was a highly active member of the community for nearly 50 years.

He passed away last Friday, Dec. 7, at the age of 80.

Derby moved to Hebron in 1958, and wasted little time getting involved in town. In 1960, he joined the Hebron Republican Town Committee. Three years later, he became the deputy Republican registrar of voters – a position he held until he was elected registrar of voters in 1969. It's in this role that Hebron residents may recognize him the most for – which is unsurprising considering he remained registrar for the next 40 years.

Current Republican Registrar Jack Richmond said Derby always approached his job in a non-partisan way, "which we're expected to do."

"He was a very ethical guy – completely honest – and he took his job seriously," Richmond said.

In 2007, Derby's dedication was recognized by the town when Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz presented him with a special Hebron Town Clerk Award for his years of service as registrar. The award said when all of Derby's service was tallied together, the town figured he had actually given around 96 years as a public official.

Since Derby first arrived in town, many things have changed. But as the award stated, "one thing has remained constant and that is Jim Derby's dedication to the town of Hebron."

Donna McCalla, former chairwoman of the Republican Town Committee, said Derby was one of the RTC's longest-serving members. She said he was "always contributing" and was "very faithful" to the polls.

"People knew Derby because he was always at the polls. If you voted you'd always see him there smiling," said McCalla.

McCalla said Derby exemplified a true Hebronian, and when she first met him close to 20 years ago, she was struck by one thing.

"He had a twinkle in his eye. And it was just amazing how he always had this fantastic sense

of humor – and it was with everyone," she said. "Jim just had a way of really showing his love of people and his love of God. I think if there was anyone who really had that Christian love for people and exemplified it, it was Jim. He just really showed such compassion."

Toward the end of his life, Derby battled with Parkinson's disease. But no matter what stage of health he was in, McCalla said "he always had that twinkle."

On Wednesday, First Selectman Jeff Watt said Derby was "always a gentleman" and someone who always looked out for the community. Watt said he remembers turning to Derby for information when he first became involved with community service.

"Jim always seemed available to ask questions and be a mentor," Watt said. "He was always a gentleman."

Town Manager Andy Tierney called Derby a pillar to the community and a long-time public servant.

"I don't think the guy ever missed a day and he never had a [bad day]," Tierney said. "He always seemed pleasant and upbeat and a genuine person who always had a kind word to say and led by example. He was just a nice man."

Tierney added when word of his passing went through the Town Office Building, "it was very quiet and somber," as everyone felt the loss.

Assistant Town Clerk Ann Hughes echoed Tierney's sentiments and called Derby "extremely brilliant."

"Besides a co-worker, he was a good friend," Hughes said. "He cared about people. That's why he was in the community so long. ... His community involvement exceeds anybody else's."

Along with his work as registrar and involvement with the RTC, Derby was also tax collector for a year, a member of the Board of Selectmen Salary Study Committee and the RHAM Reapportionment Committee, and also was an AHM Lanterns Program Mentor. Derby was also a very involved member of Gilead Congregational Church, serving as a deacon and also part of the church choir.

Resident Harvey Desruisseaux said Wednesday that he and Derby served many years on the diaconate of Gilead Congregational and worked closely together. In addition, their families were very close.



The Hebron community this week is mourning the passing of Jim Derby, far right, shown here with his wife Jean, left, and state Rep. Pam Sawyer.

"We camped together for many years. In fact, when everybody was up there [at a campground in Lebanon] there were maybe 20 families camping on each of the holidays," said Desruisseaux. "They were wonderful, wonderful times."

Desruisseaux shared on a particular Fourth of July, under Derby's leadership, a parade took place around the campground.

"We had nothing to play on but pots and pans to use as drums and symbols," Desruisseaux laughed.

Derby was "the consummate gentleman," Desruisseaux continued. "He never had a bad word to say about anybody or anything and he was always positive in his demeanor; a true friend."

John O'Sullivan was the Democratic registrar of voters alongside Derby and on Wednesday he called Derby "as close to being family as anyone ever could without actually being family."

For 35 years, O'Sullivan and Derby worked together in the registrar's office, but their friendship extended well beyond that. They came to know each other's families, and did "lots of homey-type things together."

Those "homey-type things" included opening, closing and maintaining their pools to-

gether, getting their houses ready for Christmas together and then taking down the lights at the same time once the season ended. And although O'Sullivan started as the Democratic registrar ten years after Derby began, the two of them even retired at the same time.

"He was just one of the kindest, nicest human beings I ever met in my life," O'Sullivan said.

As an engineer, O'Sullivan said Derby looked at things at town hall from a math and science point of view, while O'Sullivan, as an English teacher, looked at them "from a kind of idealistic point of view."

"And we always managed to get things straightened out and settled, and in 35 years we had one argument and I'll be happy to admit he was right and I was wrong," O'Sullivan laughed, adding he had "nothing but love and respect" for Derby and his family.

"I couldn't have asked for a better friend in the whole world," he said.

And on Saturday, O'Sullivan said he's been honored as one of the pallbearers who will bring the man with the twinkling eyes to his final resting place.

Derby's obituary appears this week on page 19.

Cuts Restored to Hebron Transfer Station, Library

by Geeta Schrayter

When the \$33.78 million 2012-13 budget passed in June, it was after two failed referendums and \$500,000 in cuts. As a result of the reductions, various town services – such as the transfer station and library – were adversely affected. The transfer station was closed on Sundays, and the library was asked to replace a full-time position with a part-time position which resulted in fewer library hours.

But residents who lamented these changes will need to no longer, as the selectmen decided at their Dec. 6 meeting to restore both areas.

At the meeting, Interim Finance Director Elaine Griffin gave a financial update on the 2012-13 fiscal year. She called revenue and tax collection rates "phenomenal," at just under 50 percent and 55.97 percent, respectively, and said that, for the moment, she doesn't anticipate any revenue shortages. Furthermore, the expenditure budget "appears to be on target," she wrote in a memo, with 44.97 percent spent. There were a couple of non-budgeted expenses related to the October snowstorm. These expenses are "not catastrophic," she said, but, because the town budget was rather bare-bones to begin with, they warrant close monitoring.

Griffin also shared that, due to a change in insurance carriers, costs for worker's compensation and property liability premiums are running higher than expected. Town Manager Andy Tierney explained later in the meeting the town had been dropped by the carrier they had been with during the budget process.

"The company had bid us at a low rate, and were comfortable with us at that [rate]," he said, but as a result of the winter weather in October, Tierney said the town incurred a number of claims making Hebron more of a risk and "when the claims went in, they dropped us."

Tierney stated the town went out to bid again

and the new insurance company, The Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency, had a four-year rate that was about \$30,000 more.

But the town will be able to cover the difference, Griffin explained, because of some unexpected savings in payroll and benefits due to the delay in appointing a finance director and town manager. The savings amounted to \$42,711.54, but that number was reduced to \$29,188.77 due to unbudgeted salary increases for the assessor and assistant tax collector as well as an added stipend Public Works Foreman Bill Standish received for his additional duties in the absence of a public works director. However, Griffin said, \$13,297.88 in savings was realized from the public works director position when Tierney, who had been in that position, was officially named town manager.

As a result of all this, Griffin said, the town had a total of \$42,486.65 in surplus savings. She said it could be used to offset the insurance cost shortage – and there would also be enough left to reopen the transfer station on Sundays, for \$2,737.32, and to give \$8,501.06 to the library for building maintenance expenses and an increase in staff hours.

"We're in a pretty good financial state right now," she said.

Board of Selectman Chairman Jeff Watt recommended using the savings for those areas, and selectman Dan Larson agreed.

Selectwoman Gayle Mulligan inquired as to whether there may be any other expenses which would require unbudgeted money, but Griffin said "at this point in time we're not expecting any" – although she noted it wasn't yet winter.

Mulligan expressed concern if this turns out to be a major winter, the town "would have virtually nothing" as far as funds to cover snow-related expenses. But Griffin explained if the

winter weather does prove intense, there would be the option of supplemental appropriation to cover anything major.

Although selectman Mark Stuart wasn't present at the meeting, Tierney said he had wanted to educate the public on just how "bare bones" the budget was for 2012-13. Tierney explained the town had been coming in with very tight budgets, "and now we're coming in short."

"We had no wiggle room," Tierney said.

Mulligan agreed, and said there wasn't room for "a lot of fluff."

"The town had some situations that allowed for some extra money in there," she said. "Otherwise we wouldn't have been able to add the transfer station or the library."

Mulligan said the budget process would be "just as bad this year," and urged residents to get involved early and understand just what voting 'no' meant.

"Understand if you don't vote in favor then there are going to be cuts to services we provide this community because that's the only way we can go," she said. "So I just hope people get involved, ask questions and see what the budget entails before making a decision."

The motion to add to the transfer station and library services accounts passed unanimously.

The transfer station will reopen on Sunday beginning Dec. 30.

* * *

Also at the meeting, the board determined it was the appropriate time to establish a Charter Revision Commission. Board members decided they were looking to appoint a commission with eight volunteer members consisting mostly of citizens, but with at least one who has past experience on a board or commission. In addition, the board is looking for one member from

the town administrative staff.

O'Connell said the board was interested in individuals "who can be open-minded, look at the charter and what it actually is and [determine] what's good for the town."

On Wednesday, Tierney added the selectmen were looking for "some very energetic and open-minded people."

The commission will be appointed and the charge will be finalized and approved at the Jan. 3 selectmen meeting.

Individuals who are interested in being considered for appointment can send a letter of interest to the Board of Selectmen in care of the Town Manager's Office, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead St., by Dec. 27.

* * *

In addition, Tierney shared work was underway to repair some damage done to Fire Company No. 1 after there was a blockage in the sewer main about 30 feet out from the building. He explained the backup caused some septic to seep into the building that then wicked up into some of the walls.

"There will need to be some remedial work," he said, but added "it could have been a lot worse."

On Wednesday, Tierney said the floors in the bathroom, some of the carpeting in the hallways and dayroom and some molding and sheetrock will all need to be replaced. He added the building had been mediated and "all hazardous stuff has been taken out of there."

An insurance claim has been submitted to cover the repairs, and Tierney said it's expected to cost between \$11-13,000.

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the Hebron Town Hall, 15 Gilead St.

Positive Results on Andover School Climate Survey

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Education Wednesday was presented with the results of the School Climate Assessment Survey required by the state Department of Education. And, the survey said, the news is good.

Superintendent Andrew Maneggia explained the survey came about through the effort to do something about school bullying, and the purpose of the survey was to determine how safe Andover Elementary School is.

Principal Dave Griffin explained the survey was administered to parents, staff, and students in third and sixth grade. He said AES had an "extraordinary response rate" with 88 percent of staff participating, 74 percent of parents and "as far as students, only one sixth-grader was not available to take the survey."

"Eighty-eight and 74 percent is really high," said Griffin. "We're usually looking at maybe 30 percent so my colleagues are saying 'wow, this is wonderful.'"

Across the board, Griffin said there were no areas of concern.

The state is "looking for what areas are unsafe," feelings about the school and thoughts on working conditions.

"And by and large, we're looking at 97-98 percent [of students] saying coming to school

every day 'I mostly like it,'" he said. "Those are the answers that are coming through and it's across the board.

Sixty-eight point nine percent of third graders said they liked coming to school, while 26.7 percent said it's "ok." Comparatively, 58.8 percent of sixth graders said they liked Andover Elementary School, while 38.2 percent said it was "ok."

The majority of third graders - 64.4 percent - said they were "happy" coming to school, while the majority of sixth graders - 55.9 percent - said they were "ok" about it.

The majority of students in both grades - 72.1 percent of third graders and 61.8 percent of sixth graders - said they liked other children in the school "a lot," while 60 percent of third graders and 67.6 percent of sixth-graders said other students like them "a lot" in return.

For the remainder of the student survey, the results continued to be positive. Most students for example - 67.4 percent of third graders and 55.9 percent of sixth graders - said students liked each other "a lot," and 77.8 percent and 70.6 percent of third and sixth graders, respectively, said adults in the school cared about them "a lot."

While the majority of third graders - 55.6 percent - said other students say nice things to them "a lot," 47.7 percent also said students say mean things to them "sometimes."

In the sixth grade, 55.9 percent of students said other children say nice things to them "a lot," but 55.9 percent also said mean things are said to them "sometimes."

Yet when asked how often the students say nice and mean things to someone else, 83.7 percent of third graders said they say nice things "a lot," along with 76.5 percent of sixth graders. Then, 83.7 percent of third-graders said they "never" say mean things, along with 73.5 percent of third-graders.

While the results are mostly positive, Griffin said one thing that "popped up" and will be looked into is how comfortable sixth grade students said they feel going to an individual if there's a problem. While 67.6 percent said they have at least one adult they can go to, 26.5 percent said they were unsure.

"We've already started to look at that response," he said, to try and get some answers "as to why students are not fully convinced they can go to an adult."

But Maneggia added the response may have

to do with when the survey was implemented.

"Remember this was done in October," Maneggia said. "Kids in sixth grade only had teachers for a short period of time. I think if you gave that same question to students in the second half of the year you'd get a different response."

Griffin added "by and large," the results to the survey are positive. He noted there was a run of 4-5 years where there not one student was suspended "and that says a lot."

"If we take a look at the student body, we really do have some wonderful, wonderful children - they're all wonderful."

He added in the sixth-grade comment section (third-graders weren't given the opportunity to comment) the responses were all "really positive."

"All these kids gave compliments to the school and their learning," said Board of Education Chair Jay Lindy.

"I think in totality we had a great response rate and I think that overall we received very positive feedback," added Griffin.

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m., in the Andover Elementary School library.

Colchester Residents Attend Hanukkah Celebration

by Melissa Roberto

Rain did not stop residents from gathering in the Town Green Sunday night to partake in the celebration of Hanukkah, and to watch as the second candle of the community menorah was illuminated.

This was Colchester's fifth annual Hanukkah celebration organized by Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky, executive director of the Chabad Jewish Center in Glastonbury.

Colchester was the first stop of the week for Wolvovsky and his wife Yehudis, who traveled to Middletown, Ellington, Tolland and Glastonbury for lightings as well.

In honor of the second night of the holiday, Wolvovsky explained the message of the second candle is to "grow everyday in spirituality."

As he started to light the candles, he explained that the Jewish performed a mitzvah, or a good deed, by lighting the first candle on their own menorahs the day prior, but that deeds should not stop there. "One is not enough anymore," he said. "You have to keep on growing."

He explained that each candle that is lit is a reminder of the spirituality and equality of all people.

"We should always look for opportunities in our lives to do another mitzvah, to pray a little more, to study some for Torah, to share a little more and that's a very good thing to keep in mind at the beginning of Hanukkah," Wolvovsky said.

After the traditional lighting of the 9-foot tall menorah, children joined Wolvovsky in a dance around the menorah with the accompaniment of traditional songs like "I Have A Little Dreidel" and "Oh Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah."

The celebration of Hanukkah is to commemorate two major events of the Jewish. In 165 BCE a small group of the Jewish called the Maccabees were outnumbered by the Greeks but were able to challenge their oppressors and to overcome the Greek tyrannical rule. The second is the celebration of the Hanukkah

miracle. After the Temple of Jerusalem was defiled, the Maccabees discovered a small jug of oil that was meant to fuel the menorah for only one day, but instead it burned for eight days.

Wolvovsky explained that the word Hanukkah means both "dedication and education." He told the crowd of about 40 that he was gratified to have children and adults alike come together to be educated about the holiday.

Despite the sudden rainfall, attendees were in high spirits as they enjoyed hot latkes and cider and raffle drawings for the kids.

Wolvovsky explained that putting together the event is a way to bring not only people of Colchester together, but residents of surrounding towns too, to celebrate the holiday jointly.

East Hampton residents Scott and Karen Zinkermin attended the event in Colchester for the first time with their two children and were pleased with their decision to come out for it. In addition to the "ridiculous amount of latkes," Scott said he enjoyed the lively atmosphere. The family plans to make their way back to the green for next year's celebration.

Yehudis Wolvovsky said that traveling with her husband to different communities to host the event is what the Hanukkah holiday is all about. She explained that the theme of Hanukkah is not only to celebrate together in an open space but to celebrate the "festival of freedom."

The giant menorah is in good company, as it is the last holiday structure to appear in the Town Green among the new 25-foot Christmas tree and multiple lit arches on the green's path.

As the celebration came to a close, Wolvovsky reminded attendees to take the delight from the celebration home with them in order to have a whole week full of joy.

Overall, he thought the event was "a beautiful thing."

For more information about the Chabad Jewish Center and its events, visit chabadER.com or call 860-659-2422.



Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky leads children in a dance around a giant menorah at Sunday's Hanukkah celebration on the Town Green.

All-Day Kindergarten in Colchester to Be Expanded?

by Melissa Roberto

Colchester Elementary School (CES) Principal Jackie Somberg led a presentation on the benefits of providing all-day kindergarten to all students in Colchester during Tuesday night's Board of Education meeting.

The goal is to provide an all-day kindergarten program to all of Colchester, which would get rid of the half-day program altogether. However, Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said parents or guardians would still have an option to pick their children up early if they strongly opposed all-day kindergarten, a decision that the town of Glastonbury currently offers.

Colchester currently provides two all-day kindergarten classes and six half-day classes. The all-day kindergarten classrooms are composed of children with special needs that are placed because of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that identify three or more supportive services, and the rest are chosen by lottery. Somberg said three-fourths of this year's all-day program consists of students chosen by lottery and one fourth is students with identified needs.

This is the second year that CES offered a second class of all-day kindergarten and it is the sixth year since CES started to offer all-day kindergarten.

Accompanying Somberg Tuesday night were the two CES all-day kindergarten teachers Megin Sechen and Sue Arntsen, all-day special education teacher Alexa Armagno, and two of the three half day kindergarten teachers, Anne Lemke and Krystin Lattarula.

A majority of the teachers referred to the all-day kindergarten program as "the gift of time." While a half-day program currently provides 450 hours of actual school work for a minimum of 180 days, that number is doubled to 900 hours for an all-day kindergarten program.

Somberg provided the crowd with statistics of districts in Connecticut who have utilized all-day programs. According to the state Department of Education, Somberg explained that during the 2011-12 school year 73 Connecticut school districts provided all-day kindergarten only and this year that number has risen to 87 districts, "a major change," she said.

In addition, she pointed out that last year 52 districts provided half-day kindergarten and this year 38 districts provide half-day kindergarten. Colchester also falls under the District Ref-

erence Group D (DRG) and is one of two districts in the DRG that provide all-day and half-day kindergarten in town, the other is East Hampton. Fourteen districts in the same DRG provide all-day kindergarten only and eight districts provide half-day kindergarten only.

Somberg said that offering all-day kindergarten to all of Colchester will lower grade retention and drop out rates from students later in life and, he said, "Isn't that what we strive for in the world of education?"

Sechen and Arntsen, the school's all-day kindergarten teachers, walked the board through a day in the life of an all-day kindergarten student. The schedule consists of language arts, one workshop each in reading and sensory, one hour of math, as well as a science and social studies component. Once a week the children have a media, art or music lesson. The all-day students also participate in physical education twice a week. The day is split up between one snack in the morning and one in the afternoon, as well as recess after lunch. Arntsen explained that students are continuously moving to different groups throughout the day so they are not sitting for long periods of time, something a lot of board members agreed would be difficult for children of that age group to do.

At the end of each day, the students of both classrooms participate in a joint class meeting that "excites the kids," said Sechen. With the teacher's help, the students send a tweet to their parents about what they learned that day.

Sechen was pleased to announce that during the week of the election students wrote letters to President Barack Obama to suggest how he can improve the country. She then showed the crowd a letter sent back to students from the president himself.

Sechen and Arntsen explained to the board that reading, math, and fine and gross motor skills that students develop throughout the full day are aligned with the common core standards that all districts in the state are currently implementing.

Arntsen added that in the last six years she has never had a child that could not handle the all-day program.

Board member John Reeve asked the teachers if there was enough time "for kids to be kids." He was concerned about the children having time for "role-playing" and using their

imagination. Sechen explained that there are "many opportunities" for students to interact with each other and have the autonomy to make their own choices.

Half-day teacher Lattarula said there is a "time issue" in the half-day classrooms as opposed to the all-day classrooms.

"We do our best to utilize every minute," she said, which she added does not leave much time for students to have a break and be able to play. Half-day teacher Lemke referred to an all-day classroom as a "dream."

The cost of expanding all-day kindergarten was deliberately left out of Tuesday's presentation, Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said, because they wanted it to be a focus on the theory of all-day kindergarten to all. He said "it's always a matter of resources" when costs are involved. He explained that in order to provide all-day kindergarten to all of Colchester, three more classes would need to be added but that the two already in place "make the expense of it less."

Goldstein announced that Superintendent of Schools Jeffry Mathieu will continue to work with his administration team to find out how much expanding all-day kindergarten would cost, and if it would be possible in the 2013-14 fiscal year budget, a topic that will be addressed at the next board meeting.

* * *

The Board of Education also took action Tuesday night to support a performance contract with Honeywell for an energy savings program for the town and Board of Education buildings.

The project would include energy efficient improvements in Bacon Academy, Jack Jacter Intermediate School, Colchester Elementary School, Cragin Library, both fire companies and Town Hall among other town buildings while also saving money the town spends on energy.

In the summer of 2009, Colchester received a stimulus grant of \$69,867 and the Board of Selectmen agreed to spend the grant funds to have an energy audit performed on the buildings. A request of approval was written and CELTIC Energy of Glastonbury was chosen to assist in selecting an energy services company.

Honeywell was hired in December 2011 and completed the investment grade audit in September of this year and made recommendations

that would reduce the amount of energy town buildings would use, as well as reducing the cost of that energy.

Schuster said the project is "very conservative" because there would be no additional costs to the town. Goldstein explained that the money used to make payments on the energy improvements would come from the savings that the energy improvements allow.

Furthermore, Schuster explained that if the savings that Honeywell has "guaranteed" do not cover the payments, Honeywell will pay the difference. That guarantee with Honeywell to cover the difference is considered "insurance," Goldstein explained, and that the town would "definitely" choose to pay insurance during the first year of the project if it goes through.

In a tri-board meeting Wednesday night between the Board of Education, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen, the boards discussed a financing plan for the project. No actions were taken during the meeting, but the "consensus" according to Goldstein, was that there would be a twelve year payback period for approximately 3.9 million dollars worth of energy saving improvements.

Goldstein added that the Board of Education does not have any role in how the project is financed but that additional meetings between the Board of Finance and selectmen will continue over the next month. The project will need to go to a town meeting for a final approval, which is "tentatively scheduled for the last week of January."

Assuming the project is approved and passes the 30-day wait period without any petition, the selectmen have the authority to sign the contract with Honeywell.

Lastly, Goldstein announced that a person in the audience will be retiring at the end of the 2012-13 school year: CES Principal Jackie Somberg. Members of the board said that she will be "greatly missed."

"You have [been] and you are CES," Goldstein said to Somberg, adding that it was "fitting" that she presented all-day kindergarten to all on the same day she announced her retirement.

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m. at CES, 315 Hall Hills Rd. All 2013 regular meetings will be held at the CES cafeteria.

Colchester Soldier Returns Home

by Melissa Roberto

After a long two years away from home, and spending the last seven months in Kandahar, Afghanistan, 22-year-old Jacob Kvasnik returned to his hometown of Colchester last Sunday afternoon to untie his yellow ribbon off of a big tree on the Veterans Town Green.

Kvasnik was the first soldier from Colchester to return home and untie his yellow ribbon since the yellow ribbon program started last month. He was an intelligence analyst of the U.S. Marine Corps VMU-2, an unmanned aerial vehicle squadron conducting aerial coverage and surveillance for ground troops.

Corporal Kvasnik was welcomed to Colchester by a group that included the Patriot Guard Riders, incoming state Rep. Melissa Ziobron, First Selectman Gregg Schuster, members of Colchester's Yellow Ribbon Committee and many of Kvasnik's family members and friends.

Committee member Sean O'Leary introduced Kvasnik as a man who is "certainly dedicated" to defending his country. Kvasnik and his wife, Carrie, had the honor of taking down his yellow ribbon, a sight that brought tears to many attendees' eyes.

Kvasnik expressed his gratitude to the crowd for welcoming him home.

"To see those members in the community and all the support means a lot," he said.

Soldiers' family members and friends first tied yellow ribbons around the tree, in honor of their loved ones serving overseas, on Nov. 11 on the Veterans Town Green as part of

Colchester's Veterans Day ceremony. The inspiration for the ceremony came from East Hampton's Yellow Ribbon Committee, which was spearheaded by Ann McLaughlin of East Hampton last year. During the ceremony, a yellow ribbon is tied to represent each soldier from town fighting in war, and an additional celebration takes place when the soldiers return home. McLaughlin was present for Sunday's ceremony.

Yellow Ribbon Committee member Christine Bell said she was pleased with the turnout of the event – around 30 people attended – and added that seeing the first soldier return home gave her hope that her own son fighting overseas will return home safely. He is expected to arrive back in the U.S. early next year.

Kvasnik explained he had an idea that something was being planned for his return to Colchester, but he was not expecting to see so many Patriot Guard Riders stand in his honor.

"It was a neat experience," he said.

The Patriot Guard Riders are a group of veterans that were created in 2005 to attend funerals, send-offs and welcome home events for those who defend our country.

Carrie Kvasnik said it is "great" to have her husband home and safe.

"It's nice to not worry anymore," she said.

However, Kvasnik's desire to fight for his country hasn't ended. Yellow Ribbon Committee member Sean O'Leary announced that Kvasnik has re-upped his position for another four years. Kvasnik and his wife will return to Cherry Point, N.C., where he was initially stationed before deploying to Afghanistan.



Many members of Kvasnik's family came out for the Marine corporal's official return to watch him remove his yellow ribbon. It had been two years since Kvasnik returned to his hometown of Colchester.

Kvasnik said he likely won't be deployed for another year, although he's not sure when he will be sent back overseas.

For now, Kvasnik and his wife said they are enjoying the cold temperatures before they

make their way back to Cherry Point at the end of next week. Kvasnik mentioned that since his return to Colchester he has enjoyed seeing the new changes around town, as well as seeing what has stayed the same.

Obituaries

Colchester

Vera Burchards

Vera "Vickie" Crowninshield Burchards of Colchester, died Thursday, Dec. 6, in Middletown, after a brief but courageous battle with melanoma and CRS.

Vera was born as the youngest of Wallace A. and Edna E. (Bourn) Crowninshield's four children Sept. 5, 1931, at the family home in Jamaica, Vt. Few things in life made her prouder than being a true farm girl and a "stubborn Vermonter." After moving to Connecticut, she settled in Vernon and later Colchester. She previously maintained residences in Mims, Florida and in Ocho Rios on the island of Jamaica, also owning a business in the latter.

Vera was a beautiful woman with many talents. At Leland & Gray Seminary in Townshend, Vt., she was captain of the basketball and cheerleading teams as well as prom queen. She was a feisty competitor who often claimed to be born with a deck of cards in her hands. She was a nationally-ranked duckpin bowler who set several state and regional records in the 1960s through 1970s. She played bingo for many years in Marlborough and Glastonbury. She never found a casino she couldn't find time to stop at, and she had a lifelong lucky streak, including hitting the Connecticut Rainbow Lottery jackpot in 1983.

After her retirement from Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford, she enjoyed traveling around the country in her RV and spending summer vacations in Rhode Island and winters in Florida with Roy, her beloved beau of more than 30 years. In recent years, she became an active member of the Red Hat Society. She was a die-hard UConn basketball fan and loved attending both men's and women's games whenever possible. She teamed up with her son, Doug, in the setback league at the St. Joseph's Society in Colchester. In 2012, she was featured on a float in the Jamaica Old Home Day parade back in Vermont. She was proud of her true farm-style cooking, her many artistic and crafting talents, and raising a good son.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Douglas G. and Janice Odell Burchards of Manchester; her granddaughter, Ashley Odell of Manchester; her step-grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Janice (David) Morton of Somers and daughters Katherine, Melissa, and Laura; Tony (Elizabeth) Ruiz of Middletown, N.Y. and children Evelyn, Zedekiah, and Ellianna, and Tony's children Paige, Tucker, and Abigail of Sag Harbor, N.Y.; Donna Capaz Sciuga of Apollo Beach, Fla. and daughters Samantha and Alicia; Hope (Philip) Naples of Tampa, Fla.; Amy (David) Rentler of Barkhamsted and children Morgan and Gavin; sisters-in-law Mildred (Shattuck) Crowninshield and Eliza (Allbee) Crowninshield of Brattleboro, Vt.; her nieces Shirley Ritchie of Perkinsville, Vermont and Diane Knapp of Taylorville, Ill.; her nephews, Lawrence Brooks of Jamaica, Vt., Ronald Brooks of Brattleboro, Vt., and Thomas Crowninshield of Brattleboro, Vt.; her beau's son, Roy T. Dudzic, Jr.; her neighbors in Westchester Village; and her devoted canine companion of 13 years, Cody.

She was predeceased by her parents; her beloved and devoted partner, Roy T. Dudzic Sr.; her former husband, Robert "Bob" T. Burchards; her sister, Della (Crowninshield) Brooks; her brothers, Bernard Crowninshield and Norman Crowninshield; her niece Janice (Crowninshield) Litchfield; her nephews, Gregory Crowninshield and David Brooks; and her grandson, Jeremiah Odell.

The family sincerely thanks the living miracles who work and volunteer at the Middlesex Hospital Hospice & Palliative Care Unit.

In keeping with her wishes, no services or calling hours will be held, and private interment alongside her family will follow in Pleasant View Cemetery in Jamaica, Vt., in May. At that time, family and close friends will be welcome to join in a celebration of her life.

Memorial donations can be made to the Jamaica Historical Foundation, 3417 VT Rte. 30, Jamaica, VT 05343, or to the American Diabetes Association or the Humane Society. In lieu of flowers, please laugh frequently, love fully and always care for those around you.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.



Portland

Edward John Sharr Sr.

Edward John Sharr Sr., 90, of Portland, beloved husband of Kathryn (Onofrio) Sharr, left this life peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 5. He was born Nov. 23, 1922, in New Britain, the son of Adeline Gnazzo Sharr and John Sharr, and raised in Plainville, where he lived for many years, moving to Portland in 1973.

He attended Plainville High School and continued his studies at the Morse Business School and at Quinnipiac College. After college, Ed pursued a career in the food industry. In 1969 he bought Tri Town Foods in Westchester, and expanded the company into several other locations. He was a member of the Connecticut Food Association (CFA) Board of Directors; in 1989 he was recognized by CFA as "Man of the Year." Throughout his life, Ed was active in several community groups.

He was a charter member of the Knights of Columbus Council 3544 in Plainville; a charter member of the Colchester Business Association; a former member of the Board of Directors of Glastonbury Bank and Trust, where he served for 21 years; a former Director of South Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce and a former Director of Allied Grocers Cooperative, Inc. He served on the advisory board for Bacon Academy and was instrumental in establishing Colchester's first newspaper, *The Regional Standard*. In 1992 the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International named him a "Paul Harris Fellow," the organization's highest honor. Ed was also involved with the Boy Scouts for many years and in 1994 he was named the first "Distinguished Citizen" by the Indian Trail Council in recognition for his many scouting and civic involvements.

While his awards were numerous, his best reward was the personal satisfaction he felt by helping and guiding others. Although he spent long hours establishing his business in the early years, he always made time for his family – both nuclear and extended. Not only his children, but also his nieces, nephews and grandchildren relied on his business acumen and life experience, and sought his advice and insights. He was always viewed as somewhat of a "father advisor" figure even beyond his family. While he was working at the stores, his door was always open. He never refused to sit down with an employee and offer counsel when they sought him out. He was generous with his time and helped many former employees who wanted to start their own businesses. It gave him great pride to see them flourish.

For many years he and his wife enjoyed traveling with friends to Europe and the Caribbean and wintering in Vero Beach, Fla. He was an avid sports fan – football, baseball, basketball – and enjoyed watching the Dodgers home team which wintered two blocks from his Florida home. A longtime supporter of Goodspeed Opera House, he also enjoyed Wednesday night card games with his pals and annual trips to Saratoga Springs during the horse racing season. Once retired, he took up golfing and reading, particularly enjoying books about sports and politics.

In addition to his cherished wife of 66 years, he is survived by his loving daughter, Sandra, and her fiancé, Marc Fishbone; his son, Ed ("Rick") Jr., and his partner, Linda Dutcher; his granddaughter Juliet Rodriguez and her husband, Jay; his grandson, Jonathan and his wife, Mellisa; as well as three great grandchildren, Cayden and Callie Rose Rodriguez and Luke Sharr. He is also survived by his sister, Joan Pagliarulo, of Florida and brother, Arthur Sharr of California, as well as many nieces and nephews – Jim Welch, Marlene Olson, Gary Onofrio, Kim D'Amore, Jan and Joan Silverio, Joe Musumano, Mark and Greg Pagliarulo, Lisa West, Jeffrey and David Sharr – and their families. He will be enormously missed by his family and by all whose lives he touched.

Calling hours were held Monday, Dec. 10, at St. Mary Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. There was a funeral Mass on Tuesday, Dec. 11, directly at St. Mary Church, Portland. Burial was Wednesday, Dec. 12, at St. Joseph's cemetery in Plainville.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Haitian Health Foundation, 97 Sherman Street, Norwich, CT 06360, or St. Mary Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT. 06480.

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



Portland

Donald I. Franklin

Mr. Donald I. Franklin, age 68, of Portland, died Friday, Dec. 7, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by his loving family.

Donald was born Feb. 2, 1944, in Hartford, a son of the late George W. and Alice (Cowles) Franklin, and lived in Portland for over 40 years. He was a graduate of East Hartford High School Class of 1961. Donald had worked as a vice-president of manufacturing at the former Cushman Industries in Hartford for over 30 years; he also worked for various oil companies in Portland until his retirement in 2005. He was an avid golfer and member of the East Hartford Men's Club for many years. Donald coached various youth sports, especially baseball in Portland for many years.

Donald loved being with family and friends especially at family picnics in the summer. He lived for spending time with his sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren while impacting the lives of everyone he knew.

He is survived by his three sons: Brett D. Franklin and his wife Sandy of West Hartford, Craig D. Franklin and his wife Deb of Portland, Keith D. Franklin and his wife Roxanne of Portland, two brothers Edward Franklin of Vernon, Richard Franklin of East Hartford, two sisters, Martha Franklin of East Hartford, Nancy Franklin of Burlington, Vt., his nine grandchildren: Meaghan, Alec, McKenzie, Noah, Kelly, Carissa, Dan, Sam and Katie; two great-grandchildren, Zoe and Sharlotte; and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his two grandsons Kyle and Nathan Franklin.

Donald's family would like to thank Dr. Kimmell, the nurses at The Infusion Center and the staff at Middlesex Hospital Hospice for their help and support during Donald's illness.

His funeral was held Wednesday, Dec. 12, directly at Trinity Church, Portland. Burial followed in Trinity Cemetery, Portland. Family and friends called at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, on Tuesday, Dec. 11.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Connecticut Oncology Group, 536 Saybrook Rd., Middletown, CT 06457-4783, or Middlesex Hospital Hospice and Palliative Care, Middlesex Hospital, Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Marlborough

Betty Foote Grun

Betty Foote Grun of Pine Point, Maine, formerly of Marlborough, died Friday, Dec. 7, at Pine Point Center, Scarborough, Maine. She was born Jan. 16, 1926, in Baltimore, Md.

She lived in Marlborough for 20 years before returning to Maine in 1976. She worked at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft, Travelers Insurance and Hartford Builders Finish in Connecticut, then part-time at GE in Maine. She had been active in the Marlborough Congregational Church as a volunteer church secretary and Sunday school teacher. She was also a 4h leader. In Maine, she was a member of the West Scarborough Methodist Church and a guild member.

She lived at Scarborough Terrace for five years with her beloved bird, Tequila.

Betty (Beeb) was predeceased by her husband, Hank, her brother Jordan and nephew Tim.

She leaves her daughter, Sandy Hooker and her husband Jack of Hebron; her grandson, Jeff Hooker, his wife Anne and her great-grandchildren Teresa and Trevor of Marlborough; her granddaughter, Karen Hooker and Karen's partner Graham Forbes of Great Neck, N.Y.

A memorial service will be held Saturday afternoon, Dec. 15, at 3 p.m. at the West Scarborough United Methodist Church.

Memorial donations will be to the Michael J. Fox Foundation, Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 4777, New York, NY 10165-4777 or the West Scarborough United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 2035, Scarborough, ME 04070.

Hebron

James L. Derby Jr.

James L. Derby Jr., 80, of Hebron and formerly of East Hartford, beloved husband of Jean (Britt) Derby, died peacefully Friday, Dec. 7, at his home, with his family at his side. He was born Dec. 19, 1931, in Hartford, son of the late James L. Derby Sr. and Elzie (Oldham) Derby.

Jim grew up in East Hartford, attended local schools and graduated from East Hartford High School with the Class of 1949. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from RPI and began a career with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, lasting 37 years before his retirement in 1989.

Mr. Derby had lived in East Hartford before moving to Hebron in 1958. His activities in the community included the Boy Scouts, the RHAM Music Boosters, tax collector, Zoning Board of Appeals and 45 years as the registrar of voters. Jim was a longtime active member of the Gilead Congregational Church in Hebron. He was a Sunday school teacher and served on numerous committees. After many years as a Deacon, he was honored as Deacon Emeritus in 2009.

In addition to his loving wife he is survived by and was the proud father of three children, Stephen J. Derby and his wife Sharon, of Troy, N.Y., Susan J. Derby of Manchester, Sharon J. Gordon and her husband Randy of Brooklyn, N.Y., he also leaves three granddaughters, Laura Brigada and her husband David of Watertown, Mass., Melanie Derby of Troy, N.Y., and Mollie Gordon of Brooklyn, N.Y.

Jim's family would like to express their deep appreciation to their friends and neighbors, Dr. DeMarcaida, the Glastonbury VNA, especially Jennifer and Kelly and his personal aide prince for the loving care and support shown throughout his illness.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Dec. 15, at 1 p.m., at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St. (Route 85), Hebron. We would encourage those attending to wear brightly-colored clothes as this will be a celebration of Jim's life. Burial will be in the Gilead Hill Cemetery. Calling hours will be held today, Dec. 14, from 2-7 p.m., at the Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Gilead Congregational Church Memorial Fund, 672 Gilead St., Hebron, CT. 06248 or to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, Church St. Station, P.O. Box 780, New York, N.Y. 10008-0780.

To sign the online register book, go to holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Cobalt

Solomon Adler

Solomon Adler, 94, of Deerfield Beach, Fla., and formerly of Cobalt, husband of Rosalind Adler, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 5, in Florida. Born in New York, N.Y., he was the son of the late Abraham and Pauline Adler.

Solomon lived in Cobalt most of his life and was a member of Congregation Adath Israel Synagogue in Middletown. He was a member of Masonic Lodge No. 88 in Hartford and was an avid golfer and sports fan.

Besides his wife, Solomon is survived by his son, Victor Adler of Madison; his daughter, Sheila Alperin of South Hamilton, Mass.; seven grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Along with his parents, he was predeceased by a stepson, Gary R. Grant.

A graveside service was held Sunday, Dec. 9, in Adath Israel Cemetery, 714 Pine St., Middletown, with Rabbi Seth Haaz officiating. There were no Shiva hours.

In lieu of flowers, friends may make donations in Solomon's memory to National Hemophilia Foundation, 116 West 32nd St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10001 and may send messages of condolence to the family at doolittlefuneral.com.

Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown, is handling the arrangements.



Marlborough

Marion F. Canfield

Marion F. Canfield, 76, of East Haddam, beloved wife of Walter for nearly 40 years, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 11, at the Middlesex Medical Center in Marlborough.

Born Feb. 28, 1936, in Perth Amboy, N.J., she was a daughter of the late Michael and Florence (Smith) Mollish.

Marion studied nursing at the Chas. E. Gregory School in Nursing in Old Bridge, N.J., graduating in 1957. She worked as a registered nurse at Perth Amboy General Hospital until 1971, and then at Chestelm HCC in East Haddam and at CT Valley Hospital in Middletown before retiring in the early 1990s. Mrs. Canfield was active with the East Haddam Seniors and Community Lions, as well as the Middletown Stroke Club.

In addition to her loving husband, she is survived by seven children, Lori Canfield and John Hasuly, both of East Haddam, Diane Stychcomb of East Millinocket, Maine, Cheryl Tuttle, Francis Hasuly and Mary Ventres, all of Moodus, and Debra Lupinek of Westbrook; eight grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; two siblings, John Mollish of San Benito, Texas, and Patricia Chegus of Englishtown, N.J.; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends may call 9-11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 18, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The celebration of the memorial liturgy will follow at 11:30 a.m. at St. Bridget of Kildare Church, 75 Moodus-Leesville Rd., Moodus. Burial will be private in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

Per Marion's wishes, kindly omit flowers and those who wish make memorial contributions to the CT Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

Marlborough

Mark N. Hallquist

Mark N. Hallquist, 43, of East Hartford, passed away suddenly Saturday, Dec. 8, at Salmon River State Forest in Marlborough. Mark was doing what he loved, hunting deer with his best friends, who heroically tried to save his life. His last words entering the woods were a joke with laughter and his famous "Mark smile" on his face.

Mark was born on March 17, 1969, in Hartford, a son of Elizabeth "Betty" J. (Hill) Hallquist of East Hartford and the late Donald E. Hallquist, Sr. Mark was a lifelong resident of East Hartford and a graduate of East Hartford High School, Class of 1987. Mark was an auto mechanic for many years and had been employed by AMR Ambulance Company, West Hartford, for over the past 18 years as one of their mechanics.

Mark was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting and fishing with his buddies. He loved his MOPAR vehicles, especially his Plymouth Barracuda. He also enjoyed his Sunday afternoons and evenings watching football and barbequing with his friends. Living at home with his mother, Mark especially enjoyed his mornings with a cup of coffee with her as they both worked on solving "SODUKO" and other word puzzles.

Besides his father, Mark was predeceased by a brother, Douglas W. Hallquist of East Hartford.

Along with his beloved mother, Betty, Mark is survived by two brothers, Donald E. Hallquist, Jr. and his wife, Marie, of East Hartford, Scott D. Hallquist and Kerin of Enfield; and his twin sister, Linda J. Libardi and her husband, Robert, of Glastonbury. He also leaves two aunts, Virginia Bedat of Stratford, Louise Hill of New Britain; several special nieces and nephews, Amanda "Mandy", Jessica, Matthew, Solange, Zack, Mariah, James "Jimbo;" and many dear close friends.

A memorial service celebrating Mark's life will be held today, Dec. 14, at 4 p.m. at South Congregational Church, 1301 Forbes St., East Hartford, with Rev. Al Turner officiating. Private burial will be held at the convenience of the family. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Mark's name may be made to the South Congregational Church, 1301 Forbes Street, East Hartford, CT 06118.

The D'ESOPO-East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford, has been entrusted with the care of the funeral arrangements. For any online expressions of sympathy to the family, visit desopo.com.

Mark's family wants everyone to know that Mark smiled to the very end.

Colchester

Loretta Durand

Loretta Leontine (Thiffeault) Sarnowski Durand, 95, of Baltic, died peacefully after a brief illness Sunday, Dec. 9, at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was born Oct. 7, 1917, in Willimantic, the daughter of Joseph and Ardina (Garceau) Thiffeault.

Loretta was predeceased by her nine siblings, Anthony, Rose Alma, Henry, Yvonne, Emil, Eugene, Dennis, William and Armand. She was also predeceased by her husbands, Stanley Sarnowski and Joseph Leo Durand.

Affectionally known as Mom, Gram, Great Gram and Aunt Loretta, she leaves two daughters, Barbara Bioty and her husband Joseph of Dennisport, Mass., and Carol Shefer and her partner Kenneth Allyn of Baltic. She is also survived by her four grandsons, "The Boys," Stephen Bioty and his wife Lisa of Guilford, Christopher Bioty and his wife Kathleen of Marshfield, Mass., Timothy Shefer and his wife Sherry of Uncasville and Shawn Shefer and his partner Karla Bragdon of Hanover. She is also survived by her precious great-grandchildren, Ashlee, Courtnee, Haylee, Ava, and Olivia Shefer; Isabella, Abigail, Jaiden, John, Grace and Charles Bioty. Loretta will be missed by her special friend Barbara Alfiero of Baltic. She is also survived by a sister-in-law, Helen (Sarnowski) Light and her husband David of Windham Center, and numerous nieces and nephews.

She spent most of her early years working in various manufacturing plants in Willimantic. After retirement she moved to Baltic and especially enjoyed her time volunteering at the Sprague Library helping children enjoy her love of books.

Her family received relatives and friends Wednesday, Dec. 12, at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Route 195), Willimantic, prior to the celebration of her funeral Mass at St. Joseph Church, 99 Jackson St., Willimantic. Interment followed in St. Joseph Cemetery, Windham.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to the Sprague Public Library, 1 Main St., Baltic, CT 06330.

For an online memorial guestbook and directions to the funeral home, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

Haddam Neck

Frank A. Rogers

Frank A. Rogers, 48, of Safety Harbor, Fla., and formerly of Haddam Neck, passed away Thursday, Dec. 6.

Frank was a proud United States Marine Corps Veteran who served in Beirut, Grenada and Lebanon. He was a lifetime member of the VFW Post 5095 in East Hampton, and a skilled carpenter with a huge heart and a great love for children and animals.

Frank is survived by his loving wife of 26 years, Karen M. Rogers; children Jeremy F. Rogers, Corey F. (Kate) Rogers, Tarryne E. Rogers, Justin Fontana, and Willie Noe; parents Marie (Charlie) Nichols and Frank Rogers; siblings Courtland Rogers and Corinne (Walter) Farren; nieces and nephews Michael Visintainer, Sean Visintainer, Jaimie Farren, Patrick Farren and Kiley Farren; numerous uncles, aunts, cousins, a loving family of friends, and his beloved English bulldog, Tank.

The family received friends Thursday, Dec. 13, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Funeral services were also held Thursday in the funeral home, with the Rev. Walter Nagle officiating. Burial followed with military honors in St. Bridget of Kildare Cemetery in Moodus.

You will live on in our hearts forever. SEMPER FI.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

David Alan Cooper

David Alan Cooper, 77, of Colchester, died unexpectedly Friday, Nov. 30, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by his family.

Born Aug. 10, 1935, in New Bedford, Mass., he was the son of the late Everett and Kathleen Cooper and was predeceased by a sister Joan Garner; brothers William, Albert and Richard Cooper; and a son Bruce Cooper.

He leaves behind his wife of 53 years, Jane McKnight Cooper; son, Paul Cooper; and a daughter, Deborah Cooper of Colchester; a daughter-in-law, Patricia Cooper; and grandchildren Michael, Samantha and Jesse Cooper, all of Hudson, N.H. He also leaves his sister and brother-in-law, Grace and Sam Downey of Colchester, and many nieces and nephews.

David attended Wethersfield High School and was a member of the US Army during the Korean War. He worked for many years as a route salesman and was recently retired from Utz Quality Foods. A resident of Colchester for nearly 50 years, he was one of the original founders of the Colchester Cougars Midget Football team and was a member of the Park and Recreation Commission and coached little league baseball for many years. He was a golfer, loved to fish and was an avid Boston Red Sox fan. He loved "cutting up" and will always be remembered for making us laugh. He will be greatly missed.

A private funeral and burial was performed at Rose Hill Memorial Park in Rocky Hill.

Marlborough

Elizabeth Farley

Elizabeth (Centrella) Farley, 77, of Marlborough, died Saturday, Dec. 8. She was born in Winsted, daughter of the late Carmine and Antosia (Linkovich) Centrella and had lived in Simsbury for several years.

Elizabeth had operated a yarn shop in Canton for several years and had worked part time for the McLean Home, Simsbury.

She is survived by two sons, David B. Farley and his wife Nancy of Marlborough and Richard C. Farley and his significant other, Diane Porter of East Hartford; two sisters, Dolores Kateley and Marie Steeves, both of Florida; a sister-in-law, Jan Centrella Fumire of Barkhamstead; and several nieces.

She was predeceased by a brother, James Centrella.

The funeral was Wednesday, Dec. 12, at the Dillon-Baxter Funeral Home, 1276 Berlin Tpke., Wethersfield, with the Rev. John Rogers officiating. Burial will be in Eno Hill Cemetery, Colebrook, at the convenience of the family. Visiting hours were Wednesday, prior to the funeral, at the funeral home.

Contributions in her memory may be made to: Alzheimer's Association of Connecticut, 2075 Silas Deane Hwy., Suite 100, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To share a memory with the family, visit dillonbaxter.com.

Portland

Thomas H. Cady Sr.

Thomas H. Cady Sr., 93, of Bartlett Street, Portland, husband of the late Jessie (Frank) Cady, died Friday, Dec. 7, at Middlesex Hospital. He was born Feb. 27, 1919, in Manchester, N.H., son of the late Michael J. and Margaret (Clancy) Cady.

Thomas was the owner of T.E.T. Manufacturing Co. He was a resident of Portland most of his life, and was a veteran of World War II, serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps, where he received a number of medals.

Thomas is survived by his loving family: five sons, Thomas H. Cady Jr. of Middlefield, Lawrence B. Cady of Florida, William S. Cady of Hartford, Stephen D. Cady of Middletown, Michael J. Cady of Middletown; two daughters, Christina Kelly of Portland, Kathy Cihocki of Middlefield; 10 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; also several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Middlesex Hospice Unit, c/o Development Office, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

The Coughlin-Lastrina Funeral Home, 491 High St., Middletown, is in charge of arrangements.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

If you happened to wander into the *Rivereast/Glastonbury Citizen* office at around noon on Tuesday, you'd have been treated to quite the sight: an entire office of people stuffing themselves silly on various homemade food delicacies.

It was the annual holiday potluck lunch Tuesday and, in what is the case every year, there was food aplenty, as everyone contributed to this gourmet feast. As far as names the *Rivereast* readers would know go, Joshua Anusewicz brought some delectable spinach dip, Geeta Schrayter made some delicious pumpkin chocolate chip muffins with a butter cream frosting, and Melissa Roberto brought strawberries dipped in Connecticut's own Munson's chocolate. Jim Hallas' wife brought her annual favorite, a corn soufflé-type casserole.

As for yours truly? A longtime fan of green bean casserole, I decided to, as Emeril might say, kick it up a notch, and added in plentiful amounts of bacon and cheddar cheese. The result, I have to say, was pretty good – although I realize by adding bacon and cheese I made what likely wasn't a very healthy dish to begin with tremendously unhealthy. But, hey, Christmas comes but once a year.

And there were desserts galore. Sandy, whose friendly voice greets you when you call the office, contributed her world-famous (well, at least far as our little 87 Nutmeg Ln. world goes) peanut butter balls dipped in chocolate. Geeta, who I already mentioned brought cupcakes, also made mini chocolate brownies with a mint Hershey's Kiss inside. Melissa, in addition to the aforementioned chocolate-covered strawberries, brought a box of Munson's chocolates. And there were also cream puffs, cookies, chocolate-almond torts and more. It was a sweets-lover's paradise.

In short, we ate very, very well on Tuesday. And enough was leftover for lunch on Wednesday as well. Like I said, it's an annual tradition at the *Rivereast/Citizen* office – and one we look forward to every year.

* * *

I've written here in past Decembers just how much I enjoy listening to the radio this time of year. Two stations in the area – 94.7 FM out of Springfield and Lite 100.5 FM here in Connecticut – turned their playlists to nothing but Christmas music the day after Thanksgiving, and will be non-stop holiday cheer right up through Dec. 25.

Those two stations are not alone, of course; radio stations across the country have been dialing up the holiday tunes. So I got to wondering: just what are the most-played holiday songs out there? And Billboard had my answer. Apparently, the music publication tracks the airplay of the different Christmas tunes, and publishes a new top 10 list each week. So, for this week, the No. 1 most-played Christmas song in the country is... "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" by Peggy Lee. And I have heard that song several times already this year – and each time I do, I can't help but think of *Home Alone*, which featured that song in a scene in which Kevin is trying to convince the Wet Bandits he is not home alone at all, and in fact there are people at the McAllister home. He succeeds, albeit – spoiler alert! – temporarily.

Number two on the list is "Jingle Bell Rock" by Bobby Helms, a name that, unlike Peggy Lee, is probably pretty unfamiliar to most people. While this song – written by a couple of admen, by the way – is by far his most popular, he actually had two number-one country hits to his name – "Fraulein" and "My Special Angel" – in 1957 before releasing "Jingle Bell Rock" just two days (yes,

two days!) before Christmas that year.

Number three is "Holly Jolly Christmas" by Burl Ives – which comes from my favorite Christmas TV special (sorry, Charlie Brown), 1964's *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Ives was an Academy Award-winning movie and television actor, and also a successful singer. But for multiple generations – including my own – he's probably best-known as the snowman from *Rudolph*. Not a bad way to be remembered; as I said, it's a great special.

Number four is "The Christmas Song" by Nat "King" Cole. There are scores of renditions of this song played at this time of year, but Cole's version is by far the best. The song was actually composed by another singer, the famous Mel Torme. I've heard Torme's version, and while it's not bad, Cole had a smooth-as-silk voice that works perfectly with this song.

Up next in the five slot this week is "Feliz Navidad" by Jose Feliciano, a song which I actually like a lot. Perhaps this is getting played more on other stations, or perhaps I've just been out of the car when it comes on 94.7 or 100.5, but for whatever reason, I haven't heard this song a lot this year, which is a shame.

I have, however, heard the number six song, "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," a ton. The version of it *Billboard* singles out is the Andy Williams one. And he does do a great job with it – no big shock, as Williams, who died just a few months ago, had a great voice; his signature "Moon River" is one of my favorites.

Number seven, "All I Want for Christmas" by Mariah Carey, which has the distinction of being the only song in the top 10 that's less than 25 years old. I guess we like our Christmas classics to be *classics*.

Number eight is another one of my all-time favorites "Happy Christmas (War is Over)" by John Lennon, which is very affecting. In case you were wondering, fellow former Beatle Paul McCartney's trademark holiday piece, the decidedly more poppy (but admit it, delightfully catchy and entertaining) "Wonderful Christmas Time" doesn't crack the top 10, instead checking in at number 14.

The ninth song, "Do They Know It's Christmas?" by Band-Aid, is meant to remind people of those less fortunate – specifically starving people in Africa. And I'll admit, it does a good job of doing that. It's not one of my favorites, but it's passable. Still, whenever I hear it, I can't help but remember a friend of mine who detests this song; it's one of his very least favorite Christmas songs. The lyric he objects to the most is "Tonight, thank God it's them instead of you," on the sheer basis that it's a rather un-Christmas-y thought. And you know what? He kind of has a point.

Rounding out the top 10 is a "Last Christmas" by Wham! As is the case with "Feliz Navidad," I just haven't heard this song much this year. It's not one of my favorites, though; I'd rather hear "Dominick the Donkey." Come to think of it, I haven't heard the exploits of the Italian Christmas donkey once all season. Hopefully that'll change sometime in the next week and a half.

Because that's when the Christmas music goes away for another year. And artists like Andy Williams, Nat "King" Cole and (though they're not seen in the top 10, their Christmas hits are well-played this time of year, and they're one of my personal favorites) The Carpenters will, sadly, disappear from the airwaves.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Police News

11/26: Wigberto Laboy, 32, of 17 Old Coach Rd., was arrested for misuse of the Emergency 911 System, East Hampton Police said.

12/1: Nicholas Campisi, 19, of 107 Main St., arrested for possession of a hallucinogen substance and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, police said. In the same incident, Sean McGovern-Cullen, 22, of 201 Chestnut Hill Rd., was arrested for possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, possession of narcotics, possession of drug paraphernalia and failure to drive right, police said.

12/5: Kevin C. Messerschmidt, 45, of 200 Chestnut Hill Rd., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

Portland Police News

12/5: Robert McLellan, 30, of 63 Freestone Ave., was charged with sixth-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

12/5: Louie Westcott, 28, of 87 Isinglass Hill Rd., was charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.