

RIVEREAST

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Last weekend's massive snowfall left the entire area blanketed in over 30 inches of snow, leaving local public works crews to clear roads, sidewalks and parking lots for hours at a time. While towns worked quickly to clear major routes, secondary roads, like Isinglass Hill Road in Portland, above, are still in rough shape. Crews have continued to work this week to widen roads and clear intersections throughout the area, one of the hardest hit in the state.

Historic Blizzard Cripples Area

by Joshua Anusewicz

Whether you called it Nemo, Charlotte or the Blizzard of 2013, there's one thing we can all agree on: that was a lot of snow.

With most towns throughout the state reporting well over 30 inches of snow, the blizzard that hit the area last weekend is one for the record books, and one that those who lived through it will talk about for decades to come. And for an area that has had more than its fair share of catastrophic storms in recent years, the *RiverEast* communities were unfortunately not spared, with close to 40 inches of snow falling in some spots, and the heavy snow and near-hurricane-force winds leading to whiteout conditions.

The fluffy white flakes that provided a picturesque scene as they were falling soon turned into hulking piles that covered cars and massive drifts that blocked doors and windows of homes, businesses, and schools. With that, the clean-up efforts began, with locals breaking out salt, shovels, and snow blowers, while town crews worked tirelessly to clear local roads, freeing residents for the first time in days.

The process of cleaning up the record snowfall took several days in places like Marlborough, where according to First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski, the blizzard dumped "anywhere from three to four feet" on the town. However, Gaudinski said that, thanks to the Public Works Department employees who worked 13-hour days over the weekend, the town's roads, schools and municipal parking

lots were cleared as of Monday morning.

Gaudinski said, fortunately, the town did not lose power. Maintaining power throughout the storm was a situation the first selectwoman admitted was "unusual for the town of Marlborough," as the town experienced a 100 percent power outage as a result of Hurricane Sandy last October.

The only minor setback during the town's clean-up happened on Monday. The town's skid steer vehicle, which is used to push heavy snow, was out of commission for a portion of the day due to a tire that needed to be replaced. However, additional equipment and same day replacement of the tire made it possible for the Public Works crew to work into Monday night.

While Gaudinski said the town's emergency operations center – which is located at Town Hall in the state of an emergency – did not need to be opened, she sent out telephone messages to residents on Friday afternoon updating them with town closings.

Marlborough Elementary School was closed on Friday and Monday, but resumed Tuesday at regular starting time. On Tuesday, Gaudinski said the town's priority was to concentrate on lessening the height of snow banks along intersections and to widen the roads.

Although Gaudinski was unsure of actual figures, she said the blizzard will impact the budget due to overtime hours, additional road treatment supplies and the replacement of the

See **Blizzard Page 2**

Baby Born in Ambulance During Blizzard

by Melissa Roberto

For most residents, the main objective during last Friday's blizzard was to stay off the roads and bundle up indoors – but Elizabeth Judy Ambrosia of Colchester had other ideas. She chose that moment to make her grand entrance into the world.

Elizabeth wound up being born at approximately 8:35 p.m., in an ambulance in the parking lot of Backus Hospital in Norwich.

While Elizabeth's parents, James and Donna, admit that their new daughter's arrival didn't exactly come at the best time – two weeks before her due date in the middle of a blizzard – they're thrilled to have a happy, healthy newborn daughter, born safely thanks to a responsive ambulance crew.

Though Elizabeth's arrival last Friday was a surprise, the couple had actually just been at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford – where the baby was supposed to be delivered – the day before, after Donna began experiencing contractions. They were sent home, though, because "nothing was progressing," she said.

But the next day, as the snow started to pick up into the late afternoon, so did Donna's contractions. The couple was informed by their

doctor via telephone to get to a hospital immediately.

"I was going to drive her to St. Francis in a pick-up truck, but I looked out the window," James said. "It was whiteout conditions."

With a statewide travel ban already in effect, the couple's only option was to call an ambulance in order to make it to the hospital. The call was placed at around 7:30 p.m. and, within 10 minutes, an ambulance sent from the Colchester Hayward Fire Department arrived to the Ambrosias' home on Crestview Drive.

The ambulance was then escorted to Route 2 by the help of a plow. Once on the highway, though, it was a different story.

"[There was] well over a foot of snow on Route 2, no plows had come by on the highway and we couldn't see 10 feet in front of us," said James. "We could not make out the road at all."

It took the ambulance 45 minutes before making it to Backus Hospital in Norwich, about three times the amount the route would take on a normal day, said James.

However, on the way to the hospital, Elizabeth was already coming out.

"She had a mind of her own," joked Donna of her daughter.

James said he was "very nervous" on the way to the hospital, not just because of Donna's situation, but also because the couple was forced to leave their other five children, ranging in age from nine to 14, at home during the storm.

"In the middle of the storm I had a lot of emotions going through my mind," said James.

After making it into the parking lot, Donna said Elizabeth was "pretty much" born.

A doctor and "about 10 other nurses" came out to the parking lot cheering, said James.

And while going into labor in a blizzard isn't exactly ideal, Donna said the sight of her newborn baby girl melted all of her stress and worry away.

"The ambulance ride, the snow, the pain – everything is just forgotten and doesn't matter anymore," she said.

The parents were appreciative of the help they received.

"I can't give enough praise to the Colchester Hayward Fire Department and the ambulance crew," said James. "Same thing goes for

Backus Hospital, they had outstanding service."

Deputy Fire Chief Don Lee also commended his department's timely response to the Ambrosias call. "This was during the height of the storm when we were getting that three to four inches per hour snow rate," he said. "They did a great job."

Lee said fire departments and hospitals "usually" see a spike in child birth during snowstorms due to "barometric pressure changes," or changes in the atmosphere. However, he admitted last weekend's rapid snowfall made it difficult to travel.

"I've got to give them a thumbs up," he said of the department's emergency medical technicians. "They're the best."

Due to snow-covered roads, the Ambrosias weren't able to arrive home with their new delivery until Sunday afternoon – and brought home a new nickname as well.

James and Donna had planned to call Elizabeth "Lizzie" for short. But due to her unique arrival, they've been referring to her as "Blizzie" instead.

"She kind of earned that nickname," said James with a laugh.

Blizzard cont. from Front Page

skid steer tire. Overall, Gaudinski was pleased with the public works crew for working “very hard” to keep the town safe.

And while police could not be reached to provide a specific reason for the crashes, the timing suggests snowfall may be behind a pair of car crashes that occurred within minutes of each other midday last Friday. Police said that, at approximately 11:11 a.m., a driver was traveling on Route 2 east in the area of exit 13 in Marlborough when the operator lost control of the vehicle going off of the right shoulder of the roadway, striking a tree. Minutes later, at 11:27 a.m., a two-car crash took place on route 2 west about a quarter-mile before the exit 12 entrance in Marlborough, police said. The crash was caused after one vehicle cut off another vehicle, causing both vehicles to crash and one to hit a guide rail.

Police said no one was hurt in either crash.

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In Hebron, Town Manager Andy Tierney said he was “very proud” of the Public Works Department for the way they handled the blizzard, which Tierney said was the worst he’s seen in his 27 years of involvement with public works. But through it all, town crews managed to keep up with the accumulation and ensure roads were passable.

“As of Sunday morning we didn’t have any roads that were blocked,” he said. “Pretty much by Saturday night we had the roads open; they were narrow but we could get emergency vehicles out.” Tierney acknowledged that wasn’t the case in some other towns, and said Hebron was “very fortunate.”

In order to help move all the snow out of the way, Tierney added area contractors with larger equipment had been called to assist in the efforts. And while it was too soon to have an exact cost, he said the additional help would inevitably drive up the budget.

“When this stuff comes we have to deal with it, and sure, this is going to shoot the budget, but we have to get it done for safety reasons,” he said.

On Monday, Public Works Director Kevin Kelly – who Tierney also said did a “fantastic job” – mirrored Tierney’s praise and commended the Public Works employees for their “extra effort.”

“The town of Hebron is lucky to have such dedicated men to plow their roads,” Kelly said. “It is challenging times like this when we see just how hard these men work in the most difficult conditions. They put in many continuous hours with minimal rest periods and still managed to keep our roads safe and passable.”

Kelly explained it would take a few days for the roads to be widened back to the curbs and mailboxes and improve the sightlines at intersections. He said if any residents sustained damage to their mailbox, contact the department and they’ll be repaired after the snow has been cleared.

In addition, Kelly asked the public not to push excess snow into the roadway as it causes safety issues and makes the department’s job more difficult due to the extra pass needed to clean it up. Kelly also asked that parents keep their children from playing in the snow banks on the side of the road, explaining the snow removal teams may not see them when they’re pushing back the piles.

“Let us try to keep everyone safe and hope that spring is just around the corner,” he said.

As a result of the weather, there was one reported car crash in town. On Friday, Feb. 8, at around 3:30 p.m., state police said a driver lost control of their vehicle as they were going down a hill in front of 398 Wall St. The vehicle struck a mailbox and a utility pole. Police said it was snowing at the time and the roadway was covered. No injuries were reported, but police said the operator was found at fault for the crash and issued an infraction for traveling too fast for conditions.

Due to the blizzard, Hebron schools were closed on Monday, a decision that was explained in a notice by Acting Superintendent of Schools Kathy Veronesi.

“The obvious conditions regarding the roadways and visibility are likely evident to you from being in town,” she said. In addition, drifting snow prevented all the doors of the schools from being opened and at the time, there were staff members whose roads had not yet been plowed.

After the doorways and walkways had been cleared on Monday, and the bus company gave Veronesi the go-ahead, schools reopened on Tuesday.

At the nearby RHAM middle and high schools, there was a similar scenario. Classes resumed as normal on Tuesday, but had been canceled Monday. In an update from the school’s

website, it was explained some of the doors had drifts in front of them as high as 10 feet, while drifts in some of the parking lots reached eight feet.

Blowing snow also caused eight- to 10-foot-high drifts on the roofs, which Superintendent Bob Siminski said Tuesday was an area of concern.

“We had to have shovelers on the roof to reduce the weight,” he said. “We started hearing about the weather forecast talking about rain and that made it more imperative [to remove the snow],” as there was concern over the building’s ability to support the weight.

In addition to RHAM’s own equipment, two large front-end loaders, a backhoe and a seven-foot snow blower were called in to help with the parking lots.

“We had some contractors in here that really helped us because when you look at the equipment we had, it’s designed to handle somewhere around a foot, or a foot and a half of snow, and this was so massive,” he said, calling the clean-up “truly a process.”

In order to clear the drifts from the doors, for instance, a backhoe had to go in first to take away some of the snow. The custodians then used snowblowers and shovels to remove what was left.

And of course, the extra help comes with an extra cost. “I figure probably \$50-60,000, so we’ll see when we get the bills,” said Siminski. “But obviously we had to do it just because we needed school to open.”

Siminski said he’d be taking a look to see where money could be reallocated for the costs, and due to the fact Gov. Dannel P. Malloy declared a state of emergency that was supported by the president, the expenses would be tracked for reimbursement by the government.

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For East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, who came to the town less than a year ago, last weekend’s blizzard was the second major weather event he’s had to handle. Having spent several years living in South Dakota, a place known for harsh winters with heavy snow and wind, Maniscalco said he was ready for this one.

“If you can survive South Dakota in the winter, you can survive just about anything,” he joked. But even he admitted he was taken aback by the close to 40 inches that blanketed the town last weekend.

Maniscalco said that members of the police and public works departments met before the storm to prepare and strategize, filling the vehicles with fuel and planning which town roads were of the highest priority to be cleaned. Maniscalco said that town plows were out during most of the storm, except for a period early Saturday morning when the storm was at its peak.

When the snow ended, Maniscalco said crews worked quickly to open major roads, while working to “maintain access” to secondary roads, clearing at least one lane for vehicles to get in and out in the case of an emergency. The crews also worked to clear the bus routes, as well, he said, for schools to reopen.

According to Maniscalco, schools were closed last Friday, as well as Monday and Tuesday this week. Large snow drifts were also cleared off the roofs of the schools to prevent any roof collapses from the heavy snow.

One major concern Maniscalco said he had that fortunately didn’t occur was power outages. Erring on the side of caution, Maniscalco said he was in contact with Connecticut Light & Power prior to the storm, and that a tree-trimming truck and a line truck were on call in town to quickly respond to any power outages.

“That could have been devastating,” Maniscalco said of losing power in such cold temperatures. “We were very, very luck in that regard.”

With the storm in the past, Maniscalco said that he will be meeting with town employees in the coming weeks to review how the town weathered the storm, including how well prepared the town was for the blizzard. “We’ll talk about things that went well and some things that were a problem,” he said. “We can always improve.”

During the blizzard, the East Hampton Fire Department was also busy, battling a house fire on Flannery Row during the height of the storm. The fire, which took place around 6:30 p.m. on Friday, took close to an hour to extinguish in what Maniscalco called “less than favorable conditions.”

“The firefighters said they “never seen anything like it in their lives,” he added.

Due to the slippery conditions, two firefighters were injured fighting the blaze, one of them seriously. Maniscalco said both were



The intersection of Jones Hollow Road and North Main Street in Marlborough was buried by last weekend’s blizzards – a common sight throughout the Riverast area. Photo by Janie Boston.

transported to a local hospital and are recovering.

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In Andover, Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia said that while school was closed on Monday, and the blizzard called for custodians to work on Sunday, at this point, the school’s snow removal budget hadn’t been exceeded.

“We do budget for such contingencies,” he said. “Right now we’re alright – if we don’t have any additional storms that require the custodians to come in on the weekends and things like that.”

Maneggia said the good thing about the storm was the snow was light and fluffy. This prevented the school from having to shovel the roof. “This snow was lighter and easier to move although there was a lot more of it,” he said.

In order to get things cleared away for school to re-open, Maneggia said the custodians had to clear the sidewalks and entryways, while the town helped with the parking lot.

“If it weren’t for the town crew – they use the loader and large trucks for plowing – if it weren’t for them, we would never be able to open, realistically,” he stated. “But other than that, we’re in good shape.”

Andover First Selectman Bob Burbank said the same could be said of the town as a whole. On Wednesday, he said clean-up had gone “pretty well.”

“We were able to keep all the roads open, even though some of them were only one lane,” he said, adding Public Works employees were called in Tuesday to widen the roads, clean off intersections and open up the fire pond accesses.

“So at this point we’re in good shape waiting for the next one,” he continued. “I think we’re fortunate because people in Andover are kind of used to this kind of crisis with all the storms that we had so they know how to prepare.”

Burbank added that, despite all of the work the blizzard caused, the town was still within budget.

“I’ve heard we may get some FEMA reimbursement for the storm which will, of course, help us if we have future storms,” he said, “but right now we’re in pretty fair shape.”

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For Portland, the clean-up of over 30 inches of snow was a tough task that the Public Works Department met head on, clearing all of the town’s main arteries by 5 p.m. on Sunday, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said. Crews then worked to clear secondary roads all through Monday and moved to clearing sidewalks and widening roads on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Bransfield said the crews were able to move efficiently due to residents heeding warnings and not going out during the storm. “I was glad to see most people knew enough to stay home,” she said.

The town did not experience any power outages, Bransfield said.

The clean-up process did experience one hiccup, however, when the axle of a plow truck broke on Friday on Middle Haddam Road. Bransfield said that, fortunately, the Public Works Department had a spare plow that was used throughout the storm.

Portland schools were closed on Monday – as were town offices – and the schools remained closed Tuesday, as roads were not entirely clear. Students were back in school on Wednesday.

Bransfield praised the work of the public works crews and the buildings and grounds department for their “hours and hours of work”

clearing snow over the weekend. Those hours of work could be seen in Rick Kelsey, public works director, who simply smiled when asked how the weekend went.

“It was an interesting weekend,” he said, simply.

* * *

In Colchester, residents were surrounded by approximately three feet of snow last weekend, but thanks to the “amazing” collaboration of the Public Works Department and the Colchester Hayward Fire Department, First Selectman Gregg Schuster said roads were passable by Monday morning.

However, State Police reported two crashes that took place early Friday that could potentially have been due to the start of the snowstorm. While neither crash resulted in any injuries, both were single car crashes on Route 2 east that resulted in vehicles traveling off of the roadway. Police said the first accident took place at 11:09 a.m. and involved a driver traveling near exit 22 in Colchester, losing control and striking the embankment and trees. The car then rolled over due to impact and came to rest within the median area of the highway, police said. At 12:42 p.m., another driver traveled off of the roadway on Route 2 east, striking a guardrail.

While Schuster admitted that clearing Colchester’s “100 miles of roads” was a large task, he gave credit to the Public Works crew for working non-stop from the start of the snowfall on Friday to Monday night. But Schuster said the work did not stop there. On Tuesday, he said priorities for the rest of the week were to clear out the catch basins in the streets and improve visibility at intersections by knocking down the steep snow piles along the sides of the roads.

Schuster also explained that the emergency operation center was not activated because the town did not suffer from any power outages.

On Monday, Fire Chief Walter Cox said that although the roads were cleared, he was still concerned with fire hydrants buried in the snow. He said house numbers would also need to be cleared off to make sure a house could be located in case of an emergency.

Fortunately, Cox said, there was no breakdown of equipment during the blizzard. He added that he was “absolutely” pleased with the fire department’s work.

The four Colchester public schools were closed last Friday and Monday and Superintendent of Schools Jeffry Mathieu said they reopened on Tuesday with a two-hour delay due to black ice. In addition to the Public Works crew that was responsible for clearing school parking lots, Mathieu said each school had an “around the clock” maintenance staff made up of custodians that were responsible for clearing school sidewalks and doors of the schools.

Mathieu also said he appreciated the combined efforts of Schuster, the CHFD, the Public Works Department, the Highway Department and Colchester Police for coordinating meetings over the weekend in order for town officials to make safe decisions for the town.

In addition to town departments, Schuster said he appreciated the decisions made by Colchester residents to stay indoors and off the roads during the blizzard. “The town reacted very well,” he said. “Everyone was patient.”

Reporters *Melissa Roberto* and *Geeta Schrayter* contributed to this story.

Colchester Fire Chief Requests \$34,000 Appropriation

by **Melissa Roberto**

A recent spike in call volume led Colchester Hayward Fire Department Chief Walter Cox to ask the Board of Selectmen last Thursday for a \$34,000 appropriation from the town, to help the department maintain its staffing for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

After the fire department fielded a record-breaking number of calls in 2011, the call total dipped a bit in 2012. However, it doesn't look like 2013 will continue the downward trend; Cox said January saw the highest number of calls in a single month in the history of the department.

The call volume over the last couple of years, Cox told the selectmen, has placed a burden on the department to sustain and add to its network of volunteers to be able to send out ambulances.

The \$34,000 appropriation Cox requested includes a \$10,000 increase in the "per diem" line item and \$24,000 for staffing incentives to maintain volunteers. Cox proposed paying volunteers \$15 per six-hour shift, as well as an additional \$15 for each call the volunteers respond to.

After the meeting, Cox said volunteers currently receive fuel compensation for "a few dollars a call." A tax-exemption clause in the town charter also guarantees volunteers compensation if they own real estate or a vehicle. However, Cox said "a lot" of the department's younger volunteers do not own property, "so it's not worth anything to them."

On Monday, Cox said there are currently six paid staff members at the department. He said he believes the requested stipends would help sustain the department's volunteers.

"If there's a little bit [of] incentive to get them to make a decision to go above and beyond to

cover a shift it's going to be beneficial to our response and to them," Cox said.

At the meeting, First Selectman Gregg Schuster agreed on the increased burden CHFD volunteers face.

"We've added additional support there...but the demands keep growing on the department," he said.

With Colchester's population reaching 17,000, Cox said the additions of two long-term care facilities in town and "numerous" senior housing developments have added to the increase in calls.

In 2011, that call number totaled 1,967, Cox said. While that fell slightly to 1,813 in 2012, last month the fire department responded to 198 calls – "the most calls ever in one month," Cox said. As of Monday, February's seen 77 calls – an average of seven per day.

While Cox said the department has made changes in the last two decades to include new apparatus, facilities and a paid career staff, the department is still facing staffing and financial issues including a "heavy financial cost" associated with emergency equipment.

Another concern of the department has been providing proper training for staff, which is required under state and federal regulations.

"We take our responsibility very seriously in order to protect our community and membership from harm and liability," he said. "However, it has taken a toll on volunteerism since we are asking for more time dedicated to train while the incentives to do this have become quite staggering."

The chief discussed the fire department's procedure for emergency calls and said the increase in calls has placed a burden on the department to staff ambulances. He said the full sequence of an emergency call consists of three

tones. When an emergency call is placed, an ambulance crew has four minutes to contact dispatch. If there is no response after four minutes, the call is toned for a second time, and this time the crew has three minutes to call in. If the second call does not result in a dispatch, a third tone is sent out, which Cox said paid staff are required to respond to. However, if, after another three minutes, the paid staff crew is not available, the emergency call goes out to mutual aid.

While Cox said the paid staff does a "great" job in responding to calls, he admitted they are not always available. He said about 70 percent of the time paid staff is able to respond to emergency calls.

After ambulance transport is completed, Cox said, the fire department bills the patient (or his/her insurance provider). He said the current projected income from ambulance transport for the current fiscal year is \$475,000. For the 2011-12 fiscal year, it totaled \$493,000.

Cox said Thursday projected ambulance transport has increased over the last decade by \$200,000. "Every year we bring in more money," he said.

Money generated through ambulance billing goes into the town's general fund.

Although no decision has been decided just yet, Schuster told the board the \$34,000 would be a supplemental appropriation, which would potentially come from the town's undesignated fund balance.

"It should also be noted that if we're going to take this route it would be entirely feasible that this would have to roll into next year's budget," said Schuster.

On Monday Cox said that an approximate \$75,000 appropriation would be needed in the

2013-14 budget to cover the entire year, to provide for the per diem increases and staffing incentives.

Lastly, Cox said that in January 2012 the selectmen approved the formation of a Volunteer Incentive Task Force to focus on a long-term solution to volunteer incentives but it has yet to be formed. He said members of the fire department are willing to sit on the task force but it has been difficult to find individuals in the community who want to volunteer their time.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle said she would like to see the task force be formed "now," and Schuster told Coyle he agreed "100 percent."

Schuster said the selectmen will continue the discussion about the appropriation at their next meeting.

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Also at Thursday's meeting, Schuster communicated his concerns regarding Governor Dannel P. Malloy's proposed state budget. While he said the budget holds aid to Colchester at the same level as the current year, he explained that funding will be moved around, with some aid packages potentially being increased, decreased or eliminated.

Also, Schuster said the "biggest concern" to towns including Colchester is the proposed elimination of motor vehicle tax. If the elimination is approved, Schuster said the town assessor, John Chaponis, predicted that Colchester would lose approximately \$3.7 million in tax revenue.

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The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 21, 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Hebron Selectmen OK Drainage Easement for Wood Acres

by **Geeta Schrayter**

The Board of Selectmen last week approved an easement to help improve drainage along Wood Acres Road.

Town Planner Mike O'Leary said that, as a result of a drainage study conducted by the town, different recommendations were brought forth to address drainage problems on some of the older roads. One of the recommendations was to improve the drainage on Wood Acres Road and Deepwood Drive.

O'Leary said this area was considered a priority for two reasons: safety and the environment. He explained the insufficient system means storm water runs down the gutter of Wood Acres Road, across the intersection of Wood Acres and Deepwood Drive, down Deepwood, and into a leak-off at 277 Deepwood Dr.

During the winter, O'Leary said this can translate to freezing over the roads. In addition, the street sands get washed into Amston Lake, which accumulates over time and can result in shallowness, algae growth and kills vegetation

on the bottom of the lake.

In order to deal with the area, a drainage improvement project was developed. The proposed improvements would capture the water in drain pipes and dump it into catch basins and a vortech unit near the outlet, which captures the street sand before the water is drained into the lake.

O'Leary said the improvement was a "good cooperative project."

Since the poor drainage affects Amston Lake, the Amston Lake Tax District donated \$20,000 for the purchase and installation of the vortech unit.

In addition, O'Leary explained the easement was needed since they'd be going over private property, and the property owner had offered the easement to the town at no cost.

"It's definitely a worthwhile project," said selectman Dan Larson.

The selectmen voted unanimously to approve the easement, and work on the project is expected in the spring.

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Also at the Feb. 7 meeting, members approved the Hebron portion of the AHM Youth and Services budget for the 2013-14 year. The budget totals \$1,101,358 and each of the AHM towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – contributes to it. The amount each town contributes is based on the percentage of that town's students that attend the RHAM middle and high schools.

Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt explained Hebron's share would be \$163,326.04, an increase of \$7,826.93, or 5.03 percent. He said the AHM budget increased by 1 percent overall, but due to an increase in enrollment at the RHAM middle and high schools, Hebron was responsible for a higher amount.

Andover's selectmen unanimously approved their contribution to the AHM budget at their Jan. 28 meeting, while Marlborough has yet to take action.

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The selectmen also approved the call for a

special town meeting to be held Thursday, Feb. 21, at 7 p.m. in the Town Office Building. The meeting is being held for the acquisition of the Cardillo property and the acceptance of the Grayville Estates subdivision as open space.

In addition, the board set a public hearing for Thursday, March 7, at 7:15 p.m. at Douglas Library, to receive public comment on the World War II Civilian Aircraft Observation Post in town and its potential designation as an historic property.

After moving to different locations in town over the years, Tierney said it seems the post has "finally come to its resting place."

He added that the post's "historic significance speaks for itself and warrants that designation."

The public hearing date and call for a special town meeting were both approved unanimously.

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The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 21, at 7:30 p.m. in the town office building.

Andover School Fetches Award for Healthy Food

by Geeta Schrayter

The local Board of Education learned at its Wednesday meeting that Andover Elementary School has received the *Healthier US* School Challenge Bronze Award from the United States Department of Agriculture.

James C. Arena-DeRosa, the northeast regional administrator with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, explained in a letter to the school system that the awards are a way for the USDA to recognize schools that create healthier school environments “through the improvements in the quality of food while providing both nutrition and physical education to promote healthy lifestyles.”

“Your school joins a select group of only 4.5 percent of schools throughout America that are certified as HUSSC schools,” he wrote.

The school’s receipt of the award also earned it a certificate from First Lady Michelle Obama, who started the “Let’s Move!” campaign, which she described in the certificate as “an ambitious initiative to solve the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation.” The campaign stresses healthier eating as well as a more active lifestyle.

“As a winner of the Bronze Award,” she

wrote, “your school is among the very best of the best, going above and beyond the minimum requirements to help ensure your students live full and active lives. This is an extraordinary accomplishment, and you should all be incredibly proud of what you have achieved.”

Maneggia said Food Service Coordinator Beth Pratt and Cheryl Folsom were responsible for the school being recognized, and Linddy added it was good the school had them..

“We’re very fortunate to have the people that we have. They brought so much experience to our food program,” he said, saying there was nothing to do “but to be proud.”

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Also related to school food, the board unanimously voted to allow Maneggia to sign the Healthy Food Certification for next year. The certification is part of the National School Lunch Program, and states that the school will follow state-certified nutrition standards.

On Thursday, Maneggia explained changes were made to the menu items provided at schools, limiting the amount of carbohydrates kids are given and increasing fruit and vegetable offerings.

“Basically it says that we will serve healthy foods,” he said. “For us here in Andover, it really is not a problem, because we really did not engage to the depth that, say, a high school or middle school would” in terms of having less-than healthy offerings.

The state Department of Education explained its nutrition standards focus on “limiting fat, saturated fats, trans fats, sodium and sugars, moderating portion sizes and increasing consumption of nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats and legumes.”

* * *

The board also unanimously voted to approve \$1,639 to cover the purchase of a new scoreboard.

Linddy explained the scoreboards get hit by a lot of balls being kicked around the gym, and require periodic replacement. He said the first board was purchased about 20 years ago, and replaced with another 11 years ago. The new board was installed two weeks ago, and Linddy said it will be running Friday night. He added the total cost of the board was actually \$2,168 but the remaining \$529 would be covered

through donations. In addition, approving the money “wouldn’t affect any kid’s education,” he said.

Maneggia explained the school had received a favorable bid on heating oil which meant there was some leftover money in the budget. Based on an agreement with the town, leftover money is returned at the end of the year unless there are some extraordinary expenses. Maneggia said money for the scoreboard would be taken from this excess.

* * *

Also at the meeting the board approved the calendar for the 2013-14 school year. Maneggia said the school tries to align itself with other towns in the area, and the calendar coincides with Hebron and Marlborough as well as RHAM. The calendar places the start of school for teachers on Aug. 27. School begins Aug. 28, and ends June 12. The calendar includes a two-day recess Feb. 17-18 and April vacation falls from the 14-18.

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 13, at 7 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School library.

Some East Hampton Residents Still Displeased Over Reimondo Decision

by Joshua Anusewicz

The decision by Town Manager Michael Maniscalco to retain Matthew Reimondo as police chief has been made, but the matter was still the topic of a heated discussion at Tuesday’s meeting of the Town Council.

Council members sparred and residents expressed their concern on the controversy, which bubbled up when the town announced Jan. 31 – the day after Reimondo was due to retire – that it was keeping him on as interim police chief while it continued its search for a new police chief. The announcement prompted Town Council member Ted Hintz Jr. to hold a press conference at Town Hall the next day, where he claimed that retaining Reimondo, who accepted a retirement offer from the town in early January, was in breach of the retirement contract the council had agreed upon and that Maniscalco’s decision was made without the consultation of the full council.

Maniscalco fired back last week that the authority to appoint an interim was vested entirely in the town manager and that a new contract had been drafted, with the help of town legal counsel, to keep Reimondo on until a permanent police chief was hired.

Since the press conference, opinions have varied on the latest issue swirling around the ever-controversial police department, including irate residents who have targeted Reimondo as the root of the department’s problems and felt Maniscalco bent to the wishes of the council majority, who are seen as being in the chief’s corner. Though the council majority and Maniscalco have attempted to dispel any misinformation, speculation and rumors have failed to cease.

Tuesday night represented the council’s first public forum since Maniscalco’s decision. Though a number of residents turned out for the meeting, the first public comment section of the meeting came and went without a peep; it wasn’t until Maniscalco’s town manager report that the sparks began to fly.

The exchange began when Hintz questioned Maniscalco’s reasoning behind the decision, as Hintz stated the town manager told the council

a week prior to the reappointment that the town didn’t immediately need an interim police chief.

“What changed in a week, from when the state regulations said it was okay that we didn’t have a police chief?” said Hintz.

Maniscalco stated that he actually said that not having an interim police chief is “not ideal” and that the decision was made with public safety in mind.

When Hintz shot back that Maniscalco never informed him and the other two members of the council minority – Barbara Moore and George Pfaffenbach – of his decision, claiming the other four members of the council knew about the decision, Maniscalco laid in to Hintz.

“I tried to inform you, but you like to scream and yell on the phone rather than have a reasonable conversation,” he said.

But Hintz was undeterred by the barb, questioning the town manager on whether the contract had been reviewed and proofed by the town labor attorney, which Maniscalco said it had. Maniscalco explained that the clause in the contract in question – which stated that the town could not rehire Reimondo – didn’t apply in this case, as Reimondo and the town entered into an entirely new agreement.

With that being the case, Hintz questioned why the town entered into a retirement agreement with the police chief, calling a hurried December meeting to formalize the agreement “a waste of time.”

“If it was something that couldn’t be attained in a reasonable time, then why not wait until we had a permanent chief in place?” said Hintz of finding an interim police chief. “It just does not make any sense to me.”

The conversation then steered back toward the issue of Maniscalco not holding a meeting prior to the decision to retain Reimondo. Though the council doesn’t factor into the decision, some council members indicated they felt “an informational meeting” should’ve taken place to discuss the matter and advise the town manager.

“I’m disappointed that we didn’t try harder to hold a meeting,” said Moore. “I think we

should have waited.” Pfaffenbach added that, given the history of the police department, bringing back Reimondo would be “a bad idea.”

Some members of the council majority, including Kyle Dostaler, stated that a meeting was scheduled but then canceled, as Hintz alerted the town there had not been adequate public notice of the meeting, and thus the council would have been in violation of Freedom of Information (FOI) laws had they gone through with it. But Dostaler also directed pointed words toward Hintz, relating that Hintz’s assumption the council majority was in on the town manager’s decision was false.

“I didn’t know about the police chief until I called that day [Friday, Feb. 1],” Dostaler said, adding, “If you don’t know the facts, don’t make them up.”

Despite the differing viewpoints of the council, Maniscalco said the decision was his and the town would move on accordingly. “It’s not the best of scenarios, but it’s the scenario we’re left with,” he said. “It’s more than time to move forward.”

But Hintz said the ordeal left a scar. “I’m telling you right now, you’ve lost my trust,” he said to Maniscalco. “Sorry, but that’s how I feel, like I have to second-guess every word you say.”

Though the council conversation ended, residents later weighed in on the matter, throwing support behind Hintz.

“This is a massive disappointment,” said Karen Lee. “The manner in which it was handled was disastrous. [Maniscalco] should know the public perception [surrounding Reimondo].”

Lee also questioned whether the town did its “due diligence” in looking at the need of a police chief for the town, an idea that has been bandied about by the council before.

Resident Patience Anderson also expressed disappointment in the council’s inability to “guide the town manager to make good decisions.”

“I think this is a lack of judgment,” Anderson said of the decision, adding to the council, “You need to guide him.”

* * *

Also at Tuesday’s meeting, the council revisited the idea of doing away with parking fees at Sears Park, ultimately voting to maintain the \$10 parking stickers by a 5-2 vote. Moore and Hintz voted against the motion.

The decision to keep the fees in place came at the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Plummer, who was present at the meeting. Plummer said the fees have been in place for over 20 years and have provided money for the town’s general fund.

Rich Norkun, chairman of the advisory board, added that the fees are partly responsible for saving the park, which was once a blighted area and a haven for teenage parties.

“The park was a disgrace,” Norkun said. But the fees kept the teenagers out, he said, and gave residents “a sense of responsibility” to keep the park clean, as they were paying for its use.

Plummer explained that the funds from the passes – which included season, day and boat passes – accounts for close to \$25,000. After some of that money is transferred to a fund to maintain the park’s boat launch, the revenue from the passes totals around \$10,000.

Plummer added that the amount of residents purchasing the passes has actually increased, with close to 200 more residents buying the stickers from 2011 to 2012.

However, Hintz and Moore didn’t feel that charging residents to park at a town facility was fair, even if revenue was generated. “This should be a destination. We should be promoting our park,” Moore said. “It’s a beautiful place.”

Councilor Derek Johnson disagreed. “There seems to be no particular reason why this year should be different than any other year,” Johnson said.

* * *

The next regular meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 26, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

New Committee to Study RHAM School Safety

by Geeta Schrayter

In response to the school shooting that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December, schools are taking a good hard look at their security measures. This is no less true at the RHAM middle and high schools, where a School Security Committee was recently formed.

According to Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski, the committee was created to examine security at RHAM “from a variety of perspectives,” with the goal of making recommendations “that will enhance the safety of all students while allowing them to have a school experience that does not deprive them of experiencing all aspects of middle school and high school life.”

The committee consists of parents, teachers, the athletic director from each school, each school’s principals, state troopers, Hebron’s emergency management director and a member of the RHAM Board of Education. On Tuesday, Siminski explained the committee met for the first time last week and was sent out in two teams; one will examine the high school while the other will look at the middle school, both with the assistance of the Educational Facilities Vulnerability/Hazard Assessment Checklist.

The American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities, which devised the checklist in collaboration with the Texas School Safety Center and various other resources, said the document “provides an overview of educational facility vulnerabilities and hazards that should be identified and addressed in the prevention/mitigation phase of a school’s emergency management process.” Areas covered include school climate and culture, communication systems, school grounds and building interior and exterior as well as the athletic facilities and equipment safety review.

Siminski said he had two priorities for

RHAM’s committee. First, he said he wanted to learn whether there were things already in place they could modify “to ensure the safety of kids,” and secondly, to find out whether there are any changes that can be made to the facilities to make them safer.

“I think [the committee is] going to come up with some areas that can be improved,” he said. “When you just look at it logically, the building is ten-years old. Construction ideas and ideas of safety have evolved over those ten years.”

Hebron Resident State Trooper Kyle Fitzgibbons said some of the findings may result in “tweaking” what’s already in place to make things a little better. He added that the “new norm” for school safety is in light of the Newtown tragedy has yet to be established, and explained Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has his own committee examining school safety. But all the information is yet to be received, “so it’s kind of tough to give all the details.”

Even so, Fitzgibbons said there had already been some good brainstorming, “and hopefully it leads to everything being better and safer.”

Hebron Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea is one of the parents on the committee. She has two children at RHAM, and said she’s “always had an eye for safety.”

“It interests me,” she said, “and so I’m on one of the subcommittees that are going to review the high school.”

Shea noted she’s never at the school during school hours, and coming in with an outsider’s perspective could prove beneficial.

Administrators and staff are there everyday, “so they may not see everything or notice everything,” she said. “So we’re hoping we may observe some areas that could be improved. That’s what I’m hoping to do.”

Marlborough resident Nancy Aniolek, who has children in high, middle and elementary

school, is another parent on the committee, and said she’s long felt there are things schools could be doing better in terms of safety.

“I always felt there was room for improvement when it came to the safety and security of our school,” she said. “I’m always seeing things from a safety standpoint and I just felt like there’s way too much exposure in schools and not enough safety.”

Aniolek added, at this point, she hoped the committee members could work together collaboratively “to come up with some recommendations to present to the board.”

RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie said he already believes the building to be a safe place, but he agreed there’s room to improve.

“I believe the school is already a very safe place to be for kids” as well as staff, he said. He added the school had basic safety measures in place while also looking to be proactive through creating a positive school community and helping individuals who may be struggling with different issues.

“I think we’re safe. I think we’re very safe,” he said, but added, “I think the question is ‘could we be safer?’ and the answer is ‘yes.’”

Leslie said he hopes the committee will help identify key recommendations that will be the most helpful.

“Rather than a long laundry list, I’m hoping the committee will bring a few key recommendations the Board [of Education] could choose from,” he said.

But Leslie, Siminski and Fitzgibbons all noted funding would be a deciding factor when thinking about which recommendations could be implemented.

For instance, Leslie said it may be beneficial to consider reinstating a school resource officer.

“On a number of levels I really like the idea,” he said. “You don’t only enhance school safety

by bringing in a protective person, but help reduce the amount of drugs that come into the building or prevent hostility between different students. So in the bigger picture, it really helps us enhance community.”

But at the end of the day, “if it’s going to cost \$100,000 for a school resource officer versus \$100,000 for some kind of communication system, I’m afraid that’s where you’re going to end up with ‘which one do you recommend more strongly?’” said Leslie.

“Finances I think are going to be a big issue,” furthered Siminski. “That’s going to be a discussion the board’s going to have.”

Fitzgibbons added “money is one of the variables,” and explained RHAM didn’t have the resources other towns – like Glastonbury – did.

“From what I understand, Glastonbury is going to have bulletproof glass already put in. The monetary resources they have are a lot greater than in this area,” he said.

Even so, Fitzgibbons, like Shea, stressed the value of the committee and the different perspectives.

“When you see something every day you may not notice that there could be an improvement,” he said, “whereas someone else might come in the office and say, ‘well, if you did this you might have more room,’ so different sets of eyes provide different opinions on things.”

But just what those different opinions will mean in terms of recommendations, and which recommendations RHAM’s budget will allow, is yet to be seen. The next meeting of the RHAM School Safety Committee is scheduled for March 6. At that time, Siminski said he expects to receive either preliminary or final reports. The committee and the Board of Education can then move forward in working to enhance the security of all RHAM’s students.

Town Looking Into Water, Sewer Shortfalls in Portland

by Joshua Anusewicz

At last week’s Board of Selectmen meeting, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield appointed a subcommittee of the board to look into the town’s water and sewer systems, which ran at a deficit last year.

The subcommittee, which will consist of Ryan Curley, Brian Flood and Carl Chudzik, will be tasked with researching ways to pull the system out of a hole, which has been built mostly from unfunded state and federal mandates, Bransfield said. Reviewing the debt service, Bransfield said, is a “prudent” strategy for the board.

“We wouldn’t be doing our jobs if we didn’t address this,” she added.

According to Public Works Director Rick Kelsey, the reason for the deficit is simple: the revenue generated doesn’t meet the expenses to run the system. Because of the mandates, Kelsey explained, the water and sewer budgets have not only shouldered its own operating costs, but also the hulking debt service from various infrastructure improvements to meet state and federal requirements for matters like water quality and sewage treatment.

Portland is unique in being one of the few small towns in the state that utilizes its own sewer and water systems, which are often found only in larger communities like nearby Glastonbury and Middletown. According to Kelsey, in the past, the town has looked into joining with other sewage districts like Middletown or Mattabasset in Cromwell, but he said the decision was made in the early 2000s

to maintain an in-town system due to the lack of time to meet then-impending state requirements.

To meet those requirements, however, the town was forced to make considerable upgrades to the system, which cost the town roughly \$5 million in 2001. That debt has been paid for by the just 1,750 customers that are on the system – resulting in increased sewer rates which, combined with a fluctuating economy, have resulted in some customers leaving the sewer system.

Another \$1 million was spent in 2006, Kelsey said, to upgrade the Indian Hill Road pump station, one of the three pump stations in town, and the 18 miles of pipes in town – some close to 100 years old – are routinely checked and prioritized for maintenance and repairs.

“We have continued regulations and our revenue side has diminished,” Kelsey said. “That’s our problem.” Bransfield said Wednesday that, over the years, the fund balance has accumulated a \$197,764 deficit.

The town went through a similar process with its public water system, a process that Kelsey said began in the late 1970s. For a number of years, the town had used its own reservoir to provide residents with public water; beginning in the ‘70s, however, Kelsey said the federal government passed legislation that all “surface water bodies” needed to be equipped with a filtration plant that would filter the water.

According to Kelsey, the cost of the plant would have been roughly \$8 million for the

town, on top of the regular operating expenses for the plant.

“The cost of the filtration plant was just too great,” said Kelsey, who has served as public works director since 1995. The town then searched for other options, including groundwater sources throughout the community, but ultimately settled on entering into a 30-year contract with the Metropolitan District (MDC), which pumps water from reservoirs in New Hartford and Collinsville to Glastonbury and into Portland.

To connect to the MDC, Kelsey said, cost the town between \$4-5 million. The MDC provides the town with roughly two-thirds of the water – the rest of the water comes from wells – for the 2,500 or so residents that are on the public water system, as well as the 275 fire hydrants throughout town.

“That has worked well,” said Kelsey of the contract with the MDC. Though the water system ran at a deficit last year, the town has accumulated a positive fund balance over the years of \$46,419.

But like the sewer system, the water system has been subjected to additional state and federal regulations, which have caused the MDC to raise its rates. Kelsey said the town’s water and sewer departments have stripped resources “down to the bone,” with just a handful of employees manning the systems. “There’s no real end in sight,” he added. “We’re going in the wrong direction.”

For all the financial hardships, however, Bransfield said the town has maintained a clean and efficient system, with high water quality and well-filtered sewage. Recent upgrades to the water pump station of Bartlett Street, water mains on High Street, and water storage tanks near the high school have also helped keep the system current, Bransfield added, and meet all state and federal standards.

“It’s admirable for a town this size to do this,” Bransfield said of maintaining the water and sewer systems. Relying on its own systems, she added, has also helped the town attract industry, making the town appealing to larger businesses, particularly in the area of the industrial park. Bransfield said that the water and sewer systems were part of what has attracted developers to the Elmcrest property on Route 66, a project she said is getting closer to landing permanent tenants each month.

Despite the success of the systems’ operations, the fact remains that the water and sewer systems are on rocky ground financially. And though Kelsey, the water and sewer departments, and the Board of Selectmen have discussed possible remedies for the shortfalls, town officials are hoping that the new subcommittee will reach an agreement on how to move forward in a way that will benefit the town and its residents.

If not, the future doesn’t look promising, Kelsey said. “We need to come up with something,” he said. “We’re going down fast.”

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

And that, ladies and gentlemen, was a lot of snow.

In January 2011, when we got that massive amount of snow – close to 30 inches – in one day, I thought that was the largest snowfall I'd see around here for many years. After all, I'd lived in Connecticut for more than 25 years, and had never seen anything close to that. In fact, in my column in that week's *Rivereast*, I wrote that it was a "once-in-a-generation storm."

Guess I was wrong; generations usually last longer than two years.

Last Friday's blizzard was truly historic; the state hadn't seen snowfall like that since the Blizzard of 1888. My hometown of Manchester wound up with 32 inches of snow, the most of any town in Hartford County. (The jackpot in the state was Hamden, which clocked in at 40.) I got picked up by some friends – as my car was lodged in my parking lot – on Sunday and we saw some of the sights around Manchester. The sheer amount of snow was, frankly, absurd. Two-lane roads had become one-lane ones. One-lane ones were sometimes more like half-a-lane. And in some instances, dedicated turn lanes – like a lane to turn right from Tolland Turnpike onto Buckland Street to go up to the mall area – simply no longer existed.

And in Manchester – and, from what I heard, in cities and towns throughout the state – there were some roads that simply were not plowed. Not plowed poorly (although believe me, I saw plenty of those); I mean, just had not been touched, at all. Entire streets were filled with nearly three feet of snow, acting as a big, wide, white roadblock. I had never seen anything like it.

There were lots of complaints about poor plowing or, in some cases, no plowing altogether. And I'm torn; as of Monday there were many roads in the state

that had not been plowed – not just apartment complex parking lots (although trust me, there were plenty of those), but entire streets – and if you lived on one of those streets, particularly if you were sick or elderly, it was likely a scary situation. But on the other hand, how do you prepare for a storm that dumps 30-40 inches of snow in less than 24 hours? This amount of snow overwhelmed not just snowblowers and snow shovels, but sometimes entire city plows. I've heard more than one tale of town-owned plows – big machines – getting stuck in the snow. So it's tough to be down on state and municipal road crews. I truly believe they did the best job they could, in what was basically an unprecedented storm (as there weren't too many snow plows roaming the streets in 1888, I imagine).

Last weekend's blizzard prompted Gov. Malloy to do something I hadn't seen in my time here: basically shut down the entire state. There was a travel ban for much of Saturday, to allow DOT crews to at least begin tackling the accumulation. It was a wise move by the governor, one that probably saved some lives. And as it was, sadly, five people in the state lost their lives during the blizzard.

Schools and businesses across the state were closed Monday – a move that looked even wiser when a terrible mini-ice storm rolled through Monday morning, making travel rather treacherous – and while many remained shuttered Tuesday, many also opened, and things began to, slowly, get back to normal.

I obviously spoke too soon when I called the January '11 storm a "once-in-a-generation" storm. But the Blizzard of 2013 *has* to be a once-in-a-generation one.

Hasn't it?

* * *

See you next week.

Hebron Resident Pleads Guilty to Federal Tax Charge

David B. Fein, United States attorney for the District of Connecticut, has announced that Alan Miskunas, 51, of Hebron, waived his right to indictment and pleaded guilty last week before United States District Judge Michael P. Shea in Hartford to one count of filing a false tax return. Miskunas formerly owned Bolton Flooring Center in Bolton.

According to court documents and statements made in court, during the 2003 and 2004 tax years, Miskunas filed income tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service that under-reported Bolton Flooring Center's gross business receipts by approximately one-half, resulting in his failure to pay more than \$64,000 in personal income taxes due on that

unreported income.

Miskunas also did not file tax returns for the 2005 and 2006 tax years and failed to pay more than \$88,000 in taxes owed for those years, Fein's office said.

Shea has scheduled sentencing for May 2, at which time Miskunas faces a maximum term of imprisonment of three years and a fine of up to \$250,000. Miskunas also must make restitution to the IRS totaling more than \$152,000, plus applicable interest and penalties, Fein's office said.

This matter was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Henry K. Kopel.

East Hampton Police News

2/3: Joanne Casey Foreman, 50, of 35 Tupell Pl., Middletown, was arrested for disorderly conduct and violating a protective order, East Hampton Police said.

Hebron Police News

2/2: Santos Rivera, 36, of 83 Maplewood Ave. Apt. 33, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

2/7: Joseph Walz, 19, of 63 Lafayette Rd., was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, possession of cocaine, possession of drug paraphernalia and improper mechanical equipment, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

2/5: Colchester Police said Tyler Nordgren, 20, of 24 Brindlewood Path, was charged with second-degree assault, disorderly conduct, interfering with an emergency call, third-degree criminal mischief, possession of narcotics and possession of drug paraphernalia.

2/6: Michael J. Bradley, 37, of 28 Richard St., Danielson, turned himself into Troop K on an active arrest warrant for violation of credit card theft by transfer, illegal use of a credit card, and sixth-degree larceny, Colchester Police said.

2/10: State Police said Chelsea Gray, 23, of 280 Parum Rd., was charged with third-degree criminal mischief, disorderly conduct and third-degree assault.

2/11: State Police said Michael Perry, 28, of 16 South Dr., Taftville, was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and speeding.

Obituaries

Colchester

George William Cuff Sr.

George William Cuff Sr., 85 of Colchester and formerly of East Haddam and Forestburgh, N.Y., passed away Sunday, Feb. 10, at the Apple Rehab Center in Colchester, after an extended illness. Born Jan. 15, 1928, in Sparkill, N.Y., he was a son of the late George A. and Viola D. (Rehberger) Cuff.

Mr. Cuff was a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy, having served during World War II. He married his beloved Joan Travis Cuff on April 23, 1949. The couple shared a devoted and inspirational love for 63 years prior to her passing on April 12, 2012.

He retired several years ago after having worked his way to vice president of manufacturing at the Emhart Corporation. George was a great advocate for business. While living in Forestburgh, N.Y., he was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and a mentor for businesses through SCORE. He was also active in politics there, having served as town councilman in Forestburgh.

George was an accomplished woodcarver of birds and decoys, among other things. He also enjoyed golfing. What he will be remembered most admirably by his family for is the unconditional devotion and love he gave so generously to all of them as husband, father and grandfather.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by three children and their spouses, George W. Cuff Jr. and his wife Josie and their daughter, Sarah of New Britain; Christopher Cuff, with whom he made his home in Colchester; daughter Janet and her husband Louis Bonfoey of East Haddam; grandson Jeffery and his wife Isabel Bonfoey and their children, Aedan and Gabriella of Centreville, Md.; grandson Brian Bonfoey of Marlborough, CT; a sister, Charlotte of Bainbridge Island, Wash.; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his beloved wife and parents, he was predeceased by a sister, Julia Trowbridge, and a brother, John Cuff.

A memorial service to celebrate his life will be held at a later date, at the convenience of the family.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Wm. W. Backus Hospital, 326 Washington St., Norwich, CT 06360.

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

Portland

Rita Hazel

Rita Hazel of Portland, wife of the late Charles Hazel of Hartford and daughter of the late Ida and Leo Combe of Middletown, died Thursday, Feb. 7, at Middlesex Hospital, with her loving family by her side. She was born April 23, 1922. She attended St. John's School, Woodrow Wilson High School and Morse Business College in Hartford.

In 1966, she took a position at Middlesex Hospital as secretary to the vice president of finance, whom she was with for 24 years. She retired in 1990, after which she volunteered at the Hospital's Information Desk for 18 years.

She is survived by a son, Stephen Hazel and his fiancée, Robin of Portland; a daughter, Sheila White and her husband, Ken of Meriden, a daughter, Donna Milardo and her husband, Dave of East Hampton, her brother, Henry Combe of Old Saybrook and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by three brothers, Anthony Combe of Cromwell, Joseph Combe and Edward Combe of Middletown. She had nine grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

There will be no calling hours. A memorial Mass will be said at Saint Mary's Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, on Saturday, Feb. 16, at 11 a.m., followed by a reception in the church hall. Donations in her memory may be made to Saint Mary's Church at the above address.

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

Marlborough

Walter Gregory Memorial Rescheduled

Walter T. Gregory of Marlborough passed away Friday, Jan. 30, at the age of 93. His obituary ran on page 34 of last week's *Rivereast*.

His memorial service was to be held Feb. 9, but due to the blizzard was rescheduled. It will now be held at noon Saturday, Feb. 16, at St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough.

Colchester

Maureen Shelto

Maureen "Moe" Shelto, 82, of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 11, at Windham Hospital, surrounded by her loving family. Born Sept. 27, 1930, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Frank and Mary (Kerrigan) Hulse.

Moe worked for many years in the restaurant business as a waitress. Most recently, she worked for Easter Seals as a program activity aide at the Colchester Senior Center. She was very involved with the Colchester seniors in many capacities, volunteering and helping wherever and whenever she could. Moe was a social butterfly and enjoyed talking with people. She also liked playing bingo and completing wordsearches.

As a younger woman, she was an award winning roller skater. Moe loved spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her favorite pastime was shopping and eating lunch "out" with them. Most importantly, she will be remembered by her family as a devoted and loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered by her two sons and their spouses, Carl and Lorna Shelto of Baltic, Gary and Donna Shelto of Weare, N.H.; her grandchildren and their spouses, Janet and Roger Sirois, Elaine and Dana Mitchell, Cindy and Ryder Broderick, Christine and Jeremy Franchere, Ryan and Sonya Shelto, Stacy and Greg Smith and Scott Shelto; 13 great-grandchildren, Carissa, Kyle, Elizabeth, Joshua, Ashley, Dylan, Hailey, Tristan, Evan, Taylor, Jayleigh, Aislyn, Baby Boy Smith and numerous extended family and friends.

She was predeceased by a son, James. A memorial Mass will be celebrated Monday, Feb. 18, at 11 a.m., directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave, Colchester, CT 06415.

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

Portland

Margaret Mary Suprynowicz

Margaret Mary (Hayes) Suprynowicz, 92, of Portland, beloved wife of the late Frank Suprynowicz, passed away Monday, Feb. 11, at Cobalt Lodge.

Born in Middletown on Jan. 13, 1921, she was the daughter of the late Patrick and Katherine (Quirk) Hayes and had lived in Middletown before moving to Portland in 1951. She attended the Day Club Adult Day Center in Middletown where she enjoyed playing bingo, painting and entering exhibits in the local fairs. She was also a member of the Church of St. Mary in Portland.

She is survived by a son and daughter-in-law; Dr. Frank A. Suprynowicz Jr. and

Dr. Wendy Spencer-Suprynowicz of Columbia, Md.; two daughters and son-in-law, Mary and James Davis of North Haven and Ann Marie Suprynowicz of Portland; and her beloved sister and best friend, Eileen Heckart of Middletown; a nephew, John Patrick Hayes, two nieces, Patricia Guire Zaprzalka and Kathlyn Heckart (Weiss).

She was predeceased by three brothers, Robert, James and Albert.

The family would like to thank the staff at Yale-New Haven Hospital for their professional and compassionate care and they will also be forever grateful for the love and care shown to Margaret during her stay at Cobalt Lodge Health Care.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 10 a.m., from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial will be in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Relatives and friends may call on Monday, Feb. 18, from 4-7 p.m., at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions in Margaret's memory may be sent to the Church of St. Mary Memorial Fund, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480, or to Yale New Haven Stroke Center, 800 Howard Ave., New Haven, CT 06520 or to the Day Club Adult Day Ctr. 32 Miner St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Colchester

Glorianna Russell

Glorianna (Brothers) Russell, 70, of Clearwater, Fla., formerly of Colchester, passed away Monday, Jan. 7, at Largo Medical Center, Fla. She was born Sept. 24, 1942, in Middletown, to Albert and Mary Brothers.

She was raised in Colchester by her father, Albert Joseph Brothers, and loving stepmother, Inamae Brothers. Glorianna was the eldest child, with five younger sisters and three younger brothers.

Glorianna married Robert (Bob) Russell Aug. 17, 1974. Glorianna enjoyed crafting, collecting porcelain dolls and spending time with her family. Glorianna also enjoyed running two Christian coffee shops with her husband, Bob: The Whale's Belly in New London, and My Father's House in Colchester.

Glorianna is survived by her husband, Robert Russell, her three sons; David Cady and his longtime girlfriend, Renee Bisbee, of Voluntown; Paul Cady and his wife, Karen, of Blair, Okla.; and Richard Cady and his longtime girlfriend, Dawn Mesick of Beaufort, S.C.; three stepchildren, Shannon Russell of Waterford, Bobby Russell and his wife Linda of Boonton, N.J.; and Michael Russell of Colorado Springs, Colo. She is survived by her 19 grandchildren, Melanie, Adam, Richie, Amanda, Heidi, David, Becky, Kaitlin, Luke, Dylon, Casey, Jacob, Jake, Josalyn, Kyle, Emilee, Keith, Shane, Devin, and eight great-grandchildren.

She is survived by her siblings, Albert Brothers, Anita Petroulis, Shirley Fellows, Alice Chodkowski, Kenneth Brothers and Pamela Hubbard. Glorianna is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins, and too many family and friends to mention.

Glorianna is predeceased by her parents; a brother, Donald Brothers; and a sister, Betty England.

Thank you to all who kept Gloria and the family in your prayers, and have shared their condolences. All have been greatly appreciated.

Colchester

Fred D. Izzarelli

Fred D. Izzarelli, 88, formerly of Sholes Avenue in Norwich, went home to be with the Lord Sunday, Feb. 10, at Harrington Court Healthcare Center in Colchester. He was born in Norwich May 26, 1924, son of the late Daniel Izzarelli and Carrie Delesio.

Fred attended the Norwich Technical School, and worked at Gilman Bros. Co. in Gilman as plant manager for many years, becoming president of the Eastern Connecticut Industrial Management Club. Upon leaving Gilman Bros. he worked at David Hecht Custom Kitchen Centre for 42 years as a kitchen designer/salesperson.

Fred was also a well-known drummer in the area, and, in his earlier years, worked in California as a carpenter, building the sets and back-grounds for many classic movies of that era, giving him the opportunity to dine with, and to get to know, many famous actors, such as Burt Lancaster, Clark Gable, Ricardo Montalban and many others.

Fred also regularly attended the Living Word Fellowship Church in Voluntown.

On Jan. 20, 1954, Mr. Izzarelli was united in marriage to Annabelle Lee. Mrs. Izzarelli predeceased her husband on Dec. 24, 1999.

Fred is survived by his son, Daniel H. Izzarelli of Norwich, a son, Bill Izzarelli of Nevada; a daughter, Carolyn Dorchak of California; daughter, Judy Branham of Indiana; a brother, Jim Izzarelli of Texas; a sister, Anne Gattuso of Nevada; sister, Sandy Abrams of Arizona; and a sister, Shirley Seyfried of Nevada; and a stepson, Lee Broll of Lisbon; and several nieces, nephews and grandchildren.

He was predeceased by a son, Fred Izzarelli Jr.; a stepdaughter, Lynn Broll; and a brother, William Izzarelli of Florida.

The family would like to give a special thanks to all of the people at Harrington Court for taking such good care of Fred, and for all of the love, and caring that they showed him while he was there. You're the best!

A graveside service will be held today, Feb. 15, at 11 a.m., at Maplewood Cemetery in Norwich for family members, and all friends are invited to attend also.

For an online obituary, and to share a condolence with the family, visit cumplings-gagnefh.com.

Colchester

Emma R. Buys

Emma R. Buys, 93, beloved widow of Howard G. Buys since 1947, of Colchester (formerly of Glastonbury) passed away peacefully Thursday, Feb. 7, at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was born April 15, 1919, in Manchester to the late Andrew and Julia (Turek) Roth. She attended Glastonbury schools and resided in Glastonbury for 61 years.

Emma was employed by Glastonbury Toiletries (formerly J.B. Williams), working there with her husband for 41 years before its closing. She was a lifelong member of the First Church of Christ in Glastonbury. She was a loving, generous wife and aunt who was devoted to her husband and family, and was always there when needed. She and her husband enjoyed several trips to Long Island each year to visit her brother-in-law.

Emma most enjoyed being with her family and owned a cottage with her husband at Amston Lake where the family spent much of their time. She enjoyed parties and get-togethers and loved to plan them for any occasion. She will be most remembered for her unending generosity where family was concerned, and more than once took in a family member that needed care. Though having no children of her own, she embraced all of her nieces and nephews as though they were her own and doted on them. She was a very special person who will truly be missed by everyone whose lives she touched.

She was predeceased by her sisters Ann Nielsen and her husband Clarence of Glastonbury, Dorothy Rauert and her husband Steve of Cromwell and Barbara Kataja and her husband John of Niantic, and her brother Larry Richards and his wife Irene of Glastonbury.

She is survived by her brother, Frank Richards and his wife Ellinor of East Hartford, and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and great-great-nieces and nephews.

Many thanks to the nurses and aides of Harrington Court and Vitas Hospice for their outstanding, wonderful, loving care of Emma during her time there, and especially to Vitas Hospice for staying with her around the clock at the end.

Visitation and funeral services were scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 12, at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury. However, all services were canceled due to severe weather conditions. Services will be held at a later date. Burial will private.

To leave an online condolence, or visit Emma Buys' tribute, visit GlastonburyFuneral.com.

Colchester

Hilda Grohs Goodwin

Hilda A. (Weirauch) Grohs Goodwin, 99, of Colchester, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 6. She was the beloved wife of the late Herbert S. Grohs and James H. Goodwin.

Hilda was raised in Burlington, daughter of the late William and Bertha (Miller) Weirauch. She spent her first 45 years there until becoming a Newington resident. She was an avid bingo player and enjoyed crocheting and gardening.

A loving and devoted mother, she leaves her two daughters, Betty Gregerick and her husband Albert of Unionville and Bernice Rouleau of Colchester, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her son, William J. Grohs, her daughter Barbara A. Clavette, her grandson Thomas Clavette, and her sisters, Dorothy Locks and Marjorie Buchardt.

Hilda's funeral services will be private. Memorial donations may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

To share a memory with her family, visit newingtonmemorial.com.

Portland

Dominic Limanni Funeral Rescheduled

Dominic Limanni of Portland died Saturday, Feb. 2; his obituary ran on page 33 of last week's *Rivereast*.

Funeral services were to be held this past Monday, Feb. 11. However, they have been rescheduled for a later date.



East Hampton

Marguerite M. Leonard

Marguerite M. (Christian) Leonard, 85, died Sunday, Feb. 10, at an area convalescent home. Born in Bristol, the daughter of the late William and Jennie (Smat) Christian, she lived many years in New Britain and the last 15 years in East Hampton.

She was the wife of the late Raymond E. Leonard, who died Feb. 21, 1993.

Mrs. Leonard is survived by three daughters, Kathleen Humphrey of Bristol, Maureen Dabrowski of Marlborough, and Patricia Leonard of Bristol; three granddaughters Jessie, Michelle, and Lisa; two great-grandchildren, Alexandra and Kevin; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her daughter, Karen Leonard, and her sister, Jean Cook.

Funeral services were Thursday, Feb. 14, at the Farrell Funeral Home, 110 Franklin Square, New Britain. Burial followed in St. Mary Cemetery. Visitation was Wednesday, Feb. 13, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society 825 Brook St., Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To light a candle or send a condolence, visit FarrellFuneralHome.com.

Marlborough

Shirley Clarke

Shirley (Dickinson) Clarke, 87, of Rocky Hill, formerly of Marlborough, died peacefully on Thursday, Feb. 7, in Connecticut Hospice, Branford. She was the beloved wife for 61 years of Harold R. "Hal" Clarke.

Born in Hartford, daughter of the late Howard and Blanche (Blinn) Dickinson, she was raised in Wethersfield, and resided in Enfield and Marlborough. She attended Hartford Art School and loved drawing and painting.

Mrs. Clarke was formerly employed by G. Fox & Co., Hartford. A gifted crafter, she especially enjoyed needlepoint.

A loving and devoted mother, she leaves her daughter Jenna (Libbe) Clarke. She also leaves several nieces and nephews, including her nephew Wayne Brooks, and nieces, Sandra Baker, Kimberlee B. Roe, and Lisa Brooks.

She was predeceased by a sister, Jeanne Dickinson Brooks.

Her funeral service will be held today, Feb. 15, at 1 p.m., at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington, with the Rev. Melanie Enfield officiating. She will be laid to rest privately. Relatives and friends are invited to call today from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Newington Memorial.

Memorial donations may be made to Connecticut Hospice, 100 Double Beach Rd., Branford, CT 06405, Attn: Development Office.

To share your sorrow, visit newingtonmemorial.com.

Portland

Gloria Kunsey

As Gloria decided to join John and neither wanted to continue alone, she passed into eternity Saturday, Feb. 9, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation. John's obituary was published on page 33 of last week's *Rivereast*.

Combined funeral services and burial will be held on a date to be determined due to weather conditions.

Portland

William A. Noonan

William A. Noonan, 77, of Portland, formerly of Wethersfield, husband of Dolores (Duval) Noonan, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 6, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late William J. and Evelyn (Stone) Noonan.

Born on July 11, 1935 in Hartford, he lived in Wethersfield for most of his life, residing in Portland for the last 11 years. A U.S. Air Force veteran, he worked at Aetna for many years until his retirement. He was an avid gardener, aviation enthusiast, and enjoyed spending time with his animal friends.

Besides his wife, he leaves two daughters: Evelyn Noonan of Glastonbury and Mary Noonan of Bristol, and a sister, Elaine Noonan of Wethersfield.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Feb. 16, at 10:30 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Relatives and friends may call on Saturday from 9:30 a.m. until the service.

The Noonan family would like to express their sincere gratitude to all those at Middlesex Hospital Hospice who helped make Bill's last days peaceful ones.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Middlesex Hospital, Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 or via their website, middlesexhospital.org/support-middlesex-hospital. Please mark your donations in Bill Noonan's name to the Hospice/Palliative Care Unit.

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

Portland

Max Martin Wutsch

Max Martin Wutsch, 43, passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, Feb. 6, at home. He was born in Portland Aug. 17, 1969, the beloved son of Margaret (Parker) Wutsch and the late Robert M. Wutsch.

In addition to his parents, he leaves his two sisters, Margaret M. (Wutsch) Szymaszek and her husband Gary of Mansfield, and Dorothy Clarke of Alexandria, Va.; his dear friend Billie; and several friends and extended family members.

Family and friends gathered at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury, on Wednesday, Feb. 13, for a period of visitation. A funeral service followed that morning at the funeral home. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family.

To leave an online condolence, visit glastonburyfuneral.com.

East Hampton

Ralph Burton Hignett

Ralph Burton Hignett, 90, of Moodus, died Saturday, Feb. 2, at his home. Born June 19, 1922, in New Haven he was the son of the late Joseph and Annie Hignett. He had lived in Moodus and East Hampton for most of his life.

Ralph had served his country in the U.S. Army Air Corp. during World War II. He had retired from the State of Connecticut Highway Department where he had worked as a test borer.

He is survived by his three nephews, Horace, Christopher and Joseph Hignett. He was predeceased by his two brothers, Horace Hignett and his twin Raymond Hignett. Funeral services will be held today, Feb. 15, at 11 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be in Rose Hill Memorial Park in Rocky Hill. Friends may call at the funeral home today from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., I-91 Tech Center, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.