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News Bulletin

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

Volume 37, Number 4

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

May 4, 2012



Middle school student Zoe Grinfield will put on a charity fashion show this Sunday, May 6, displaying her clothing designs made from recycled materials. Here, model Taylor Duperry dons a dress made with red plastic cups.

Colchester Teen Turns Trash Into Treasure

by Katelyn Kelleher

Plastic cups and gum wrappers are more likely found in the garbage than in fashion, but a creative Colchester teen's fundraiser will give often-discarded materials their runway debut.

Zoe Grinfield, 13, designed a collection of clothing from recycled materials for a fundraiser fashion show this Sunday. She'll show off her creations for charity in a show called "Speechless" Sunday, May 6, at 2:30 p.m. at the Ahavath Achim Synagogue on Lebanon Avenue.

Ticket sales for the show will benefit the Urban Zen Foundation, an organization aiming to promote well-being, preserve culture and empower children. Grinfield said she chose the foundation for the work they do with children.

"I thought it was a really cool program that they were doing," she said. "They do art and yoga and programs for children."

The show is Grinfield's second – last year she raised \$511 for Greenpeace. Approximately 80 attended, she said, and hopes this year the audience will surpass that and raise even more money.

Fashion design started as just a hobby for Grinfield.

"When I was little I made jewelry. I made a necklace out of Barbie heads," she said. "I like to buy simple clothes and 'Zoe-ify' them."

Using knick-knacks found around her house and consignment stores, Grinfield started incorporating recycled materials into her pieces.

Plastic cups, bed sheets and party decorations are among the materials she turned into 10 wearable designs for the upcoming show.

While each took a day or two to finish, depending on how complicated the piece, one took a year and a half. "This year, I did have one dress that a lot of people from school were involved in. For my gum wrapper dress I actually bought bulk-sized packs of gum and gave

it to my friends to chew," she said. "In return, they gave me back every single wrapper flattened out and color-coded."

Grinfield said she collected over 1,000 wrappers in that timeframe. "I wouldn't have been able to make the dress without the support of everyone around me," she said.

Grinfield's friends lent extra support by volunteering to model the fashions.

Laura Plourde, who will wear a dress made out of party supply finds, called Grinfield the most creative person she has ever met.

"It's pretty much all her own imagination," she said. "No one can think of stuff like that."

One of the more unique creations, worn by Taylor Duperry, is a dress made of bright red plastic cups. Duperry said Grinfield has a talent for unique design, and even wore a bubble wrap vest to school.

"People were popping it all day," Duperry said.

In addition to several fittings, Duperry said she and the other models wore their dresses for pictures that will be on the *Seventeen* magazine website.

Hillary Goldstein, who gets to wear the long-awaited gum wrapper dress, commended Grinfield on the innovative idea of holding a fashion show for charity. "She really thinks of good ideas," she said.

Grinfield, currently a student at William J. Johnston Middle School, said she aspires to become a costume designer for stage and film and has been accepted to the freshman program at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, where she can major in technical theater and design costumes and sets for the academy.

"I don't make 'normal' clothes, but I love creating and I also love the performing arts,"

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Portland Teen Fights Rare Disease

by Joshua Anusewicz

For a parent, few things are ever more challenging than seeing your child sick or injured. Try as you might, kids will inevitably catch a cold, chicken pox or an ear infection. They might even fall off a bike and need some stitches to heal a wound. These things happen.

Sometimes, these illnesses or injuries are more serious. The child might break a bone or suffer a concussion playing sports. They might get the flu or strep throat, or, in more serious cases, be stricken with a disease like cancer.

However, these injuries and illnesses are often easy to identify and multiple treatments are available. Doctors and entire hospitals are dedicated to the treatment, and many children are given the proper care, recover and are able to continue living a normal childhood.

But what happens when people can't figure out what ails your child? They are plagued by constant aches and pains, you know something

is wrong, but doctors' tests can't find anything. As the symptoms get worse, you grow restless while still providing support for your child, praying that the pain will stop. But how?

This was the life of the Gould family over the past several years. On the outside, they seem like any other family in Portland: two parents, a son and a daughter, two cats, a two-story home with a garage.

"We're just your regular family," 15-year-old Jill Gould said. "The only thing that's not normal is my disease."

For the past five years, Jill has suffered from acute intermittent porphyria (AIP), a hereditary disease that results in the body producing insufficient amounts of enzymes that are necessary for the production of "heme," a form of hemoglobin that contains red blood cells.

Jill and her mother Joyce are practically experts on the disease by now, having gone through multiple treatments, researched across

the Internet, and read books about others stricken with the disease. But when Jill first started exhibiting symptoms at age 10, nobody – not even doctors – knew what exactly was wrong with her.

In 2006, when Jill was in sixth grade, she began experiencing tremors, nausea, and nosebleeds on a fairly regular basis. While causing discomfort and inconveniences, nothing seemed serious at the time. (Jill also suffers from Von Willebrand disease, a type of hemophilia, which often causes nosebleeds, as well.)

Not long after, however, the symptoms began to escalate. Jill would suffer through fainting spells and series of convulsions that landed her in the emergency room at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown, then on to Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) in Hartford. But with the attacks occurring intermittently and doctors unable to find any telltale signs of an illness that would normally strike a

child, she was released.

"Just drink lots of fluids," Joyce recalls the doctors telling her, a strategy that had little effect. Symptoms then began to include vomiting, fever, and other aches and pains, particularly in her abdomen. Jill's heart would also begin to race before an attack, so she now knew when it would happen, but only minutes before it actually did.

Further tests yielded nothing. CAT scans, EKGs, blood work – negative. It was around this time that the symptoms began including mood swings, sudden changes in behavior, blackouts and hallucinations. Jill – who her mother describes as "no complacent Civil War-era girl" to begin with – would often have outbursts, even at school, which would result in disciplinary action and made her the butt of jokes among her classmates.

"They diagnosed her with a conversion dis-

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order, basically a mental illness,” Joyce said with disappointment. “They would say that it was all in her head, that she was faking [the fainting and convulsions].”

Joyce remembers an instance, while Jill was attending Brownstone Intermediate School, when her daughter collapsed while at recess. After being virtually unconscious for over an hour, Joyce came to pick up her daughter. When they got into the car, Jill came to – and began to cry.

“I remember thinking, ‘Here we go again,’” Joyce said of the attack, one of roughly 30 Jill has suffered over the past few years.

After graduating from Brownstone, Jill was prepared to enter Portland Middle School. She said she had felt good and healthy and was “really excited” to get started in a new school, the final step before reaching high school. But it didn’t take long for the seizures to start up again, even worse than before.

Also worse than before: the bullying. Jill said that because she was often sick or experiencing attacks, she was “always in the spotlight” at school.

“It gave them a reason to target me,” she said.

During this time, Jill was still making trips to the hospital regularly for treatment. Trips to CCMC often resulted in the same dead end, but one particular trip brought hope – a new doctor at the hospital. Joyce said that all they needed was someone, anyone, who could find out what was wrong between Jill’s “head” – the seeming cause of her fainting, convulsions and outbursts – and her “gut” – the cause of her constant pain and sickness.

The new doctor ran down the list of possibilities, which included porphyria. But it couldn’t possibly be that, the doctor thought; she’s too young, and it’s too rare.

The name of the disease, however, stuck with Joyce. She began to read everything she could find on the topic, finally coming to the realization that, yes, her daughter had porphyria. Twenty of the 22 symptoms were there.

The problem was nobody would believe she had such a rare disease. According to the American Porphyria Foundation, about 1 in 20,000 Americans suffer from AIP, with an even smaller number of cases being found in children. So no matter how sure Joyce was that this disease had stricken her daughter, doctors just weren’t buying it.

Seemingly on her own, Joyce realized that if the disease was hereditary, Jill should have her DNA tested. (Jill and her older brother, who suffers from diabetes, are both adopted.) The family traveled to Mount Sinai, NY, for the testing and waited six long weeks to get the results.

Two days before Thanksgiving of 2009, her thoughts were confirmed: Jill had porphyria. And now it was Joyce’s turn to cry. “I collected myself and said, ‘What now?’” she recalled.

So the search began for someone who could treat Jill. After striking out with a doctor in North Carolina who had never treated a juvenile patient, Joyce visited a website called rareshare.org, which provides message boards for those suffering from rare diseases. She posted information about Jill and her condition and, after a long wait, connected with someone in Virginia, whose 24-year-old daughter suffered from porphyria. This girl, though, was receiving treatment from a doctor in Virginia who could treat Jill. Joyce felt it must have been a sign that this doctor studied just down the street at Yale, and was also from Sweden, a country that has the highest prevalence of porphyria in the world.

“It was too much,” Joyce said, with a laugh. The doctor was able to officially diagnose Jill with porphyria and began treatment, which included a port installed directly into Jill’s heart, where doses of glucose and panhematin could be administered to counteract the disease. These treatments then continued at CCMC – where Joyce said the doctors issued her an apology – in decreasing increments over a period of weeks.

Feeling better once again, Jill returned to school for eighth grade after missing roughly a year. She said that she was excited again for a “chance to socialize and learn” with her classmates, but it didn’t take long for the bullying to start again. Jill said she tried to act tough and hold her emotions in, but that only made it worse.

“Kids would pick on me for fainting and tell me to suck it up,” she said. Her classmates would also tease her on Facebook, including one student who said that porphyria wasn’t that bad because “she didn’t even lose her hair.” These taunts and attacks would eventually result in Jill fighting back, earning her more than one suspension.



Portland teen Jill Gould hopes to educate others on porphyria, a rare blood disease, through a pet contest. Jill entered the contest with Bella, one of her pet rats.

Soon after, Jill fell into depression and was placed in a special education school to start ninth grade. She was also put on anxiety medicine, which had a volatile interaction with her treatments and caused her to become even sicker. Jill would remain in the special education school the rest of her ninth-grade year and now attends Wheeler Academy, a magnet school in Middletown.

And this is where 15-year-old Jill Gould is today: a normal, intelligent, well-spoken teenage girl who acts and looks no different than anyone else her age (save the purple-dyed tips of her hair.) She writes poetry and music, plays volleyball and plans to take up softball soon, and spends time with friends. She will soon be looking into a new college-preparatory magnet school for next year, and also plans to apply to the Greater Hartford School of the Arts to continue her passion for music.

Jill has not received a treatment since Jan. 16 – an eternity considering how the past few years seems to be meshed together into one enormous nightmare. She said she still feels sick every once in a while, but “it’s not too bad.” Sometimes, when she feels under the weather, she eats candy to up her glucose level, a practice she has no objection to.

But as tough as the Goulds’ road has been, and as improved as it seems now, it appears far from over. Jill’s life is full of restrictions from things that will trigger her symptoms, which include certain medicines, chemicals in cleaning products or paint, pesticides, cigarette smoke and alcohol. Particularly high levels of stress can also trigger a need for more treatment.

The dangers of her exposure to these things are very real; Joyce said that out of the 22 symptoms of porphyria, there are two Jill hasn’t experienced that stand out: coma and death.

Knowing what they do about the toll the disease has taken on their family, Jill and Joyce are now setting out to educate people on porphyria and the possibility that more Americans – even children – could suffer from the disease. Currently, the two have almost completed a book about their story titled *The Purple Canary* – porphyria comes from *porphyros*, the Greek word for purple, as those with the disease usually have their urine turn purple; and canary, because Joyce considers her daughter the canary for this cause.

“And if she’s the canary, what do you think is in the coal mine?” Joyce asked rhetorically, insinuating that porphyria will become more prevalent. “We have to get this word out. You’re going to be hearing more about this.”

Jill agreed, and said she looks at the crack-down on bullying – another thing that has afflicted her – as an example of how one person could make a difference.

“With bullying, someone had to take that one step. I want to take that step,” she said proudly. “We need to get the word out.”

Another way the word is getting out – with a little help from Jill – is a pet contest being run through the American Porphyria Foundation. Those who suffer from the disease have been asked to send a photo of their pet into the contest, where people can vote for their favorite contestant and donate money that will go to the association to provide further education of the disease.

Jill has entered the contest with one her pet rats, Bella – “I can’t believe I have rats living in comfort in my home,” Joyce laments – and, as of Thursday, has raised \$30. For those interested in donating, visit porphyriafoundation.com/node/537. You can also visit porphyriafoundation.com to find out more information about AIP.

Treasure cont. from Front Page

she said. “This past year I’ve been teaching myself how to sew and I’ve explored the technical aspects of designing that I never realized existed. Once this fashion show passes, I want to experiment with making more wearable clothes for myself.”

Next year she hopes to put on another show, likely in the summertime, where she can try to utilize some of the “failed materials” from this year, like tinfoil, photographs and watercolored paper towels.

For now, she’s focusing on this appropriately named event. “I’ve always had this really cool idea but I’ve never known how to phrase it until recently,” she said. “My inspiration is that even though most people say that a picture’s worth a thousand words, I believe that a design should leave you speechless.”

Tickets for the show are \$5 per person and children under 5 years old are free. Tickets can be pre-purchased at Colchester Mill Fabrics at 120 Lebanon Ave. Attendees are asked to arrive at 2:15 p.m.



Middle school student Laura Plourde models the “party store supply” dress she will wear in a charity fashion show Sunday.

Man Killed in Wrong-Way Crash on Route 2 in Marlborough

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A collision involving a driver heading the wrong way on Route 2 on the Marlborough/Glastonbury town line Saturday left one dead and two seriously injured.

Around 4:15 p.m. Lingxin Wu, 22, of 317B Roanok Ave., Willimantic, was traveling eastbound on Route 2 west in Marlborough, approximately 300 feet prior to the Glastonbury town line, when he struck the driver side of a Subaru Impreza traveling west in the right lane.

The crash fatally injured the Subaru’s driver, Richard Sullivan, 68, of 20 Old Orchard Rd., Huntington. Barbara Sullivan, 66, was in the passenger seat.

A third driver, Jerry Johnson, 63, of 48 Morningside Dr., Feeding Hills, MA, was unable to avoid the accident and struck the Sullivans’ vehicle as it spun out of control, State Police said.

Wu’s Nissan Rogue continued eastbound before rolling onto its side in the roadway, Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department Captain Kevin Asklar said.

Barbara Sullivan, whose airbag did not deploy, was transported by a Glastonbury ambulance to Hartford Hospital with incapacitating injuries, State Police said.

A spokesperson for Hartford Hospital listed Sullivan in good condition Thursday.

Glastonbury Fire Chief Michael Thurz said it took crews approximately 20 minutes to extricate Wu from his vehicle.

Asklar said Lifestar helicopter landed on the highway to transport Wu to Hartford Hospital for Level 1 trauma care. A spokesperson for Hartford Hospital was unable to provide information on Wu’s condition Thursday.

Johnson, whose airbag also did not deploy, was not injured. All four people involved in the crash were wearing seatbelts, State Police said.

Both Glastonbury and Marlborough fire crews responded to the crash. Marlborough Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said the debris field from the accident was in both towns.

Thurz said Route 2 westbound was shut down for three to four hours while State Police reconstructed the accident. The highway reopened at 8:11 p.m.

Thurz called the crash a “tragic situation.”

The incident remains under investigation by State Trooper Gregory DeCarli and anyone who witnessed the crash is asked to contact Troop K in Colchester at 860-537-7500.

East Hampton Man Arrested for Growing Marijuana

by **Joshua Anusewicz**

East Hampton Police recently arrested a local man who was “cultivating marijuana” in his home, Sgt. Garritt Kelly said this week.

On Saturday, April 21, Kelly said that officers were dispatched to the home of Ralph Boreman Stone, Jr., 55, 15 Barbara Ave., after neighbors witnessed Stone “yelling and screaming.” Kelly said that Stone was suffering from “psychological issues” and was issued a summons for disorderly conduct.

Kelly said police also discovered that a warrant was out for Stone’s arrest, stemming from Sept. 25, 2011. According to Kelly, officers had been dispatched to Stone’s house for a similar public disturbance; upon arrival, po-

lice found eight separate pots for growing marijuana, fluorescent lights and lamps, and other “cultivating materials.”

After the April 21 arrest, Kelly said that Stone was released from custody and sent to a local hospital for a psychological evaluation.

According to the state’s judicial website, Stone has been charged with first-degree threatening, operation of a drug factory, sale of a controlled substance, and possession of a controlled substance (less than four ounces). He was released on a \$10,000 bond and is scheduled to appear in Middletown Superior Court on Thursday, May 24, at 10 a.m.

YPCCA Headed 'Into the Woods'

by Joshua Anusewicz

"Careful the tales you tell; children will listen."

That is the line that director Chris Mansfield uses to explain *Into the Woods*, the latest production from East Hampton's Young People's Center for the Creative Arts (YPCCA). The musical, based on a book by James Lapine with music by Stephen Sondheim, is a retelling of classic fairytales that are melded together to tell one story.

What makes the musical unique, Mansfield said, is that the "darker side" of some of the most recognizable fairytales is exposed. Classic stories of *Cinderella*, *Rapunzel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *Jack and the Beanstalk* are intertwined and followed further to find the ultimate consequences of the characters as their tales continue.

"These stories are ripe for exploration of their drama and their comedy," Mansfield said. "There's rich meat underneath these children's tales, and it's all very melodramatic. That's all you really need for musical theatre."

And Mansfield knows quite a bit about musical theatre, having worked with YPCCA since his parents, Mike and Adina Mansfield, founded the organization in 1982. With his sister Rachel, who will serve as producer for the musical, YPCCA has been producing a yearly scholarship fundraiser since 1989 – every spring – in the name of his parents. All proceeds from the musical go to the Mike and Adina Mansfield Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded to an East Hampton High School senior that plans to study education or visual or performing arts in

college.

This year, the scholarship, which totals \$1,750, will be awarded to Taylor Casey, who starred as Dorothy in last year's YPCCA production in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Casey will also be a part of this year's cast, which features performers from throughout the area, ranging from age 6-50. Mansfield called the production a "community cast," with parents getting involved by not just volunteering time to set up sets and donating props, but jumping in and showing of their acting chops.

"They really support us in every way they can," Mansfield said of the parents involved.

It's fitting that parents are involved, as Mansfield describes the musical as "fairytales treated as adult stories" that are broken down in a more "stylized" fashion. The story follows a baker and his wife, who push the story along through the tales by trying to reverse a curse that was put upon their family. To do this, the family makes a deal with a witch to remove the curse if they can find a way to turn the witch back into the beautiful woman she was before she herself was cursed. The fairytales in first act of the show are much how you remember them, with the characters living "happily ever after."

The second act, however, delves into the consequences of the characters' actions in their tales, as they try to keep "happily ever after" going. It's in that quest that they realize the consequences of their actions, as they all live interdependent of one another.

With such an intricate storyline, Mansfield said the most important task for each performer



Brynn Owen, Kevin Paley, Caroline Jackson and Henry Tobelman rehearse for YPCCA's upcoming performance of *Into the Woods*, a fairytale musical with a dark side.

is to "stay within the scene" and focus on what the story is trying to portray.

"If there's a little slip, it just looks like a bunch of people in costumes singing on stage," he said with a laugh.

Mansfield has embraced the challenge, though. "[The musical] is too much fun not to do," he admitted.

And the group has been rehearsing regularly to meet those challenges as the performance nears. The musical will be performed Friday, May 11, at 7 p.m., Saturday, May 12, at 2 p.m.

and 7 p.m., and Sunday, May 13, at 2 p.m., all at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St. YPCCA will also perform the following weekend at Cuginchaug High School in Durham on Friday, May 18, and Saturday, May 19, both at 7 p.m.

Tickets cost \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors and children under age 16. Tickets will be available at the door or on the organization's website, ypcca.org, where you can also find more information about the organization and the show.

\$25.16 Million Budget Heads to RHAM Voters Next Tuesday

by Geeta Schrayter

After months of crunching numbers, the RHAM Board of Education's proposed \$25.16 million budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year is heading to voters next Tuesday, May 8, in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – and school board chair Michael Turner said Wednesday he hopes it passes.

"What we have in there is pretty representative of what our needs are," he said.

The proposed budget is a 2.33 percent increase over current year spending, and includes a number of decision packages such as funding for oft-discussed lacrosse at a cost of \$40,550, a groundskeeper for the athletic fields for an additional \$43,152, and a five year lease-to-purchase program for band instruments, which will cost \$5,000 for each of the next five years.

Lacrosse has been a self-funded sport for the past three years, supported through tag sales, fundraising and a cost of \$300 per student athlete. However, at a March 26 Board of Education meeting, community members said the cost prevents students without the financial means to pay from participating in the program. Residents also said lacrosse has health benefits, and gives students an advantage when applying to colleges.

The proposed groundskeeper addition is also sports-related, as RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie explained at a March 19 meeting the position addresses "the needs of repairing our athletic fields for competition and practice."

Leslie noted there was one maintenance worker currently caring for the fields, and said "it simply is not enough." While there are five athletic fields at RHAM, each is used for multiple purposes, meaning they require additional maintenance. Some of the sports also call for unique field markings.

Leslie explained RHAM athletics have only seen an increase in both involvement and popularity, concluding "quite frankly one person isn't capable of preparing all of those fields all the

time" along with general field upkeep.

The band instruments were added because, as Marlborough resident Joan O'Connell expressed at the April 9 public hearing, many of the instruments "are very, very old and they're very expensive to fix."

"I think the program will be very worthwhile," she said at the meeting.

Another new addition in the proposed budget is a \$30,278 "Freshman Academy" program, which helps at-risk students transition to high school.

The largest drivers in the proposed 2012-13 budget are rising health insurance costs, as well as money for heating and fuel oil – which is capped in at \$3.01 per gallon – and bus fuel, which is listed at \$3.07 per gallon.

Heating oil is listed at \$265,329 – a \$40,959 increase over the current year – while transportation comes in at \$1,227,936 – a \$121,071 increase.

As for health insurance, it has also been a topic of significant discussion. The budget proposal lists it as increasing 17 percent, or \$338,478, over the current year. Although high, it was explained at an April 23 meeting with Region Eight's health insurance consultant that it could have been worse.

Steve May of Milliman, Inc. explained that in the claims projection his company put together, it was determined a reasonable renewal rate was 21 percent, but RHAM had already locked in an increase at 17 percent.

"It's a good deal even though it's a disgusting number that's recognized," May told the board last week.

The budget proposal also features an increase as a result of school choice. Vocational tuition was listed as rising \$12,984 while magnet school tuitions climb \$46,139. The total cost of the two for 2012-13 is \$338,488.

Lease/purchases, which include additional wireless access points in the two schools, will increase \$60,494, while Prof/Tech Services,

which includes additional software, is listed increasing \$44,684.

Additionally, funds for textbooks amount to a \$50,144 increase, while funds for other instructional supplies are increasing \$26,231.

If the budget doesn't pass, Turner explained it's these items – along with the "decision packages," which are the lacrosse, groundskeeper, band instruments and Freshman Academy additions detailed earlier – that would be reevaluated.

"First I would start looking at some of the decision packages," he said, adding, "then [the board would] probably try and go through the budget again and see what else we could try to shave a little money off of. You start looking at supplies, et cetera."

Decreases in the proposed budget include negotiations of the electrical rate, saving about \$68,000, and renegotiation of the 2004 bonds issued to pay for the building, bringing around \$150,000 worth of savings.

A decrease in special education tuition, due to fewer students being out-placed and others who have moved out of the district, caused more than \$252,000 in savings.

However, the budget features significant revenue losses as well, such as \$326,880 of federal Education Jobs money and around \$20,000 due to the technology offset Hebron will no longer be paying RHAM, as the town has decided to no longer use the regional school district's server network, and instead will use that of a different, yet-to-be-determined company. (This change is counted in the \$44,684 increase in Prof/Tech Services).

Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski had explained during the April 9 public hearing if the Jobs money hadn't been lost, the budget increase would only be .512 percent. "But 2.33 is what it is," he said.

"The budget's been pretty tight for the past few years," Turner said this week, "but we've been able to keep it down with some of the fed-

eral stimulus [Jobs] money – but now that's gone."

Contracts also impacted the budget number. Administrators will receive a 1.5 percent increase, or \$9,584, and the non-certified staff contract is still pending. Certified staff took a zero percent increase for the year.

An additional \$2,000 was requested for curriculum writing, due to alterations that will need to occur to meet the changing common core standards in the state, and \$62,166 for an additional special education teacher was also included to prevent some students from being placed out of district, thereby having an effect on special education costs.

Twelve thousand dollars is also included for an architectural study to examine changes the school was told they'd have to make to become Civil Rights-compliant, in order to potentially appeal the state findings or look for alternative solutions.

Based on the hometowns of the students attending the middle and high schools, Hebron will pay 54.74 percent of the RHAM budget, or \$13.77 million; Marlborough will pay 29.16 percent, or \$7.33 million; and Andover will pay 16.10 percent, or \$4.05 million.

A district budget meeting will be held Monday, May 7, at 6:30 p.m. in the RHAM High School chorus room and the referendum will be held the following day. But Turner noted it's hard to say which way the votes will go, since the budget meetings have been sparsely attended.

"It's hard to tell how people are feeling," he said. But, by the end of the day Tuesday, those feelings will be known.

Voting will take place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in all three towns. Polling locations are, in Andover, the Town Hall Community Room; in Hebron, Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St.; and in Marlborough, Marlborough Elementary School, 15 School Dr.

Marlborough School Board Looks to Lower Insurance Costs

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

In an effort to save money on health benefits, the Board of Education authorized the superintendent of schools to sign a contract with a new agent of record at its meeting last Thursday, April 26.

Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz was authorized to sign a contract with Lockton Companies to serve as the school's new agent of record, to consult on insurance policy. The services will cost \$48,000, a savings of \$27,000 over the previous agent.

Sklarz said a regional Insurance Advisory Committee, which has met monthly for at least a dozen years, has been represented by superintendents, first selectmen and budget managers in Marlborough, Hebron and Andover, to discuss health benefits and insurance.

Recently, the committee has been looking for ways to save, Sklarz said. "Things have been changing so rapidly and costs are going up so we've been looking at cost-saving measures," he said. "We've also been looking at if we should become self-insured or not self-insured."

Sklarz said the decision the committee came to was that it needs better guidance. "We really needed to go out and find a new agent of record to guide us through this process," he said.

"We've reached a certain point where we feel we need to have the expertise. So the subcommittee sent out a [request for proposal], we do have an agent of record and we've had one for many years, but we wanted one that had a broader scope."

After conducting interviews, the committee chose Lockton Companies as the new agent of record.

Board of Education Chairwoman Betty O'Brien said she had been attending the Insurance Advisory Committee meetings and supported the choice. "They seem like they have an excellent reputation with all the school systems they worked with," she said.

* * *

The board also authorized Sklarz, pursuant to state statute, to notify in writing three non-tenured teachers that their employment contracts will not be renewed after the 2011-12 school year due to budget cuts. One of the teachers was on a one-year assignment and another was a kindergarten teacher, Sklarz said.

Sklarz and Marlborough Elementary School Principal Scott Nierendorf met with each of the three teachers in-person before sending out the

letters.

"It is a formality; in no way is this a reflection of performance," Sklarz said. "It's just to make sure the people are notified before May 1 that their contracts will not be renewed."

The teachers were the three most recent hires, so they were simply chosen by the school's "last one in, first one out" policy, Board of Education member Louise Concodello said.

During a preliminary discussion of proposed policy revisions Tuesday, Board of Education member Karen Tyler asked about parent and volunteer security checks. The policy requires personnel to go through a certified security check, including fingerprinting. Tyler pointed out that parents and volunteers are not mentioned anywhere in the policy.

"Parents on a field trip in some districts need to get fingerprinted to go on a school field trip or if they come in the classroom. In some districts they do; in some they do not," she said. "Right now a parent going on a field trip or a volunteer does not need to get a security check."

Sklarz said the Policy Subcommittee considered that requirement. "I was assuming that we had gone through this and made the assump-

tion that what policy we had in place was working," he said. "And it is working."

Concodello said a teacher is usually present, but Board of Education member Mimi LaPoint said that is not always the case. "In a field trip, to a museum for example, they break you up into a group and a parent would be directly in charge of the kids," she said. "I know because I've been in that situation as a parent."

Board of Education member Carole Shea said the possibility of requiring parents and volunteers to go through a security check can be discussed as a separate issue at a later date.

Also Tuesday, school board vice chair Ruth Kelly discussed a change in the superintendent's evaluation process that would allow board members to share their feedback with the superintendent either signed or anonymously.

Resident Cliff Denniss pointed out the potential issue with allowing board members to sign their evaluation.

"You have nine board members. If eight sign and one doesn't, it's not anonymous," he said. "It's your process, you can do what you want with it, but it may not work the way you want it to."

Marlborough Church Holds Fast to Raise Money for Starving Children

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

Seven young adults from Fellowship Community Church went without food for 30 hours last weekend, to benefit starving children worldwide.

The seven put down their forks Friday afternoon and broke the fast around 5:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The fundraiser benefited World Vision, an organization supporting impoverished global villages.

Wendy Worley, who coordinated the event at the church, said she learned about the event in March when she got a flier in the mail from World Vision, giving them only a month to collect for the cause.

The 30-hour famine was a nationwide event held April 27-28, in which an estimated 150,000 teens from across the country participated, according to World Vision. Worley said 86 percent of the funds raised go to those in need.

The Marlborough group, ranging in age from 13 to 21, raised \$1,060.50 over the last month to donate to the organization. The group collected donations from family and friends, and sisters Morgan and Emma Begin even went door-to-door in their neighborhood asking for donations.

Morgan Begin said many people were happy to help. "Even if it was a few dollars or if they were really generous, we were really excited because everything helps," Begin said.

Sarah Waterhouse said she had a friend who donated 50 cents, but when just \$30 can help feed a child for a month, every bit counts.

"Sometimes that one meal for that child can end up keeping them alive for another day," Begin said.

The group was in good spirits even after going 30 hours with nothing but water.

"I think the main reason we did it was just to have the feeling of waking up hungry and going to bed hungry and how tired you get and how much water you actually have to drink to stay hydrated," Waterhouse said.

While most of the participants spent Friday night at the church, Colin Lovely, the oldest of the group, had to work an eight-hour overnight shift on an empty stomach.

"It was not as bad as I thought, actually," he said. "I just kind of kept busy and kept my mind off the work and my stomach so I figured that

must be what they do over here."

The volunteers didn't eat a large meal before the fast because they said it would be harder to do on a full stomach.

They finally broke the fast Saturday evening by eating a food called REVIVE. The sweet, dough-like substance made with peanut butter, powdered sugar, vegetable oil and powdered milk is fed to those who have been starving so long their bodies cannot handle a full meal. The group actually enjoyed the blend.

"I could eat it forever," Waterhouse said.

The mixture is one of two recipes provided by World Vision, the other being a "cornmeal blend mush," Worley said.

"Their stomachs can't digest normal foods so in order to keep them from getting sick they gradually give them small meals that have high protein but not a ton of fat," Worley said. "If you eat too much after starving for so long you can actually die because your digestive system has not been working for so long. You go from this [REVIVE] to soft foods then increase it."

Rob Earhart, who raised \$375 for the event, would have qualified to apply for a trip to a third-world country through World Vision, but at 13 years old he missed the eligible age range of 14-21 by a year. This year's trip is to Zambia.

Worley said the goal for next year is for at least a few, if not all, volunteers age 14 and above to raise enough money to apply and maybe get to go on one of the trips. "It's not a vacation; it's not a missionary trip," she said. "It's going to learn and have the villagers teach you what kind of life they live."

Begin said she hopes everyone can raise enough money to apply for the trip, but more importantly she hopes the group can raise more next year.

"My sister and I ended up raising the money together," she said. "Even though we weren't able to come up with \$360 a piece, it's still great what [donations] you can get because even a few dollars can help give at least one meal to a child."

Worley said Colchester Federated Church participated in the event as well, and said next year she'll try to reach out to other churches in the area to try to get a larger group. The teens said they hope to get others in the Marlborough



Coordinator Wendy Worley led teens on a charity fast last weekend. Pictured from left are, back row, Worley, Sara Turner, David Verizzi, Rob Earhart, Colin Lovely; front row, Emma Begin, Morgan Begin, Sarah Waterhouse and parent Andrew Begin.

community involved as well, including friends of theirs who donated to the cause and showed interest in participating next year.

To pass the time before they broke their fast, the group members played games simulating issues that people in third-world countries face, such as malaria and finding clean drinking water.

"We did an activity with a five-gallon jug of water and they had to go to each different water source in here with a little Dixie cup or a coffee cup or a ladle," Worley said. "I had them answer a question accurately and if they answered it then they got a bottle so they would be able to fill up more and it just goes to show how the distance that these people have to walk

to get the water and then sometimes the water isn't great. There's feces in it from animals, so they end up bringing home water that has bacteria in it."

They also spent over three hours spreading mulch outside the church, as the World Vision fast calls for participants to partake in a community service project.

They got a look into the lives of the people they raised money for by watching a half-hour film showing the hardships children in third-world countries face.

"It was eye-opening and really informative, because now we know what's really going on over there," Begin said.

Hunniford Leaving Marlborough Public Works for Ledyard

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

After accepting the resignation of the town's public works supervisor, the Board of Selectmen discussed the process of finding a replacement for the position at Tuesday's meeting.

The selectmen accepted, "with regret," the resignation of Public Works Supervisor Dean Hunniford, who provided a letter indicating that his final day would be May 3. Gaudinski said Hunniford accepted a position in Ledyard, which is "a larger town with a little more responsibility and a larger work crew."

"I wish him well though I am regretting that he is leaving us," she said.

Hunniford's letter stated he felt fortunate to have been associated with Marlborough for the past seven years. "My experiences and training have been invaluable and I leave with many good memories," the letter read.

Gaudinski said the town is working on a transition plan while the position is vacant, with Grounds and Building Maintenance Foreman Chris Corsa picking up some of the additional duties until the completion of the hiring process.

Selectman Michael Gut questioned whether the town needed to fill the position, but Gaudinski said there is a need for someone with "intense road experience" to supervise the department.

Gaudinski said she has contacted other towns to compare job descriptions for the position and to get information regarding the interview process.

"In the past, this was done as a panel and people from outside the town were brought in that were in those positions to do interviewing," she said.

In accordance with the department's union contract, Gaudinski said, the position needs to first be posted internally for 10 days.

"This position is heavily-involved with the road reconstruction and working with the contracts and surveying to know about all the engineering part of it," she said. "So if there's someone interested down in public works, they can apply."

* * *

In a "housekeeping" matter, the board accepted the resignation of Water Pollution Control Authority member William LaPoint. Gaudinski said the town clerk received a copy of LaPoint's resignation letter, effective Feb. 13, but the board had not received the letter. LaPoint served on the WPCA for six years.

"I think I'll have to do that one with regret too, because he put in a lot of time during a very difficult set of issues," selectman Dick Shea said.

The board also accepted the resignation of WPCA alternate Steve Tourillotte, whose work schedule conflicted with meetings.

Also Tuesday, the selectmen authorized Gaudinski to sign the 2012 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant application resolution.

The grant would fund a housing rehabilitation program to improve the homes of residents meeting certain income requirements. The improvements would make the homes more code-compliant by covering the costs of electrical upgrades, windows, roofs, furnaces, septic systems and wells. It would also cover the costs of modifications to accommodate disabled homeowners.

At its Feb. 21 meeting, the board chose Larry Wagener to administer the grant.

Gaudinski said Tuesday she was surprised at the amount of paperwork the grant application required.

The selectmen voted to scrap an out-of-service public works dump truck and senior center van. The dump truck is not serviceable or roadworthy and has been replaced by one purchased this year, Gaudinski said. A Massachusetts company will give the town \$1,900 for the truck.

Gaudinski said the van has a rusted frame

and has not been operable since last spring. It will be scrapped by M & J of Colchester, and Gaudinski said she is unsure of the funds the town will receive.

Shea said both vehicles were in "tough shape, with no opportunity to sell them for more than the metal involved."

The board also approved recommendations from Parks and Recreation Chairwoman Barbara Lazzari and Parks and Recreation Seasonal Directors Brian Aiola and Ashley Kitchens for the director and assistant director positions of Netto Summer Camp.

Katie Sullivan will be the director of the camp and Melissa Kaika will be assistant director, replacing Darrell Netto, who is retiring.

Both Sullivan and Kaika have worked with the camp before and Shea said the town is fortunate to have people with experience taking over the positions.

The board also discussed the May 14 town meeting on the \$21.579 million 2012-13 fiscal year budget, which includes the town operations budget, the RHAM budget and the Marlborough Elementary School budget. Gaudinski said she doesn't know what to expect.

"It's been quiet," she said. "Hopefully we'll see if the public will support the budget."

East Hampton Budget Referendum Set for Tuesday

by **Joshua Anusewicz**

After over a month of deliberations, residents will be asked to vote for the proposed 2012-13 town budget on Tuesday, May 8. Voting will take place at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St., in the gymnasium, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

The overall budget sits at \$38.69 million, a \$930,439, or 2.46 percent, increase from current year spending. According to Interim Town Manager and Finance Director Jeff Jylkka, the expected mill rate is 26.28, an increase of 0.6 mills, or 2.34 percent, from the current fiscal year.

Between the Board of Finance and the Town Council, the Board of Education budget has seen \$300,000 cut from its original proposal; the proposed education budget now sits at \$26.94 million, down from the \$27.24 million that was originally proposed. The total increase in the proposed education budget from the current fiscal year is \$726,338, or 2.77 percent.

Board of Finance Chairman Matthew Walton said Wednesday the entire budget process went "very well" and that cooperation from members of the finance board and the Town Council was key.

"Every board member gave a little and took

a little," Walton said.

One of the highlights of the budget that was discussed at length during deliberations was the inclusion of a new town engineer position. While originally included as a full year position by former Interim Town Manager John Weichsel for \$109,000, the Board of Finance ultimately decided to fund the position for a half of a year, leaving the decision to keep the position up to a newly-hired town manager. (The announcement of the new town manager is expected in the next 7-10 days, pending that individual's acceptance of the position.)

The reason for adding the town engineer would be to reduce the total of contracted engineering services in the budget by having the engineering done in-house. Over the past seven years, the town has paid an average of \$195,411 in engineering fees per year. This position would be used to assist in upcoming projects throughout the town, including an overhaul of most of the town's roads.

Elected officials on the finance board and the council were both split on its inclusion; some felt the position would save money in the long run, while others questioned whether it was necessary now, particularly during a time that

residents can't afford higher taxes. The ultimate result was the compromise of a half-year position.

Despite a sizeable increase, the education budget has been described as "lean," with no changes to staff, supplies or technology. But one major downfall for this proposed budget is the decrease in funding and grant money from the state and federal levels, which has provided the district with additional dollars for staff and programs over the past few years.

The board has also seen considerable savings from negotiated teacher salary concessions over the past few years, but that will end this year, with 62 percent of the certified teachers receiving a 3 percent increase. (In the proposed budget, certified teacher salaries make up 50 percent of the total number.)

Walton said he was confident the budget would pass, and added that all members of the finance board have done their best to get the word out about the referendum. He also warned that a failed referendum would have serious consequences for the town.

"If we cut any more, the people of East Hampton are really going to be hurt," Walton said, adding that the Board of Education, which

has seen substantial reductions to its budget proposals in past years, has "been cut enough," and that any other cuts might come from town operations.

Town Council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub said Thursday she believes the town has presented a "solid budget," but said she was disappointed that more residents didn't share their opinions during deliberations, particularly on the education budget.

"I wish we had received more feedback," said Weintraub. "I hope it's because they believe and trust that we are doing our job."

Weintraub also threw her support behind the town engineer position, stating that the position would end up saving the town roughly \$72,000 a year for engineering services. She added that she hopes for a "strong turnout" for the referendum in hopes that it will pass, echoing Walton's sentiments that a failed referendum might hurt the town.

"We don't want to reduce our town services or education much more," she said.

The entire proposed budget and a guide to the budget prepared by the Board of Finance can be found on the front page of the town's website, easthamptonct.org.

Hebron Problem-Solving Students Headed to Indiana

by **Geeta Schrayter**

Being a successful problem solver can take you places – and for four Hebron Elementary students, it's taking them to Bloomington, IN, to compete in an international conference.

From June 7-10, sixth-graders Katie Beard, Isabelle Goode, Maya Paprocki and Ashley Young will take part in the conference after winning first place at the state competition with Future Problem Solvers.

Future Problem Solving Program International Inc. "stimulates critical and creative thinking skills, encourages students to develop a vision for the future, and prepares students for leadership roles," according to the program's website.

Kate Maupin, challenge and enrichment teacher at Hebron Elementary School, explained over the course of the past year, 20 sixth-graders split into four teams had been learning and practicing the Future Problem Solvers process.

The teams would meet once a week to discuss various issues and work on practice booklets, she explained.

"A booklet is a two-hour competition in which students are presented with a 'future scene' that creates a hypothetical future, in which a current problem has escalated or evolved," she said, adding the students looked at issues such as human rights, coral reef damage and trade barriers.

During the booklet competition, the students have two hours to solve the problem using the six-step Future Problem Solvers process, which includes: identifying 16 problems from the future scene, choosing one as an underlying problem, creating 16 solutions to the problem, developing five criteria to judge their solutions and writing a detailed action plan on their best solution.

Three of the four teams from HES qualified for the state competition at the end of March and each team placed.

Maupin, who met with the students each week to teach them the process, said what set the winning team apart was how well they worked together.

"These four girls are self-starters," she said. "Each of them had a specialty; one is the 'solutions' expert, another the brainstormer for the booklet, et cetera."

Maupin added that the research the girls did to prepare for the state topic of trade barriers was very thorough.

"They had to complete the two hour booklet at the state competition with the other teams that qualified, and they received the highest overall score for their creation," she said.

Maupin attended the state competition with the teams and will join them in Indiana as well, where they'll work through a booklet on the topic of pharmaceuticals. However, she said,

no coaches are allowed with the students while they're working on the booklet. But at that point, "they know what they're doing," said Maupin, adding she was very excited.

"When they called the girls' names at the award ceremony, I can honestly say they were more composed than the parents and I were," she said. "This is my fourth year coaching [Future Problem Solvers], and although we've attended the state conference every year, this is our first win in this division," she said.

On Wednesday, Hebron Elementary School Principal Amy Campbell said she was excited as well.

"My goodness, we're just so proud of them, knowing how challenging the competition was," she said, "and very excited that they have the opportunity to travel and meet students from all over the world, and hopefully do their very, very best there."

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz shared similar feelings, saying this week she was "immensely proud" and expressing awe over the students' ability to work together and solve the issue.

"Can you even imagine four 11-year-olds in a room for two hours by themselves tackling a problem and coming up with just, such a sophisticated solution and questions?" she asked rhetorically. "I think that just doesn't 'happen.' Here in Hebron Public Schools we try to pro-

mote those kinds of dialogs in classrooms - that kind of in depth thinking - the critical thinking skills that kind of contributed to their capabilities to sit down and come out with such a competitive piece of work," she said.

Cruz continued on to praise not just the students, but everyone else involved as well.

"I think it's a tribute not just to Kate Maupin," Cruz said, "but the teachers and support staff that have guided and encouraged this kind of creative problem solving [and] 21st century skills."

Cruz said Hebron Elementary School has been an active participant in Future Problem Solvers for the past seven years, and there's a case at the school filled with trophies from the program.

And while, of course, the hope is the four students attending the June conference will bring back another trophy for all their hard work, Campbell stressed there's no pressure for the team to take first place. Rather, she said, the school is "just excited that they have the opportunity."

Along with the winning team, Ian Holm, Caleb Yerke, Luke Slater and Alex Breinan won third place at the state competition, while Alexandra Heline, Kate Grabowski, Joshua Desjardins and Harrison Oatman won fifth place.

\$34.28 Million Budget to be Voted on Next Week in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

Months of work by various departments preparing the 2012-13 budget have finally dwindled down, and the proposed \$34.28 million spending package will head before voters at a referendum next Tuesday, May 8.

The budget proposal is an increase of \$195,698, or .57 percent, over current year spending. However, due to last October's Grand List dropping almost 13 percent, the budget features a proposed mill rate of 34.32, a 13.40 percent increase over the current rate. The mill rate will be set by June 15, providing a budget has been approved by then.

The overall budget includes a general government spending plan of \$8.50 million, a 4.79 percent decrease over the current year, due mainly to a debt service reduction of about \$680,000.

The budget also includes the \$12.01 million for the local Board of Education, and \$12.40 million for Hebron's portion of the proposed RHAM schools budget for 2012-13. (A full story about the RHAM budget appears in this issue.)

The local Board of Education budget is a 1.85 percent increase over the current year. The largest increases are due to a loss of \$179,000 in Educational Jobs funding, along with a \$265,000 increase in health insurance costs and a \$210,148 increase as a result of contractual raises. The major increases amount to \$651,148, while major budget offsets equal \$346,610.

Offsets include the elimination of five teaching positions saving \$279,610, use of the solar roof saving \$15,000 and reconfiguring the administrative structure for \$52,000 savings. The decision was made to only have a special education director three days a week, with the other

two days being covered by Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz.

The budget also includes the expansion of all-day kindergarten. Although a failed attempt was made two years ago to include the initiative in the 2010-11 budget, Cruz said at past school board meetings the scene has changed since then. She mentioned at the Jan. 26 meeting that declining enrollment, combined with the retirement package that was offered and taken advantage of by eight teachers in the school system, allowed for more flexibility "and the opportunity to move things around and accommodate the reduction in class sizes but also support an all-day initiative."

The budget includes five full-time kindergarten teachers. If all-day kindergarten were not expanded and there were six half-day kindergarten classes instead, the budget would reduce by \$41,000 as a result of the reduction of an additional teacher.

Cruz explained that would be the only savings, though, as there would be no need for additional classroom space, supplies, support personnel or furniture if all-day kindergarten were expanded.

The general government budget includes \$6,465,592 in government expenditures — \$121,324 more than the current year — as well as a \$100,000 contribution to Open Space/Land acquisition, a contribution to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in the amount of \$644,084, a \$61,053 contribution for capital projects costing \$5-25,000, a \$50,000 contribution for revaluation, and a \$10,687 contribution to re-fund non-recurring projects.

Board of Finance Chairman Michael Hazel explained at the April 12 public hearing funds

for capital improvement were up 2.79 percent over the current year to make up for CIP being flat-funded for many years.

It was also explained the contributions to fund smaller capital projects, non-recurring projects and revaluation were just new ways of looking at the items, as they'd previously fallen under the overall CIP budget umbrella.

The total cost of the new capital initiatives is \$122,000.

Additionally, there are two new budget initiatives included totaling \$27,000: changing the fire marshal position to a full time emergency management director at a cost of \$9,697 and hiring an economic development coordinator for 16 hours per week at a cost of \$17,903.

Hazel said he didn't think it was an unreasonable request since it was important to attract businesses to town.

The total amount that will need to be raised by taxes in 2012-13 is \$25,912,903, and it was stressed at the public hearing the aspect of the proposed budget that would be the "most shocking" to residents is the impact of revaluation.

As a result of the October 2011 revaluation the grand list dropped \$99,588,090. Due to this, the proposed mill rate, which will be set by June 15 assuming a budget has been approved, is 34.32, a 13.40 percent increase over the current 30.26 mill rate.

Hazel said at the April 12 hearing tax increases, if revaluation had not occurred, would be "less than a tank of gas" in many cases, but under the new assessment, some homes would see increases in the hundreds, if not more.

"It's not a spending issue [in this year's budget]," Hazel said. "It's what we're required by

law to do" to redistribute the tax burden.

On Wednesday, Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt stressed the budget was only climbing .57 percent, and said the boards try to do the best they can from what they've heard from the people.

If the budget doesn't pass, he said the board would likely go back and "open the whole thing all over again."

"Anything from CIP to what you do for parks and recreation, the library, emergency management — all those things we spent a lot of time on, we'll probably have to visit all of them," he said.

Watt also said that now what was most important was that residents came out to vote so their feelings would be known.

"The important thing is people now have the opportunity to vote and state their choice on the finances of the town and send a clear message to us," he said, adding the boards were elected volunteers who are supposed to represent the residents in town.

"We're definitely looking for feedback. I'm imploring the people of the town to come out and vote," Watt continued, saying it would only take 15 minutes to "tell us if we're going in the right direction. We need their feedback, need their vote; it's the only way we'll know."

Voting will take place Tuesday, May 8, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St. Residents will have the opportunity to vote on the town government budget, which includes the local Board of Education budget as one item, while CIP spending and the RHAM Board of Education budget will each be separate votes.

'Bargains' Make Their Way to Main Street in Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

Gary Bailey might be one of the only people in Portland who isn't bothered by the traffic caused by construction on the Arrigoni Bridge. As a matter of fact, he recalls choosing the spot for his new store just because of its prime location on Main Street.

"We drove by and I said, 'That would make a great consignment shop,'" Bailey said.

And so it came to pass that on April 1, he opened Bailey's Bargains at 204 Main St., directly at the intersection of routes 17 and 66. The store is in the former location of the Tierney Brothers liquor store, but the space has been stripped, renovated, and repaired into a clean, modern space that holds hidden treasures for any shopper.

Bailey, a native of East Hampton, doesn't quite call the store a consignment shop, however. While he does purchase some new and used goods from interested residents, he is more adept at visiting auctions or purchasing goods on his own to fill his shop. So when he left his job at a printing shop in Glastonbury, he decided to throw his "eggs in one basket" and give the store a try.

Attending various auctions, Bailey found that he had a knack for buying various goods and being able to sell them for a good profit. These items began to fill a storage unit in East Hampton and even overflowed into his home, much to the chagrin of its other occupants. So the idea to open the store — his first foray into business — was born.

Bailey signed the lease for the space right around Christmas of last year and began the hard work of renovating the space, which he said had substantial wear and tear and had to be brought up to code. The store now shines like a new penny, with updated carpeting, walls,

and lighting; the store even smells new.

When the store opened in April, Bailey said the response was overwhelming.

"We sold enough on our first day to pay our rent for the month," he said proudly.

The great response has continued, Bailey said, as he sees a regular flow of traffic into his shop from "people of all walks of life." Particularly during the day, he said, he sees seniors dropping in, most from the neighboring Quarry Heights housing complex, to see what he has to offer. Bailey said that one thing many are looking for are small kitchen tables with two chairs, which fit perfectly into the modest units of the complex.

"Any time I see those at the auctions, if they're in good shape and reasonably priced, I'll grab them," he said. And that's not uncommon; Bailey said some shoppers will come in looking for a particular item, and if he doesn't have it, he can usually find it.

Another aspect of Bailey's Bargains that is unique is the ever-changing merchandise. Bailey said he visits the auctions about once a week, which means if you dropped in every Wednesday, you'd see a whole new range of items to choose from. While most of the items now are various types of furniture — tables, chairs, dressers — the store also offers a litany of other items to sift through.

The opening of Bailey's Bargains adds another fresh, new storefront to the development of Main Street, which has seen multiple new businesses open in the past year. The development of the area has become a focal point of many elected and appointed officials in town; Bailey particularly pointed out Mary Dickerson, the town's economic development consultant, as she provided various promotional tools and opportunities to help publicize his business.



Main Street welcomed another new business last month when Bailey's Bargains opened at the intersection of route 17 and 66. Owner Gary Bailey says the shop offers a range of items that he is able to purchase from auctions, private sellers or consignment.

The other businesses in the area have also been welcoming, Bailey said. Owners and employees of other companies on the street have stopped in to welcome Bailey and wish him luck, and some have even been interested in purchasing some of his items. "They've been very welcoming," he said.

Bailey said he hopes the great response continues, and believes the business could grow someday into a larger space or a second location. But, for now, he plans to capitalize on his prime location and heavy traffic, hoping that passersby will see just what "bargains" his shop has in store.

Second Public Hearing Scheduled for Blight Ordinance in Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

After receiving feedback from the public and going over the draft with a fine-toothed comb, the Board of Selectmen will send the proposed blight ordinance to a second public hearing prior to its next regular meeting on Wednesday, May 16.

A public hearing for a proposed citation hearing ordinance, however, was pushed back by the selectmen after some concerns that the draft might not follow the state statute as intended.

The public hearing for the proposed blight ordinance was first scheduled to be set after a selectmen's meeting on April 18, but at the time, the board chose to make changes based on recommendations from the public to clarify certain aspects of the draft. This included what properties could be considered blight, definitions of certain types of blight, which town official would receive complaints and enforce the ordinance, and who would oversee the citation hearings.

With these changes reflected in a new proposal, the board was prepared to send the ordinance to an additional public hearing, which will be held on May 16 at 7 p.m. at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

At its meeting on Wednesday, most of the board's discussion on the matter focused on the

proposed citation hearing ordinance, which was pulled directly from the state statutes on citation hearings. At its previous meeting, the board felt that the language in the statute was too confusing and should be clarified, although adopting the statute does not allow for any changes.

Recently, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield sought the legal advice of the town's attorney, Jean D'Aquila, who did make changes to the proposed ordinance to clarify the language. While the new draft made the ordinance seem, in selectman Carl Chudzik's words, "more user-friendly," selectman Brian Flood was unsure if changing the language was the right thing to do.

"My belief is the town should adopt the statute," Flood said. "It looks like [D'Aquila] said changes could be made. I'm not sure I necessarily agree with that. I'd like a better clarification of why she says it's alright to change it."

The selectmen agreed the proposed citation ordinance was not ready for a public hearing and chose to hold the decision until further clarification was given from D'Aquila.

Also at Wednesday's meeting, the board unanimously approved a grant application that could provide up to \$500,000 to the town for

upgrades at the senior center.

The money would be provided by a state Small Cities Community Block Grant, which is disbursed through the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. The town applied for and received \$700,000 for the same grant last year, which went to an overhaul of the fire alarm system and kitchens at the Quarry Heights public housing complex on Main Street.

According to grant writer Steve Ball, the funding from this grant would be for much-needed repairs at the Portland Senior Center, which would include a new roof, a generator, repaving of the parking lot, stair railings, and possible upgrades of the furnace and kitchen.

Ball said all of these projects would be completed if the funding allows for it. He also stated that if the funding was provided, the projects would be sent out for bid by the town and that any construction would not begin for over a year.

On the topic of new items, on Wednesday the town was also the recipient of a donation from the Red Thread, a dealership in East Hartford that provides new and used office equipment for towns in need.

A representative from Red Thread, Richard Fantoli, was present at the meeting to announce that Portland would be receiving 14 lateral files, 10 wardrobe cabinets, one bookcase, one five-drawer lateral file and one mobile storage cabinet for Portland Town Hall and Portland Public Schools.

According to Fantoli, a Portland resident, the items were ordered by another town but were the wrong color, so he set them aside to donate to his town. He said that he had seen other items donated to towns throughout the state, but felt that he should give something back to his town.

"This where it all starts," said Fantoli, who added that he has two children currently in the school system. "I wanted to do anything I could for the town."

The selectmen, who seemed shocked by the offer, quickly accepted the donation and provided Fantoli with a certificate of appreciation from the town and a round of applause.

"Thank you so much for this generous contribution, which was voluntarily done," Bransfield said to Fantoli.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. at Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

Andover Residents Balk at Blight Ordinance

by Geeta Schrayter

While the low turnout at many of the Andover town meetings could leave the few residents in attendance to wonder, along with officials, if the majority of town is apathetic, the public hearing and special town meeting on April 26 suggested otherwise.

Residents were lined up outside the entrance waiting to sign in, and many were left standing around the room as each seat was filled, prompting First Selectman Bob Burbank to apologize for the lack of chairs.

"We did not anticipate this turnout," he said.

The crowd showed up to discuss and vote on two issues – extending the tax abatement for the Hop River Homes and a proposed blight ordinance – and residents had quite a bit to say regarding the latter.

Sue England, chairwoman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, explained the purpose of the ordinance was to "preserve and protect the property values in Andover and ensure the safety of residents in the town."

She said the PZC had been receiving complaints from businesses and land owners for many years regarding certain properties in a state of disrepair, but "unfortunately, the town has very few options to address the situation aside from going to court."

England said that if a neighbor were to pile tires, washing machines and other junk items in their yard, and then refused to get rid of them once they were asked by the zoning enforcement officer, "nothing can be done."

"Blight is recognized as a statewide issue," she said, noting the general assembly passed legislation allowing municipalities to enact ordinances to address the issue.

The majority of towns in the state already have such an ordinance, said England, and enacting one "gives the town an additional tool to deal with issues of blight."

The Planning and Zoning Commission worked on the ordinance for over a year, she continued. Various ordinances already in effect around the state were collected and reviewed, from which the blight ordinance in Griswold was selected and revised to make it suitable for Andover. The proposed ordinance would have charged a property owner \$50 per day for each instance of blight on his or her property.

England added the commission had "attempted to be appropriate" in how the issue was approached, and worked to balance "the rights of the land owner versus the responsibilities of the land owner" along with providing an appeals process and taking into consideration the rights of neighbors.

"While blight is not an extensive problem in town, it is if you live next to a blighted property," said England.

But many in attendance felt the ordinance

was unnecessary and unwarranted.

Joseph Remesch, who said he's been a resident of the town for over 50 years, felt there was nothing wrong with the way things are currently run.

"I see no problem with the way it is now. The people, it seems to me, who would want this are people who want to sell their properties to leave town," he said. "Why would I want values up? Taxes go up!"

He added the ordinance meant there was the potential for abuse "big-time" by people "inflicting their views on neighbors."

"I see no reason to change it," he said.

Dave Pfanstiehl had a problem with the ordinance as well.

"This isn't Hartford, this isn't Bridgeport," he said, adding Andover didn't have factories and old buildings.

"There's no need for this ordinance," he said. "It gives the town too much power."

Pfanstiehl mentioned the economy as another reason to forego the ordinance, saying some people in town were "down on their luck," forced out of retirement, and "doing all they can to feed their family [and] pay their taxes." He said forcing someone to get a dumpster to care for an issue of blight when they can barely afford food is "outrageous."

Pfanstiehl's wife Suzette, whose family has been in town since her grandfather came over from Austria, also commented on the fact Andover wasn't a city – or even a larger town such as Griswold. She wondered how it was that Griswold's ordinance became the template for the town's.

"We are not Griswold, not Glastonbury, not any of those towns. We are a small rural farm town – I can't [imagine] driving through and not seeing a tractor in a field or something. That's not blight; that's who we are," she said. "I beg you not to do this."

However, Bill Desrosiers said "I think people get a little carried away."

He added the ordinance gave a clear definition of what blight was – "it's not a tractor in a field; it's piled-up junk" – and said he doesn't think anyone would be harassed.

Additionally, he said, his support of the ordinance had nothing to do with selling his home and "making a buck" as was suggested.

"I want to live in a nice neighborhood [and] live in a nice house," he said.

But apart from Desrosiers, commission members and some of the selectmen, residents continued to voice their disapproval.

One resident mentioned he'd recently moved to Andover from a similar small town in California.

"We enforced [a blight ordinance] there, he

said, and "it turned into the Gestapo – it got really bad. Please folks, don't do this."

After the public hearing came to a close and the town meeting began, more residents spoke regarding the ordinance, some seeking clarification on things such as the number of complaints the town has received in the past year regarding blight and who would enforce the complaints.

England said there had been three complaints and of those, one had been resolved, one had not, and the property of another had been sold.

"We're frustrated because we have situations that get people really pissed off and we don't have any effective way to deal with them currently," said PZC member Eric Anderson. "No one likes more regulations. The problem is we have a problem and we have situations we are just powerless to do anything about. We're not talking about going around harassing the majority of citizens in this town."

Anderson added that it wasn't being suggested the ordinance would be the first approach to solve a blight issue, but rather "a last resort," if the town's requests to property owners to clean up the blight went unheeded.

Additionally, the town's zoning enforcement officer would also act as the blight enforcement officer. As a paid position, it was pointed out the officer could be let go if he handled the ordinances incorrectly or abused his power. But that fact seemed to be little consolation to residents who were still concerned about the amount of power it would grant the town and a single individual.

"I realize today our Board of Selectmen and town zoning official are rainbows and ponies and we all love each other," said resident Ken Mosher, "but we're giving someone power in the future... what we pass today is going to last forever. It's better not to give the power in the first place."

After everyone who wished to speak had the opportunity to do so, a motion was made to determine whether to adopt the proposed ordinance.

After the votes were cast and tallied, selectman Jay Linddy, who was elected to moderate the meeting, thanked the PZC and everyone who came to vote.

The commission has been "elected to do their job and this is what they thought as important," he said. "They brought it to the people and the bottom line is the people have spoken."

The motion was defeated 62 to 28, to applause by many of the residents in attendance.

The issue of the tax abatement for the Hop River Homes generated significantly less discussion.

Maria Tulman, spokeswoman from the non-profit Eastern Connecticut Housing Organization, Inc. (formerly the New Samaritan Housing Corporation, Inc.), was present to explain the situation with the homes.

In the 1970s, she said, a group of residents in town saw there was a need for affordable elderly housing. They worked to solve the issue and the result was the Hop River Homes, which opened in February 1981, offering 24 apartments to low-income elderly residents.

Since its inception, tax abatement has been in place that was renewable every five years, Tulman explained. The abatement was for \$10,000 up until 2007, when it was increased to the current \$12,000.

"Last year we came before the town to ask for the abatement and it was granted [but] unfortunately the minutes of the meeting did not reflect the five year term," she said, "so we have to come before the voters again."

Granting the abatement, Tulman added, "has a big impact on the functioning of our facility."

Michael Aller, a representative with Hop River Homes, explained if the tax abatement were not approved, the tax rate would be just short of \$24,000 per year and would raise taxes about \$620 per year for each family.

Tulman added the rent would go up about \$47 per unit per month. She also stated some of the units are U.S. Department of Home and Urban Development (HUD) subsidies "so certain residents would be assisted" if there were an increase.

But Vivian Slater, a resident of one of the homes, stood and asked the public to remember many of the individuals living in Hop River have a fixed income.

"All of us there are on social security and that may be the only income for some – some have a pension but we're on a fixed income," she said. "What I'm paying now through HUD – if we had to add \$45-50 per month in rent, that's going to put me over \$600 a month and I have enough trouble making ends meet now."

Of the 24 units, Tulman said close to 90 percent are occupied by either former Andover residents or individuals who have family in Andover or neighboring towns.

"To the best of my knowledge there are seven who lived in Andover themselves, seven with adult children in Andover and another seven with children in Coventry, Manchester or nearby towns," Tulman said.

After Linddy stated the topic had been "exhausted with some great questions," residents were asked to vote whether or not to continue providing the \$12,000 tax abatement for the Hop River Homes, good for five years.

The motion passed 66 to 30.

Colchester Residents Form PAC to Oppose Town Budget

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A group of residents have formed a political action committee to urge residents to vote against the budget on the May 8 referendum.

The Fiscal Conservatives are advocating against the budget's spending increases. The overall \$51.06 million budget shows a 1.12 percent increase from the current fiscal year. While the town operations budget showed a 3.87 percent decrease, largely due to debt service, the education budget would increase 2.84 percent if the budget passes.

Joyce Maine, a Republican belonging to the group, said there is no official "count" of members of the committee, but Republican Merja Lehtinen registered the Fiscal Conservatives as a political action committee with the town clerk in order to put out releases opposing the budget.

In a press release, Lehtinen stated she opposed the 3.78 mill increase the proposed budget includes, which would bring it from the current year's 25.85 to 29.63. She added the "budget does not take into consideration the community's ability to pay."

Maine said budget spending has increased consistently for the last six years and the group isn't trying to target one particular area of the budget – they just think there is too much spending overall.

"I'd like to see a little more control overall

in spending," she said. "We definitely are trying to get the budget sent back. People are very concerned about the [revaluation] and with such a high increase in the mill rate. Your house value may have gone down but you're still paying more in taxes."

Democrat Tearice Peters said it's not the right time to be looking at large expenditures, such as bonding items. Included in the referendum are three bonding items: \$3.2 million for road repair, \$1.125 million for two new fire apparatus and \$615,000 for the acquisition of 75-acre Slembeck Farm.

"We're digging ourselves in a bad situation," Peters said, adding it would only get worse in the 10 years to come by having to make payments on the bonding items. "[Town officials] have to look down the line."

Peters said most people have "tightened their belts" and the town should do the same by "fiscally-prioritizing."

"They can't give in to everybody, they can't please everybody and the town needs to be able to say 'no,'" she said.

One of the problems is a lack of participation by residents, Peters said.

"In the town meetings, only a handful of what I call 'true residents' were there. A lot of the other ones that were there were special interest groups, town employees and elected officials,"

she said. "Their sentiment is 'Why show up? My voice is never heard.'"

"When I'm in the grocery stores and I'm talking to elderly people on fixed incomes, they come from a time period where they pay their bills upfront, and they're struggling," she said. "We need to reign in spending."

Peters took issue with the proposed land acquisition bond.

"Our town shouldn't be in the agricultural business. It's failing and the town's holding an expense to the town," she added. "That could save teachers' jobs...or could have paid for the third-shift police officer. We have crime in our town and you can stick your head in a hole and hide from it but there is."

Maine said she doesn't support some of the bonding items, either.

"I think it's good that we're trying to hold on to some of the farmlands and I'm supportive of that," she said. "I personally feel that we can find money for that [without resorting to bonds]."

She also questioned the road maintenance bond. "We put \$2 million into the roads last year," she said. "Well, where's the money for that?"

Maine said the Board of Education should always be trying to negotiate with unions, which

she said the board did not do this year.

"That was not good and we didn't know that until about a week ago [at the town budget meeting] when people started asking questions," she said.

Peters agreed that the board should have tried to negotiate, but said their responsibility is to "make sure our educational system adheres to state rules and regulations. They really aren't adherent to whether the taxpayer can afford it or not, however it would be nice if they could try a little bit."

Peters was concerned with forcing a heavy education budget on an aging population.

"They really needed to go back to the union and get better deals. In general, if they have to cancel some more programs and, it's sad to say, I don't like to see layoffs but as a business sense companies don't keep people around that they don't need," she said. "There's probably a lot of other things they could touch on. Bring back pay-to-play [at the schools]. Unfortunately, you can't get everything."

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said he had never heard of the new group.

"It's just curious that no one from the organization [Fiscal Conservatives] spoke out at any of the meetings or identified themselves," he said. "I'd be happy to speak with them."

Andover Selectmen Discuss Blight, Failed Charter Changes

by **Geeta Schrayter**

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday reviewed the April 26 public hearing and town meeting held for the blight ordinance and tax abatement.

While – as a story about the public hearing on the adjacent page indicates – residents at the hearing were largely opposed to the blight ordinance, during public comment at Wednesday's selectmen's meeting, some residents said they felt the ordinance might pass, if it were altered to deal with abandoned properties.

Resident Morgan Steele said there was an abandoned property on his road that was dangerous and needed to be addressed. He mentioned while the town's building official had looked into the issue and a few changes had been made as a result, there were still broken windows and other dangerous aspects.

Steele inquired as to whether there was anything the selectmen could do to deal with the problem, but members explained there wasn't.

"That's what we were trying to do [with the ordinance]," said selectwoman Elaine Buchardt.

Resident Wally Barton said he felt the ordinance might have passed if it were written differently.

"I think if it was written better it would have passed," he said. "There were too many questions that weren't spelled out" and "an awful lot of grey areas."

But First Selectman Bob Burbank explained the Planning and Zoning Commission had tried to follow state guidelines which were "fairly strict."

In regards to dealing with abandoned properties, he added in the past, the board has attempted to contact the bank, mortgage company or escrow company responsible for different abandoned properties in town, but received no response.

"It's frustrating," he said.

Selectwoman Julia Haverl said she felt a le-

gal opinion should be sought on the matter and the best way to try and deal with the issue moving forward.

Selectman Jay Linddy then suggested Haverl, who is also the liaison with the PZC, bring the idea up at their next meeting.

Also Wednesday, selectmen reviewed the charter revision process and the referendum that took place on March 13, where 720 residents turned out and shot down the proposed changes.

At the referendum, voters were asked three questions: whether they wanted to move town elections from May to November, whether the selectmen should be able to enact, amend or repeal ordinances, and a broader approval of the other changes within the charter including streamlining the language and putting it in plainer English.

Each question was soundly rejected. Five hundred and forty-six voted against changing the election date, while 685 voted against allowing the selectmen to deal directly with ordinances and 640 voted against the additional revisions.

Although there was some discussion at Wednesday's meeting about trying again, Buchardt said she felt the residents had spoken and simply didn't want the changes that were being asked for.

"We didn't ask for many changes," she said, "but the changes that were asked for were rejected."

"We even took out the most controversial changes," added Burbank, "but [residents] shut it down."

Linddy said he felt more time should have been spent educating the public, and Buchardt agreed.

All of the signs that were placed around town said "no," she explained, and nothing else, Buchardt said.

"People just did what the sign said," she said.

Going forward, if another attempt was made to alter the charter, Linddy added the only thing to do would be to educate residents. Additionally, he said, it might make sense to contact the state senate about changing legislature which says only one-third of the members on a charter revision commission can have other town involvements.

"We should somehow let the state know how difficult the process is," he said.

Burbank felt similarly, and said the town should ask for an exemption. He also added the charter revision process had been "fairly expensive," costing taxpayers almost \$4,000 between legal fees, printing notices and the referendum.

No decisions were made as to whether or not another attempt would be made to alter the town charter in the future, and the selectmen seemed in no hurry to repeat the process.

"It hurts to think about," said Buchardt.

Also at the meeting, the selectmen moved to allow Burbank to enter into an agreement with Lockton Companies, LLC to act as insurance broker for the region.

Linddy explained the region had been with the same firm for the past five years. As a result, the insurance advisory committee, which is made up of representatives from each board of education and board of selectmen in the Region Eight towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – as well as a financial representative, decided to send out a request for proposal from other firms.

Seven were received, from which the pool was narrowed down to five, then to two firms, who were each interviewed.

"To make a long story short, [Lockton] had more services available," said Burbank.

Lockton was selected for a three-year brokerage fee of \$48,000 shared by the three towns. Similar motions have already been approved by

the boards of education in the Region Eight towns along with RHAM, as well as the boards of selectmen in Hebron and Marlborough, making the Andover Board of Selectmen the last to approve the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

The board also moved to allow a group of volunteers to raise funds for a cannon to be purchased and placed in Veterans Monument Park.

Burbank explained he had held off on approving the motion previously because he wanted to advertise the fact this could happen in case there was opposition to the addition of a cannon.

However, he said, "there wasn't anyone opposing," so he "feels comfortable now and can move forward."

The motion passed unanimously.

The board went into executive session at the end of the meeting, after which the selectmen unanimously decided to appoint Roberta Dougherty as assistant assessor in replace of Emma Soussa, who took a position as Hebron's assistant assessor.

Linddy said Thursday there were 38 applicants for the position, which were narrowed down to three – all of whom, coincidentally, ended up being Andover residents.

Linddy went on to say it had been a difficult decision, since, they were all great candidates.

Dougherty was chosen for "her experience and her character," he said, "but I can say the same thing about [all of] the final three."

Dougherty will work fulltime, 34 hours per week, for \$29,260.69 per year.

The next Board of Selectmen's meeting will be held Wednesday, June 6, at 7 p.m., in the Town Hall Community Room.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Watching CNN on a Saturday night is rarely something that will generate belly laughs, but an exception was made last weekend, when the annual White House Correspondents' Dinner was held in Washington, DC.

This is a yearly gala, wherein various members of the DC-covering media get to have dinner with the President of the United States, various government officials, and a few Hollywood-types too, such as George Clooney. (Much was made about the presence of Lindsay Lohan and Kim Kardashian at the dinner, saying that the presence of the longtime tabloid queens cheapened the affair, but less attention was paid to the fact both were invited guests of the Fox News Network. I suspect Fox News knew exactly what it was doing, and exactly the reaction Lohan and Kardashian would draw – and I also suspect they wouldn't have dared invite the two had it been McCain at the dais and not Obama.)

The dinner is typically a pretty light event, and the keynote speaker is usually a popular comedian. But before the comedian speaks, the president gets a chance – and just as he did last year, Obama proved highly entertaining.

Look, I've made no secret of my support for Obama over the years. But I think even his opponents would have to agree he's a charming guy. He gives a great speech, has a good sense of humor, and his skin is thick enough that he isn't afraid to laugh at himself every now and again.

Here's an example from last Saturday's speech. Now, as you may have noticed, "Dog-gate" (as Keith Olbermann has labeled it) has commanded a surprising amount of attention in recent weeks. The Democrats started it by lambasting Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney for, on a car trip in the early '80s, strapping his dog's carrier – with the dog inside – atop his car for a road trip from Boston to Ontario. (By the way, am I the only one who thinks this sounds like it should be a scene out of *National Lampoon's Vacation*? I wonder if Romney drove a Family Truckster.)

The Republicans responded by noting that Obama, in his autobiography, wrote that, as a 9-year-old child living in Indonesia, his Islamic stepfather fed him dog meat on occasion. (Personally, comparing what Obama was fed by his father when he was 9 years old with what a fully grown Romney did – albeit 30 years ago – seems a bit like apples and oranges, but then this whole thing has gotten a little silly anyway.)

Obama last Saturday sent up the ridiculousness of it all, making a couple self-deprecating references to it, the funniest being when he said Sarah Palin's recent guest-hosting stint on *Today* "reminds me of an old saying: What's the difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull? A pit bull is delicious."

Other comedic highlights from Obama's speech:

— He noted that, four years ago, he was in a bitter battle with Hillary Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination. But now, he said, "she can't stop drunk texting me from Cartagena," referring to photos that surfaced last month of the secretary of state having a beer and dancing while in Colombia for the Summit of the Americas.

— More self-deprecating humor: "Now, some have said I blame too many problems on my predecessor, but let's not forget that's a practice that was initiated by George W. Bush."

— Obama also said he wanted to thank all the members of Congress, "who took a break from their exhausting schedule of not passing any laws to be here tonight."

— Obama said he wasn't going to campaign during his speech – but still couldn't resist a few barbs at Romney. Among them was when he noted the dinner was being held in the "vast, magnificent Hilton ballroom" – and then added, "or as Mitt Romney calls it, a little fixer-upper."

— Another comment Obama made about Romney also featured a jab at himself, and his less-than-ideal approval ratings. Obama said he and Romney "both think of our wives as our better halves, and polls show, to an alarmingly insulting extent, the American people agree."

— Obama also took a swipe at the *Huffington Post*, which, as he noted, recently won a Pulitzer Prize. "You deserve it, Arianna," Obama said. "There's no one else out there linking to the kinds of hard-hitting journalism that *HuffPo* is linking to every single day."

— Obama ended his speech with a reference to the infamous Secret Service prostitution scandal. He said he had a lot more material prepared, "but I have to get the Secret Service home in time for their new curfew."

Obama was followed up by Kimmel, who gave a fairly hit-and-miss speech (although it hit more often than not) that, as good comedians often do, managed to attack both sides of the political aisle. He said to Obama near the beginning of his speech, "Hey Mr. President, do you remember when the country rallied around you in hopes for a better tomorrow? That was hilarious."

Later, Kimmel said, Obama wanted to move this year's dinner to the Kennedy Center, "and the Republicans wanted to keep it at the Hilton. So, they compromised and here we are at the Hilton."

A couple remarks made me laugh out loud, such as when Kimmel said, "If you told me when I was a kid I would be standing on a dais with President Barack Obama, I would have said, 'The president's name is Barack Obama?'"

Another came when Kimmel referenced the obesity epidemic in America, saying that it's even affected the way people protest. "We used to march," he said. "Now we occupy."

Some of Kimmel's jokes were real groaners, though, and were surprisingly juvenile considering the leader of the free world was sitting three chairs away. There were multiple fat jokes about New Jersey governor Chris Christie, and Kimmel also managed to make fun of Benjamin Netanyahu's last name – which was something I didn't even know people did anymore. (I mean, really, hasn't the novelty of his name worn off by now?)

Yes, Obama's speech proved to be the better of the two last Saturday night. He made me laugh early and often. There are videos of his remarks all over the web; I'd recommend seeking one out and watching it.

* * *

See you next week.

Budgets, Bonding Questions Head to Colchester Voters Next Week

by Katelyn Kelleher

Colchester's town and education budgets, as well as three bonding items, will each be decided on in a referendum Tuesday, May 8.

Residents will be able to vote on the items from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

The overall \$51.06 million 2012-13 fiscal year budget is a 1.12 percent increase from current year spending. The proposal also calls for the mill rate to climb 3.78 mills, or 14.62 percent, from 25.85 to 29.63.

The \$13.15 million town operations budget is a 3.87 decrease from the current year and includes an additional \$50,047 in the road maintenance budget and \$26,000 for a part-time network technician.

The \$37.88 million education budget is a 2.84 percent increase, largely due to a \$845,502 spike in health insurance costs and the loss of \$550,000 in funding for state mandates. The budget eliminates a total of 12.7 positions and

three school programs: marine studies program Project Oceanology, non-mandated summer school for at-risk students, and the enrichment program at William J. Johnston Middle School to identify gifted students.

In addition to the town and school budget questions, residents will vote separately on three bonding items, including \$3.2 million for road repair as part of a plan to bring the roads back to an appropriate condition level, \$1.125 million for two new fire apparatus to replace older vehicles at Colchester Hayward Fire Department, and \$615,000 for the acquisition of 75-acre Slembeck Farm in the town's "agricultural corridor."

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said he is hopeful each of the five items will pass.

"I think we've done a lot of good work between all the boards and had a lot of input from the public on the budget," he said. "I think we've put forth a reasonable budget."

Hebron Man Killed in Boat Crash

by Geeta Schrayter

A Hebron man died after the boat he was traveling in on Mashapaug Pond in Union crashed on Saturday, April 21.

Richard Franas Jr., 40, was traveling with Michael Antol of Middletown when, at around 11 p.m., the boat they were in "crashed into rocks and trees along the shore," according to an April 26 press release from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

Both individuals were then taken to Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford. Antol, who DEEP representative Dennis Schaine

said was believed to be the operator, was treated for minor injuries and released later that night. However, Franas was transferred to St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, due to the extent of his injuries. He was pronounced dead on Wednesday, April 25.

Schaine said Tuesday the investigation into the accident "is still underway." He mentioned DEEP's Environmental Conservation Police investigates all boating accidents, and they're looking into the incident, along with state police.

Colchester Police News

4/25: Charles Jamal Wilson, 22, of 14 Spruce St., Willimantic, was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

4/28: Nicholas Romano, 22, of 71 Briarwood Dr., was charged with third-degree assault, criminal mischief and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

4/29: Michelle Rodrigue, 44, of 143 Norwich Ave., was charged with DUI and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, State Police said.

4/29: Jamison Cole, 36, of 52 Balaban Rd. Apt. 310, was charged with breach of peace and violating a protective order, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

4/26: Russell Mara, 23, of 390 Leonard Bridge Rd., Lebanon, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

4/28: Tricia O'Reilly, 41, of 269 Jones St., Amston, was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

4/29: Michael Majewski, 18, of 54 Alton St., Manchester, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

4/15: John Russell Forbes IV, 25, who police had no certain address for, was arrested for third-degree larceny, East Hampton Police said.

4/20: Michael Poe, 37, of 88 Main St., Apt. 1, was arrested for sixth-degree larceny, police said.

4/21: Dorothy Montoni, 57, of 445 N. Brooksvale Rd., Cheshire, was arrested for fifth-degree larceny, police said.

4/22: James Zimmerman, 50, of 50 Leffert Rd., Trumbull, was arrested for sixth-degree larceny, third-degree burglary and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

Marlborough Police News

4/27: David O'Keefe, 23, of 5 Riverview Circle, was charged with reckless driving, State Police said.

Obituaries

Amston

Richard Joseph Franas Jr.

Richard Joseph Franas Jr., 40, of Amston, passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, April 25, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Born in Bridgeport Nov. 23, 1971, he was a son of Richard and Andrea (Dembowski) Franas of Webster, MA.



He married Stacey Dabkowski in August of 2001. The couple made their home in Amston where they lived with their two daughters, Elisabeth and Madalyn.

Rich was a self-employed entrepreneur who graduated from Eastern Connecticut State University with a degree in Business Administration. He was vice president of Rollcorp and owner of Franas Associates. He was an active member of the Westerly Yacht Club. His greatest love was spending time with his family enjoying nature, boating, fishing and ATV riding among other things. Rich, talented in technology and mechanics, was a man who loved helping others with anything. Most of all, he was a devoted family man and friend who gave generously of himself to all.

Rich will be sadly missed by all who knew him. In addition to his beloved wife, children and parents, he leaves a brother, Jeffrey and his wife Heather of New Market, NH; in-laws, Robert and Conni Dabkowski of Estero, FL; Robert Dabkowski and his wife Nicole of E. Granby, Steven and his wife Bonnie Dabkowski of Westerly, RI; grandmothers, Anna Franas and Eleanor Dembowski; nine nieces and nephews; and numerous extended family and friends.

Friends attended calling hours Friday, April 27, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Celebration of the funeral liturgy was held Saturday, April 28, directly at St. Andrew Church. The burial followed privately with the family in the River Bend Cemetery in Westerly, RI.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to benefit his children at P.O. Box 373 Hebron, CT 06248.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with Arrangements. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Elaine T. Slopak

Elaine T. Slopak, 80, of Colchester, passed away at her home Friday, April 27, after an extended illness. Born in New Haven, CT on September 2, 1931, she was the daughter of the late Ben and Lillian (Supportin) Cohen.

She married Leo Slopak Nov. 4, 1951, at Ahavath Achim Synagogue. The couple shared 45 years together, raising their family in Colchester. The Slopak family was well known for their family grocery store known formerly as Ben and Leo's Supermarket from 1957 until 1981. Leo predeceased her Sept. 29, 1997.

After their retirement from the store, Elaine worked as a para teacher at Jack Jackter Intermediate School. She has been an active member of Congregation Ahavath Achim and she loved to read. Most importantly, she will be remembered fondly as a loving and devoted mother and grandmother.

She will be sadly missed by all who knew her, especially her son, Robert Slopak and his wife, Jean DellaValle of Swansea, MA; four grandchildren, Joshua, Philip, Kathryn and Daniel; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by a son, Steven Slopak.

A graveside funeral service was held Sunday, April 29, at Ahavath Achim Cemetery on Tater Hill Road in Colchester.

Donations in her memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 106 Franklin Commons, Route 32, Franklin, CT 06254-1800.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with arrangements. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

James A. Sullivan Sr.

James A. Sullivan Sr., 91, formerly of 33 Waverly Ave. Ext., Portland, husband of the late Catherine (Otfinoski) Sullivan for 55 years, passed away Saturday, April 28, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation, surrounded by his children. He was the son of the late James and Mary (Teevan) Sullivan.

Born July 27, 1920, in Middletown, he was a Portland resident for most of his life. He worked for Pratt & Whitney for 38 years, retiring in 1977 as the divisional superintendent at the Middletown plant where he received many achievement awards. He was also a U.S. Coast Guard veteran having served during World War II.

He was a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Middletown, the American Legion, the Portland Fish and Game Club, he coached baseball and midget football in Portland and he was a member of the Church of St. Mary in Portland. He loved spending time with his family at his cottage on Jobs Pond in Portland.

He leaves his sons, James A. Sullivan Jr. and his wife, Maraide of John's Island, SC, and John P. Sullivan of Middletown; daughters, Catherine Rau of Portland, Mary Rand and her husband Earl of East Wallingford, VT, Patricia Lehman and her husband Robert of Portland, Ellen Nolan and her husband Christopher of Portland and Margaret DeLucia and her husband Anthony of Glastonbury; daughter-in-law, Lisa Sullivan of Portland; 17 grandchildren, Daniel Sullivan, Katherine Sullivan, Dimitry James Sullivan, Amy Rau Binezewski, Christopher L. Rau, William M. Rau, Emily M. Rand, Nathan Rand, Michele D. Lehman, Kelley A. Lehman, Kristen M. Nolan, Julie C. Nolan, Brandon Sullivan, Michael Sullivan, Anthony Andrew DeLucia, Catherine Alexandra DeLucia, Margaret Madeline DeLucia; and nine great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his sons, Joseph, Michael J. and Dr. Thomas J. Sullivan; a son-in-law, Christopher L. Rau; and a sister, Anna M. Sullivan.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, May 2, from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., with a Mass at 11 a.m., at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Tuesday, May 1, at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to the Church of St. Mary 51 Freestone Ave Portland, CT. 06480.

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

Marlborough

Albert Frank Karrenberg

Albert Frank Karrenberg, born Jan. 17, 1925, in New York, NY, passed away peacefully at Marlborough Health Care Center Friday, April 20.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife Catherine, of 36 years, and three brothers Charles, Frederick, and Paul Karrenberg.

He is survived by his son, Gregory Pace of North Arlington, NJ; two grandsons, Christian and Lucien, also of New Jersey; his brother and sister-in-law, Walter and Anna Karrenberg Sr. of Colchester; and his sister-in law, Anne Karrenberg of Melbourne, FL. He was also loved and will be missed by his many nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews, great-great nieces, and great-great nephews. His family is eternally grateful for the time they were able to spend with him upon his move to Connecticut six years ago.

After graduating from high school, Albert enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he proudly served on the USS Maryland in the Pacific Theater during WWII, following in the footsteps of his four older brothers who also served in the United States military. After being honorably discharged in 1946, he began a long career in the banking industry.

Albert was a member of the Knights of Columbus and VFW. He was an avid Yankees fan, and enjoyed watching games with his friend and roommate Roger. Albert's family would like to acknowledge the wonderful care he received from Merci, Roseanne, Linda and the many other caring staff members at the Marlborough Health Care Center.

A private service to honor his life will be held at St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough. Burial will be at the family's convenience.

Colchester

Helene M. Swider

Helene M. "Pat" (Wasniewski) Swider, 82, of East Hartford, loving wife of 60 years of Frank A. Swider, died peacefully Wednesday, April 25, at her home, after a long and courageous struggle with cancer. Born in Colchester Jan. 8, 1930, a daughter of the late Frank and Julia (Kuchinski) Wasniewski, she had resided in East Hartford for the past 60 years.

Pat and Frank were the most devoted couple, an example to their children and grandchildren. Pat graduated from Bacon Academy in Colchester, Class of 1948 and in 1951 from Hartford Hospital School of Nursing and was the Operating Room Supervisor at Hartford Hospital for several years until she raised her children. She remained educated about and proud of her nursing background, even as she took over the secretarial and bookkeeping roles for the family business, "Television Service Corporation" in East Hartford, until her retirement.

She cherished their summers at Amston Lake, quiet times fishing and exploring with their children and then grandchildren. She was a gardener and excelled at starting seeds and raised seedlings and plants for family gardens, both vegetables and flowers. Though she was debilitated for years following her first fight with cancer, she kept her mind sharp by reading, crossword puzzles, watching news programs and rooting for her beloved Red Sox.

Pat is survived by her husband Frank, who had remained by her side, always devoted and caring; three daughters, Beth Sullivan and her husband, Jim, of Stonington, Pat McLarney and her husband, Tom, of South Glastonbury, Chris Jackson and her husband, Ray, of Stafford Springs. She was a devoted, proud and loving grandmother to Megan Sullivan Young and her husband, Nick, Emily Sullivan and her fiancé, John Biederka, Katie McLarney, Jim McLarney and his fiancée, Sarah Kane who was very special to them, Sarah Higley, Melissa Higley, Jenna Higley, and Christine Jackson. She also leaves a brother, Ira Wasniewski and his wife, Nan who was a true sister to her, of Colchester, a sister, Phil Mikolajcik of Norwich; many nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

Besides her parents she was predeceased by her siblings, Irene Wasniewski, Clara Dubiel, Florence Bystrowski, Stella Gostkiewicz, Ceil Schaffhauser, Fan Fidrych, George Wasniewski and John Wasniewski.

Private funeral services and burial will be held at the convenience of the family. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Helene's name may be made to the Arthritis Foundation, 35 Cold Spring Rd., Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

Helene's family would like to extend their sincere gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Robert Siegal for many years of care, VNA Hope and Hospice Program, several wonderful caregivers, most especially Maria D. for her devotion to the family.

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

Portland

Albert S. Mosca

Albert S. Mosca, 77, passed away peacefully Thursday, April 26, at Hartford Hospital, surrounded by his family. Albert was born in Portland on Jan. 18, 1935, to Salvatore and Nellie Mosca.

He graduated from Portland High School and served in the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Naval Reserves. He was a self-employed architect for many years. He was a loving husband, devoted father, a talented designer and an avid sports fan. He loved to cook, eat, entertain and laugh heartily and that spirit will be greatly missed.

Besides his wife Claudia, he is survived by his children, Carolyn Hawk of Cromwell and William Mosca of York, NY; as well as his grandchildren, Kurt Dralle and Olivia Hawk, both of Cromwell. He is also survived by his siblings Madeline Footit of Middletown, Joseph Mosca of Clinton, Salvatore Mosca of Higganum, Mary Lou Gilbert of Middletown and James of Middletown; also, many sisters and brothers-in-law; cousins; nephews and nieces.

He was predeceased by a brother, John Mosca.

Family friends gathered with his family Monday, April 30, at the D'Angelo Funeral Home, 22 South Main St. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, May 1, at St. Francis Church, Elm Street, Middletown. Burial was in the State Veterans Cemetery, Bow Lane, Middletown.

Portland

Frances M. Zabicki

Frances M. Zabicki, 94, of Portland, wife of the late Harry J. Zabicki, passed away Tuesday, May 1, at home. She was the daughter of the late John H. and Mary (Sokolowski) Dawicki.

Born Jan. 6, 1918, in New Britain, she lived in Portland for most of her life. She worked for Fafnir Bearing Co. in New Britain for 31 years until her retirement. She was a member of the Church of St. Mary in Portland, the Altar Society of the church and she centered her life around her loving family.

She leaves her children, Gail Bogdan of Portland, Sandra Wardwell of East Hartford, Patricia McCane of Middletown, Geraldine Jacobson of Portland, Marsha Dowling and her husband Philip of Middletown and Jerome Zabicki and his wife Terry of Portland; 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; three nieces, especially Mary Keating; and two nephews.

She was predeceased by a brother, Henry Dawicki, a sister, Jeannette Donnellan and a great-grandson, Cody McCane Cartwright.

Funeral services will be held today, May 4, at 10 a.m., from the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday, May 3, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave Portland, CT 06480, or to the Sisters of Mercy, 20 Taylor Dr., Portland, CT 06480.

To send an online expression, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

East Hampton

Marjorie Way

Marjorie (Larson) Way, 86, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully with family at her bedside Monday, April 30.

Marjorie was predeceased by her husband of 64 years, Burt Way, as well as her sister, Olive Granstrand, and her brother, Raymond Larson. She is survived by her sister, Phyllis Tribuzio, her brother, Burt Larson, and sister-in-law, Bunny Larson.

Margie also leaves her three loving children and their spouses, Ann and Dick Parsons, Lynn and Marty Podskoch and Greg and Sallie Way. "Grammy/GG" will be greatly missed by her ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Friends and family wishing to pay tribute to her memory are invited to the Ways' home at 13 West Dr. Saturday, May 5, from 2-4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to East Hampton Ambulance Service at P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

Colchester

Margaret M. Noon

Margaret M. Noon, 66, of Maple Drive, Colchester, formerly of Norwich, died Tuesday, May 1. On Aug. 8, 1945, she was born in Omaha, NE, the daughter of Mary (Riley) McKirahan of Norwich and the late Lyman McKirahan.

Margaret worked as a secretary at the Bishop Flanagan Ministry Center in Uncasville for many years, having retired in 1998 due to her illness. She was the loving wife of Robert B. Noon for 47 years. They met while attending business school together and were married May 22, 1965, at the Cathedral of St. Patrick in Norwich.

In addition to her husband and mother, she is survived by a daughter, Kathleen Belcamino and husband James of Colchester; son, Robert R. Noon and wife Cynthia of Charlotte, NC; five grandchildren, Addison and Mia Belcamino and Meghan, Ryan and Amanda Noon; and her brother, Lyman McKirahan of Norwich.

The funeral assembled today, May 4, at 8 a.m., at the Woyasz & Son Funeral Home, 141 Central Ave, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 9 a.m. at St. Mary Church. Burial followed at St. Joseph Cemetery. Calling hours were held Thursday, May 3, at the funeral home.

Donations in her memory may be made to the American Diabetes Association, 2080 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.



Hebron

Elizabeth Dent

Elizabeth Dent, 85, of Hebron, passed away Saturday evening, April 28, at Mapleview Health Care Center in Rocky Hill. Born Oct. 3, 1926, in Littleton, NH, she was a daughter of the late Roland and Stephanie (Gagnon) Brooks.

Elizabeth married Joseph Dent Feb. 22, 1946, at St. Michael's Church in Hartford. The couple shared 64 years of marriage together before he predeceased her Dec. 12, 2010.

Elizabeth retired several years ago after having worked as a pharmaceutical assistant at Arthur Drug Store in Hartford. She later worked as the superintendent of Falcon Ridge Apartments in Manchester for over 14 years. Elizabeth had an avid love of horses, singing and reading. Most importantly, she will be remembered as a loving and devoted wife, mother and grandmother.

She will be sadly missed by her daughter, Victoria MacDonald of Hebron; two grandsons, Kyle MacDonald of Vernon, Seth Morabito of California; and many extended family and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by two daughters, Leslee Morabito and Carol Dreselly.

Calling hours were held Thursday, May 3, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A graveside funeral service will be held today, May 4, at 10 a.m., at St. Peter's Cemetery, 30 Church St., (Route 85), Hebron, with Fr. Michael Smith officiating.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Rider Relief Fund, 101 West Riverwalk, Pueblo, CO 81003.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

John H. Sorensen

John H. Sorensen of Montville died Sunday, April 22, at Harrington Court in Colchester. He was born March 8, 1923, in Brooklyn, NY, the son of John M. Sorensen and Ida S. (Tellefson) Sorensen.

John was a veteran of the Air Force, serving during World War II and the Korean War. He retired from Pfizer in 1988, where he was employed in the research and safety department. John was a captain of the Mohegan Ambulance and was a life member of the Mohegan Fire Department in Montville. For 30 years, he was an EMT instructor and helped develop the EMS system in Connecticut. He was also a member of the VFW and American Legion.

Mr. Sorensen was the widower of Patricia White Sorensen.

He is survived by his daughter, Gayle Passan and her husband Kenneth of Colchester; his grandsons, Mike Caplet and his wife Jen, Tim Caplet and his wife Chrissy; and his great-granddaughter, Ella Caplet.

In addition to his wife, he was predeceased by his son, Eric Sorensen, and his sister, Muriel Oberst.

The family would like to extend their deepest thanks to his many friends at Harrington Court for their compassion and love towards Pop. Their kindness will never be forgotten. The family would also like to thank Hospice Vitas for their heartfelt care and guidance.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, April 25, at Fulton-Theroux Funeral Home, 181 Ocean Ave., New London. Burial with military honors followed in Cedar Grove Cemetery, New London. Calling hours were held Tuesday, April 24, at the funeral home.

To sign the online guestbook, visit fultontherouxnewlondon.com.

Marlborough

Mineola Giles

Mineola "Minnie" Giles, 97, mother of Elizabeth McCann, died Monday, April 23, at the Marlborough Healthcare Center in Marlborough.

Mrs. Giles had been employed as a hotel maid prior to her retirement.

A funeral service was conducted Monday, April 30, at the Thomas L. Neilan and Sons Funeral Home, 12 Ocean Ave., New London, followed by burial in St. Mary Cemetery. There was a calling hour Monday morning before the service.

East Hampton

Josephine Strickland

Josephine Strickland, 92, of East Hampton, beloved wife of Herbert C. Strickland Sr., passed away peacefully Sunday, April 29, surrounded by her family. She was the daughter and second youngest of nine children of the late Andrew and Mary (Novak) Seckla. Born Oct. 19, 1919, in Moodus, she lived most of her life in East Hampton.

Josephine and Herbert married on July 24, 1937 and would have celebrated 75 years of marriage in July. Together, they built a life with love, hard work, steady habits and faith.

Prior to her retirement, she worked at Gong Bell Manufacturing and Chestelm Health Care. She was a lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary and Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. She was also a member of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton.

She was a devoted daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister and aunt. Her greatest joy and comfort was spending time with her family. Together with her husband and beloved dogs, Mitzi and Trixie, she enjoyed rides in Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut. She also enjoyed her numerous flower gardens. Gram, as she is affectionately known to her granddaughters and great-grandchildren, was always proud to talk about her family. She also loved animals. In addition to her dogs and cat Cuddles, she also spoiled her grand-dogs, Cal, Franklin, Lily, Duffy, Pugsley, Fred and Hobbes.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her only son and daughter-in-law, Herbert C. Strickland, Jr. and Elizabeth Strickland; two granddaughters, Kirsten M. Reilly and her husband, Robert and Maureen F. Strickland; and three great-grandchildren, Meghan, Ian and Sean Reilly. She is also survived by her sister, Frances Czaja, and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her parents and seven brothers and sisters.

Funeral services were held Thursday, May 3, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial followed in Lakeview Cemetery, East Hampton. Friends called at the funeral home Thursday before the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424, or to an animal charity of the donor's choice.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.