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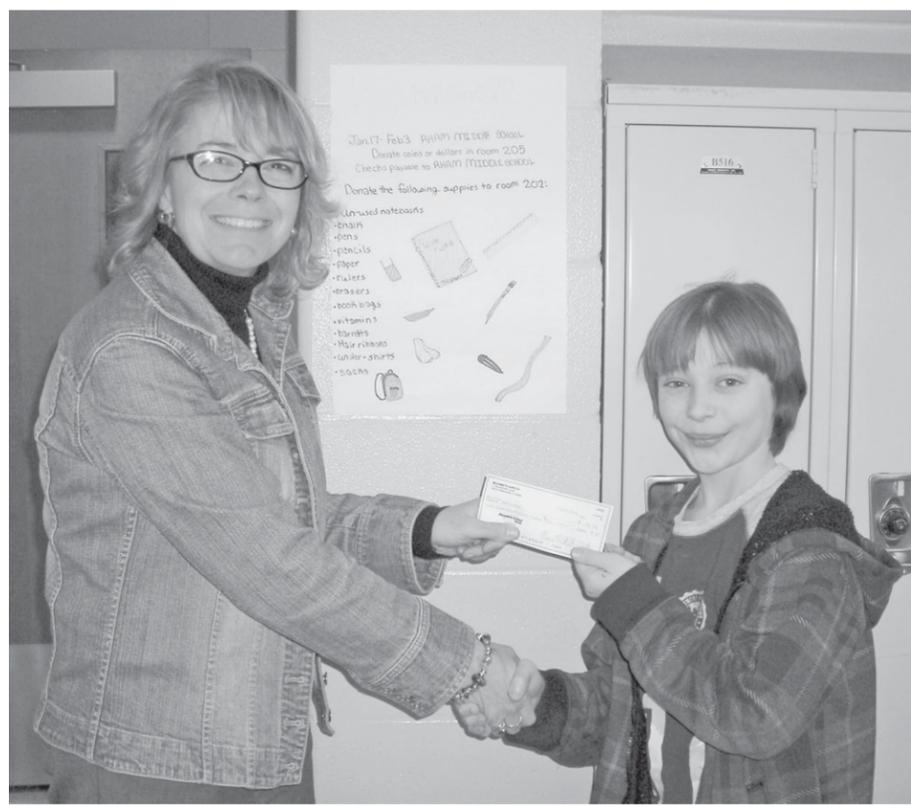
News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

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Money for Haiti...RHAM Middle School blue team students recently collected a total of \$701.26 to give to Haitian refugees. Nathaniel Larson, a seventh-grade student, spearheaded our funds drive. He is seen in the picture handing over a check to Jae Marano, middle school guidance counselor and liaison to ARM2ARM, an organization that helps Haitian refugees in the Dominican Republic. Another check was given to HELO, a Haitian orphanage. Earlier this month, the students collected supplies and gave them to volunteers at the Church of the Holy Family. These supplies were sent directly to Haiti.

Marlborough Ed Board Cuts Spanish Program

by Katelyn Kelleher

The Marlborough Board of Education purged Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School's Spanish program from its 2012-13 budget proposal Thursday, Feb. 16, after several board members bashed the quality and effectiveness of the program.

After much debate, members voted 6-2 in favor of eliminating the Spanish program for grades three through six.

Member Corinne Chappelle said she understood the importance of learning a foreign language, but the quality of the school's program is poor.

"I know the value of a foreign language program and for me to say I don't think it's worth anything in this school says a lot," she said. "It is about the quality. I appreciate all the data and research people have gone out to find, but there's nothing you can show me that I don't already know."

Chappelle said the specific problem with the program is the children are not being taught what they should be.

"I saw firsthand what my child came home with," she said. "I'm embarrassed that my child or any child in this school would come home and say 'this is what I've learned in Spanish.'"

The current program doesn't cover the fundamentals of the language, Chappelle added. "They're supposed to be learning conversational Spanish, but they don't know basic verbs," she said.

Member Robert Clarke said time constraints

– the program is taught in one 20-minute and one 40-minute session each week – keep it from being effective. The time spent on Spanish each week "is probably not enough when you throw in cultural aspects to it," he said.

Clarke said the consensus among parents he spoke with preferred a conversational approach to learning without cultural education or strict academic grading.

Member Louise Concedello said the board still has to make cuts, and the next ones might be worse than the Spanish program. "This has been on the table year after year and it's not working," she said. "We can't afford this right now, and if we kept it in we would probably have to increase class size."

Member Shannon Bielaczyc said she wanted a plan to reinstate the program before cutting it.

"I, in good conscience, could live with taking a break for a year if we say 'this is so important we're going to take it out, rework it and put it back in for 2014-2015,' but I am not really okay with 'take it out and we'll put it back in some time,' because other stuff comes up," she said. "Our responsibility is to the school, not the Board of Finance. We cannot just keep cutting and cutting and cutting and coming in at 1 and 2 percent and maintain the standards that we have."

Resident Richard Storrs said planning to bring the Spanish program back does not help

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Proposed Charter Changes Causing Controversy

by Geeta Schrayter

The special referendum on the proposed changes to Andover's town charter is fast approaching. Sixteen months of work by the town's Charter Review Commission will come to a head on March 13, when residents will vote 'yea' or 'nay' on the proposed document.

But some of the same individuals who worked on the document said this week they will be voting against the changes.

Three questions will come before the public at the referendum, and two of them reference specific changes to the charter: should municipal elections be switched from May to November, and should the selectmen have the authority to enact, amend and repeal ordinances. Both questions raise concerns for some.

Gary Giles, who was a member of the Charter Revision Commission, said he has some concern over the change regarding ordinances.

"At first I thought that was a good idea," he said, "because it makes it easier for the town to operate."

But he went on to say that, under the proposed change, if the townspeople oppose an ordinance and petition against it, "the selectmen can sit on it and then pass it to the attorney, and then the attorney can sit on it – so it could take weeks or months or never before it's

actually brought before the people to vote on."

Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad had similar thoughts on the proposed change.

"That [change] to me is dead wrong," she said, "not because I don't trust the administration, but at some point we could get someone in there with their own agenda," which she said could then pose a problem.

Conrad also said she was concerned with the change that would allow the selectmen to "set the mill rate with the input from the Board of Finance" if the town budget isn't passed "in due time." Currently, the Board of Finance sets the mill rate, after the budget is approved by voters at referendum.

On two occasions in the past, Conrad explained, the budget hadn't been approved by the time that the Board of Finance needed to set the mill rate. The first time it happened the solution was to delay sending out the tax bill by two weeks, which "worked out fine," she said. The second time around the decision was made to go ahead and set the mill rate.

"It should have stayed at what it was until a budget passed," she said, adding in the current charter it says the mill rate "goes back to the [mill rate from the] last approved budget and

stands until the [new] budget goes in. It shouldn't be the Board of Finance's authority or the Board of Selectmen's to set the mill rate. It should be the people."

And the idea that the charter and what's written in it "should be for the people" is part of the reason Giles decided to join the commission – and something he doesn't feel was maintained in the proposed revisions going before the public next month.

"I wanted to make the charter more reader-friendly for the townspeople, who of course, the charter is for," he said, continuing, "the charter is for the people of the town to know their rights and understand – it shouldn't be for attorneys only, to twist and manipulate as they choose."

But he said the version that's going to referendum doesn't contain all of the changes the commission had wanted.

Conrad added the revised version "does take power away from people and boards and give it to the Board of Selectmen," she said. "I don't think it's a good change. It would have been really good if they had gone with the one the commission did."

Although the version of the charter that was presented to the selectmen was approved by the commission, some say the submitted version

was different from the one the commission had spent so much time on.

"This is not the charter that we worked on," said Catherine Lewis, who was vice chair of the Charter Revision Commission.

Lewis said the commission submitted its version of the charter to the town attorney for review, but he "refused to look at it," and instead created his own version that "has a lot of legalese and non-information."

The attorney "sat on it for quite some time, didn't do a thing," said Giles. "Then at the last minute he put our version aside, took the charter and made changes on that. That's what was presented," he said, adding that "some committee members felt they didn't have a choice but to approve what he presented."

Conrad said she'd rather see the version the commission had worked on.

"I really, really like the one the Charter Commission did," she said. "While keeping a lot of the same things in there they made the language much simpler. It was easier to read."

She added she had compared all three versions, and she found the attorney had cut and pasted a lot of the current charter into his version, left some things out and consequentially,

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Charter Changes cont. from Front Page

“there were a lot of errors.”

But First Selectman Bob Burbank explained the situation differently, and said the charter sent to the attorney was in a PDF format which prevented him from making corrections.

“The attorney had no choice but to make the changes on his own, because he couldn’t take [the version he was given] and rewrite it,” he said.

Burbank added he attended a majority of the meetings, and most of the changes in the charter were the same in the attorney’s copy and the copy prepared by the Charter Revision Commission.

And in view of the commission’s apparent dissatisfaction with the attorney’s charter, both Burbank and selectman Jay Linddy said the commission should not have submitted it.

“If I was on the committee and that was the fact, you know, I would have stopped the process right there,” said Linddy. “But that’s their choice they had – they never entertained that choice [to] vote ‘no,’ ‘yes,’ or not go any further.”

He went on to say “they never should have given it if they didn’t want to vote on it.”

Burbank agreed, saying “the charter, as presented to the Board of Finance, was voted on by the entire committee with no dissenting votes.”

“I know there’s been a lot of false information passed around,” he continued. “And I was a little upset because here we had a committee that worked for a year and a half and spent many, many, many hours on it, and we’re going to a special referendum that is costing the taxpayers a lot of money, and the chances of even getting 15 percent of voters out on a special charter vote is really stretching it.” State statute requires a minimum of 15 percent of a town’s electorate vote in favor of a referendum question in order for it to pass.

Burbank continued, “Whether the charter passes or not is up to the people, but in my opinion, to waste thousands of dollars to bring this to a special referendum [only to have it defeated] ... that’s what I’m upset about.”

Burbank continued on to say the move to defeat the charter was with a lot of false information and by “a small, vocal group” of

people.

There are a few things that aren’t liked, he said, but “hundreds of minor changes made that improve the existing charter.”

He went on to say the current situation could deter residents from wanting to join a committee in the future.

“You’ve got a lot of work that a lot of people spent a lot of hours on,” Burbank said, “and to make it a political football, and then disseminate false information is really doing a disservice to anyone going on a commission – who is going to want to go on a committee now?”

Still, at this point, some feel it would be better to defeat the proposed charter and go through the process again – taking the chance that people would volunteer to form another commission.

“What’s sad is we spent those 16 months to make it as accurate as possible and as easy to ready as possible... we’re very, very upset about this,” Lewis said. “It was never, ever the intention of the Charter Revision Commission to take power away from the town and give it to the selectmen.”

And despite the amount of work put in, Lewis said she’d like to see the process repeated.

“I would like to see another committee again,” she said, who would work from the charter they already revised.

“If they did that, working from that, it wouldn’t take 16 months – maybe a couple of weeks,” she said, “and make it a great document that helps lead our government.”

Giles agreed.

“I definitely want to revert back to the original [charter] and have it reworked on,” he said, and mirrored Lewis’ thoughts in saying he’d like the next committee to “reconsider some of the things that we approved” and work on making it “reader-friendly.”

“I’d hoped small town governments would work better than federal or state [governments],” he said. “I guess I’m wrong there.”

But, disagreements aside, the outcome of the situation does in fact lay with the people and their vote on March 13 – and whether or not they decide to come at all.

are guidelines, not policy, and could change as necessary,” she said.

Sklarz said he didn’t want to go any lower, as the guideline would serve as an indication of when classes should be given an additional section, Skarlz said. “I look at this as a nice protection, where we’re never going to [exceed] that class size,” he said.

The board also voted to accept Sklarz’s proposed academic calendar for the coming school year. Changes included starting school Aug. 27, reducing February vacation to two days, adding a staff development day before Good Friday in March and removing the Monday off after Veterans Day, which falls on a Sunday this year.

Sklarz said starting Aug. 27 would end the school year on June 11, and would ensure it does not extend past June 21 with snow days.

Bielaczyc said not observing Veterans’ Day might offend some people, but “if there was ever a year to do it, it would be this year because it’s on a Sunday.”

The Board of Education will hold another meeting Thursday, March 1, to adopt the budget proposal before presenting it to the Board of Finance for approval.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Remember last week when I got all up on my soapbox and opined that letter-writers disagreeing over the all-day kindergarten issue in Hebron should do so in a more mature manner? Well, shortly after I wrote that I read a story in the *Hartford Courant* about a situation on the Board of Education in Manchester that showed that things could be worse.

At least in Hebron, the individual members of the Board of Ed have kept it together.

According to the *Courant*, Democrats on the Manchester Board of Ed are calling for Republican Merrill Kidd to resign, after comments she posted on Democrat Kelly Luxenberg’s Facebook page.

In the comments – posted between 2:37 and 2:58 a.m. the morning of Feb. 8 – Kidd writes things like “I will bulldoze you. Promise” and “Don’t srew with me Kelly.” (Kidd took full responsibility for the misspellings, telling the *Courant* last week she “wished I had hit the spell check.”)

At one point, Kidd writes, “Your looking out for your husband [Democratic state Rep. Geoff Luxenberg, D-Manchester] and are backed by dem news papers. I have a plan. Do you? Bring iton Kelly. Your so phoney.”

So far, these look like ill-advised (*very* ill-advised) late-night rants by a public official. But some of them seemed to cross the line with Luxenberg, such as the “bulldoze” comment and this one: “Don’t you ever shut me off again with you political s— again. Next time, it will not be pretty. Here here I am no shinking violet.” Luxenberg, after consulting with fellow board members and the board attorneys, opted to file a complaint with Manchester Police.

“It’s unfortunate that it came to this point,” Luxenberg told the *Courant*, “but my family’s safety, my safety – I’m not going to put that in jeopardy.”

Now, what led to the Facebook brouhaha in the first place? At a Feb. 1 meeting, Kidd, one of three Republicans on the nine-member school board, voted with the Democrats in favor of adding \$400,000 to the superintendent of schools’ proposed 2012-13 budget. (It should be noted fellow Republican Deborah Hagenow also voted in favor of the additions; Republican Michael Crockett was the lone ‘no’ vote.)

Luxenberg told the *Courant* that, after the meeting, she told Kidd she “did a really good job. You did it for the kids.” Luxenberg theorizes this is what set Kidd off. (Among Kidd’s initial Facebook comments was “Don’t you ever patronize me again by telling me I did a great job. GOT IT!”)

Interestingly, though this whole thing seems to have its origins with a Republican board member voting with the Democrats, the two parties now have opposing reactions to what’s taken place. While the Democrats want Kidd to resign, the Republicans seem to think Luxenberg is making a mountain of a molehill.

Manchester Republican Town Committee Chairman Matt Galligan told the *Courant* that, while the school board is facing real issues, such as needed repairs for its schools and the search for a new superintendent, “the Democrats have chosen to concentrate on a situation that they blew completely out of proportion.”

Basically, he said, stuff like this happens in politics.

“Mrs. Luxenberg should be reminded that the political realm includes vigorous and contentious debate, and may at times offend her sense of decorum,” Galligan said. “The fact of the matter is, public servants need to quickly develop a thick skin while dealing with some of the most pressing issues before our community.”

I’m not so sure. I don’t really think Kidd poses a dangerous threat, but what she said isn’t simply the “vigorous and contentious debate” that can arise during budget season. It’s not just politics as usual. When you write to somebody “I will bulldoze you. Promise” well, that’s just uncalled for. Kidd says she’s not going anywhere. But I hope, for her sake and the Board of Ed’s as a whole, she tones down the rancor.

* * *

I’m admittedly something of a Starbucks junkie. I need to have my fix every morning during the week (*grande bold*, please). On the weekend, I tend to take a break, but I do sometimes indulge myself with one of their often-delicious latte creations. So it was with interest when I read last weekend about a man who came up with the most expensive Starbucks drink ever.

Armed with a card redeemable for a free drink because it was his birthday, Texas resident Logan Warren walked into his neighborhood Starbucks on a mission. After exploring his options with a barista for about half an hour, he arrived at a drink that would – if not for the card – have set him back \$23.60. Just what was it? Why, just a venti java chip frappuccino. Oh, with a few little extras: 16 shots of espresso, a shot of soy milk, caramel flavoring, banana puree, strawberry puree, vanilla beans, Matcha powder, protein powder and a drizzle of caramel and mocha.

All that sounds rather revolting, actually – and, with all that caffeine (1,400 mg, to be exact) and sugar, quite possibly a little lethal.

Warren didn’t drink the whole thing (for which I’m sure his internal organs were very grateful). He told Yahoo the mega-beverage tasted “tolerable, but not good. Imagine a coffee-based health food smoothie that will put you in the hospital if you drink it all.”

As for me, next time my birthday rolls around I think I’ll stick with just the java chip frappuccino, without all the extras. That’s a pretty darn tasty treat.

* * *

See you next week.

Former East Hampton Councilman to Run for State Rep

by Joshua Anusewicz

Christopher Goff told the *Rivereast* last June the reason he didn't seek reelection for the East Hampton Town Council was because of the large response from Democrats who were interested in running for elected positions. And having already served on the Town Council and the Board of Education for over a decade, Goff figured it was time to "step aside."

Looking back, he might have just been playing possum.

Goff announced last Thursday at a meeting of the Democratic Town Committee that he would be running for state representative for the 34th District, a position that he admits he has "wanted to do for a while."

"I see being the state representative as being a spokesman for the town in Hartford," Goff said Tuesday. "You see the inner-workings of how laws and statutes are passed, and you learn how it affects our town."

Goff will be running on a considerable amount of political experience at the town level; Goff has served four terms on the Town Council, including terms as both chairman and vice chairman, and served for three years on the Board of Education. He was appointed to that school board seat when it was vacated by Gail Hamm – ironically, the current state representative for the district.

The district, Goff explained, is very similar to the town he has served. The 34th District includes East Hampton and East Haddam, and will now include Westchester, a part of

Colchester. The district formerly included the southern part of Middletown, and Goff feels the move to include only towns east of the Connecticut River "makes sense."

"We're all very similar communities," he said of the towns in the district. Efforts have been made over recent years to regionalize services between East Hampton and East Haddam, like last year's regionalization of the towns' dog pounds and animal control officers, an effort Goff was a major part of.

Cost-cutting measures, much like regionalization, are what Goff said will be on the forefront if he is elected to the post. He said securing grants and additional funding from the state will be imperative for the towns, as will lessening the negative effects of possible budget cuts.

"Everything that gets cut affects the towns," Goff said, "and we have to make it up on the other side. We need to provide the resources to combat that."

Goff listed funding and support for childhood programs as an issue he hopes to focus on, as he spent 16 years with the Department of Children and Families.

Aside from his experience, the campaign team he has assembled adds even more valuable knowledge of state and local government. His campaign managers will be Terry Concannon, who served four terms as state representative, and John Blaschik, who serves on the Board of Selectmen in East Haddam and formerly served as that town's first selectman;

his treasurer, Tom O'Brien, is a former member of the East Hampton Board of Finance and his deputy treasurer, Dean Markham, has also served as state representative.

"It's outstanding," Goff said of his team. "I don't think I could really ask for anything better."

Goff also said the support from the DTC and other members of the community has been "unbelievable" since he announced his candidacy. "I feel a little overwhelmed, actually," he added.

"I think he's a very good candidate," Concannon said Wednesday. "He's been involved in East Hampton in a number of ways. He works hard and he believes in what he's doing."

Goff hopes to begin campaigning soon, but said he plans to "mix it up" from the usual door-to-door technique. He said he has already planned a few "neighborhood get-togethers" where he will speak with groups of interested residents at local homes. He said a campaign committee meeting is in the works for those interested in helping out on the campaign trail.

"I'm really excited," Goff said of the campaign. "With the experience of the team, I expect it to go smoothly."

As for contenders for the seat, Goff said that Hamm hasn't announced yet whether she will seek reelection, but a decision is expected by the end of the month. On the Republican side, Goff said that Melissa Ziobron, the economic development coordinator for East Haddam, has made preliminary steps toward a campaign, and



Christopher Goff

former East Hampton Town Council member Bill Devine has expressed interest.

No matter whom the competition, Goff said he likes his chances.

"I'm very optimistic, particularly in a very Democratic district," Goff said. "I feel very good."

Copper Questions Answered at Hebron Public Info Session

by Geeta Schrayter

In an attempt to answer any lingering questions after customers of the Amston Lake Water System were issued a "Do Not Drink" advisory from Jan. 6-18, Connecticut Water held a public availability session on Feb. 16.

The session, which was hosted at the Douglas Library from 4 to 7 p.m., brought together 21 representatives from Connecticut Water, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), the Chatham Health District, and Matco Services, the testing firm that has been analyzing pipe corrosion.

Approximately two dozen households came to the session throughout the evening, and of those, Maureen Westbrook, vice president of Customer & Regulatory Affairs with Connecticut Water noted 64 percent said on an exit survey the session had been "somewhat or very helpful."

"I think there were some who still felt they wanted a different format," Westbrook said.

Director of Corporate Communications Dan Meaney explained some individuals had "wanted a town hall meeting" format, where people could "get up and speak at a microphone." But Meaney continued on to say with the number of representatives available at the session, attendants "certainly have access to experts to get answers."

"Some of the questions are very personal in nature," said regional director Craig Patla. "You have to have that one-on-one ability. Not everyone is comfortable standing in front of a large crowd."

Expressed concerns that remain in regards to the water incident after the lifting of the advisory revolved around potential health issues, future concerns and communication.

Meaney explained going forward the company would continue to be on an accelerated testing plan for copper. Testing usually takes place once every three years, he said, but the company would be "back for testing once every six months" until its compliance plan "al-

lows us to go back to the testing less frequently."

In a fact sheet prepared by the water company for distribution at the session, it was noted that, prior to the recent incident, the Amston Lake Water System was last tested for copper during the summer of 2009.

"The 2009 results and all monitoring for lead and copper rule since 1995 have been in full compliance with the EPA rule," the sheet read.

The copper rule states lead concentrations in drinking water are not to exceed an action level of 15 ppb, and copper concentrations are not to exceed an action level of 1.3 ppm.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website states lead and copper enter drinking water primarily through plumbing materials, and Meaney reiterated the source of the increased copper in this case was household plumbing. But he went on to say what wasn't known was why the pH levels in the well decreased.

"It could be one of those things we never know – it could be from the extreme weather of 2011," he said, adding, "The key now is we're monitoring the pH continuously."

The pH levels in the water were adjusted by the addition of potassium hydroxide or sodium hydroxide, and Meaney stated it's a common treatment and Connecticut Water uses pH adjustment in 48 facilities, including Amston Lake.

"It's approved by the health department," he said. "There are no health effects."

According to representatives from the state DPH, there will be no long-term health effects from the elevated levels of copper that had been in the water either.

Brian Toal, epidemiologist with DPH, explained the levels of copper found in the first flush samples (samples taken in the early morning after the water has been resting in the pipes and exposed to copper the longest) were "high enough to cause immediate gastrointestinal effects."

On the fact sheet prepared by the department, these gastrointestinal symptoms were listed as "nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea. These symptoms disappear when exposure to copper stops."

The "Do Not Drink" Advisory had been issued on Jan. 6 because copper levels showed there was "an immediate concern" these symptoms might occur, Toal explained.

But as for the long term, Toal stated DPH had "researched our literature" and there were "no known health defects for water [with copper] at those levels after a month or two or even some[time] after."

"We're as certain as we can be," he said.

The copper levels "were not high enough to cause liver or kidney damage, or any other permanent health effects. Historical testing data indicates that copper concentrations in the drinking water were high for only a relatively short period of time," the sheet prepared by DPH read.

Toal explained individuals with Wilson's Disease, a genetic disorder that prevents the body from getting rid of extra copper, are susceptible to the effects of elevated levels in water, but DPH is unaware of other preexisting conditions which may be effected. He added anyone with a kidney ailment or liver issue should see their doctor, but continued there were no special concerns for pregnancies, and said "we don't see any reason for medical treatments or medical monitoring" for customers on the Amston Lake Water system.

"It's important to remember that copper is an essential mineral and we need copper for a proper developing fetus – it's not toxic at normal levels," he said. "We all ingest a good amount every day from our diet and from water – most water sources have *some* [copper] in it from plumbing."

Michael Hage, section supervisor with the drinking water division at DPH, mirrored Toal's statements, and said "I would definitely say [as

a customer], I shouldn't be concerned. The water is safe to consume."

From a communication standpoint, Meaney acknowledged "some of the customers that we talked to are appreciative of the fact that we did identify the problem, worked to resolved the problem, brought in outside experts, supplied water: tanked water and bottled water, and communicated with them regularly up through the time the advisory was lifted." But, he added, "there's some that still want to know more."

However, Meaney said it wasn't the job of the water company to provide health advice.

"That's really for the state health department and for the local health department," he said. "Our role as a utility is to treat the water, to deliver to people, to monitor and to report the results."

But Meaney noted short-term effects had been listed on the initial notice from Jan. 6, and attempts were made to supply other information in a timely manner.

"We've tried to provide [test] results to people, they're on our website – if people have called and said 'can I have a water quality test on my property?'" the answer is yes, but if someone asks for results from all of the tests, that won't be given, he said.

"We won't give one person their neighbor's tests," said Meaney, but added, "we do provide summaries on our website."

"We've tried to communicate," he said. "I'm sure there are things we could have done better with people, and we'll go back and look at that... we tried to be pretty forthcoming."

Meaney continued on to say you can't over communicate, and perhaps information on test results could have been made available a little sooner, but apart from that, there's "nothing else that just says 'boy, you screwed up and you've got to fix it next time.'"

But naturally, the hope is that there will be no "next time."

Selectmen Approve AHM Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

Hebron's share of the AHM Youth Services Budget for 2012-13 was approved by the Board of Selectmen at its Feb. 16 meeting.

Also at the meeting, the Citizens Green Committee discussed ways to improve the transfer station services in town, to perhaps get more people to recycle.

AHM – the youth service bureau that serves Andover, Hebron and Marlborough — has a proposed budget of \$1,059,397, a 5.81 percent increase over last year's budget of \$1,001,227. However the share of the budget for the three towns is a 1 percent increase: \$278,475 compared to last year's \$275,718. Each individual town's share is determined using the same formula the RHAM school board does when determining what each town pays in its budget: the residency of the students at the middle and high schools.

Hebron's share of the proposed budget is \$155,499, followed by Marlborough at \$83,891 and Andover at \$39,085. The Marlborough and Andover boards of selectmen have already approved their respective towns' shares.

Hebron's share represents a \$3,298 increase over the current year, and board members as well as various individuals present at the meeting expressed their support for AHM and the budget amount.

AHM Board of Directors Vice President Peter Yorio discussed the budget, and mentioned AHM served 4,414 children, teens and adults in Hebron.

According to the AHM website, the purpose of the nonprofit agency is to "promote and support the health and well-being of children, youth, and family for themselves and for the greater good of the communities."

Yorio added AHM "ranks near the very top year after year in terms of success raising money in ways apart from tax dollars."

On the revenue budget it's shown 26 percent of AHM's revenue will come from the towns' contributions, while the remaining amount stems from a variety of different means. Federal and state grants will constitute 25 percent of the upcoming year's revenue while the schools' contributions will make up 18 percent. Earned revenue will account for 16 percent and fundraisers are expected to make up 11 percent. Finally, charitable contributions are listed as accounting for 4 percent, with 1 percent remaining to be covered by other items including the AHM Scholarship fund and the AHM Project Graduation Fund Balance.

Carla Pomproicz, one of AHM's directors, said "the board worked diligently to keep [the increase] 1 percent."

"I'm very confident we can make up the difference through grants, private contributions

and fundraisings," she said.

Lynn Sansone, who is also a director, praised AHM, saying "it's just the most incredible organization. I can't say enough to what it is or does."

Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt said AHM's staff had "done a great job" with the budget, and selectwoman Gayle Mulligan stated she was "in full support" of it, saying "I think AHM is a huge value to our community... we see that it's used more and more."

Selectmen Mark Stuart and Brian O'Connell felt similarly.

"It's a responsible budget" said Stuart, adding "I think that you'll have wide support."

"I thank you for what you do," O'Connell stated. "I know that AHM consistently looks to try to squeeze everything right out of a rock – you got my full support."

"This is really a no-brainer but to accept this," selectman Dan Larson added.

The motion passed unanimously.

* * *

Also at the meeting, a preliminary report from the Citizens Green Committee was presented by member Peter Moon. The committee had been formed to look into solid waste disposal, ways to potentially lower costs at the transfer station and increase recycling in town.

"As a whole, the town of Hebron does a fairly lousy job recycling, at least in terms of the recycling rate," said Moon.

Last time data was examined, Hebron was below the average rate for the state, he explained, coming in at 22-23 percent compared to a state average in the high 20s. Moon also added the state goal used to be 40 percent, but that had been changed in 2006 to have the state's recycling rate come in at 58 percent by the year 2024.

"It's now six years later and we've regressed" in terms of how much the town recycles, Moon said. "There are a lot of things we can do."

The selectmen were informed of ways the committee felt the recycling rate in town could be improved. Moon noted the transfer station is located almost on the Colchester line, and residents in other parts of town "see it as an inconvenience" to go there.

"It would be really useful if a satellite location – maybe a couple – could be situated in town in places where people in the process of traveling out of town or going to do business in the center could bring recyclables," he said, adding it wasn't something that could be done with a "snap of the fingers," but would require planning.

Watt expressed interest in the idea of the satellite locations, supporting what Moon had said, and noting there are "some people that are say-

ing it's so inconvenient to go all the way over" to where the transfer station is.

Moon also mentioned some towns don't have a transfer station and rely on private companies and programs that would reduce town costs but put more reliance on residents. One program, he explained, is called Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) or SMART (Save Money And Reduce Trash). It is also referred to as Unit Based Pricing, and the Department of Environmental Protection website explains it's "a method of charging for trash disposal based on the amount disposed."

Households in towns that have implemented the program "are charged for waste collection based on the amount of waste they throw away – in the same way that they are charged for electricity, gas, and other utilities, providing incentives for residents to not only increase the amount they recycle, but also to think about ways to generate less waste in the first place."

Towns that use the program "have realized the most significant increase in recycling rates when compared to any other change they might have made," Moon stated, but added it's sometimes "controversial."

Moon said the commission was in the process of gathering information, and also stated education as key.

"I think the thing we all agree has to happen is there needs to be a lot of information," said Moon. There needs to be "a lot of education provided to residents and businesses, government and employees, to make it very clear what can be recycled – what they can do [to] reduce the amount of waste that's generated and then also make it as easy as possible to do those things."

Mulligan said she liked that the committee was going to meet with local organizations.

"It's a good idea to try to get some of these organizations involved," she said, and inform the public on recycling in town.

O'Connell said he supported the committee "wholeheartedly," and stated "it's an educational process." He acknowledged people could be "stubborn" and "sometimes lazy," but went on to say those individuals need to be educated.

"It's about the bigger picture: the earth, and the next generations," he said.

* * *

Also at the meeting, Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney also provided updates on various business matters throughout Hebron.

He explained he had been in contact with the state office regarding the ongoing issue of safety and the desired implementation of turning lanes on Route 66 near Loveland Road as well as speed limit changes.

"I've got [the Department of Transportation] to verbally commit to a 90-day timeframe to investigate the speed limit change that's being requested by myself as traffic authority, under the petition," Tierney said.

A petition regarding the matter had been signed by 150 residents and submitted in January.

"I consider that to be good news in the state of Connecticut" Tierney added, commenting that the state typically acts on things at a slow pace.

An update was also given on the restoration of the Russell Mercier Senior Center, which has been closed since flooding occurred at the building in late October. Tierney said he had received positive confirmation from the insurance company regarding the scope of work that needed to be completed.

"What needs to be done is a lot less of a project than the original bids of like \$100,000" were for, he said.

"The date that I'm shooting for [to have it reopened] is St. Patrick's Day," Tierney said at the meeting.

But on Wednesday, Tierney said the work began last Friday, and had been completed over the weekend.

There are still a few minor things to be done related to the water heater, but Tierney explained the safety requirements had been completed to the satisfaction of the building official, and all that remained was to talk to the fire marshal.

"Then we'll say 'let's move 'em in!'" he said, adding he was now shooting to have it reopened on March 1.

Tierney also provided an update on the status of the old Fire Company No. 2 firehouse in Amston. He said there was interest from the Amston Lake Tax District, which was proposing "to assist the town to pay for the demolition of the building, and in turn they would take over ownership of the property and take over the taxes and assume any liability," he said.

Watt raised a concern over the possibility of asbestos, were the building to be demolished, but Tierney explained that had been taken into consideration.

"I think for us it's a win-win," he said. "There's really no value in that building per say, like for sale."

Tierney said he soon planned to meet with the Amston Lake Tax District and the Amston Fire District today to come up with a proposal.

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting is Thursday, March 1, at 7:30 p.m., at the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St.

Marlborough Selectmen Talk About Next Step in Sidewalk Plan

by Katelyn Kelleher

The Board of Selectmen discussed the next step in the town's sidewalk project at its meeting Tuesday.

Town Planner Peter Hughes presented the design of a section of the sidewalk project, which is being funded through a 2012 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant. The design calls for 1,400 feet of sidewalk stretching from North Main Street near Sadler's Restaurant to Pettengill Road. Hughes called it the "fourth phase" and would complete the southern portion of the overall plan.

Hughes said he thought this section would cost between \$175,000 and \$180,000 of the grant money and plans to put the project out to bid in early March. The town applied for a \$500,000 STEAP grant to extend the sidewalk project down North Main Street and received \$400,000, which Hughes said should cover the whole length.

Hughes said this portion of sidewalk is one of two on North Main Street, for a total of 3,250 feet of sidewalk, but the project has not yet been designed past Sadler's. He estimated a total cost between \$325,000 and \$350,000.

The sidewalk project's previous phase was 1,400 feet of sidewalk on East Hampton Road completed last fall, also done with a \$250,000

STEAP grant. The two phases before that were sections of sidewalk on School Drive and South Main Street, Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission alternate, Louise Concodello said.

The sidewalk on North Main Street would be curbside, meaning it would narrow the road lanes rather than decrease residents' property.

"We don't have to disturb much vegetation and we would slow traffic down because we're narrowing the lane," Hughes said.

The old guardrails would be replaced with new ones separating the sidewalk from residences and beaches. Hughes said they would provide a barrier between the two and will address residents' concerns about pedestrians walking their dogs.

Hughes said this sidewalk section would connect 145 residences to the town center, which strengthened the town's case when applying for the grant, which was awarded to the town in October.

"The governor and the state like anything that ties housing to commerce," he said.

Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission Chairman Russ Johnston said the ultimate goal is for the sidewalks to "ring the lake, pick up Blish Park and come back down [toward the town center]."

Sherry Newman, also on the Nature Trails

and Sidewalk Commission, said residents along the sidewalk line have been very supportive of the project.

The board asked Hughes to calculate the engineering costs for the project.

* * *

Also Tuesday, the selectmen unanimously approved a request of \$5,611 from Richmond Memorial Library to re-carpet their second floor. The money will come from an uncommitted balance in the capital non-recurring fund. Insurance reimbursed all but \$1,000 of the \$35,000 to re-carpet the first floor, which was damaged during last October's nor'easter. However the second floor sustained no damage and therefore received no funding.

Library Director Nancy Wood said the second floor should be replaced as well because it is original to the 1987 building and would not match the new carpet on the first floor.

The selectmen also chose Larry Wagner as the consultant to administer the 2012 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant.

They selected Wagner over three other prospects because he has worked with the town before and had the most reasonable fee.

The grant would cover home improvements for residents with moderate income. Gaudinski

said the program has only seven letters of interest to date and needs 15.

"We need to show need for this grant to help people," she said. "It's not that they're committed to it they just need to show interest."

The selectmen also voted in favor of using a Department of Transportation grant of up to \$40,000 to purchase a wheelchair-accessible vehicle for Marlborough Senior Center. The new vehicle would replace a minivan that has been out of service since last spring. Gaudinski said base models for the vehicle start at \$36,000.

Resident Karen Tyler asked the selectmen to consider recommending her for a position on the Board of Education. Tyler, a reading and writing consultant in Portland's school system, said she has a sense of community that would benefit the board. Tyler had also expressed her interest to the Board of Education at a meeting earlier this month. She is seeking to fill the seat of Karen McKinney, who resigned earlier this year. The Republican Town Committee would need to nominate a candidate for the seat, and then the Board of Selectmen would make an appointment. RTC Chairman Ken Hjulstrom told the *RiverEast* last week the committee would review applicants for the seat at its March 7 meeting.

Hebron Restaurant Features Classic Dishes with Homemade Twist

by Geeta Schrayter

Georgia Alevras may have left the country for a few years, but now that she's back, she plans on staying – and serving people fresh food for years to come.

Alevras and her husband Yianni are the owners of Georgia's Restaurant and Pizza, located at 291 Church St., Route 85. The eatery opened at the end of October, not long after the Alevras family returned to the country.

It's not her first venture into the restaurant business - she used to work at Two Brothers, her uncle Zisi's restaurant in Salem, and for six years her family "owned another place" in Hebron. (Alevras did not wish to name the restaurant, as it still exists; it is just under different ownership.) Then, the family sold it and moved back to Greece.

But "the economy being really bad there, we decided to come back here."

The American economy, she continued, is not bad.

"It's a lot better" than Greece, she said. "People think it's not good, but they haven't seen the worst. So we wanted to do something better for the kids. Over there, there's no future."

Her uncle helped with all the arrangements, and upon their return, Alevras and her husband were already the owners of the property, which used to house Mary & Alli's.

"I knew the place," said Alevras, adding because of their past restaurant "I knew everybody around here. I didn't want to go somewhere else."

After painting, redecorating and having ovens installed in the kitchens, the restaurant opened on Oct. 28, and Alevras said things are going "real good."

"On the weekends it's crazy," she said.

The quaint restaurant, housed in a building from the 1950s, can hold around 75 patrons, and Alevras noted it's not uncommon for people to be waiting for a table on a Sunday morning.

The menu contains a variety of items, from pizza made using her uncle Zisi's recipe, to

homemade soups, Italian dishes like manicotti and chicken parmesan, fresh seafood, salads such as the Amston Spinach Salad with baby spinach, bacon, fresh mushrooms and grilled chicken with a honey balsamic vinaigrette, and sandwiches like the Greek Burger topped with tzatziki sauce, feta cheese, red onions, tomatoes and cucumbers.

Those with a sweet tooth can also find homemade desserts such as strawberry shortcake, cheesecakes, puddings, brownies and muffins.

"Then we do daily specials," Alevras said, adding "a lot of people come in and ask 'what's the special?' and that's what most people are getting."

The goal, she said, is to make it so the menu isn't the same every day. And there already seems to be some favorites. She mentioned her customers enjoy homemade-style food "like turkey dinners and meatloaf dinners – and they love our clam chowder. That's like our main thing."

Personally, Alevras said she'd recommend the meatball grinder.

"Our meatballs are good – made from scratch," she said. "My husband makes them and the sauce, so it's real good."

"We keep adding things to the menu," Alevras continued.

Georgia's also serves breakfast – which represented a leaning experience for Alevras.

"The breakfast, to me, was a new thing. I had to learn how to cook that, too," said Alevras, adding she needed to learn how to make eggs along with pancakes and waffles "because it's all made from scratch."

Also, she continued, "we just started dinners a while ago. People haven't realized we're open for dinner yet."

With the addition of dinner, the restaurant now serves all three meals, and is open daily from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. And that means preparing for the day begins even earlier – Alevras noted one of the breakfast cooks usually arrives by 4:30 a.m.



Since opening in October, Georgia's Restaurant and Pizza, located on Church Street, has been a hit among locals, serving up meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Most of the dishes are made from scratch, including the meatball grinder, which owner Georgia Alevras highly recommends.

to begin prep work for the morning.

Then, she said, they start making the sauce, pasta, pizza and salads. Everything is usually prepared the same day she stated, adding, "we always have fresh food."

While the restaurant has brought in patrons from nearby towns such as Moodus, East Hampton, Colchester and Lebanon, Alevras noted "there are repeat customers" from Hebron.

"I had a lot of customers – they knew me from the other place – and when they saw the sign up there they recognized my name and

stopped in to say 'hi' to me and were very happy we were back," she said.

And Alevras says she's happy as well. "It's like I was born to be here."

Looking towards the future, Alevras says: "I just want to be a healthy business that's good [to their] customers, that's it."

She went on to say she planned to be there for quite some time.

"This is my place," she said. "I'm not moving."

Georgia's can be reached at 860-228-3164.

Proposed ECS Increase to Impact Area Towns

by Joshua Anusewicz

Earlier this month, as part of his proposed budget, Gov. Dannel Malloy presented state legislators with a plan that would send an additional \$50 million to 130 towns throughout Connecticut – including all six towns covered by the *Rivereast*.

According to a release from the governor's office, this announcement is part of his proposal to reform education across the state. The increase would be part of the state's Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding, the release said, and would send nearly \$40 million of that additional funding to "Alliance Districts" – the state's lowest-performing school districts, such as Hartford, Bridgeport and Middletown.

"It's critical that we get to the schools that are really struggling – and do it quickly," stated Malloy. "We can get good teachers into the classrooms, and hire the best superintendents and administrators, but we must address the overarching resources issue and fund the programs that will directly reach the kids who are at a disadvantage because their school is underperforming."

The release also stated an additional \$4.5 million in "competitive funding" would be offered to districts that show improvement. (However, the preference for that funding will be for the Alliance Districts.)

Although none of the *Rivereast* towns fall

into the Alliance Districts, the plan shows that all of the towns would receive a fair increase in ECS funding. In the proposal, Andover would receive an additional \$36,610 (\$57 per pupil), a 1.57 percent increase; Colchester would receive an additional \$176,628 (\$56 per pupil), a 1.3 percent increase; East Hampton would receive an additional \$70,209 (\$35 per pupil), a 0.92 percent increase; Hebron would receive an additional \$96,423 (\$45 per pupil), a 1.4 percent increase; Marlborough would receive an additional \$47,261 (\$38 per pupil), a 1.51 percent increase; and Portland would receive an additional \$75,526 (\$52 per pupil), a 1.77 percent increase.

The release states that the Alliance Districts will have the new funding phased in at a rate of 2.47 percent of "the gap between what they currently receive in ECS funding and the new formula amount." The other districts due to increase will receive 1.4 percent of the funding amount gap.

According to Juliet Manalan, the governor's communications coordinator, the state's Office of Policy and Management recently changed its formula for calculating the ECS funding that produced the higher percentages. The formula will now include such factors as poverty measurements and bilingual students, Manalan said.

Colchester Superintendent of Schools Karen

Loiselle said Wednesday she "was pleased" to hear of the increase in funding, the largest increase of all *Rivereast* towns. Loiselle said that because she has already presented the education budget – \$37.88 million, a 2.92 percent increase – the additional funding will be brought to the Board of Education when the board approves the budget next week.

"It's great news for the Board of Finance and the community," Loiselle said.

Although the proposed budget includes cuts to programs and the elimination of 12.7 full-time employees, Loiselle said she won't be recommending that programs or positions be added with the additional dollars, but rather to "defray the increase" in the budget. She added that she didn't want to speculate on how the money will be used, but said there are several "priority areas" that she will recommend.

East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden said that "every dollar is appreciated" in the plan, as the ECS funding for the town has "stayed flat" in recent years. She added, though, that the town has been expecting an ECS increase of 3 percent over the past few years – but has not received anything close to that.

"The government had an agreement to do so," Golden said. "But they didn't have any money. This [roughly 1 percent increase] does not make

up for the lack of 3 percent increases, but every penny is helpful."

According to estimates from the state's Department of Education, the state owes school districts at least \$725 million more a year for the state's education funding formula to work as intended.

Golden said that the additional funding will be in the control of the town and used to help cover costs for the education budget, decreasing the mill rate.

Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz echoed similar sentiments, saying that in her experience, the town has used the ECS funding as "a direct offset" to lessen the tax burden, which Cruz said she "viewed as a positive."

"I think that so many folks are struggling financially," Cruz said. "To me, it seems to make sense to relieve that tax burden. I'm hopeful that it will be seen as a positive thing."

With Malloy's proposed increases, the total amount that each town will receive is: Andover, \$2,367,466; Colchester, \$13,723,859; East Hampton, \$7,665,929; Hebron, \$6,969,354; Marlborough, \$3,171,682; and Portland, \$4,347,783.

Gov. Malloy's budget is currently in the Connecticut legislature for approval; if approved, the budget would go into effect on July 1, 2012.

Colchester Resident Teaching Kids How to Handle Being Home Alone

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A Colchester woman who has spent the last 30 years teaching safety tips to babysitters has broadened her classes to teach children and parents about common safety misconceptions when left home alone – and encourages them to talk to strangers.

Mindy Johnston developed the Safe Home Alone Readiness Program (SHARP) last May to educate children and parents on appropriate courses of action in emergency situations. She has taught in several towns, including Andover, Hebron, Marlborough, Colchester and East Haddam. Johnston said she was surprised to find that most parents tell their children the opposite of what she teaches in her programs.

“The most common misconception regards what to do when someone comes to the door,” Johnston said. “The kids think, ‘pretend we’re not home and the person will go away,’ but if a person is a burglar they won’t go away; they’ll assume no one is home. What would have been a burglary is now a home invasion.”

Johnston, a former emergency medical technician and auxiliary state trooper, tells her students to make their presence known by making noise or talking through locked doors when someone comes to the house, because some-

one is less likely to break in if they know someone is home, she said.

She uses real stories to teach her students. “Information is remembered best when it can be applied to real-life situations,” she said.

Some of Johnston’s stories are her own. “My two girls, 8 and 11, were home alone and the dog outside was barking,” she said. “A man was walking down the driveway toward our house and as soon as he noticed them in the window he turned around and drove off.”

One day after her son completed Johnston’s course, an East Haddam parent, who wished not to be named, left her son home for 45 minutes to test what he had learned.

“I didn’t think anything would actually happen, though,” she said. “But someone came knocking at the door and he spoke with them. From how he described him he sounded like a Jehovah’s Witness.”

The parent later called the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses and the person who answered the phone was the same man who had come to the door.

“I was proud of my son and impressed with the program,” she said.

Girl Scout troop leader Robin Baran of Marlborough said she told her daughter to hide

when someone came to the door until she enrolled her daughter’s Girl Scout troop in the SHARP course.

“During the time we were taking the course, someone knocked on the door saying he was from a building company,” she said. “It definitely wasn’t [legitimate].”

Baran said she became emotional after the incident, and was surprised she would have to apply the information learned in the course so quickly. Baran’s daughter has since enrolled in Johnston’s babysitting course as well.

Johnston negated the misconception that children should call their parents first when an intruder arrives.

“Children should not be afraid to call 911 if they are in immediate danger,” she said. “I have my kids role play a call to 911 that I’ve arranged with a reason for calling. I have one kid saying why he’s calling and I have the dispatcher talk them through it and I have my state trooper there and we discuss.”

Johnston said she teaches the students to know where they are, to be able to direct emergency help to them as quickly as possible.

Although her course targets children 10 and

older, Johnston said she has found children as young as 7 being left home alone.

“To me, it’s not as much about age as it is about the maturity to follow directions,” she said, adding that Connecticut has no law stating the minimum age a child can be left home alone. “It’s not my place to say [to a parent] if their child is ready to be left alone. I just tell them the child met the requirements of the course.”

Johnston mandates parent participation in the SHARP program, which takes place over three sessions, two 1.5-hour sessions and a final one-hour graduation which a parent is required to attend so Johnston can share the information with them as well.

“I’m not saying these things are going to happen; I’m just trying to prepare them,” Johnston said. “I always use the same analogy to get the kids used to the true stories: a flight attendant always goes through emergency procedures before the pilot takes off, but not because the pilot is planning on crashing the plane.”

For more information about the SHARP program, visit homesafetyeducation.com.

Gung Ho Celebrates 25 Years in Colchester

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A balance of consistency and change has been Gung Ho Restaurant’s secret to keeping its place as a fixture in Colchester’s town center for the past quarter century.

Aside from a prime location right on Main Street, an ever-evolving menu and the same reliable quality and service are what owner Jimmy Pan said has kept the restaurant in business long enough to see its 25th anniversary.

Pan said he is constantly adding new Malaysian, Thai, Vietnamese and Japanese dishes to the menu. One of the restaurant’s signature dishes is Vietnamese pho. “Not a lot of people know what it is,” he said. “It’s a really healthy food. A big bowl of noodles with basil, mint and a little bit of spice.”

The restaurant switches its menu up often, and the customers dictate which specials stay as permanent dishes and which go.

“If something is good, if people like it, I keep it. If they don’t like it, it’s not good, I take it off,” he said.

The drink menu also changes regularly and often features a new martini and wine.

The restaurant added a sushi bar in 2002 and, more recently, a hibachi grill. “I am a picky eater,” Pan said. “But we have great sushi.”

Pan, a Colchester resident, started at Gung Ho as a waiter in 1996. He took over just three years later when the owner, a close friend of his, retired. Pan aimed to make the place more functional.

“When I took over I let it sit for a few months because I didn’t have any finances to remodel,” he said. But after a couple of months of saving he had enough money to begin to change some things, and “first we did the kitchen because it was a mess,” he said.

After the kitchen was functioning properly, Pan remodeled and expanded the dining room.

This gave him the capacity to expand the menu.

“The menu was so small, so I cleaned it up and did some remodeling and I saw business pick up month by month,” Pan said.

In the 12 years he has owned the restaurant, Pan has figured out the system so the place runs smoothly. However getting started was more difficult than he imagined. “We worked so hard for the first 10 years, me and my family, since 1999. I was young at the time and I didn’t realize how hard this business is,” he said. “I look back and think ‘how did I do it?’ but I did it.”

Pan started in the restaurant business as a busser in Rochester, NY, at age 18. “When you first immigrate, that’s the basic job you get, so I didn’t go to school,” he said. “I went to school for a couple months and dropped out and decided to get in the restaurant business.”

Gung Ho draws regulars, mostly locals from Colchester and its surrounding towns, many of whom Pan said he knows by name, but has regulars coming from as far as Manchester.

“A lot of customers have been so nice to us, so loyal,” he said. “It’s great knowing the customers. Sometimes we get busy and things slow down and they are really patient. [They’re] like friends when they dine here.”

One of the regulars even gave Pan a painting of the original façade of Gung Ho, before any renovations. The painting hangs above one of the restaurant’s many booths.

Marlborough resident Jennifer Craig said she makes the trip to Gung Ho when she craves sushi.

“There aren’t a lot of sushi places in the area, especially ones that are good,” she said. “And you have to be careful to make sure you’re going to a place where you know it’s fresh because it’s raw.”

Pan is confident everything in his restaurant is of high quality because he has very reliable



Gung Ho Restaurant has been serving up a variety of Malaysian, Thai, Vietnamese and Japanese dishes for the past 25 years.

staff – his family. Several of Pan’s cousins, his brother and sister-in-law and his girlfriend, even his son and daughter sometimes help out by answering phones.

“Family members work for us so our food is very consistent with a competitive price and good service,” he said.

Pan said he plans to add specials to the menu to celebrate the restaurant’s 25th anniversary, but mostly he will continue to try to make improvements. Future renovations will include a new bar, floor tiles and lighting fixtures.

“Until then, we will continue as we are doing,” he said. “We have to take it step by step.”



A late-night fire last Saturday badly damaged a single-family house at 31 South Stonybrook Dr. However, all occupants of the home were able to escape without injury.

House Badly Damaged in Marlborough Blaze

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

The town condemned a house badly damaged in a fire that started in its garage Saturday.

Marlborough firefighters received a call at 11:14 p.m. reporting the fire. Within two minutes they arrived at the single-family home on 31 South Stonybrook Dr., Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said. Four minutes later they called in a second alarm and mutual aid from Glastonbury, Hebron Colchester and East Hampton fire crews responded to the fire.

Asklar said the homeowner heard a popping sound coming from the attached garage and attempted to put out the fire himself with an extinguisher, but called the fire department when he could not get it under control.

"The fire was too large at that time," he said.

All occupants and a dog present at the time escaped without injury. Firefighters had to rescue a cat trapped on the second floor. Asklar said a couple with two children lived in the home, but could not confirm whether all four were home during the fire.

Asklar said the crews didn't finish putting out the fire until approximately 3 a.m. Sunday. "Being in the garage, because of the combustible liquids with the autos, it was a difficult fire," Asklar said. Crews had to vent the garage in order to avoid an explosion.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. Asklar said the home suffered heavy damage to the garage and second floor.

First Selectwoman Catherine Gaudinski said she went out to the house as the building department secured the property to condemn it. Gaudinski said the family – she said the home is owned by Joshua Toth – has lived in town for approximately five years.

"[The house] is totally destroyed inside," she said. "It was terrible, but at least everyone was safe."

Gaudinski also commended the responding fire crews for preventing further damage with the combustible chemicals in the garage.

"An explosion could've taken out a couple more homes," she said.

Manchester Man Charged in East Hampton Hit-And-Run

by **Joshua Anusewicz**

A hit-and-run in the early hours of Saturday, Feb. 18, left a Manchester man in handcuffs and a Portland man in critical condition, East Hampton Police said.

According to police, the incident occurred hours after both men were at the same East Hampton party.

John Sialis-Giagios, 23, of 179 East Center St., Apt. 4A, Manchester, was arrested and charged with second-degree assault with a motor vehicle and evading responsibility for his role in the incident. Sialis-Giagios posted a \$50,000 bond and was released; his arraignment is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 28.

According to East Hampton Police Sgt. Michael Green, the incident took place shortly before 3:30 a.m. on Feb. 18. EHPD's initial report, released Saturday morning, stated that an unknown vehicle traveling north on Main Street struck a bicyclist in the area of Edgerton Street, then fled the scene, Green stated.

The bicyclist, identified as William Sigman, 24, of 32 Rustic Ter., Portland, was transported to Marlborough Clinic by East Hampton paramedics, and then transported by LifeStar helicopter to Hartford Hospital, Green stated.

Green stated that, at the scene of the crash, based on evidence, officers were able to identify the make and model of the suspect's vehicle - a 2007-09 Mazda 3.

According to Green, at around 1 p.m. later that day, an off-duty East Hartford police of-

ficer, Lt. Todd Hanlon, located the suspect's vehicle parked in a lot next to an industrial building on Watrous Street. Green said Hanlon had been apprised of the incident and the vehicle description by his cousin Matthew Hanlon, an East Hampton police officer.



John Sialis-Giagios

Green and East Hampton Officer Mark Pekar then went to the location of the vehicle and made a positive identification, Green stated. Green was then able to locate Sialis-Giagios on foot, where he was arrested and later admitted to his involvement in the crash.

According to Sgt. Garritt Kelly, Sialis-Giagios and Sigman had been at party at a residence on Route 16 just prior to the hit-and-run, which occurred just a half-mile from the house. Kelly said that "all indications are that alcohol was involved" at the party, but it has not been officially determined if it was a contributing factor to the crash.

On Wednesday, a representative from Hartford Hospital stated that Sigman was listed in intensive care. The nature and extent of his injuries were not available, but Kelly said that Sigman was in "serious condition."

Hebron Police News

2/17: Echo A. Garofalo, 25, of 164 East Main St., Vernon, was charged with DUI and failure to maintain a lane, State Police said.

2/18: Mary-sol Keesey, 51, of 221 Wall St., struck a tree after falling asleep at the wheel heading south on Church Street. Hebron EMS evaluated Keesey for a bleeding lip and reported knee pain. Keesey signed a refusal for treatment, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

2/4: Albert A. Overbeck, 51, of 19 Boulder Rd., Colchester, was arrested for DUI, failure to drive right and failure to carry insurance, East Hampton Police said.

2/5: Gregory R. Paradis, 34, of 11 Long Hill Rd., and Christina Newton, 26, of 130 Colchester Ave., were involved in a two-car motor vehicle accident on Route 66 in the area of Princess Pocotopaug Drive. Paradis was arrested for DUI, evading responsibility, and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

2/8: Michael C. Poe, 37, of 88 Main St., was arrested for first-degree criminal mischief, sec-

ond-degree reckless endangerment, fifth-degree larceny, and conspiracy to commit fifth-degree larceny, police said.

2/10: David W. Parke, 46, of 22 Avon Ct., Middletown, was issued a summons for criminal attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny, police said.

2/12: Andrea D. Gayeski, 24, of 128 Davidson Rd., Colchester, was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

2/15: Anthony Gotavaskas, 28, of no certain address, was arrested for fifth-degree burglary and fifth-degree larceny, police said.

Colchester Police News

2/14: Police are investigating \$3,000 cash and prescription pain medication reportedly taken from a residence on Balaban Road. Anyone with information is asked to contact Officer Jonathan Goss at 860-639-8724, State Police said.

2/15: Christopher Scalpen, 27, of 24 Falanders Rd., East Hampton, was charged with violation of a protective order, disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, Colchester Police said.

2/15: Adam Panek, 27, of 168 Carli Blvd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, Colchester Police said.

2/18: Bethany Groome, 33, of 150 Mayflower Ln., Meriden, was charged with DUI, possession of narcotics and failure to drive in the proper lane, State Police said.

2/18: Kurtis Goodspeed, 20, of 129 Parker Rd., East Haddam, was charged with DUI, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

2/14: Emeline Vazquez, 35, of 54 Nepaug St., Hartford, was charged with DUI and speeding on Route 2, State Police said.

2/15: Keegan M. Lynch, 21, was issued an infraction for possession of narcotics after police found a small amount of marijuana during a motor vehicle stop on Route 66, State Police said.

2/16: Scott Mills, 21, of Main Street, Coventry, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane on Route 2, State Police said.

2/20: Aldo Elescano, 25, of 41 Mozart St., West Hartford, was charged with reckless driving and DUI, State Police said.

2/21: Justin Ruffino, 25, of 271 Main St., was charged with first-degree failure to appear in court, State Police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Ernest A. Piombino Jr.

Ernest A. Piombino Jr., 77, of Colchester, formerly of Madison and Killingworth, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 8. He was born March 13, 1934, in New Haven, to Ernest Sr. and Emma (Brockett) Piombino.

Ernest is preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by loving wife of 57 years, Jean (Cromwell) Piombino and children Ronald Piombino and his wife Monica (Daily) of Madison, William Piombino and his wife Laurie Swanson of Wells, Maine, Robert Piombino and his wife Lisa (Stage) of Newington, Donald Piombino and his wife Stephanie (Wells) of Lewisville, TX. Ernest is also survived by five grandchildren, Matt, Mark, Andrew, Meagan and Carter Piombino; sisters, Emma Handlowich of Florida, Ruth Caliendo of Hamden and Ernest's twin sister, Marie Severino and her husband Anthony of North Branford.

Ernest worked as a mechanic and service manager in the automotive industry for over 40 years. He was a former volunteer fireman in North Branford. He enjoyed boating, fishing and spending time with his grandchildren.

The family received friends Friday, Feb. 10, at the Swan Funeral Home, 825 Boston Post Rd., Madison. The funeral Mass was celebrated Saturday, Feb. 11, at St. Margaret's Catholic Church on Academy Street, Madison, followed by committal at West Cemetery.

Visit swanfuneralhomemadison.com for a memorial tribute.



East Hampton

Thomas E. Bolles

Thomas E. Bolles, 86, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Jean (Overbaugh) Bolles, died peacefully at his home Wednesday, Feb. 22, surrounded by his loving family. Born March 3, 1925, in Hartford, he was the son of the late John F. and Josie M. (Hoyt) Bolles.

Thomas served his country in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a pilot during WWII. He was a retired carpenter, having worked for the carpenters' union in the construction industry for most of his career.

Tom had a remarkably strong faith in God, and was a member of Bethany Covenant Church in Cromwell. His wife Jean was the love of his life for more than 65 years, followed by his four daughters and their husbands, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His greatest enjoyment was his family. He enjoyed camping, Herkimer diamond mining, woodworking and a good roaring campfire. His daughters feel they couldn't have asked for a better father and Tom felt he couldn't have asked for better daughters and sons-in-law.

Besides his wife Jean, he is survived by his four daughters and their husbands, Marcia and Edward Craddock of Florida, Mildred and Eric Heath of Hebron, Melanie and Richard Jump of East Hampton, Marjorie and Edward Rauza of East Hampton; a brother, Richard Bolles of East Hampton; a sister, Josie Eaton of Pawcatuck; four grandchildren, Celeste Shea, Michael Jump and his wife Jennifer, Ryan Jump and his wife Erin, Eric Heath; seven great-grandchildren, Nora, Holden, Lorelai, Georgia, Dean, Kendall, and Addison, and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by two brothers, John and Robert Bolles.

Funeral services will be held today, Feb. 24, at noon, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Phillip Brockett officiating. Burial will follow with military honors in Lakeview Cemetery. Friends may call today from 10 a.m. until the time of the service.

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

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Amston

Yolanda A. McCard

Yolanda A. McCard, 83, of Amston and formerly of East Hartford, widow of the late Phillip J. McCard, passed away Thursday morning, Feb. 16, at the Marlborough Health Care Center. Born April 29, 1928, in Westbrook, ME, she was a daughter of the late Zephirin and Melanie (Valcourt) Lestage.

On Feb. 19, 1949, she and Phillip were married in Westbrook, ME. Together, they shared 53 years of marriage before he predeceased her on May 31, 2002.

In addition to raising her family, Mrs. McCard had worked as a waitress as well as helping run the family business with her husband before her retirement.

She is survived by four children and their spouses, Joseph and Ann of Portland, Simone and George Brunton of Manchester, Suzanne and Daniel McMahon of Amston and David and Susan of Manchester; four grandchildren; two sisters, Theresa and Olive, both of Maine; three brothers, Guy, Lubert and Andre, all of Florida; and numerous extended family members and friends.

The memorial liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, Feb. 21, directly at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron. Burial followed in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. There were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 417005, Boston, MA 02241-7005.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Judith Elaine Fontanelli

Judith Elaine Fontanelli, 63, of East Hampton, died Wednesday, Feb. 15, after a courageous battle with cancer. Born Dec. 7, 1948, in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Joseph J. and Norma A. (Anderson) Fontanelli.

Judy had worked as a supervisor for the Travelers Insurance Co. until her retirement after 41 years of service. Judy was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam where she was sexton for many years and a member of the Altar Guild. Judy loved gardening and animals of all kinds. She had a special appreciation of Native American Culture. Judy's loving and compassionate nature will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

She is survived by her brother, Anthony Fontanelli of Glastonbury; her twin sister, Lynne O'Donnell of Glastonbury; her sister and brother-in-law, Alice and Richard Fancher of East Haddam; niece and nephews, Dennis and Stephen Fancher, Betsy and Bobby O'Donnell; two great nieces, Sara Jean Fancher and Piper Jolie Fancher; and many close friends and extended family.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Feb. 25, at 11 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home on Saturday from 10 a.m. until the time of the service.

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

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Joan A. Woronoff

Joan A. Woronoff, 65, of Portland, wife of Bruce R. Woronoff, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 21, at Middlesex Hospital, after fighting a courageous battle with lung cancer. She was the daughter of the late Harold C. and Stella (Wiater) Anderson. Born Aug. 13, 1946, in Middletown, she lived in Portland for all of her life.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her daughters, Brenda Walsh and her husband, Kevin of Madison, Lorry Rutland of East Haddam and Kimberly Lorenti and her husband, Anthony of Meriden; six grandchildren, Cassey LeBlanc, Olivia Walsh, Keith and Kayla Rutland and Caden and Nolan Lorenti; three great-grandchildren, Mia, Lilah and A.J. LeBlanc; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by two brothers, Clifford G. Anderson and Raymond H. Anderson and son-in-law, Roger Rutland.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Feb. 25, at 11:30 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in Center Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends may call Saturday from 10:30 a.m. until the time of the service at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net. The family would like to thank the personnel of Middlesex Hospital Hospice, Portland Care and Rehab and the Portland EMTs for their caring help.

East Hampton

Boris Lashenka

Boris Lashenka, 88, of East Hampton, peacefully and gracefully stepped into the next realm after a short but courageous battle with cancer on Friday, Feb. 17.

Born in 1923 to Peter and Alice Lashenka of New Britain, Boris spent his elementary years in New Britain, attending local schools and graduating as an electrician from New Britain Technical High School, leaving only to join the Army Air Corps in 1942. He served his country stationed throughout the Caribbean as a communications/radar officer. During which time, his contributions resulted in equipment changes that are documented to have saved the lives of our fighting men and women. These changes were eventually adopted throughout the Army Air Corps Theater of War.

Upon returning to the U.S., he proposed and married the love of his life, Carmela, whom he loved and adored each and every day of the next 66 years.

After World War II, Boris found himself in the oil heating industry, which provided him and Carmela "Mother" the opportunity to start their family, with Peter, Paulette and Mary being born. Boris' love of problem solving was matched only by his drive to share knowledge and he found himself developing a program for the State of Connecticut and soon after, a teaching position at Al Prince Tech in Harford and at the same time, instructing men and women already in the trade at evening courses sponsored by the Independent Connecticut Petroleum Association, where he was able to inspire hundreds over his more than 25 years of educating.

Upon his retirement in 1985, he and Carmela continued to reside in East Hampton. He kept himself busy and his mind sharp by offering assistance to anyone in need, working in his wood shop where he created elaborate furniture, puzzles and toys. It was also during this time that he was approached by the Lynal, Inc. (his beloved nephew Al and his wife Joyce), to design apparatus that tests the tinsel strength of several products that are used by our firefighters, police and in baby carriers just to name a few; but with all of these wonderful accomplishments, he is most remembered (in the neighborhood), riding his tractor with trailer in tow to fell trees on the property for heating in the winter months and his famous "power naps."

Boris is predeceased by his brothers Nick, Peter and Eugene; his sisters Tanya and Nadia; and his daughter Mary. He is survived by his loving wife and soulmate, Carmela; his son, Peter and his wife Jeanne of North Palm Beach, FL; daughter Paulette of East Hampton; grandchildren Peter F. Lashenka and his wife Jean of Stuart, FL; James Leask of East Hampton, CT, Jennifer O'Neal (Maule) and her husband Nick of Haddam, CT; Jessica Cullen of Berlin, CT and Amy Grendzinski and her husband Jim of East Hampton, CT. In addition he leaves his great grandchildren, who know him as "Grandpa Fix-It," Peter Dutton and Nadia Dutton Lashenka; Molly and Evan O'Neal.

Our family and friends all share in the loss of such a great, gentle soul who would help you out at the drop of a hat. We have all been blessed to have had him in our lives.

We would like to thank the wonderful nurses; PCAs (Wade and Barbara), and all of the support staff at Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale in New Haven, especially the seventh floor infusion center. Their compassionate treatment and understanding of the family dynamic dealing with cancer is unparalleled.

We would also like to thank Middlesex Hospital Hospice especially Jill and Erin for their care and support during this transitional and emotional time and the many friends and family members who watched vigil during Dad's final days, especially Robert, our personal spiritual leader, and Father George.

A very special thank you goes out to the entire workforce at Lynal, Inc. Their respect and appreciation was most coveted by Dad and a day did not go by that he didn't bring up the importance of what their company does for the safety of our police, firefighters and emergency personnel.

Following Dad's wishes, there will be no funeral services but a celebration of his life will be held at a future date and in lieu of flowers, we respectfully request that donations be made to The Connecticut Humane Society in Newington, to the charity of your choice and/or comforting quilts and blankets to Middlesex Hospice.

Marlborough

John Brudz

John Brudz of Marlborough passed away peacefully at Hartford Hospital Tuesday, Feb. 21. John was born in Rzeszkowo near Torun, Poland, on Nov. 12, 1925. He was the son of Andrzej and Antonina (Malek) Brudz.

Arrested by the Gestapo on May 9, 1942, at the young age of 16, he was placed in the Pustkow Concentration Camp in Poland. He was later transferred to the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp in Germany and walked for two weeks on the Death March until he was liberated on May 3, 1945, by the American Army. He said he would always remember that unbelievable day when he saw the Americans. John believed in the power of hope and knew it was the main reason for his ability to incredibly survive three years of unspeakable torture.

John's experiences and memories during that time period shaped his life and he was forever grateful for the beautiful life he was able to live having survived the atrocities of the Holocaust. John shared his experiences of that time so that those who knew his story would never forget. Although many found it difficult to retell their experiences of the Holocaust, John knew how important it was for people to know the truth. In 1998 his testimony was documented by the Shoah Foundation Institute's Visual History which is archived at the Holocaust Museum.

John's motto in life were, "If there's a will there's a way" and "You have nothing to lose by trying." John had absolutely no fear of failure, was passionate about learning new things and embraced all that life had to offer. He had a great love and respect for his country and never forgot the freedoms that he was given. John immigrated to the United States in 1949 and settled in New York City for 41 years before retiring to Connecticut. He helped many families who immigrated to his adopted homeland, helping them find work, homes and whatever else was asked of him.

John loved his family more than anything in this world. He knew what was most important in this life. John's family was his top priority and made sure that they were always taken care of. He wanted his children and grandchildren to remember their Polish heritage, to embrace the American culture and to appreciate all the wonderful gifts and opportunities that they were given. John always wanted everyone to appreciate all that they had because he knew all too well what the world was like when people had no freedom. He loved teaching his children how to swim, skate, ride their bikes and learn how to drive a car. John took great delight in doing these same things with his grandchildren, who were the apple of his eye.

John's circle of friends crossed generations because of his ability to connect with people of all ages and cultures. That same circle expanded as he became close friends with the friends of his own children. He never turned away a friend in need. His home was always open to everyone, was filled with good food and conversation and the loving and supporting hand of friendship. Everyone knew John Brudz and everyone knew there was nothing he could not fix, install or design.

John is survived by his loving family; his wife Stella of 51 years; his daughter Irene Montalti, her husband Frank, their children Nicholas and Andrew Montalti; his daughter Christine Brudz, her husband George Rodriguez and their children Megan and Adam Brudz-Rodriguez. John will also be remembered by his dear nieces, nephews and countless dear friends.

Funeral service will be Saturday, Feb. 25, at 10 a.m. from the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, to St. Cyril & St. Methodius Church, 55 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford, for a Mass of Christian Burial at 11 a.m. Entombment will follow in Holy Cross Cemetery, Glastonbury. Relatives and friends may call at the funeral home today, Feb. 24, from 4-8 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the American Veterans Association, 4647 Forbes Blvd., Lanham, MD 20706.

To share a memory, visit mulryanfh.com.

