

RIVEREAST

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China Bound... On April 12, a contingent of teachers, students, relatives and community members from Hebron will journey to China for 10 days where they'll see numerous attractions and visit Hebron Elementary's sister school Zhangqiu Shuangshan Central Primary School. Pictured above, in the top row from left, are teachers Paula Graef, Kristine Garofalo, students Patrick Wakefield and Max Wechsler, and teachers Kate Maupin and Jason Kearns who will be a part of the trip along with students Phoebe Geagan, Danielle Dempsey, Katie Beard and Catie LoBianco (second row). See story on page 15.

Residents Stand Up For Spanish Program

by Katelyn Kelleher

Residents patiently waited through Board of Finance budget presentations Wednesday to voice their opposition to cuts made in the proposed 2012-13 budget for Marlborough Elementary School.

Following presentations of their respective budgets by Marlborough Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz and RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski, residents spoke up with concerns about class sizes and cutting the Spanish program at Marlborough Elementary School.

At a March 1 meeting, the Board of Education adopted a school budget for 2012-13, eliminating the \$55,000 Spanish program. In the original budget proposal, cutting the Spanish program reduced \$79,790 from the budget, which would have been the Spanish teacher Kristen Vrabie's salary. However, the school plans to keep Vrabie as a teacher in the school and reduce a newer teacher at \$55,000.

The board also maintained class sizes at 18-23 students for grades two through four and 20-25 students for grades five and six, but reduced the class size guidelines in kindergarten and first grade from 16-21 to 16-20 students.

In total, the \$7.20 million budget represents a 3.35 percent increase.

Sklarz said Spanish was the program chosen to be eliminated because it didn't fit in with the school's core mission as well as other programs.

"Our core mission is math, language, arts," he said. "[The choice was made by looking at] where we're going with our core in the curriculum and can we afford continuing what we're

doing. The foreign language was one of the top things."

"It's a business decision," Sklarz said. "We can't afford everything, and the Spanish program seemed to be one program that is not part of that core."

Resident Christie Moraga said in the 26 years she has lived in Marlborough she has always voted in favor of the education budget, but not this year.

"With the cut in Spanish, I don't feel I can vote in favor of the budget," she said. "I think the \$55,000 is a drop in the bucket when you think that third- through sixth-graders will not be prepared for the 21st century."

Resident Pam Farrington agreed that Marlborough Elementary students would not be prepared to enter RHAM Middle School without the elementary Spanish program.

"It honestly blows my mind that this town would even consider sending our children to a regional middle school...without a language while the other two towns have one," she said.

Resident Lori Tarka informed the board of a petition she started and posted on her Facebook page. The petition stated, "there has been an adoption of guidelines that will potentially increase class size over the years...based on the projected decrease in student population, even though the school has seen an increase in students in the past few years."

"The Board of Education has adopted budgets with zero increases in the past few years," the petition continued. "This has made it nearly impossible to maintain the quality of education

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Bacon Girls Take State Basketball Crown

by Katelyn Kelleher

The Bacon Academy girls' basketball team won the Class L State Championship against undefeated E.O. Smith High School at the Mohegan Sun Arena Saturday.

The team beat Storrs' first-ranked E.O. Smith High School 38-34.

Coach David Shea, who just finished his 18th season coaching the girls' team, said third-ranked Bacon Academy trailed E.O. Smith, led by coach Kirk Murad, for the majority of the game. It wasn't until the last six minutes they made their comeback.

Bacon scored the last 12 points of the game. Junior Taylor McLaughlin broke a 34-point tie with a lay-up with less than a minute remaining in the game, Shea said. With just seconds remaining in the final quarter, junior Sarah Rogers scored two free throws to put the Bobcats up four points over E.O. Smith.

Shea said that as the season progressed the team kept improving and were able to set their sights on making it to the state finals.

Then, a win in the semi-final gave the coach confidence that the team could take the state title.

"After we won the semi-final game I knew we had a pretty good chance to get to the final," he said. "They worked very hard all season and they pulled two major upsets: they beat the teams from Southbury [Pomperaug Regional High School] in the semi-finals and beat E.O. Smith in the final game."

Rogers said the season started off well, and she had confidence all along that the team could earn the state championship.

"We started out strong and came out as a team," she said. "I definitely had faith in us."

She said the Bobcats knew their opponent and had a plan going into the game.

"Our strategy was to pass the ball a lot," she said. "E.O. Smith had a really quick tempo and pace and we wanted to slow them down a little bit."

McLaughlin said the team had a good first half. They struggled a little bit during the game, but morale grew as the team caught up. "We just kept scoring and that kept the momentum up," she said.

McLaughlin also commended teammate Carlee Putnam for helping the team's spirits

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The Bacon Academy girls basketball team poses with their trophy after defeating E.O. Smith High School to win the Class L State Championship title.

Spanish cont. from Front Page

our children deserve. At this point we want to ask the Board of Education to increase the school's budget to restore some of these important services."

Tarka said the petition currently has 130 signatures, but not all are Marlborough residents.

Upon Board of Finance member Cliff Denniss' inquiry, Tarka said the petition did not mention what the guidelines are.

"So all you mentioned was the increase in class size," Denniss said.

Selectman Dick Shea asked residents to double check their facts.

"There's a lot of information that gets tossed around. People make statements like there's going to be an increase in class size, like the kids are doomed unless they have Spanish, like we don't want to fund education," he said. "I resent people who say, 'they don't want to fund education,' because we pay a ton."

Board of Education member Carole Shea said statements against the budget are giving

Basketball Crown cont. from Front Page

when the Bobcats were behind. Putnam made a three-point shot in the final 18 seconds of the third quarter.

Shea said the team made a good effort and every athlete contributed in some way. "All I can say is I'm very, very proud of the kids and it was an excellent game, especially on the defensive side," he said.

This was not the girls' basketball team's first state championship, but it was their first victory since moving to Class L in 2010. In 2009, the girls won the Class M State Championship. This was the third state championship title for Shea, who coached the Bacon Academy boys' basketball team to a Class S title in 1981.

Shea has hopes for next season too, as only one member of the team will be graduating this June. "The good part of it is that we have four of the starting team back next year," he said.

Two of those returning players are McLaughlin and Rogers, who both said they are beginning to look at colleges and hope to

"a false impression of the way things are."

Carole Shea said positive things, like the school's test scores improving, are being overlooked. "I think those people [speaking out against the budget] should look around at the condition of the school. It's a little less than 10 years old. We have a nice school here," she said.

"I think people who are speaking out and making emotional statements about the school in a negative light [are] not doing the school any favor," she added. "You're not doing the town any favor. You really need to know what you're talking about and you really need to look at the facts."

Resident Jen Bove responded to Carole Shea's statement.

"I think that, when I look at the facts, this town won't have kids who know how to speak a foreign language going into RHAM Middle School and the other two towns will," she said. "That's not an emotional statement. That's just a fact."

play basketball at an NCAA level, although neither is sure where yet.

"Playing in college would be great," McLaughlin said. "That's the goal."

Rogers is setting her sights on her senior year, and said she thinks it's possible the team has another championship in them.

"I think we'll have a good season next year," she said. "I have faith in the team."

Meanwhile, McLaughlin is still cherishing this year's win. "I'm glad we pulled back," she said. "I couldn't be happier right now coming out on top."

* * *

Saturday's spectators were treated to a game within the big game, as Bacon Academy's unified basketball teams took to the court during halftime. Bacon Academy Principal Jeff Mathieu said the student body erupted with excitement and support when the announcement was made that the teams would get to play.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I don't usually write about the obituaries I get emailed to me as editor, but Monday I was sent one that included an interesting little piece of Colchester trivia.

Ann (Hominick) Clauson, 97, passed away last Friday morning, March 16. She was born in Colchester Jan. 3, 1915, lived here her whole life, and, according to the obituary, she had the distinction of being the very first female licensed driver in town.

Just goes to show you people's 15 minutes of fame come in all shapes and sizes. True, that distinction may not have landed her on the evening news upon her passing last week, but I'm sure that accomplishment gained a fair amount of renown, particularly in the area.

It also serves as a subtle reminder of just how many advancements the country has seen in the past 100 years. When Ann was born, horse-drawn buggies were still the order of the day when it came to transportation.

* * *

In a letter to the editor this week, Andover resident Georgette Conrad criticizes Secretary of State Denise Merrill's proposal to institute same-day voter registration in Connecticut. The proposal is part of Merrill's attempts to increase voter turnout in the state on Election Days. Now, I'm not as worried as Georgette seems to be that it would lead to increased voter fraud, but I do feel it would do little, if anything, to raise the turnout numbers.

Merrill has said one of three Connecticut residents eligible to vote aren't even registered. This may be true, but let's look at the ones who *are* registered. Where are *they* the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November?

Town officials are typically thrilled when they get a turnout of around 40 percent for municipal elections. That's not 40 percent of a town's population; that's 40 percent of those who have *registered to vote*. In other words, 6 out of 10 people can't even be bothered to do the very thing they signed up to do.

There aren't too many places where being successful just 40 percent of the time is cause for celebration. And yet, officials have grown so accustomed to people staying home on Election Day, a 40 percent turnout is something to cheer about. That's kind of sad.

So the problem isn't a lack of people registered to vote; it's overall voter apathy, and laziness.

When you consider voting is easier now more than ever (although it's not like the old lever machines were that difficult to maneuver), how quickly you can be in and out of the polling place, and how many hours one gets in a day to vote – a full 14 of them, 6 a.m.-8 p.m. every year – it's really a shame more people don't participate in the process.

* * *

TV Trivia Question: Most people know *M*A*S*H** is the most-watched TV series finale of all time (and up until a few years ago was the most-watched television program, period). But what was the second most-watched finale?

* * *

Speaking of television, some of you may recall I wrote last fall about the whole *Two and a Half Men* debacle, with Ashton Kutcher taking over for Charlie Sheen after the latter's legendary flip-out and subsequent dismissal. The ratings for Kutcher's debut episode were, predictably, through the roof, but I wondered how many viewers would remain tuned in the rest of the season, as the novelty of Kutcher replacing Sheen wore off.

Well, the ratings remained high – higher than they were during Sheen's last season on the show, in fact. Nine years in, it's still the top-rated sitcom on television. Which meant I was a little surprised when I read some are saying *Two and a Half Men* might be canceled, due simply to salaries of the cast. CBS might just feel the show is too expensive to continue.

The fact that Kutcher is making \$800,000 an episode has been paid a lot of attention, and while it's true that's an eye-popping number, it still pales in comparison to the \$1.2 million Sheen was pulling in per episode during his last year on the show. True, Kutcher would be due for a raise were the show to return, as would the series' other stars (who aren't pulling in Kutcher-sized money to begin with, though), but still, if CBS found a way to keep the show going at this time last year, it will find a way again.

Simply put: smash hits the size of *Two and a Half Men* don't grow on trees. If the show had suffered any ratings erosion at all from last season, then maybe – *maybe* – I could see CBS considering such a move. But as it stands now, I see this rumor of a possible cancellation as little more than a salary negotiation ploy. As I said, the actors are due raises; whispering "cancellation" is not an uncommon tactic for networks to take, in an effort to get the actors to lower their asking price. I'm just a little surprised CBS is taking this tactic with *Two and a Half Men*.

* * *

TV Trivia Answer: *Cheers*, which drew 80 million viewers for its final episode in 1993. (Okay, technically, the final installment of *Roots* in 1977 drew about 20 million more viewers than the final *Cheers*, but *Roots* was an eight-part miniseries event; it's sort of an apples-to-oranges comparison.) *M*A*S*H**, by comparison, drew close to 106 million in 1983.

* * *

See you next week.

Hebron Selectmen Celebrate Scouts' Centennial

By Geeta Schrayter

The Girl Scouts turned 100 this month, and at the Hebron Board of Selectmen's meeting on March 15, the anniversary was acknowledged by a proclamation making the week of March 12 "Girl Scout Week."

Girl Scouts of the USA was founded in Savannah, GA, on March 12, 1912, by Juliette Gordon Law. Law believed "all girls should be given the opportunity to develop physically, mentally and spiritually," the Girl Scout website explains.

The organization started with 18 girls gathered together by Law, whose goal was to bring girls out of their isolated home environments and "into community service and open air." Today there are over 3.2 million members – including 172 in Hebron.

In the town proclamation, Girl Scouting was described as having "inspired millions of girls and women with the highest ideals of courage, confidence, and character." The organization was commended for helping girls develop skills and lessons that will "serve them a lifetime" and increasing their awareness of the opportunities available in areas like math, science, sports and technology.

The proclamation went on to say the selectmen "applaud the commitment" the organization has made "to support the leadership development of America's girls" and expressed their "sincere congratulations and admiration" on behalf of the town as March 12, 2012 was declared Girl Scout Week.

In other scouting news, Hebron resident

Hendrik Cor Bilek was recognized for attaining the Eagle rank within Boy Scout Troop 28. Hendrik has been a Boy Scout for seven years, during which time he moved through the ranks and earned 32 merit badges.

In the town proclamation it was stated he's served in such positions as assistant patrol leader, patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader and earned a number of awards, including the World Conservation Award, Order of the Arrow and the Troop 28 Outstanding Service Award.

It was stated Hendrik has maintained perfect attendance and been on the honor roll throughout his high school career, and has been a member of a number of teams and clubs, such as the RHAM High School cross country team, race team, First Lego Robotic Club and the Video Production Club.

He's also an emergency medical technician/cadet firefighter, a member of the RHAM CERT and has worked in such capacities as a lifeguard, boom operator and production assistant.

Additionally, his Eagle Project consisted of the planning and construction of a Fire Department Training Facility at Burnt Hill Park, which will be dedicated on April 1 – the same day the Board of Selectmen, "in recognition of Hendrik's many years of achievements, dedication and leadership in the Boy Scouts and in our community" designated as "Hendrik Cor Bilek Day," with their "sincere congratulations and admiration for his accomplishments."

East Hampton Woman Seriously Injured in ATV Crash

by Joshua Anusewicz

A local woman suffered serious injuries last week after she "flew off" the ATV she was driving on Chapman Road, East Hampton Police said.

On Saturday, March 24, at around 3:45 p.m., Valerie Petocchi, 37, of 24 Fernwood Rd., was traveling north on Crestwood Drive on a 500cc ATV when she attempted to take a left turn on Chapman Road, Sgt. Michael Green stated.

As she turned, Green said she lost control of the ATV and was sent off of the vehicle, landing on the pavement. The ATV came to rest close by on Chapman Road, Green said.

According to Green, Petocchi was not wearing a helmet at the time. She was transported to Hartford Hospital via LifeStar helicopter and was listed in critical condition.

On Thursday morning, Police Chief Matthew Reimondo said that Petocchi was still

at Hartford Hospital and in recovery. The incident is still under investigation and no charges have been filed, he added.

Residents driving ATVs on town roads have become a "serious issue," Reimondo said Thursday, adding that the department is receiving "daily calls" about the ATVs as the weather has improved in recent weeks. Reimondo said that other towns in the area have seen a jump in reports of ATVs on roads, as well.

"Hopefully this is a wake-up call," Reimondo said of residents who drive ATVs on roads. "With their short wheel-base, they're not designed to be on the road. It's extremely dangerous."

Reimondo added that driving ATVs on the road is against the law and the operators could be subjected to fines.

Community Members Express Support for RHAM Lacrosse

by Geeta Schrayter

Students, parents and community members rallied together at Monday's Board of Education meeting to show their support for boys' and girls' lacrosse – and some of the students walked in straight from tryouts for the very sport they were supporting.

Those in attendance wanted the lacrosse program, which is currently self-funded, to be placed in the 2012-13 school budget.

During public comment, Beth Fitzgerald of the RHAM Education Foundation stated the program has been self-funded since its inception through successful tag sales and fundraisers and jobs the boys' team has had working concession at the University of Connecticut. Funds have been raised to pay for everything from the purchase of equipment like sticks, pads and helmets to salaries for the coaches and officials. Now, she said, she'd like to ask the lacrosse team to become a fully-funded sport.

Diane Blomquist, treasurer with the Friends of RHAM Lacrosse, reminded the board they'd made the decision to keep the sport self-funded for three years, after which the possibility of having it fully-funded would be reconsidered.

"It is now three years later," she said, adding "we once again ask the RHAM board to endorse lacrosse as a fully-funded sport."

Hebron resident Sara Tarca said she had to pay over \$600 for two daughters to play lacrosse last year, "in addition to \$185 for the soccer program" – and would again have to pay \$300 per daughter to play this season.

"When your kids come and want to play sports, you have to support that," she said, continuing "it gets them into colleges, builds character and camaraderie."

But, she added, when a sport is pay-to-play or self-funded, not everyone gets to participate.

"There are a lot of kids that can't afford to play," said Tarca, "and I think that's a crime."

RHAM junior Billy Grant agreed, saying, "I know a couple kids – their family has two kids playing. That's definitely a lot for one family to take on."

He added that being able to play sports provided a lot of health benefits.

"It helps [students] stay in shape and be healthy," Grant said, along with keeping them busy after school.

Lacrosse, he added, "should definitely be funded by the school."

Hebron resident Andrew Stanulonis congratulated the board for allowing lacrosse to happen in the first place, and mentioned his niece had been recruited as a result of playing.

"It got her foot in the door at a few colleges," he said, adding schools take an extra look at an individual if they take part in sports.

But now, Stanulonis stated, "I hope I can say congratulations for making another step" and opening possibilities for students through fully-funding the sport.

After public comment, discussion moved to the budget, and RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie presented five decision packages to the board – one of which was to fully fund lacrosse at a cost of \$40,550.

"I would strongly advocate that we fund lacrosse," said Leslie, calling it "a significant athletic program."

When it was first introduced, he continued, "it was an up-and-coming sport" but now, it's "a full-fledged part of many high schools."

Leslie also stated it was a significant amount of money for parents to pay. If the student participates in more than one sport, "it's almost \$500 a year per child," he said. Leslie added "if a student is on the team and has [financial] hardship" the fee to play can be waived, "but certainly we have students who don't get that far."

"I do believe by funding the sport we would have more children who may not be able to cover the costs participate," he said, adding "we have very enthusiastic parent support, enthusiastic players – it has become a part of our fabric."

Additionally, Leslie noted, "one of the nice things is by having it self-funded, parents have done a nice job purchasing a lot of the things we need to get going," such as uniforms and goals.

"The program," he said, "is certainly ready to go."

To veteran members of the board, Monday's meeting may have had a certain feeling of déjà vu. Last year, lacrosse supporters attended multiple meetings of the regional school board to ask for additional funding for the program to be included in the 2011-12 budget. Ultimately, though, the board adopted a spending plan that featured no extra lacrosse dollars.

Also at the meeting, RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie detailed nearly \$180,000 worth of proposed "decision packages" – items that weren't included in Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski's initial 2012-13 budget proposal, but items the schools would still like to see funded.

Among these items was a decision package for a maintenance worker for athletic field preparation, at a cost of \$43,550.

"This goes hand-in-hand with the entire athletic program, and lacrosse certainly is a big part of that," said Leslie, adding "whether the board decides to fund it or not, lacrosse is here to stay – it's a sport we need to be sure we have

the proper facilities for."

The maintenance worker would "address the needs of repairing our athletic fields for competition and practice," said Leslie, adding there was currently one maintenance worker caring for the fields but "it simply is not enough."

He explained that, essentially, there are "four new field sports" – junior varsity and varsity boys' and girls' lacrosse – each with unique field markings. Athletics at RHAM have only seen an increase in both involvement and popularity, he said, concluding, "quite frankly one person isn't capable of preparing all of those fields all the time" along with general field upkeep.

Leslie also highlighted the fact the fields at RHAM are used for multiple purposes. The baseball field, for example, is also used as a cross country trail while the competition field is used for high school soccer and football in the fall, track and field and lacrosse in the spring.

The other decision packages were \$60,556 for two hall monitors, \$30,278 for a paraprofessional for the Freshman Academy program and \$5,000 for band instruments.

Leslie explained the monitors were because more supervision is needed in the hallways.

"The challenge that this building poses to us is, although architecturally attractive and a wonderful building to enter, we have no main entrance that allows the office to easily monitor people who enter and leave," he said.

There's an entrance by the office, an entrance by the gym and an entrance by the auditorium – the latter two being a distance from the office. So while visitors are asked to come to the office to sign in, that might not always happen – they could come in and go where they like, he explained.

"My request here is really to set up a system which is very common in a lot of schools," said Leslie. Essentially, he said, what he's requesting is an individual be stationed by each of the entrances to greet and assist visitors. Visitors would be required to deposit a form of identification so there's "a very definitive record of who's coming in."

Leslie provided details on the \$30,278 for a paraprofessional, saying it is for the supervision of study halls and duties for students in Freshman Academy – an intervention program that supports at-risk freshmen.

In Leslie's presentation it was explained freshmen who are identified as at-risk will be distributed among four core teachers who have common planning and duty activities. These teachers would meet with one another, cooperate with one another, strategize and plan "to

provide students with academic/social support and interventions."

Leslie stated the paraprofessional would supervise study halls and duties and equal "another source of support for our most needy students, not academically but behaviorally."

The last decision package Leslie presented was for \$5,000 worth of band instruments. Leslie stated there were two issues with the instruments, the first being some of them are 45 years old or more and require frequent repair. Some of the concert instruments a student wouldn't typically purchase – like a four-valve tuba – are no longer functioning, he explained.

Secondly, there was a request to organize a pep band that would play at various school activities and sporting events (RHAM does not have a marching band).

Leslie stated the \$5,000 "wasn't just picked out of a hat" but arrived at due to an option the board had to approve a lease-to-purchase agreement that is "very common in music programs."

"The nice thing is you get to purchase nice instruments without having to pay all at once." After leasing them for five years they would belong to the school, he said, but added a problem might be the fact that you have to make payment arrangements for more than one year.

"I would ask that we do some funding for both programs," Leslie said, "because pep band being new – I want to support it, but not at the cost of the concert band."

The proposed \$5,000 amount would cover "about half of what we'd ideally like to have," said Leslie.

The total amount of the proposed decision packages is \$179,537. Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski noted that because of heating or "a lack thereof [due to the mild winter], we've been able to realize some savings." He added there were other accounts that saw savings such as teachers' salaries and health insurance, and there were some areas where pre-purchasing might help mitigate the budget increases or some of the decision packages. Because, he stated, "we call them decision packages but they really aren't – there's a lot of need in those this time around."

"It's a decision package in that they are extra as opposed to a continuation budget," he added, "but obviously we do need these."

The next regular RHAM Board of Education meeting will be held on Monday, April 23, at 6:30 p.m. in the RHAM High School Chorus Room. The next budget meeting will be held Monday, March 26, at 6:30 p.m., in the RHAM High School chorus room.

Investigation Nets Four for East Hampton Insurance Fraud

by Joshua Anusewicz

Four individuals – two of which are from East Hampton – were charged this week with plotting to fake a car theft to collect insurance money, according to East Hampton Police.

On Thursday, March 15, police arrested Eva Rybitwa, 27, of 121 West High St., and charged her with insurance fraud, conspiracy to commit insurance fraud, second-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit second-degree larceny, falsely reporting theft of a motor vehicle, and first-degree accessory to commit criminal mischief. Police also charged Kyle Buracchi, 24, also of 121 East High St., with accessory to insurance fraud and second-



Eva Rybitwa



Kyle Buracchi

ond-degree accessory to larceny.

After further investigation, police arrested two additional suspects on Monday: Robert Grem, 47, and Christopher Grem, 24, both of 93 Camera Rd., Durham, were charged with accessory to insurance fraud, conspiracy to commit insurance fraud, accessory to second-degree larceny, conspiracy to second-degree larceny and first-degree criminal mischief.

According to Sgt. Garritt Kelly, the arrests trace back to Jan. 15, when Rybitwa reported her car stolen to East Hampton Police. On Jan. 25, the car was recovered in New Haven, having been stripped of most of its valuable parts, such as the stereo system, wheels and airbags, Kelly said.



Robert Grem



Christopher Grem

After the man driving the stolen vehicle was arrested by New Haven Police for possession of a stolen vehicle, Kelly said that the man admitted to being "part of a plan" to strip the vehicle of its parts and then burn it. The individual told police that the car had been given to him by Robert Grem with the instruction to burn it, Kelly said.

Kelly said that, in February, a search of the Grem's home in Durham yielded several of the removed vehicle parts; Robert Grem's involvement was traced back to Rybitwa, who Kelly said had been trying to sell the vehicle but was unable to get as much as she owed for it.

"She was hoping to get the insurance pay-

ment out of it," Kelly said of the plot.

Buracchi, Rybitwa's boyfriend, was the individual who transferred the vehicle to Christopher Grem, who stripped the vehicle for its parts, Kelly said.

All four individuals were released on \$25,000 bond and are scheduled to appear in Middletown Superior Court on Tuesday, March 27, at 10 a.m.

Hebron Students Excited for China Travels

by Geeta Schrayter

April is fast approaching, and soon after the page changes on the calendar, a group of students, parents and teachers from Hebron will be changing their scenery and venturing on a 10-day trip to China.

On Tuesday evening, a majority of the group went to a meeting at Gilead Hill School, where various aspects of the April 12 trip were discussed.

Five of the six students attending were present with family, learning about their itinerary and check-in, luggage info, arrival time and other travel details to help prepare for the excursion, which will take them to Shandong Province and Hebron Elementary's sister school Zhangqiu Shuangshan Central Primary School.

The group of 19 individuals – four teachers, six students and nine relatives and community members – will have a packed schedule.

The contingent will arrive in Beijing and visit famous attractions such as the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven. They'll then travel to Jinan, where they will visit the sister school and the students will spend three nights in a homestay with local families.

At Tuesday's meeting, excitement over the upcoming trip could be felt by all present.

"I'm very excited about going," said sixth-grader Patrick Wakefield. "I'm probably most excited about meeting the Chinese kids, going to the Chinese school as well, you know, to get to interact with the Chinese kids and see how their school culture is different from the American culture."

Patrick added he's "a little nervous" about how Chinese parents will interact with him since they may not know English, "but other than that I'm pretty cool," he said, reiterating the fact that he was "very, very excited."

Fifth-grader Danielle Dempsey had similar feelings.

"I'm super excited," she said, adding, "I really want to see the difference in the cultures."

But she noted those differences also made her nervous.

"I'm not really sure what to expect," she said, "but that definitely doesn't compare to my excitement."

Despite knowing only a handful of words in Mandarin, Danielle said she's "not really worried about the language. There are different ways to communicate than just words."

For Danielle's mother Wendy, who's also heading to China, it's the homestay her daughter will experience that's making her most nervous.

"I don't even let [my daughter] stay at people's houses where I don't know the parents now," she said, "never mind where I know *nothing* about where she's going to stay."

But, she added, "I think it's a great experience for her. It's kind of cool to be able to go as a preteen to kind of realize how much bigger the world is than your little circle."

"I hope to open her eyes to how much that petty stuff really doesn't matter," she said.

Fifth-grade teacher Paula Graef, who was active in making the upcoming trip a reality and is one of the four teachers attending, admitted the homestays were making her the most anxious as well.

"It's the unknown," she said. Still, she said, "I know that the [Chinese] culture is all about hospitality and our sister school is going to do anything and everything to make these people happy."

Math specialist Kristine Garofalo, who also took the lead with Graef in bringing the trip to fruition, mentioned other towns in the state who have taken part in similar trips have said the homestays made a big impression.

"They've all told us the kids come back and the homestays are the highlight of the trip," she said. She said she knows the parents are a little anxious, but "that'll be the only time the parents and kids are separated."

Sixth-grader Katie Beard, however, was excited about the homestay, as well as meeting her Chinese family.

"I just know everybody there will be nice," she said. "I'm used to being around different people."

Katie was actually born in China but was adopted when she was eight months old – so that added to her excitement.

"We haven't gone back to visit so this will be my first time going to China," she stated.

While it took the support of many to make the upcoming trip a reality, it could be said the excitement Graef and Garofalo felt after traveling to China last year as part of the Connecticut-Shandong Teachers Shadowing Program with the Connecticut-Shandong School Partnership served as a catalyst.

The relationship between Connecticut and Shandong goes back to 1986, when governors of both places signed a trade agreement to help Connecticut companies do business in China, according to the "History of the Connecticut-Shandong Relationship" on the state Department of Education website.

In 1993, a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program became the first K-12 education contact with the education department and schools in Shandong province. Then in 2002, another Fulbright-Hays program brought more teachers to the province, at which point the deputy commissioner of the Shandong Provincial Education Department offered to form an "education agreement" with the state DOE.

An agreement was signed in January 2003 – the first education agreement at that level with China. The agreement called for the formation of sister schools to facilitate cultural exchange for students and educators, and now, more than 100 school-to-school partnerships exist between Connecticut and Shandong, according to the state DOE.

The goal of the Connecticut-Shandong exchange programs is to "prepare students for an international world," develop Chinese language programs, and foster cultural and historical knowledge and understanding between the cultures. Additionally, according to the DOE, Shandong schools "seek to improve their classroom instruction" and improve their English programs.

The teacher-shadowing program which Garofalo and Graef attended is "a follow-up professional development program for Connecticut principals and teachers seeking an in-depth cultural experience with their existing sister school."

The teachers would critique lessons taught by Chinese instructors, then teach the students lessons of their own.

On their way back, "all we talked about was 'how can we make this happen in Hebron?'" Graef said.

"We were so moved by being there with the kids at the sister school that we kept saying to each other, 'our kids need to see this,'" Garofalo added.

So they began working to do just that, and were able to make it a reality with the help and support of individuals like Superintendent of

Schools Ellie Cruz.

"Ellie was very on board with all of this," Graef said. "Before we even went she hinted around the fact that she wanted this program to expand and go bigger than just [sending teachers] and I think [Garofalo and I] came back with the excitement she was looking for and said, 'ok, you guys want to do this – let's make it happen.'"

So, Garofalo and Graef took the lead, and set things in motion.

"This is our first time trying to think of every detail that we went through, but it's all come together," Garofalo said.

And now that the trip is almost here, both teachers expressed their excitement at returning.

"I can't wait to go back and see some of the Chinese students from last year," said Garofalo, while Graef said she's looking forward to seeing the reactions of the Hebron students.

"They're so excited," she said.

She said Danielle was recently sick for a few days, and when she came back to school she had a huge poster she had made, which had a picture of "every touristy spot we were going to with some history and information on it and she's like, 'this is what I did when I was home sick!'"

"I mean, just the excitement in them – it's showing," Graef said.

And that excitement extends beyond those who are attending.

"The whole school is creating puzzles for the kids in China," explained Garofalo. The students are drawing a scene of friendship or an act of kindness on one side, and writing a poem or a letter on the other. The creations will then be laminated, cut into puzzles and given to the students at the sister school.

"That way, every child in our sister school will get a gift from every child here," said Graef.

And on April 9, Hebron Elementary School will hold a school-wide China Day to further share different aspects of the Chinese culture with the school community.

Then, three days later, Garofalo and Graef will join enrichment teacher Kate Maupin, fifth grade teacher Jason Kearns, former Board of Education chairman Mark Allaben and his wife Susan Anderson, three sixth-graders, three fifth-graders and seven student relatives on their adventure to China.

Contract Awarded for Hebron Village Green Traffic Light

by Geeta Schrayter

The Village Green traffic light took another step closer to reality last week, when the Board of Selectmen awarded a contract for the installation of the new signal.

In a March 8 memo, Town Planner Mike O'Leary explained after the town issued a bid request for the installation of the signal, two bids were received: one from the NY-CONN Corporation for \$168,000, and one from Republic Intelligent Transportation Service Inc., for \$148,000. The signal is planned for the intersection of Route 66 and Horton Boulevard.

Based on a recommendation from Hesketh & Associates, the town's traffic and design engineer for the project, the contract was awarded to Republic Intelligent Transportation Service, Inc. "as they are the lowest qualified bidder for the project," it was written in a Feb. 13 email from Hesketh & Associates to O'Leary.

The town is still waiting on the state to issue an assistance agreement for the STEAP grant in the amount of \$214,000 that was awarded in January and will fund the project. O'Leary wrote, "we were recently told by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) that they are waiting on the legal staff to issue the final agreement document for signature by the town" and then things will move forward.

He went on to say in an attempt "to move this project along," he recommended the selectmen award the bid and authorize Tierney to finalize the contract with the Town Attorney and the contractor.

When the assistance agreement comes in from the state and the selectmen have authorized Tierney to sign the document, "we can issue the 'Notice to Proceed' to the contractor," he said.

Tierney stated the town's idea was to be proactive.

"We wanted to award the low-bid contract so we could get materials ordered," he said,

adding "once we get [the assistance agreement] we'll move forward."

O'Leary said Wednesday "the completion date depends on when we get the OK from the state and can start. At this point we are thinking August or September."

The motion to award the bid in the amount of \$148,000 to Republic Intelligent Transportation Services, Inc., and to authorize Tierney to finalize the contract documents with the town attorney and the contractor, then proceed to sign them on behalf of the town was approved unanimously.

* * *

Also at the meeting, the selectmen appointed Emma Sousa assistant assessor. Sousa comes to Hebron after having served as an assistant assessor in Andover for three years. On Tuesday, she said her decision to accept the position in Hebron was due to the fact it was a "bigger town – busier" and meant more work.

So far, Sousa, whose appointment became effective March 16, said things have been going "very good."

"It's only been a few days," she said Tuesday, "but it's been good so far."

Assessor Debbie Gernhardt said things are much easier with Sousa. Gernhardt was promoted from assistant assessor in December, when assessor Robert Musson retired, and she'd been working without an assistant since.

"Emma's been working independently in the town of Andover, so she really knows the ropes under the supervision of the assessor," she commented, adding "she kind of stepped into this office, and at this point in time I've got very little I have to teach her."

Sousa's position is full-time, with an hourly rate of \$26.30.

* * *

Extending the Horton House Historic Restoration Fund grant was also discussed at the

meeting.

It was explained in a memo the town had applied for a \$32,000 grant through the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism in October 2009 for the restoration of the Horton House. The grant was awarded in April 2010, with a termination date of April 6, 2012. The proposed motion would extend the end date through April 6, 2013.

"It was a multi-phased project," explained Tierney, adding "we're in the final phase but we just felt we needed to extend the funding agreement."

O'Leary said the town just went out to bid for restoring the front portico to its historic look. He added the doors into the building have to be replaced "in an energy-efficient and handicapped-accessible manner," and the exterior of the building also needs to be painted.

"This work should start shortly," he said. The motion to extend the funding agreement termination date passed unanimously.

* * *

Finally, the board selected a consultant for the town's Housing for Economic Growth study.

Tierney explained the study "spells out what would be the best for the town of Hebron." For example, he continued, "whether we need to get some more affordable housing in here."

In the grant application from 2010, it is written the purpose of the study is to help address the Goals and Objectives in Section 3.C of the town's "Plan of Conservation and Development." This particular section on "Housing Diversity" includes a goal to "provide diversity in the types of housing within the town that will satisfy the needs of all socioeconomic and demographic levels."

There is an emphasis within the plan on encouraging "the creation of mixed land-use opportunities within the town center" and other

locations where infrastructure supports those opportunities, and an objective to "encourage the implementation of mixed land uses that may permit businesses and residences to coexist within developments to the benefit of both types of uses."

"The study will recommend areas, develop design standards, draft a regulation and hold some public information sessions," said O'Leary.

Four firms applied to be the consultant for the study, and O'Leary said "we were looking for firms that did these studies before, worked with small towns, had expertise [and] appeared that they would do well in a public forum explaining the program."

All four consulting firms were interviewed by a committee consisting of selectman Brian O'Connell, and Judy Podell and Natalie Wood from the Planning and Zoning Commission. O'Leary also attended the interviews and assisted the committee.

Goderre & Associates and Planimetrics were the two firms selected as the finalists, and O'Leary stated "both appeared to meet the criteria easily... and it should be said that all four groups were great and capable of doing the study." But, he added, the committee finally went with Goderre.

"They thought it was the best fit of expertise and personality for the town," he said.

The motion to accept Goderre & Associates passed unanimously.

* * *

The next regular Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 19, at 7:30 p.m., at the Town Office Building. The selectmen will hold a special meeting next Tuesday, March 27, at 7:30 p.m., at Douglas Library, to finalize the proposed 2012-13 town budget.

EH Finance Board Weighs In on Proposed Budget Increase

by **Joshua Anusewicz**

With nobody in the audience aside from public officials and members of the press, the Board of Finance discussed the proposed 2012-13 proposed town budget amongst themselves on Tuesday night.

The proposed budget – including education, town operations, transfers and debt service – currently stands at \$39.084 million, up \$1.320 million, or 3.50 percent, from this year’s budget. Of the proposed budget, \$27.238 million is for education, up \$1.026 million, or 3.92 percent, from this year, and \$9.557 million for town operations, up \$300,390, or 3.25 percent, from this year.

Despite the increase in the proposed budget, Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said that the calculated mill rate is not expected to go up more than one mill; it currently sits at 25.68 and would go up 0.96 mills to 26.64, or 3.74 percent.

“Balancing the ongoing services the town needs while at the same time recognizing the current economy is no easy task,” stated Interim Town Manager John Weichsel in his budget proposal. “This budget document attempts to do that very thing. It allows us to continue to move forward and introduces some new programs for the town, as well.”

The increase, however, did not draw much support from the board.

“It’s never easy, and I don’t think things will be any easier this year,” said Board of Finance Vice Chairman Timothy Csere. “This is a bit aggressive.”

“We do need to make some adjustments,” said board member Patience Anderson, who expressed concern with the lower tax collection rate, which she called a “temperature reading of the tax burden.” The estimated tax collection rate has been reduced from 98.2 per-

cent to 97.9 percent, Jylkka said, which is in line with the current trend over the past couple of years.

On the bright side for taxation, East Hampton saw a 1.17 percent increase in the 2011 Grand List, up to \$1.128 billion - \$6.21 million more in real estate and \$6.20 million in motor vehicles. This will account for an additional \$300,000 in tax revenues.

One of the “new programs” that Weichsel proposed is a new, full-time engineering position in the town’s public works department. According to Weichsel, the cost for the position would be \$109,000 per year, including benefits; he stated that the position would move a “substantial portion of our contracted engineering services in-house.”

Weichsel stated that the contracted engineering services budget was reduced from \$60,000 to \$15,000 in the proposed budget to reflect the position being approved, and that the overall net increase the overall budget would be \$64,000. According to Weichsel, over the past seven years, the town has averaged \$195,411 in engineering fees per year.

Most board members, however, weren’t keen on the idea of adding a full-time position, given the current economic environment.

“I’m against a new, high-cost position,” Csere said plainly, adding that it was possible to review the proposed position with the new town manager, who is expected to replace Weichsel in the coming months.

Anderson added that the town previously had a town engineer several years ago, but cut the position. “We seem fine without it,” she said.

Board member Mary Ann Dostaler supported the new position, reminding Anderson that the position was cut because it wasn’t filled, not because it wasn’t needed. Dostaler added that a town engineer could be beneficial for “up-

coming town projects” like renovations at Memorial School and the resurfacing of town roads.

Another topic of discussion – as it is in most years – was the education budget, which accounts for roughly 70 percent of the town’s budget. Last year, the finance board cut \$146,000 from the education budget prior to the budget referendum, which failed by only four votes in May 2011. After an additional \$100,000 in cuts to the education budget by the Town Council, the budget passed 1,129-788.

All of the board members expressed some amount of concern over the education budget, which Weichsel did not advise making any adjustments to. Chairman Matthew Walton, who described himself as “defensive for the Board of Education,” stated that his concern was not so much the actual dollar figures, but how that funding was impacting the students.

“The U.S. is ranked 15th in the world [in education], and we don’t have the reasons why,” Walton said. “Just throwing money at it isn’t going to solve it. I want to know, what are our students getting out of it?”

Anderson also commented on the education budget, stating that cuts are made to that budget almost every year and money is often not spent. “It’s a stab in the dark, but it doesn’t seem like it has hurt,” she said. “It’s an easy place to go, that’s all I’m saying.”

School board member Bill Marshall, who was in attendance, later questioned Anderson, “How would you be able to tell if everything works out fine?”

“The perception is that [the Board of Education] has leftover money,” finance board member Tom O’Brien interjected.

In an attempt to explain the situation, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden explained that the education budget is prepared

by the end of February and that the board can’t prepare “a list of what would be okay to cut.”

“We can’t quantify what the impact of the cut would be,” Golden added. Anderson called the uncertainty a “frustrating aspect” of the process, to which Marshall and Golden agreed.

Though everyone seemed reluctant to come out and say the education budget needed to be cut, Walton admitted that the finance board had some hard days ahead. “The bottom line is we have to make the hard decision,” he stated.

But Board of Education Chairman Mark Laraia disagreed, feeling that the “hard decisions” should be in the hands of the residents. “If we inform the citizens about the budget, they ultimately make the decisions,” Laraia contested. “Let them decide what the budget will be.”

Since the only residents in attendance were elected officials, the board did not receive any citizen feedback. “I’m a little disappointed there is no public here,” Board of Finance member Ted Turner said.

Residents will still have an opportunity, however, to become educated and weigh in on the budget at an additional deliberation on Monday, March 26, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton Middle School. At that meeting, decisions are expected to be made on any possible adjustments to the budget before sending the budget to a public hearing on Monday, April 2, at 7 p.m. at the high school.

According to Jylkka, the Town Council must adopt the budget prior to Thursday, April 26, at 6:30 p.m. to reach the scheduled referendum date of Tuesday, May 8.

For more information on the budget, including the town manager’s recommended budget and important dates, visit the town’s website at easthamptonct.org.

Colchester Town Officials Put Bonding Requests in Budget

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

At a joint meeting Monday, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance both voted to include three bonding requests in the town budget – and the one regarding land acquisition drew the most support from residents in attendance.

The boards voted to approve bonding \$3.2 million for road improvements and \$1.125 million for two new fire apparatus in the town budget.

In a March 14 meeting, the Board of Finance suggested deferring bonding \$400,000 for a third apparatus, a new water supply tanker, as it was Colchester-Hayward Fire Department’s third priority.

Instead, the boards voted to include bonding \$650,000 for a new engine tank and \$475,000 to refurbish and re-chassis a rescue module.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle said she didn’t think it was a good idea for the town to

get into the habit of bonding for roadwork, which should be part of the regular budget.

“If we’re going to do this to get the roads back in shape then I hope a commitment will be made to put in the amount of money on an annual basis to continue this program,” she said. “Otherwise, I see us just going through this whole process again, because this is the second time we’ve bonded for roads.”

The boards also voted to include bonding \$825,000 for land acquisition. A concern of residents in support of bonding for land acquisition was that the town might miss out on opportunities to purchase land if funding was not already set aside for that purpose.

The town already had land in mind on Prospect Hill Road. Town Planner Adam Turner said the town has looked at various acquisitions.

“Several parcels of land meet all the open space and agriculturally viable criteria that we have,” he said.

Agriculture Commission Secretary Leslie Curtis said the commission unanimously passed a motion for the town to purchase 75.9-acre Slembeck Farm, for the purpose of having the land remain in agricultural use.

Lisa Hageman, former president of the Colchester Land Trust, said she was excited the town has come to an agreement with Slembeck Farm.

“We’ve basically divided the town into three corridors and that is part of our central corridor,” she said. “I think it’s a chance of a lifetime. Farms like this don’t become available very often.”

Resident Chris Bourque said Slembeck Farm had been “on the radar” for some time.

“This is the best opportunity we have to save one of the important farms in our town and I think there will be more coming in, because we have an aging farming community,” he said. “We need to preserve the quality of our agriculture, not just for the scenic vistas that we all enjoy seeing, but it is important to our food security and to reintroducing a new generation to farming.”

Bourque said the acquisition of Slembeck

Farm puts Colchester “on a good road toward securing farming” in the community.

Hebron resident David Morrison said he was encouraged by Colchester looking into the land acquisition process. “I speak in a regional sense, because Hebron has been looking at preserving open space for some time and we’re very fortunate that many of our farmers sold their development rights [to the town],” he said. “I feel Hebron is heading in the right direction as far as land preservation and Colchester’s doing it this time.”

Morrison said 75 percent of Colchester remains undeveloped. “I think [land preservation] is very important in our region,” he said. “We’re all one big area.”

Resident Chuck Cole said it was a positive step that both boards came together to consider

this step in land preservation.

“One of the things we need to keep in mind is that we want to continue this process over the next eight or 10 years,” he said. “But I appreciate this committee and the boards considering this.”

East Hampton resident Craig Kaeser told the boards young people are interested in farming, but it is not affordable. “The reason I don’t own a farm is because I can’t afford to own a farm, but being able to lease a farm would be a great opportunity,” he said. “The town of Colchester would have no problem leasing [farm land].”

* * *

Colchester officials will hold public hearings on the \$13.25 million town budget April 2 and 3 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Pedestrian Struck By Car

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A Colchester pedestrian was transported by LifeStar helicopter to Hartford Hospital after a vehicle struck her outside of her home Monday morning.

Police said Doula Michaud, 63, was standing at a mailbox in front of her home on 49 Melanie Ln. At 11:16 a.m., a vehicle heading eastbound hit the mailbox, then Michaud.

Police said Michaud suffered serious incapacitating physical injuries and responders called for LifeStar helicopter to fly her to Hartford Hospital.

Hartford Hospital listed Michaud in critical condition Thursday.

The driver of the vehicle, Eleanor Ball, 55, of 44 Hunters Court, hit Michaud with the front end and right side of her Nissan Altima, police said.

Police said the incident is still under investigation.

New Wellness Center Holds Grand Opening in Colchester

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

Ready for its grand opening next weekend is the new Center for Wellness, a combination of several businesses providing holistic health care, alternative medicine and services for general well-being under one roof.

The center, right across from the town green, moved in to its 11 Hayward Ave. location Feb. 1 and has plans to grow. The center is a collaboration of approximately 15 different health care providers that were already established in the area. The providers consolidated their operations to provide a complete healing center in one location under one administration.

A grand opening is set for March 31, to expand the clientele base its businesses have already established. In addition to music, food, astrology readings, mini chair massages and face painting for kids – all free of charge – each of the center’s providers will have a table set up, as well as a representative from Nutrametrix, a company offering natural alternatives to traditional pharmaceuticals.

Center for Wellness’ chief executive officer, Dr. Kimble Greene, went back to school for her doctorate in spiritual psychology in her 30s. Before that, she was a trained “traditional” counselor, and began exploring energy work, alternative medicine and holistic health.

“The medical model, both in mental and physical health in this country, is very different from holistic health, and they can go together nicely if people choose to integrate the two,” she said.

“We’re trying to explore all the different alternatives to health and wellness so that people have a choice,” Greene said. “They can either do one or the other, or they can choose to integrate their traditional medicine and conventional treatments with the alternative.”

Greene – who is actually one of five owners

of Center for Wellness – said the services offered at the center combine alternative and conventional treatments. “Certainly massage, acupuncture and chiropractic treatments are much more accepted as being somewhat conventional, and then we just add the less conventional services like the reflexology and iridology and some of those things,” she said.

“Holistic health is basically the whole person – mind, body, emotion, spirit,” Greene said. “For example, if you had an issue with your knee you would address that issue through your whole self, through an approach that addresses all aspects of your living and being.”

The center uses alternative medicines such as chiropractic therapy, naturopathy, energy work, massage, eye movement techniques, colon hydrotherapy and reflexology. Clients visit for stress, mental or emotional health issues, injury recovery, pain management, personal growth or just for overall health and wellness. The center provides military and employee wellness services as well.

Greene began her own private practice 15 years ago, and continued when she moved to Connecticut seven years ago, in a renovated barn behind her home in Amston.

“It was big enough to have some classes in, and that’s sort of where this concept [for the Center for Wellness] grew from,” she said. “I started to meet people in the community and we would gather and talk about the different services and it grew from that to this.”

Clients at the center can sign a release, if they choose, to allow all of the center’s providers to consult on their case.

“In traditional medicine, you go to different doctors for different things and they never talk to each other, but you’re trying to address the same issue through all these different things,” Greene said. “The nice thing about having that



The Center for Wellness merges 15 holistic health and alternative medicine providers and counting in one location. The business’ chief executive officer, Dr. Kimble Greene, sits at the front desk to greet clients.

managed here is that we’re managing as a group so we’re addressing the issue without any gaps in service.”

Greene said the center’s naturopathic physician, chiropractor and acupuncture specialist Dr. William Nager, is licensed with the state and can consult on any case.

The center also features a shop and a lending library, where people can borrow books on holistic health, alternative medicine and personal relationships for a small fee.

Greene said plans are underway to purchase two other buildings on the property for expansion for a natural and organic café and eventually an 8,000-square-foot health facility to

house all medical services and allow the main building to remain for administration and the shop.

Greene said she hopes the café will be open by July. “There’s going to be a counter with breakfast and lunch items made just for that day, with a selection of morning scones and muffins and wraps and of course smoothies and teas,” she said.

Once there is room, Greene said the center will offer yoga classes. The classes, café, shop and library will be open to both clients and the general public.

Center for Health and Wellness can be reached at 860-537-5344.

Colchester Selectmen Approve Architectural Firm for WJJMS Project

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

The Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the William J. Johnston Middle School/Community Center/Senior Center Building Committee’s recommendation of Tecton Architects for the project at its meeting last Thursday, March 15.

The board also voted to approve a \$32,500 budget transfer for the project for the architect firm’s services.

Resident Dave Dander, who previously asked the Building Committee for more transparency in their architect selection process, read the board an email conversation between him and Paige Farnham from the Bureau of School Facilities. In the email, Farnham stated “if an architect’s contract award does not meet the [state] statutory requirements then the costs from the contract may be ineligible for purposes of the state school construction grant.”

Lawrence Associates had offered a lower bid than Tecton and a criteria evaluation, but was bested by Tecton in the interview part of the process. A 2009 change in state statute allows towns to consider factors other than the bid price when selecting an architect.

“I was looking for what recourse I might have as a taxpayer if I felt the town did not follow state statute for selecting the architect,” Dander said. “I don’t believe that the town can do anything but award the project to Lawrence

Associates based on the criteria in the state statute.”

Selectman Greg Cordova said as long as any legal issues had been addressed he supported the Building Committee’s recommendation of Tecton Architects.

Also at the meeting, the board unanimously approved sending a Colchester Tax Incentive Program (CTIP) application for CT Chung Do Kwan, LLC, a taekwondo studio, to a town meeting. The business’ owner, David Turgeon, would like to build a 7,000-square-foot studio on a vacant lot on Parum Road. The studio currently exists down the street from that location. The meeting will take place before April 5.

Town Planner Adam Turner said the incentive program is to keep the business in town, as Turgeon has an opportunity to move his business to Hebron for several thousand dollars less per year. Because it would cost Turgeon \$1,200 more monthly to move to the new location in Colchester, due to such expenses as mortgage on the property and taxes, than it would to move to Hebron, the town would abate \$400 in taxes monthly. Because the business would see a \$20,000 or greater tax increase annually, the town would not be losing money, Turner said.

* * *

The board took no action on the creation of a new voting district in town, but instead called

for a town meeting. Schuster said Colchester is required by state law to accept the new voting district, but a few questions have come up from the town attorney reviewing it.

“We just want to get those questions answered before taking final action,” he said. “We hope to add this to the April town meeting but this will require a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen.”

A fourth district is required because, due to recent state redistricting, a slice of the western end of Colchester is going to be in the 34th assembly district, not the 48th like the rest of the town, Schuster said.

The board also accepted a \$17,000 Agriculture Viability Grant from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. Schuster said the money will “help to quantify the value of preserving farming and agriculture in the community.”

The town will work with Paula Stahl from the University of Connecticut Cooperative Agricultural Extension Office to complete the six-month study evaluating land use impacts.

“The preservation of farming is just as much about preserving character as it is about controlling the fiscal impact of residential growth,” Schuster said in a press release.

Agriculture Commission Vice Chair David Wasniewski withdrew his intention to serve on

the Planning and Zoning Commission as well. Board members interviewed Wasniewski March 1, and had concerns about a conflict of interest with him serving on two land use boards.

Wasniewski said time constraints due to a health issue in his family would prevent him from serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission. “In the future, hopefully I can consider resubmitting an application if there is an opening,” he said.

Colchester Police Sgt. Robert Suchecki explained Bacon Academy’s Be Aware program, which is designed to show students the effect of drug and alcohol abuse by taking them to Backus Hospital in Norwich and showing them patients being treated for severe injuries from a car accident.

“The culmination of the trip is going to the ward,” he said. “It has a great impact.”

Schuster also relayed that, in a response to the two storms that hit Connecticut last August and October, Gov. Dannel Malloy has decided to implement a statewide exercise for emergency training purposes involving all municipalities July 28-30. However, Schuster added he didn’t know what Colchester’s role in the exercise would be.

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The next Board of Selectmen’s meeting will be Thursday, April 5, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

New BOE Member Appointed, Public Hearing Date Set in Marlborough

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

The Board of Selectmen appointed a new member to the Board of Education Tuesday.

Resident Karen Tyler will take the place of Karen McKinney, who resigned from the school board Feb. 7. The board appointed Tyler following a letter of recommendation from the Marlborough Republican Town Committee.

Tyler, a reading and writing consultant in Portland's school system, will sit in McKinney's vacant spot on the board until November 2013.

"I think there's a lot of expertise on the Board of Education," she said. "I'd like to keep the interest of the community in mind."

Tyler said she intended to be sworn in this week to serve on Thursday's Board of Education meeting.

Selectman Michael Gut supported Tyler. "I read her resume and I think she's well-qualified for the commission," he said.

Also at the meeting, the board set a public hearing date for the 2012 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant for Tuesday, April 17, at 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall, immediately before the regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting.

The grant would fund a housing rehabilita-

tion program, covering home improvements for residents with moderate income. The program's objective is to make qualified residents' houses more energy efficient and compliant with codes.

The program provides homeowners who meet specific income limits with interest-free loans with an open-ended repayment, or until the homeowner sells or refinances the property. It would cover the costs of items such as electrical upgrades, windows, roofs, furnaces, septic systems and wells. It would also cover interior and exterior modifications to accommodate the disabled.

At a Feb. 21 meeting, the board chose Larry Wagner as the consultant to administer the grant because he had worked with the town before and had the most reasonable fee.

Town Planner Peter Hughes is currently collecting letters of interest from residents who meet the requirements of the program. Gaudinski said the town needs at least 15 letters of interest and a resident's letter of interest does not commit them to the program.

The board also discussed criteria for the selection process for an engineering firm to provide on-call engineering services to

Marlborough.

Selectman Dick Shea created a spreadsheet evaluating firms based on staff size, experience with providing municipalities with on-call services, experience with grants, location of their nearest office, and if they had done previous work with Marlborough.

Shea narrowed his list down to eight firms. Gaudinski said they would have to further narrow the list to three to five firms for interviewing. She said she would like a firm with small municipality experience so they could "understand our needs and availability of funds for projects."

Shea said there are several board members in town with knowledge of the civil engineering field, and it might be possible to ask one of the board members to sit in on the interview process.

Continued discussion and the decision process will take place after the budget season.

The Board of Selectmen presented the 2012-13 town operations budget to the Board of Finance March 14, and Shea told the other selectmen Tuesday that, overall, he thought it went well.

"Those who have been on the [finance] board for a while can see that we included some information that in the past they have had to request," he said. "So I think they will look at that positively."

Also Tuesday, the board discussed Hughes' recommendations for changes in land use and building fees. While it is up to the Board of Selectmen to determine the fees, Shea said Hughes recommended removing additional calculations associated with the fees and just having flat rates.

Hughes recommended inspection fees be 10 percent of the total project cost. Currently, the fee is 7 percent, which is higher than other towns, Gaudinski said. "The reason is, we pay for engineering staff and, because of changes in the law, we can only use surety bonds," she said. "We want to be in the ballpark [of other towns] but not overly aggressive."

Gaudinski said if any of the fee was not expended, the unused money would be refunded. "If it were over [the fee], the cost would need to be replenished from the contractor for other costs of the inspection fee," she said.

McMahon Pays a Visit to Marlborough Business

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

U.S. Senate candidate Linda McMahon visited Marlborough's Heartwood Cabinetry Thursday, March 15, on a tour promoting her jobs plan and speaking with small business owners.

Kate Duffy, deputy communications director for the McMahon campaign, said she had been in contact with Heartwood Cabinetry's owner, Laura Hart, during a tour of women-owned small businesses last fall. Visiting Heartwood Cabinetry "wasn't able to work into the schedule then, but [Hart] was so interesting and spoke with such eloquence about what her concerns were that we thought we would make sure to include her in this next tour," Duffy said.

McMahon and her team visited Heartwood Cabinetry on North Main Street on the first day of her third small-business tour. McMahon said she has already toured 105 small businesses throughout her tours and will likely do many more after this.

"It's really for me to learn. It's a listening and learning tour for me because whenever I'm out listening to business owners or just the citizens of Connecticut I learn something every single day," McMahon said. "I want them to get to know me, but I want to know what their concerns are. I want them to know about my small business background and that I understand what it is they're talking about."

Many of McMahon's visits have been to small manufacturing companies like Heartwood Cabinetry, which Hart has been running with her husband, Patrick for the last 16 years.

The company offers custom-made wood cabinetry for kitchens, wine cellars, libraries, bathrooms and has recently started building custom closets. Heartwood Cabinetry also sells American-made cabinetry from Greenfield Cabinetry in West Virginia.

Hart acts as a designer for clients looking to remodel, working with the client's contractor. She said much of her business is from word of mouth, and in the last five years the company has moved from new construction

to remodeling.

"We had a group of builders that would send their customers to us," Hart said. "The builder would already have it in their contract."

With the focus switch to remodeling, Hart said, "Now you might walk in my door and say, 'you know I've been in my house for 15 years and I'm sick of my bathroom or kitchen,' and I say 'okay, this is what we can do.'"

Hart told McMahon a common misconception about small businesses is that they don't offer quality jobs.

"Everyone here is fit perfectly for their job," she said. "They're not meant to be behind a desk."

McMahon said she supports retraining the unemployed with a skill. "We are rapidly creating a generation that has no skills," she said. "[The unemployed] could have a job if they were trained with a skill."

One of the struggles small businesses face is dealing with insurance.

"I pay a lot of insurance. We work with heavy equipment and I'm really regulated to what I have to pay," Hart said. "The government says I have to have liability, I have to have workers' [compensation], I have to pay unemployment, but then the second I need anything it's all stacked to the side of the insurance companies."

Sudden changes in her company's policy are also frustrating, Hart said. "If I come to you and say 'I'm going to sell you a kitchen, it's going to be \$10,000,' when I put the kitchen in I can't come back to you and say 'oh you know what, it's really \$20,000,'" she said. "That's happened to me with the insurance companies... They sell me a policy, I pay for it for a year and at the end of the year they look back and go 'oh we didn't categorize you right.'"

Hart said five years ago her insurer incorrectly categorized the steel building as wood. When the correction was made, her rates increased \$3,000. "They told me 'if you have woodworkers that's a different category.' We're not being dishonest. We are what we are. It's



Heartwood Cabinetry owner Laura Hart shares what she would like to see the state do for small businesses with U.S. Senate candidate Linda McMahon.

not like we used to sell coffee," she said. "There's no other business that could get away with that."

Hart said the need for lower taxes is another issue small businesses face.

"We run our business with integrity and we don't want to feel like it's us against the government," Hart said. "We don't want to feel like the villains here."

McMahon said Hart's concerns were a reaffirmation of her own findings during her tours.

"Small businesses are looking for less taxes, for less regulation, some businesses that pro-

vide healthcare are looking for better ways to bring down the cost of healthcare, and better ways to find employees because there aren't apprentice programs or work study programs," she said.

McMahon will continue her third tour of 20 Connecticut businesses over the next several weeks, but she left the staff at Heartwood Cabinetry with a tale of her own kitchen remodel.

"My husband and I moved into the cottage behind our house for 14 months," she said. "And we're still married!"

Town Orders Action on Former Main Street Gas Station in Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

Considered an eyesore by many residents, the former Mobil gas station at the intersection of routes 17 and 66 may be close to demolition.

According to a Feb. 21 memo, Portland Building Official Lincoln White sent a "Notice of Violation and Order to Abate" to Brenda Reilly of Middletown, the owner of the property at 198 Main St., stating that an inspection had been performed of the premises on Feb. 6. According to White, the "property is being maintained in an unsafe condition being open at door and window considered a fire hazard" under the state's building code.

The order from the town asks Reilly, who has only owned the property for several months, to either "demolish and remove the structure or make it safe." White goes on to state that the structure suffered considerable damage after being hit by a motor vehicle, which "pushed the front door and glazing frame in" which has created an "opening for unwanted access of people and vermin."

"It's on the edge of blight," White said Wednesday, making an allusion to a current proposal from the Board of Selectmen to create a "property maintenance ordinance" for the town. "They could certainly just board it up with some better screws, but that's not what we want to see happen."

Last Saturday, March 17, White received correspondence from Reilly's attorney, George A. Law of Portland, who advised the town that Reilly "plans to comply with the order." According to the letter, Reilly is currently "col-

lecting information relating to the demolition of the building."

In another letter sent from Law to Deanna Rhodes, the town's planning and land use administrator, on March 19, Reilly and Law are planning to meet with Rhodes to discuss a proposal of how to handle the property. Law states that he understands Rhodes and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield would like to see the structure demolished and he plans to include that in the proposal. However, Law states that because the land "will not in the foreseeable future be an income generating property," Reilly is not certain that she can handle the demolition financially and has asked to discuss the possibility of the town assisting in the demolition.

Law and Reilly stated they will also be proposing that the property be converted into "accessory parking" for the neighboring businesses following the possible demolition.

Bransfield said Wednesday that the abandoned gas station is "one of many" properties in town that has brought about the discussion of a blight ordinance, but added that the location of this property is "particularly relevant" because of its proximity to the center of town.

"There are two new businesses going in there soon," Bransfield said, "and the town has worked hard to improve the sidewalks and the 'walkability' of the area. It's heavily used."

"Many businesses on Main Street have put considerable amounts of money into renovations," White added, citing Brownstone Bottle Shop and Bud's Café as examples. "Everyone



The former Mobil gas station on Main Street has been closed for well over a decade and has fallen into disrepair, causing many residents to call for its demolition. This week, the town was in discussions with the property owner to do just that.

is in the mode of upgrading and improving."

A meeting was held Wednesday between Reilly, Law, Rhodes and Bransfield, which Bransfield said went "very well." Bransfield said that Reilly intends to demolish the building, but some discussion was had about the town offering some assistance.

"I'm not sure how we would go about it quite yet," Bransfield said Thursday. "It's something I would need to discuss with the entire board

[of selectmen]. I know that we'd all like to do this as quickly as possible."

As for now, Reilly will be submitting a formal proposal to Rhodes in the next few weeks and the town will proceed from there, Bransfield said. "We're in the beginning stages right now," she added.

Law reserved comment prior to the Wednesday meeting, and was unavailable for comment on Thursday.

They Have Spirit, Yes They Do

by Joshua Anusewicz

In small towns, it's not uncommon for residents to lend a helping hand to others, volunteering their time for the betterment of the town. On Sunday, three such individuals were honored for their tireless commitment to making Portland a better place to live.

The Portland Senior Center honored Dr. Howard Rosenbaum, Linda Cunningham and Jan Janowski with the fourth annual Ralph Paley Spirit of Portland Award; the award was renamed this year after Paley, who exhibited many of the same attributes as the recipients throughout his time in the town.

Paley, who passed away last October, was a founder of Paley Brothers Hay and Shavings and, according to Senior Center Director Mary Flood, "demonstrated unwavering dedication to the town of Portland."

Paley's family agreed to sponsor the award in his memory, and many were on hand Sunday to be part of the ceremony. One of his grandchildren who spoke, Jillian McDermott, called her grandfather an "unsung hero" and related a story about how it was common for Paley to give free hay to residents who were less fortunate.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield also spoke highly of Paley, calling him an "encouraging person" who always hugged her during times of difficulty.

"He would say, 'things are going to be alright,'" Bransfield said, "'there are so many great people in Portland.'"

And a few of those "great people" were recognized on Sunday, providing what Flood called "the best cross-section" of Portland residents the award has seen. The first to be honored was Rosenbaum, who was not in atten-

dance due to family commitments. Rosenbaum is a former member of the boards of education, finance and selectmen, as well as one of the founding members of the Brownstone Quorum. He was also instrumental in the development of the new Riverfront Park and its pavilion, and the Arch Pavilion in the downtown area.

"His dedication to making Portland a great place to live and as a guardian of our history make him most deserving of this honor," Flood stated.

Cunningham has been involved with multiple groups within the community, including the Congregational Church, the historical society, the Portland Junior Women's Club and the Friends of the Portland Library. Some residents, however, might know her best with a bag in her hand; Cunningham can often be seen walking down the streets of Portland, collecting litter to keep the town clean and attractive.

"This is a wonderful surprise and an honor," Cunningham said. She was humble in receiving the award, relating a quote that those who do good work don't need to blow their own horn, as others will provide the fanfare.

"Well, this is the fanfare!" Cunningham exclaimed, to a chorus of laughter.

Janowski was another humble recipient, and someone whose work few residents usually realize. She has been a volunteer at the senior center for over 20 years, and Flood admitted that very few regulars at the center actually know Janowski, as most of her good deeds are done in anonymity.

"That's the point!" Flood stated about Janowski never seeking praise. Janowski has been involved with the craft group at the center, helping raise money to purchase new furni-



Though not used to being the center of attention, Jan Janowski happily accepted the Ralph Paley Spirit of Portland Award last Sunday at the Portland Senior Center. Mary Flood, the director of the senior center, right, also handed out awards to residents Linda Cunningham and Dr. Howard Rosenbaum.

ture for the seniors. She has also taken time to design and create decorations for various events and programs throughout the community, putting her artistic talents to good use for the town.

Janowski called the award "an unexpected honor," considering her work around town usually wouldn't be recognized.

"It feels odd being the center of attention," she admitted. "But I certainly appreciate it."

On top of receiving the awards, state Rep.

Christie Carpino was also on hand to give citations from the state to each of the recipients. She commended each of the winners for their service, adding that each of them volunteered their time while "never looking for a thank you."

The award recipients were all chosen by nominations from residents, with the three top nominees being named by a committee at the senior center. Last year's recipients were Don Bascom, Fran Schoell and Joan LaMalfa.

Camp Invention Coming This Summer in Marlborough

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

This summer, Marlborough Elementary School will host Camp Invention, a national summer camp program designed to instill an interest in math and science in children from an early age.

The program will run from July 9 to 13, for children entering grades one through six (currently in kindergarten through grade five). The camp's local director, Marlborough Elementary School teacher Eric Brody, said he and other administration chose to host Camp Invention because it ties in with the school's STEM initiative, which integrates science, technology, engineering and mathematics in the curriculum. "This fit in really well with the initiative we've had going on here for the last year," Brody said, "so we figured, 'why should it stop in June when we can get it to expand throughout the summer?'"

The camp is open to students in Marlborough as well as other communities.

Brody said parents are often looking for alternative summer activities for their children and Camp Invention offers that. "Parents always talk about that 'summer slide' where kids don't learn anything," he said.

"Instead of just going outside and doing ac-

tivities or just going to the pool [like in a traditional summer camp] it allows kids to do something a little bit different," he said of the camp. "They're going to have fun, but they also have to bring their brains with them. It's done in a very fun atmosphere and it really promotes collaboration and higher-level thinking."

Marlborough is one of 10 Connecticut towns that will hold the program, including Waterbury, Stamford, Bristol, Darien, Stonington, Orange, Branford, Westport and Shelton.

Camp Invention Regional Program Manager Patti Holmes said the curriculum is tested every year in different venues across the country, and released nationally the following year.

"We ask [the local educators] to stay within our curriculum because we need to ensure the quality and consistency of the program," Holmes said.

This is Marlborough's first year hosting the program, which Holmes said is the Innovate program. Districts hosting the program for returning years hold the Envision program, so children returning to the camp have an entirely new experience.

The camp teaches children science, literacy, history and the arts through learning "modules,"

a curriculum crafted by the Camp Invention directors, based in Ohio, and implemented by local educators.

Innovate consists of four modules: Power'd, Hatched, I Can Invent and Action and Adventure Games. In Power'd, children will look at different sources of energy to try to power up a robot. Hatched is a technology piece in which the children will work on computers to build a simulated community from the ground up. In I Can Invent, children will take apart different machines and reconfigure them back together to try to break a balloon. Action and Adventure Games is a technological take on traditional summer camp games by combining physical activity with the concept of upcycling.

The modules are designed to promote collaboration, problem-solving skills and creativity, part of Camp Invention's mission.

Brody said campers will likely have an opportunity at some point during the week to demonstrate their inventions and projects to parents.

The schools contact Camp Invention when they are interested in holding a program. "What they like about the program is that the director is someone local from the district and it is our strategies and procedures," Holmes said.

Holmes said Camp Invention aims to instill an interest in the sciences.

"Our concern is that our children are not getting enough science during the day, so our mission is to get kids engaged with science, technology and math at an early age to continue to want to study it in high school and college," she said. "They are introduced to science in a very positive manner."

Camp Invention began in 1990 in Ohio, and went national in 1996. Holmes said in 2011, there were 1,177 programs held nationwide, with more than 76,000 children attending and more than 9,000 teachers running the programs in 49 states. The majority of the programs are held in the summer, but some are offered during school breaks.

The capacity for the program is 110 students and the minimum for the program to take place is 35. The cost is \$215 per student for the week with a \$25 discount for those who register before March 30. There are also discounts for families registering more than one child for the program. Registration and additional information on the program is available on the website, CampInvention.org.

Colchester Man Charged With Breaking into Home

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A Colchester man with several previous arrests was arrested again Wednesday, March 14, after allegedly breaking into the home of an acquaintance while intoxicated.

State police said Barry Royea, 32, of 55 Briarwood Dr., broke a basement window in a home on Parum Road and went to sleep on the bedroom floor of the homeowner's juvenile daughter.

The homeowner woke up to find their daughter in the master bedroom, and the family dog led them to the child's bedroom where they found Royea sleeping, an arrest warrant affidavit on file at Norwich Superior Court said. The homeowner called 911 because Royea refused to leave the house and appeared to be intoxicated.

The homeowner said they had known Royea for many years, and called police because they feared for their daughter's safety and knew "he [was] a pedophile," the affidavit said.

In 2011, Royea pleaded guilty to risk of injury to a minor after a high school student alleged Royea had gotten her drunk and raped her in 2005, when she was 14.

Royea said he broke into the home because he was drunk and had nowhere to stay, and reported knocking on the door with no answer. Royea also said he had entered the child's bedroom, but she was not in the room. Royea could not state a reason for entering the bedroom, the affidavit said.

"Royea was not so intoxicated that he was unaware of his surroundings or that he didn't know what he was doing because he stated at the scene prior to arrest that [the juvenile victim] wasn't in the bedroom with him," the affidavit stated.

Royea was charged with risk of injury to a minor, second-degree burglary, second-degree breach of peace and third-degree criminal mischief, state police said.

Royea had previously been arrested for first-degree sexual assault of a victim under 16 years of age, risk of injury to a minor, and multiple DUI arrests and probation violations.

For the March 14 incident, police had initially charged Royea with attempted first-degree sexual assault of a victim under 10 years of age, but the charge was later dropped.

The affidavit said "these circumstances in conjunction with Royea's previous arrests show that Royea made an intentional act by knowingly entering [the juvenile victim's] bedroom which constitutes a substantial step in a course of conduct planned to culminate in his commission of the crime of [first-degree sexual assault]."

The affidavit said Royea's probation officer was contacted and reported he would submit a violation of probation warrant.

Royea is in custody on \$100,000 bond, police said. His next court date is April 12 at Norwich Superior Court.

Marlborough Police News

3/17: Mines Ganic, 19, of 76 Follybrook Blvd., Wethersfield, was charged with DUI and possession of marijuana, State Police said.

3/17: Douglas Connelly, 51, of 4 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, was charged with violation of home improvement contract requirements, State Police said.

3/18: Mary Waltenius, 58, of 208 Kick Hill Rd., Lebanon, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

3/18: Eric Risley, 23, of 23 Rentschler St., East Hartford, was charged with DUI, operating a motor vehicle under a suspended license and failure to display license plates, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

3/14: Peter Kevorkian, 27, of 44 Brainard Rd., was arrested on a warrant for fifth-degree larceny after a motor vehicle crash in Hartford, State Police said.

3/16: Brittany Wood, 21, of 99 Lindsey Rd., Lebanon, was charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree criminal mischief and second-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/19: Richard Samolis, 39, of 18 School Rd., Marlborough, was charged with DUI, reckless driving, reckless endangerment, breach of peace, following too close and failure to sub-

mit fingerprints after a road rage incident, State Police said.

3/19: Christopher Passera, 19, of 199 French Rd., Bolton, was charged with second-degree sexual assault and risk of injury to a minor, State Police said.

3/19: Raymond Wachtarz, 23, of 52 Broadway, was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

3/19: Richard Longo, 44, of 6 East St., Niantic, was charged with DUI and reckless driving, State Police said.

Portland Police News

3/14: David Frank, 48, of 311 Main St., was charged with sixth-degree larceny and fraudulent use of ATM, Portland Police said.

3/19: A 17-year-old juvenile male was arrested for disorderly conduct and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

Obituaries

Portland

Lorraine V. Mazzotta

Lorraine V. Mazzotta, 69, of Portland, ex-wife of the late Carl Mazzotta, passed away Sunday, March 18, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Oct. 26, 1942, she was the daughter of the late George and Elizabeth Wheeler of North Waterboro, ME.

She worked as a nurses' aide for most of her life. She adored spending time with her grandchildren and loved working in her gardens.

She is survived by her four children, Richard Mazzotta of Portland, Joseph Mazzotta of Canada, Anthony Mazzotta and Frederica Lineen of Virginia and Anna Mazzotta and Scott Chorette of Marlborough; two step-children, Carl and Paula Mazzotta of Glastonbury and Carla Hull of Middletown; her sisters, Sylvia Chute and her husband of Newfield, ME and Grace Estes and her husband of Oregon; and a brother, Robert Wheeler of Connecticut. She is also survived by four grandchildren, Jennifer Mazzotta of Hartford, Joseph Mazzotta of Canada and Peter and Katelyn Fillback of Portland, and many other nieces and nephews and good friends.

She was predeceased by her sisters, Catherine Merrill of Kennebunk, ME, Elizabeth of Maine and one brother, George Wheeler of Connecticut.

Visitation hours are from 4-6 p.m. Tuesday, March 27, at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, CT.

Marlborough

Roy Lewis Coffin

Roy Lewis (Benny) Coffin, formerly of Marlborough, passed away, surrounded by his loving family, Thursday, March 8, at the age of 65, from complications of pneumonia.

He was born July 26, 1946, in Bristol, to Wendell and Phyllis Coffin, and lived with them in Glastonbury most of his life. He also lived at Marlborough Health Care Center for about four years and, recently, he resided with friends at WILA in Windsor. He attended Oak Hill School in Glastonbury and had many dear friends there as well.

Ben will be forever remembered for his wonderful smile and sweet loving personality. He faced all life's challenges with a positive outlook. Ben loved life, and expressed empathy and kindness toward others. To know him was to cherish and love him and his passing is a great loss for family and friends.

For our dear Benny, it must be awesome to see a rainbow from above.

Ben is survived by his parents, Phyllis and Wendell Coffin of Glastonbury; his sister, Carole Shea and husband Dick of Marlborough; and three brothers, Wendell Coffin of Colchester, Brad Coffin and his wife Lori of Colchester and Richard Coffin of Amston. He will also be fondly remembered by his nieces and nephews, Mallory, Jared, and Jason Coffin of Colchester, Kristina Coffin of Amston, Richard Shea of Windsor, and Kristin Shea of Manchester.

The family would like to recognize the kindness and care shown Ben by the staff at St. Francis Hospital ICU, and especially by Maureen Pepin, Winsome Wilson-Reid, and Diane Higgins, of WILA, Jacqueline Chin of Oak Hill, Alice Wade and the staff at Marlborough Health Care Center, Hazel Chandler and Christine Gaynor.

A memorial service was held Monday, March 12, at Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St., Rocky Hill.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: Windsor Independent Living Association, 45 Maple Ave., Windsor, CT 06095; Oak Hill School 3045, Main St., Glastonbury, CT 06033; or Marlborough Health Care Center, 85 Stage Harbor Rd., Marlborough, CT, 06447.



Colchester

George A. Stula

George A. Stula, 83, lifelong resident of Colchester and beloved husband of Wanda (Harasimowitz) Stula, passed away Thursday morning, March 15, at home, surrounded by his loving family. Born July 3, 1928, on the family farm in Colchester, he was a son of the late Ferdinand "Fred" and Irene (Melnyk) Stula.

He attended Bacon Academy as well as Hartford Trade, where he excelled in carpentry. George went on to work as buildings manager for several nursing homes for many years before his retirement. He will be remembered for his hard work ethic and love of farming, but mostly for his dedication to his family.

In addition to his loving wife of 52 years, he is survived by two children and their spouses, Nancy and David Bikerman of Old Lyme and Thomas and Alison Stula of Colchester; two grandchildren, Avery Bikerman and George T. Stula; five siblings, John of Columbia, Alice Hardy of Phoenix, AZ, Sr. Helen Stula of Ronkonkoma, NY, Kenneth of Athens, GA and Frances Zawacki of Fairbanks, AK; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was also predeceased by four brothers, Michael, Fred, Bruno and Edwin.

The family would like to thank all of George's caregivers from Hospice SECT, especially Sandey and Kaitlin. Many thanks also to his home companion, Lauraly.

Friends called Sunday, March 18, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Monday, March 19, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Interment followed in the New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hospice SECT, 227 Dunham St., Norwich 06360 or to the Colchester Food Bank, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Ann Clauson

Ann (Hominick) Clauson, 97, of Colchester, widow of the late Francis L. Clauson, passed away Friday morning, March 16, surrounded by her loving family. Born Jan. 3, 1915, in Colchester, she was a daughter of the late Harry and Pauline (Styko) Hominick.

A lifelong resident of Colchester, she was the first female licensed driver in town. Together with her husband of 51 years, she supported her sons in their farm business, Bob and Art's Country Market in Colchester. Ann was an avid gardener, and her sons inherited her green thumb, each operating their own nursery businesses today.

Mrs. Clauson was active with 4-H as well as the PTA when her children were young.

A woman of great faith, she was a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Willimantic, where she held various positions over the years.

She is survived by four children, Ceanne (Bob) Benzinger of New Harmony, NC, Christine Coates of Colchester, Arthur (Katherine) Clauson of Niantic and Robert (Janice) Clauson of Hampton; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members.

In addition to her beloved husband, she was predeceased by her son-in-law, Gordon Coates; her brothers, Walter and Peter Hominick; and her sister, Estelle Magnani.

A memorial service will be observed at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 25, at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 126 Quarry St., Willimantic. She was laid to rest privately in the Hominick family plot in the Old St. Mary Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Willimantic Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 126 Quarry St., Willimantic, CT 06226, designated for Youth Ministries.

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



East Hampton

Janice Elizabeth Boule

Janice Elizabeth Boule, 92, of East Hampton, widow of Henry G. Boule died Sunday, March 18, at Cobalt Health Care. Born Oct. 16, 1919, in Cambridge, MA, she was the daughter of the late Benjamin and Jane (McKenna) Cogswell.

She had lived in East Hampton since 1943 and was a communicant of St. Patrick Church, and a graduate of Roger Williams Hospital School of Nursing in Providence, RI. She had worked as a school nurse for the town of East Hampton. Janice was a member of the East Hampton Senior Citizens, the AARP and the East Hampton Art Association.

She is survived by her son, David H. Boule and his wife Helen of East Hampton; a daughter-in-law, Joan Boule of St. Petersburg, FL; five grandchildren Deborah Boule Inlow and her husband Raymond, Michele Boule Barber and her husband Kenneth, Michael Boule and his special friend Christina Kaiko, Allison Boule Dillon and her husband Kyle, Darren Boule and his fiancé Allison Haskell; six great-grandchildren, Elizabeth and Kathryn Barber, Joey and Christopher Inlow, Liam and Olivia Dillon; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her son, James C. Boule, a daughter, Judith Boule, and a brother, Col. James Cogswell.

The family would like to thank the staff at Cobalt Health Care and Vitas Innovative Hospice Care.

A funeral liturgy will be held today, March 23, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will follow in St. Patrick Cemetery. Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Thursday, March 22.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144 East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Thomas Alexander Bingham

Thomas Alexander Bingham died Tuesday, March 20, at Harrington Court in Colchester, where he had been a resident for over 10 years. He was 74 years old and is survived by his nine siblings.

Mr. Bingham was born Oct. 5, 1937, to Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Bingham IV in Marseille, France, where his father served as vice consul for the U.S. State Department. Thomas and his family moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1941, where they lived until the elder Bingham's retirement from the State Department in 1945.

He grew up in Salem with his 10 brothers and sisters, attending Salem Elementary School before continuing his education at Groton School in Massachusetts, from which he graduated in 1955. Following graduation from Yale University in 1959, where he was a member of the Elizabethan Club and the Russian Choral Society, he resided briefly in Washington, DC, before returning to Salem. He lived with his parents in the family home for the next 40 years.

Thomas will be remembered affectionately by both his family and his Salem neighbors as a gentleman whose compassionate heart embraced every human being he met, and whose goodness and purity of soul radiated outward as a blessing to all whose lives he touched. Though he never married, he dearly loved children, especially the children and grandchildren of his siblings, and always asked about their progress and development.

The family wishes to thank Harrington Court for their wonderful care of Thomas over the past decade.

Care of private arrangements, with burial in the Salem Green Cemetery, was entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Harry Armfield Sr.

Harry Armfield Sr., 85, of Marlborough, beloved husband of Barbara (Powell) Armfield died Monday, March 19, at Marlborough Health Care. Born Jan. 7, 1927, in Jersey City, NJ, he was the son of the late Robert A. and Carrie E. (Hurst) Armfield.

Harry had lived in Marlborough for more than 40 years. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He had retired from The Hartford Insurance Company where he had worked as a catastrophe property casualty adjuster. He was a member of the East Hampton VFW, the Marlborough American Legion post, and was a board member of Intercommunity Mental Health.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his two sons, Anthony E. Armfield of Ludlow, MA, Harry Armfield Jr. of Rocky Hill; two daughters, Chryl Lynn Taton of Middletown, Sabrina Martin of Lithonia, GA; six grandchildren, Bruce Jr., Harry III, Bruce, Alana, Rebekah and Lucas.

He was predeceased by his son, Bruce A. Armfield, and a sister, Edna M. Love.

Funeral services will be held Monday, March 26, at 11 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with Rev. Robert Faulhaber officiating. Burial followed in the Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown. Friends may call at the funeral home Monday morning from 10 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the State Veterans Home in Rocky Hill, 287 West St., Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Hebron

Janet S. Nelson

Janet S. Nelson, 90, the widow of Richard G. Nelson Sr., died Sunday, March 18, at Backus Hospital in Norwich.

Janet was born in Gardner, MA, the daughter of Walter and Frances (Bukowski) Urbanski, and had lived in Manchester for 40 years before moving to Hebron in 1992. She was formerly employed by WT Grant Co. in Manchester and by Lawrence J. Andrus, DDS, of South Windsor.

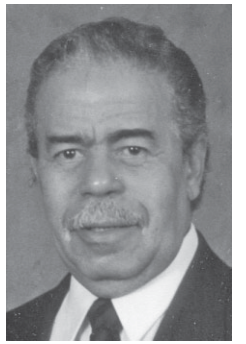
Janet is survived by her sons and daughters-in-law, Richard Jr. and Lorraine Nelson of Hebron and Mark R. and Lisa Nelson of Salem; her grandchildren, David Nelson, Brian Nelson, Mea Kline, John Nelson, Meaghan Sekinger and Matt Monaco; her great-grandchildren Christopher Delmastro, Myles Kline, Darren Nelson, Alyssia Nelson and Ollie Sekinger and several nieces and nephews.

She also was predeceased by her granddaughter Julie and her sisters Helen Ladroga, Irene Blodgett and Sabina Lurier.

The Nelsons will receive family and friends Saturday, March 24, from 9:30-11 a.m., at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester, with a funeral service to begin at 11 a.m., followed by burial in East Cemetery, Manchester.

Memorial donations may be made to the Salvation Army.

For online condolences, visit tierneyfuneralhome.com.



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Hebron

Ella Winter

Ella Winter, 95, of Hebron, formerly of the Troy, NY, area, died Sunday, Feb. 5, at home.

Ella, the daughter of Archibald Eugene Brimmer and Maude (Clarke) Brimmer, was born Maude Ella Brimmer on Jan. 4, 1917, in her parents' home in Waverly, NY. She died 95 years, one month and one day later, in her son Ronald's home in the Gilead section of Hebron, with her son, daughter-in-law Jennifer and granddaughter Heather at her side.



Ella and her family moved to a farm in Center Brunswick, NY, when she was four. Ella lived there for the remainder of her formative years, attending the local elementary school and Troy High School. Her jobs on the farm included driving horse-drawn hay wagons at which she became an expert.

Ella saw the advent of electricity inside their farmhouse, indoor plumbing and paved roads. They survived the Great Depression and Ella often remarked in her later years that "we weren't rich but we never felt poor."

Ella worked at Troy area businesses until she met the love of her life, Wilson Winter Jr., when he moved to upstate New York to work at the Watervliet Arsenal. They were married on Aug. 23, 1942. In mid-1943, Wilson left the Arsenal and joined the U.S. Navy. After boot camp at Camp Sampson in upstate New York, Wilson was assigned to the USS Princeton which was engaged in battles in the Pacific Ocean and was sunk in the Battle for Leyte Gulf in October, 1944. Ella waited eight days to hear word of her husband's fate, eventually receiving the news that he had survived the sinking.

Wilson later was assigned to occupation duty in Japan, finally returning home to the farm in Center Brunswick where Ella was waiting. In the following years, Wilson returned to work at the Watervliet Arsenal and they had four children, three boys and one girl.

In the mid-1950s, Ella went to work as a saleswoman for Stanley Home Products, where her natural sales ability and what she called a "gift of gab" soon earned her a promotion to Unit Manager. In 1957, Ella, Wilson and their children left the farm in Center Brunswick after buying a home in the town of Wynantskill, a short distance away.

They lived there until a tragic auto accident took the life of their youngest son, Laurence Alan Winter, in May 1973. Ella and Wilson soon sold their house and in 1975, still overcome by grief, they moved to an oceanfront condominium in Cocoa Beach, FL.

In 1980, they returned to the Troy area, living in Clifton Park, NY, until 1988 when they moved to the Dutch Village apartments in Menands, NY. Wilson died in 1999 and Ella stayed in their apartment until moving to Connecticut on Dec. 22, 2008.

Ella enjoyed her final years in Hebron, remarking that the rural town reminded her of the farm in Center Brunswick. In the spring she joined Jennifer and Heather in the annual ritual of planting flowers outside their home and enjoying the songbirds and hummingbirds that frequented the backyard.

She loved the annual Maple Fest and Harvest Fair and enjoyed going out for brunch and dinner at area restaurants. Ella supported the local veteran organizations and often remarked that Hebron's American Legion hall, a 150-year-old two-room building that originally was a schoolhouse, reminded her of the elementary school she attended.

Ella enjoyed playing the family the piano with her granddaughter Heather, and spent hours playing and singing her favorite hymns. She was staunchly independent until the final days of her life, assigning herself tasks around the home and applying herself to them every day. She read several newspapers each week, kept up on world happenings and would gladly launch into political discussions at the dinner table.

She made many friends in her Connecticut years and especially loved visiting with Pete and Anita Comrack, her daughter-in-law's parents in Manchester. A book on her life and her successful struggle to prevent out-of-state relatives from forcing her into an elder care institution while she lived in Hebron was published in 2010.

Among the treasured mementos she left to her son Ron and his family is a nearly 100-year old Holy Bible that was given to Ella by her mother Maude. It includes a one-word inscription, MIZPAH, on the flyleaf. The term Mizpah is found in Genesis and refers to a pact of refuge and sanctuary that was established in Biblical times in a place called Gilead, near the town of Hebron.

Ella was predeceased by her husband Wilson and son Larry. She leaves her son Ronald, his wife Jennifer and granddaughter Heather all of the Gilead section of Hebron, granddaughter Sara Winter of Pennsylvania, grandson Kevin Winter, formerly of Hebron, now of Tampa, FL, and eight great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her son Wilson Winter and daughter Nancy Patrick of New York, as well as numerous grandchildren, and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Ella's name may be made to the Hebron Veterans Scholarship fund P.O. Box 95, Hebron, CT 06248. The family of Ronald Winter wishes to thank the staff at Gentiva and the staff at Vitas Hospice for their loving and caring support in Ella's final months.

Ella will be buried in the family plot at the Oakwood Cemetery in Troy, NY, next to her husband Wilson and son Larry at the convenience of the family.

Colchester

Bruce Parker

Bruce Parker, 65, of Willimantic, formerly of Colchester and East Haddam, died Wednesday, March 14, at Windham Hospital, surrounded by his family.

Bruce was born in Laconia, NH, son of the late Richard N. and Betty E. (Moulton) Parker. He was veteran of the U.S. Navy. Prior to his retirement he was employed as a tool maker for Columbia Manufacturing. Bruce was an extremely talented self-taught executive chef and master tool maker. He was an avid UConn and Boston Red Sox fan.

Bruce enjoyed music, poetry, art, nature, and loved helping people of all walks of life. He was always telling stories about growing up in New Hampshire and in East Haddam. Bruce was proud of his accomplishments but even more proud of his family, especially his nieces and nephews.

He is survived by three brothers, Richard and his wife Carol, Bradley and his wife Dot, and Roy Parker and his wife Cindy, all of East Haddam; a sister, Brenda Barber and her husband John of East Haddam; also several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, March 20, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver Street, Middletown. Friends called at the funeral home that afternoon, prior to the service. Burial was at First Congregational Church Cemetery in East Haddam.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to the Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School Jean Fund (Charity fund for East Haddam Community members in need), 73 Clark Gates Rd., Moodus, CT 06469.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit biegafuneralhome.com.