

RIVEREAST

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**Soccer Stars...**The AHM United team participated in the Advanced Sportsplex President's Day 3 vs. 3 Tournament at Advanced Sportsplex in Middletown. The team participated in three tournament games and one playoff, and won all four games. There were four girls on the AHM United team, and the teams they played – and defeated – all had six players each. Pictured are Katie Beard and Julia Turo, both of Hebron, Libby Walker and Madison Czarnecki, both of Marlborough, and Coach Emily Walker, also of Marlborough.

## Cruz Under Fire For Questionable Expenses

by Geeta Schrayter and Mike Thompson

The Hebron Board of Education has alleged former schools superintendent Ellie Cruz racked up around \$15,000 of questionable expenses during her final year of employment in town.

Cruz's attorney, however, said this week the vast majority of the purchases were school-related, and called the charges "totally bogus."

The allegations against Cruz were first made public last week. The Board of Education had a special meeting Wednesday, Feb. 20, and authorized board member William Moorcroft to release a public summary of an "accounting review investigation." The seven-page summary was released the following morning and explained that the Hebron Board of Education was looking for more than \$15,000 in reimbursement from Cruz.

Cruz was Hebron schools superintendent for seven years. Her tenure ended in December, when she left to become superintendent of schools in Plymouth. Shortly after her departure, the summary explained, the Board of Education became aware of transactions on the district's Chase Visa credit card that were potentially unauthorized and inappropriate uses of school board funds.

Moorcroft said this week central office staff made the board aware of questionable credit

card charges. On Jan. 10, the school board authorized a review of the charges, and brought in a forensic accountant to conduct the review.

The credit card was first used in the district in January 2012. Use of the card from January to December 2012, the period the card was used in the district, and "certain expenditures" made by Cruz during 2012 were reviewed.

The report issued by the board alleged Cruz received an overpayment for her insurance in July. The board had entered into an employment contract with Cruz for July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015 and as part of that agreement, Cruz was to be reimbursed up to \$1,400 per contract year for insurance. However, a check was made to Cruz on July 1 in the amount of \$3,900, including \$2,400 for travel and \$1,500 for insurance reimbursement, and, according to the board, "no reimbursement from Ms. Cruz to the [Board of Education] for the excess \$100 has been identified."

It was also stated the \$2,400 for travel reimbursement was higher than the amount allowed in her agreement. Cruz's prior agreement had included \$400 in travel reimbursement per month, but in the new agreement she was to be reimbursed for using her personal vehicle at

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## East Hampton School Board Passes Budget

by Joshua Anusewicz

After weeks of workshops and deliberations, the Board of Education approved a budget totaling \$28,096,310 at its regular meeting on Monday. The board voted 7-1 in favor of adopting the budget, with member Josh Piteo opposed. Board member Don Coolican was not at the meeting.

The adopted budget represents a 5.19 percent increase from the current fiscal year, which was approved by voters at referendum last year at \$26.71 million.

The newly adopted budget figure represents a reduction from the original total presented to the school board by Interim Superintendent Mark Winzler last month; Winzler had initially proposed a \$28,296,206 budget, which would have been a 5.94 percent increase. Winzler said Monday that, since that time, the district has been able to realize savings totaling \$246,896.

According to Winzler, the savings came from three areas, the most important of which was health insurance. Always a difficult number to pinpoint, the insurance costs, Winzler said, will actually be down by over 3 percent from what was originally budgeted, decreasing the budget by \$175,524. Winzler added that roughly \$74,000 in savings was found by recalculating the number of teachers needed for full-day kindergarten – only one new teacher will be needed instead of two – and \$23,000 in savings was also found after an additional teacher retirement.

These deductions brought the increase down

to 5.01 percent, Winzler said, prior to board deliberations.

During deliberations, however, the board elected to add in \$40,000 that would cut the amount – roughly in half – that parents pay for their children to participate in athletics, and added an additional \$7,000 to help support the high school's co-op football program, which is currently a partnership with Vinal Technical High School in Middletown.

A number of parents were on hand at the meeting to voice their approval for the budget, particularly the addition of more sections of full-day kindergarten, bringing the total to three full-day and six half-day classes. Jessica Stewart, a mother of two, focused on the children's ability to "learn through play" in a full-day classroom, rather than focus solely on academics in a half-day schedule.

"It's our duty as parents to give our kids the best education experience," said Stewart.

Parent Jen Palmer agreed, relating that her son would have "never gone as far as he is today" without full-day kindergarten, and hopes that her younger daughter has the same opportunity.

Karen Wanat, a member of the East Hampton Elementary PTO, added that other schools in the state were making the shift, and not doing so might hurt East Hampton students. "It's time to get in line with other schools in the state," Wanat said. "I urge you to step up."

The majority of the board got behind the

spending package. Most of the support was based on the board's lack of action in recent years on what they perceive to be paramount items, such as staffing and technology, which they say has put the town's students at a disadvantage. Vice Chairman Joanne Barmasse said that budgets over the past few years have just been "Band-Aids" that have kept the district running, a practice that she said the town could no longer employ.

"Where we are currently, it's unacceptable," said Barmasse.

Board member Carol Lane said that, even if the board wanted to make cuts, its options were few and far between. "We have absolutely no programs to cut, and we don't want to cut personnel," said Lane. "If we want to move the district forward, this is the budget we need to accept."

Board member Ken Barber said that the board putting forth the budget it did took "courage," and added that he hoped "other boards show similar courage" in dealing with the school spending.

"I wouldn't usually support a number like this," Barber related, "but I support what this is and what it entails."

The lone dissenter was Piteo, who praised many of the new budget items, but questioned whether a sizeable budget increase was appropriate, given the economic situations of many citizens and the upcoming high school renovation project.

"Folks are going to have sticker shock," Piteo said of residents when they vote for the budget and the high school project. He continued, "I still have questions I'd like to look at."

But Chairman Mark Laraia gave a passionate pitch for moving forward. "This is a first step," he said. "If we stay the same, we're going to continue to see students leave our school system. The question I have is, 'If not now, when?'"

With the budget adopted by the school board, it will now be formally presented to the Board of Finance on Friday, March 8.

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Also at Monday's meeting, Winzler announced a shake-up of the school calendar, as students would be attending school today, March 1, a day originally scheduled as a professional development day for teachers.

Winzler said that the decision was made due to a considerable number of missed days for students due to inclement weather. He added that with recent snow days and vacation days, students have not had ample time to prepare for standardized testing, which begins next week.

The teacher development program, Winzler said, will instead be spread out over six one-hour segments throughout the rest of the school year.

The board had originally built in three days for school closings – coinciding with April va-

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**Cruz cont. from Front Page**

whatever the IRS mileage rate happened to be. The report said no mileage submissions have been prepared or provided by Cruz to the Board of Education.

Also related to travel, the report alleged Cruz had used the district credit card for \$390 worth of fuel purchases, but said such purchases were unauthorized, as neither her prior agreement nor the one beginning July 1, 2012, contained provisions for fuel.

But it was the alleged use of the district credit card for personal purchases that's garnered the most attention. According to the report, Cruz used the district card for Federal Express deliveries to her home, gardening and landscaping supplies, groceries and other purchases.

In November, the report alleged, Cruz made purchases at a Nordstrom Rack and a Wegmans grocery store in Maryland totaling approximately \$352, and there were also two Federal Express charges from September and November, totaling \$198, that "appeared questionable."

Twenty-three charges were also identified that appeared to be for gardening and landscaping supplies from places such as Scott's Farm and Greenhouse in Essex and Paul's and Sandy's Too in East Hampton. These charges totaled approximately \$1,406. The summary explained detailed receipts of these transactions were either not maintained or not provided to the board. Due to this, the summary stated there was no way to determine for certain whether the purchases were for the district, personal use or a combination of the two.

The board also identified \$790 worth of charges made on the district credit card to Colonial Supermarket in Essex. As with the gardening supplies, the register receipts were not maintained or not provided, the report alleged. Furthermore, the summary stated some of the receipts Cruz provided appear to have been cut before they were submitted, thereby removing the details. As in the above case, without the receipts, there's no way to determine the exact nature of the purchases.

Based on the review, the board also determined Cruz used the credit card for a number of other charges last year, totaling approximately \$6,066 and "including charges at restaurants, gift and/or jewelry shops or boutiques, pharmacies, food stores, farm markets, florists, online

retailers, a toy store and car wash." Again, most of the receipts provided lacked details on the specific items purchased, and the board didn't have documentation "that substantiates that these expenditures were made for legitimate district purposes."

The report also alleged Cruz used the house account for Gilead Hill School for purchases from Ted's Supermarket in Hebron. The charges totaled approximately \$960 – and included an \$89.72 purchase on Dec. 15, the day after Cruz's employment with Hebron ended. There were only detailed receipts for three of the transactions, but those that were available showed the items purchased included yogurt, snacks, chicken, fruit and bottled water. The charge for \$89.72 included items that are usually used in baking.

The report also alleged that last fall, Cruz authorized a \$2,375 payment from the Board of Education to a consultant with Northeast Consulting Group, to help her "understand and interpret data and information" relating to the Plymouth School District. Since the contract was of a personal nature and related to Cruz's current place of employment, the summary stated, the board determined board funds should not have been used.

The report determined the school board suffered a loss of at least \$5,905 that was determined to be "personal in nature and/or retained by Ms. Cruz in error." The board is seeking reimbursement for this amount along with \$9,133 from purchases determined to be unauthorized, lacking supporting documentation "and/or not for district-related purposes." In all, the board is seeking \$15,038, plus the costs of the investigation including legal fees and forensic accountant fees.

Moorcroft said this week the \$15,000 can be broken into "two buckets" – one of expenses that have been determined "definitely to have been of no benefit," and others that may be "questionable." He said, "We want to understand if those expenses have been legitimate," and, if it turns out they weren't, to seek appropriate reimbursement.

"It's paramount to the Board of Education to seek recovery of any taxpayer dollars that were misused," Moorcroft said. He added the board would also seek reimbursement for "any expenses we've occurred investigating this,

legal and forensic."

Moorcroft added that, based on the board's findings, a review of Cruz's expenses prior to 2012 has been authorized, one that Moorcroft stressed will be "comprehensive."

State Police Sgt. Donna Tadiello said this week that police are conducting an investigation at the Board of Education, and, she said, "some of it relates to the financial aspects of the schools." The investigation, she said, began in January, at the behest of the Hebron Board of Education.

Tadiello stressed the investigation "has not been deemed criminal in nature," and that there are no named suspects.

However, she said if it were determined a person had been using a credit card illegally, it may lead to larceny charges.

Cruz this week declined to comment, and instead referred calls to her attorney, John Gesmonde. Gesmonde said there were about \$350 worth of expenses that he said Cruz immediately identified as the result of her mistakenly using the school district credit card for a couple of purchases in Maryland instead of her own personal credit card; he said the two credit cards looked similar to each other.

But to charge her with making \$15,000 worth of personal expenses, he said, is "totally bogus." He said the vast majority of the items included in that number were school-related purchases.

For example, he said, the purchases of gardening and landscaping equipment were for the school, and would have been of no use to Cruz, as she lives in a condo.

"It's just a shame that there was so much tumult over some very explainable things," Gesmonde said.

He added that paying for the auditor is "ridiculous; absolutely absurd."

**Budget cont. from Front Page**

– but the district has already had four school closings this year to date. Winzler said that with students attending school today, the district is able to retain at least two days during April vacation.

The last day of school for all students is still

Gesmonde also said that, considering that the credit card bills would be sent to the Hebron school system for payment, "if you want to pilfer," this is not the best way to do it.

"This is not somebody cooking the books, or writing themselves a check, or taking milk money," he said.

The business manager for the Hebron schools, William Mazzara, is actually an employee of the RHAM Board of Education. Hebron pays RHAM for his services, and uses him two days a week. RHAM placed Mazzara on paid leave Jan. 2. RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski said the regional school board on Monday authorized him to enter an agreement with Mazzara. He wouldn't get into details on the agreement, but said, "I think he'll eventually resign."

Legal counsel advised Siminski to place Mazzara on leave due to "an ongoing investigation" involving the Hebron Board of Education. However, Siminski said, he didn't really know what was going on until the Hebron report was made public last week.

As for Cruz's current employer, the Plymouth Board of Education, it met Wednesday night to discuss the matter with Cruz and Gesmonde. As a result of the five-hour meeting, Cruz was placed on paid personal leave while the town does a forensic audit of Cruz's expenses in Plymouth since her arrival in town in late December.

Gesmonde said the school board "made it very clear they don't expect to find anything," but added, "they wanted to do this so that if there were any nay-sayers in the community, they would be satisfied."

Gesmonde said Cruz could be on leave for up to two weeks, while the board completed its audit.

scheduled for Friday, June 21.

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The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, March 11, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

# RHAM Superintendent Proposes \$26.45 Million Budget

**by Melissa Roberto**

At Monday's meeting of the RHAM Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski presented a proposed budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year of \$26,457,654 – an increase of 5.568 percent over the current year.

The proposed increase is a good deal higher than proposed increases in past years – which hovered around 2 percent, on average – and Siminski attributed the spike to "major increases" in health insurance, certified and non-certified salaries, magnet school tuition, as well as an increase in school transportation, due to an anticipated lack of state funding.

The budget is for the RHAM middle and high schools, which serve students in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

The highest expenditure in the budget is a 24.95 percent health insurance increase. The budgeted amount went from \$2,600,064 in the current year to \$3,208,633 – a climb of \$608,029. Siminski said the spike is due to three factors: the state taxing health insurance at a 1.75 percent rate, the cost of national health care – specifically the impact of the Affordable Care Act, which Siminski said would add 2 percent to the account – and an increase in the number of employees signing on to health insurance, which Siminski said totaled approximately \$90,000.

Also in his presentation, Siminski explained that certified and non-certified staff are due to receive salary increases next year. Certified staff is due for a 1 percent plus step increase and non-certified staff is due for a 2 percent plus step increase. Administrators are also due for an increase at 1.88 percent over the current year.

Tuition costs for magnet schools are also expected to increase by \$150,000. This increase will bring the cost of tuition for students in the district attending magnet schools from \$162,624 in the current year to \$312,624. Siminski noted the total tuition cost for magnet schools does not include Hartford magnet schools, which are state-funded. The superintendent also said the number of students choos-

ing to attend magnet schools for the 2013-14 school year is projected at 79 students, up 23 students from the current year.

But the tuition for vocational agricultural schools is proposed to drop next year, Siminski explained. The reduction of \$23,967 lowers the total tuition cost for the schools from \$175,824 in the current year to \$151,848. Siminski said the reduction is due to students that will be graduating at the end of the school year.

Additionally, Siminski informed the board that other increases found in the worker's compensation, Medicare, FICA, and property and casualty accounts total \$34,100 in next year's budget.

The district's bus contract also is proposed to increase by 1 percent. Siminski explained that the contract was only set for one year because all three towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – will go out to bid next year as one entity to achieve a better price.

Also, Siminski said Gov. Dannel Malloy's proposed state budget could possibly have a negative impact on the district's transportation account. Siminski said while RHAM has always been receiving state reimbursement for transportation because it is a regional school, the proposed state budget eliminates that reimbursement – which Siminski said would be a loss of approximately \$100,000.

"We've always had it in the budget as an offset so what we've had to do is put that money back in just to account for the loss of state reimbursement," said Siminski. "It's something we have to be cautious about when we prepare the budget."

The proposed budget also calls for an \$18,840 increase in custodial and maintenance supplies. "This increase is impacted by the age of the RHAM building," Siminski explained. "The materials have gone up in price."

Adjustments were also made to instructional supplies, textbooks and library books for the schools. Siminski said the three items were pre-purchased during the development of the current budget and in an effort to level out the ac-

counts, he added \$45,000 to instructional supplies, \$12,786 to textbooks and \$10,000 to library books.

Additionally, heating oil was shown to slightly increase from \$3.01 to \$3.08 and bus fuel went up from \$3.09 to \$3.16.

Electricity prices actually went down in the proposed budget, thanks to the district receiving "very favorable" rates, Siminski said. The price per kilowatt decreased from .11768 per kilowatt to .07966.

Another decrease in Siminski's proposal was seen in the special education tuition account. The tuition is expected to drop from \$652,970 to \$487,530 – a decrease of \$165,440.

Siminski shared two separate breakdowns of where the money in the budget goes. The first showed support services as the highest percentage at 46 percent, followed by regular education at 32 percent, special education at 12 percent and debt at 10 percent.

The second breakdown showed salaries as the highest percentage of the budget – 55.9 percent, followed by benefits at 14.2 percent, bonds at 9.6 percent, and "other" shown at 8.1 percent. Also, transportation accounted for 5.5 percent; tuition, 3.3 percent; utilities, 2.5 percent; and fuel, 1 percent.

Staff was also separated as percentages within the budget. The breakdown showed the highest percentage of staff consisting of 60.3 percent of teachers, followed by paraprofessionals at 17.3 percent, support staff at 8.1 percent and librarians at 8 percent. In addition, guidance counselors accounted for 3.4 percent of the budget, principals/assistant principals and Director of Special Education accounted for 2.4 percent of the budget, psychologists at 1.2 percent and central office professionals at .64 percent.

The RHAM schools budget is paid for by each of the three towns, in accordance with levies which are derived from the number of students from each town that attend the two schools.

As always, Hebron will pay the lion's share

– a percentage that is expected to climb, from 54.74 percent in the current year to the 56.55 in the 2013-14 year. Andover's and Marlborough's percentages each dipped slightly, with Andover going from 16.10 percent in 2012-13 to 15.26 percent in the next fiscal year, and Marlborough going from 29.16 percent to 28.19.

What this translates into, dollars-wise, is Hebron paying \$14,958,976 of the RHAM budget; Marlborough paying \$7,457,003; and Andover paying \$4,036,675

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Also at Monday's meeting, the board approved a transfer of money within the current budget to pay for the snow removal that was conducted during last month's blizzard. The board okayed taking \$20,948 from the health insurance account and put it into contracted services. Siminski said there was leftover money in the health insurance account because employees who originally planned on using health insurance chose not to.

Although he did not have an idea as to how much, Siminski said the district should receive state reimbursement for overtime hours and subcontractors.

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Also at the meeting, seven residents spoke to the board to request a change in the middle school music program to make it full-time – and two of the residents were RHAM High School students currently enrolled in the high school program. At the middle school, the music program meets three days a week, while the high school program is full-time and meets five days a week. The residents requested that the middle school program become full-time to better prepare students for the program at the high school, while parents also stressed the importance of music in their children's lives.

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The board will continue discussion on the budget proposal at a special Board of Education meeting Monday, March 4, at 6:30 p.m., in the chorus room at RHAM High School.



# Marlborough World Language Subcommittee Reviews Options

by Melissa Roberto

At its Feb. 21 meeting, the World Languages and Cultures subcommittee of the Board of Education restated its original purpose, as some members admitted they had mistaken it for something else.

Subcommittee co-chairwoman Carole Shea said the purpose – which she said was discussed and voted on by the school board during its mini retreat in January – is to “study and plan for a World Languages and Cultures program beyond the school day.”

The decision to form a subcommittee to study language and culture options was first decided by the Board of Education last year after the board voted to cut the Spanish program out of the Marlborough Elementary School curriculum. Although it has been stated in past meetings that the board’s goal for the future is to fully reinstate a program into the school day when it is financially feasible, Shea explained that the current, and first, duty of the subcommittee is to explore options to provide an after school program that would introduce students to a language.

The Spanish program that was cut last year provided students with one hour of Spanish a week which was split into two days with one 20-minute session and one 40-minute session. The cut sparked controversy last year, as concerned parents demanded the program be reinstated. This year has proven to be no different, as 10 adults showed up to the Feb. 21 subcommittee meeting.

After the subcommittee’s purpose was reiterated, some members said they weren’t entirely pleased with it. Member Mimi LaPoint admit-

ted she did not fully agree with the aim of the subcommittee, and expressed her desire to discuss a program that would be included in-school rather than after school.

“We promised the public something last year when we took the program out,” said LaPoint. “We promised the public something as a side gap for this year and it is now Feb. 21 ... [It] is 100-plus days into the school year.”

Member Shannon Bielaczyc agreed with LaPoint, saying she believed the purpose of the subcommittee was to “move forward” to get a program back into the curriculum.

But Shea repeated the purpose again. “That’s what we were charged to do,” she said.

Sklarz then broke down the Board of Education’s goal in two steps. He said the first is to “take on these options” to discuss and the next step is to “go forward creating and bringing back a world language program.” However, the school board has yet to discuss when that second step will happen.

Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly called a point of order during the discussion of the subcommittee’s purpose and stressed that the subcommittee only has one hour to achieve its agenda, which consisted of exploring a list of options to provide an after school program to students.

The list included several options that members of the subcommittee suggested during its first meeting in January. The list included: a potential French language program at MES after school; providing a cost estimate to upgrade the library to include a World Language lab; having language software inside of the MES

library for students to use after school or to take home; partnering with Parks and Recreation to provide a program during school vacation or after school; to get input from the RHAM middle and high schools; to work with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and Marlborough Education Foundation (MEF) in funding programs; to study options beyond Marlborough in other towns, to issue a brochure about World Languages and Culture options; and to survey parents and students to see where their interests lie.

Committee co-chairwoman Louise Concodello said she has spoken with Parks and Recreation who said they could assist in providing an after school program.

Sklarz also said he is already thinking “down the road” in terms of an in-school program. He stressed that he will be in communication with RHAM middle and high schools before a program is reinstated because he likes to think of it as a kindergarten- through 12th-grade program.

While Bielaczyc took on the responsibility to speak with the MEF and PTO to potentially help fund programs, she said she first would like to see the board strive to put a language program back into the budget.

“We keep saying we don’t have the money, we can’t just assume people won’t be willing to pay for whatever we want to do to move forward,” she said.

But Kelly said putting forward a program that could potentially exclude students who may not be able to afford it wouldn’t be in the best in-

terest of the students either.

Subcommittee member Robert Clarke agreed with Bielaczyc, and said that “we really shouldn’t be looking for outside places to do our work.”

Clarke shared with the board his vision of an in-school program. He said it should be continuous and “ran by administrators and monitored for quality.”

The subcommittee agreed to report back with their research on the various options at its next meeting, which Shea said she hopes to schedule in mid-March.

The subcommittee was successful in getting through their entire agenda within the hour but it didn’t take residents long to recognize one thing that was left off of the agenda that evening: public comments.

After the meeting adjourned, resident Rich Storrs expressed his frustration to the subcommittee, and said he was not happy that the public was not given a chance to speak.

“I, like many other people in the community, have been disappointed that the Board of Education has not given more effort to restoring foreign language to the budget and we were also frustrated that we were not given a chance to give our opinions,” Storrs said Tuesday. He added that he, and other residents, were not aware that the subcommittee’s purpose was to “solely” look at afterschool options.

The next subcommittee will be scheduled for sometime in March but no date has yet been decided, and it has not been said whether public comments will be included on the agenda.

## Frozen Treats Coming to Belltown

by Joshua Anusewicz

John Tuttle remembers exactly when he got the idea to bring frozen yogurt to East Hampton. A veteran of the food industry, Tuttle recalls taking his now 16-year-old daughter, Abbey, and his wife, Mitzi, to Sweet Frog, a frozen yogurt bar in Glastonbury, at his daughter’s request.

“I’m thinking, ‘Here’s two hours of my life I’ll never get back,’” Tuttle said, laughing, not looking forward to the 20-minute drive ahead just for some glorified ice cream.

When he got there, however, he was beyond impressed by how popular the establishment was – and how many people from East Hampton and other area towns were there. He recalls sitting there, taking in the scene, and the gears in his head spinning: this is exactly what we need in East Hampton.

“I loved the product, I loved the concept,” he said, recalling nudging his wife under the table to see if she was thinking the same thing. “And it got me thinking that this is something the people of East Hampton would really like.”

Months later, that idea is coming to fruition with the town’s newest culinary destination, Abbeez premium frozen yogurt bar – naturally, named after his daughter who accidentally provided the inspiration for the business.

Like other popular frozen yogurt – or “froyo” – to the kids – spots in Glastonbury, West Hartford or Middletown, Abbeez will feature a number of flavors and over 50 toppings to meet each customer’s needs, in addition to bottled drinks and coffee. The flavors will also include low fat, non-fat and no-sugar-added options as well, providing a healthy alternative to ice cream, something East Hampton actually doesn’t offer.

Tuttle said that he’s also tried to tailor Abbeez to the community, providing a family-friendly atmosphere and taking customers’ needs into

account. For example, at each frozen yogurt dispenser is a small placard that not only shows the flavor, but also details the calories, allergens, whether it contains gluten, and the number of Weight Watchers points each serving is worth.

Another option that Tuttle highlighted is that Abbeez will offer three sizes – small, medium and large – something other frozen yogurt bars don’t have. Tuttle said the small cup would be ideal for families with young children, so they can fill the cup and be able to finish it.

“I’d rather have them have a smaller cup and eat everything than eat half and have the parents feel like they got fleeced,” he said. “They can just sit down and have a good time with it.”

It’s fitting that Tuttle has focused on family with Abbeez, as it’s truly become a family business itself. Tuttle said that Mitzi has been responsible for coming up with the logo and the color scheme – the bright restaurant is awash with bright green and pink – while his son Johnathan, a recent college graduate, helped make the website despite living over 1,000 miles away in Texas.

“He’s actually been the most enthusiastic about it,” Tuttle said of his son. “He totally believes in the idea.”

But providing a destination for the community is Tuttle’s main goal. A dedicated town volunteer who once served on the Town Council, Tuttle said that the buzz has already begun around town about Abbeez, including at the high school, which is located less than a mile away. Activity has also been frequent on the Abbeez Facebook page, where he has regularly provided updates and photos to the many followers who have shared their anticipation.

Those who have been waiting, though, will have to wait no longer, as this Saturday, March 2, will mark the grand opening, which will feature a ribbon-cutting ceremony and a whole lot



**East Hampton’s newest culinary destination, Abbeez, will feature 10 different kinds of frozen yogurt, including sugar-free and gluten-free options, and over 50 toppings. Abbeez will celebrate its grand opening on Saturday, March 2, at 11 a.m.**

of “froyo” for the sweet-toothed crowds. And, as the weather gets warmer, Tuttle expects to open up an outdoor patio that will feature music, tables with umbrellas, and heat lamps to provide extra space for patrons.

Beginning Saturday, the regular hours for Abbeez will be: Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Sunday from noon-8 p.m. Tuttle said that dur-

ing the summer, hours of business are expected to expand.

For more information on Abbeez, you can visit their website at [abbeez.com](http://abbeez.com), where you can find the links to “Like” them on Facebook or follow them on Twitter.

Abbeez is located at Theater Square, 11 N. Main St.



# School Board Approves Plan for EHHS Project

by Joshua Anusewicz

At a meeting on Monday night, the Board of Education unanimously approved official plans recommended by the High School Building Committee to make needed improvements to the aging facility.

And with the plans, there is now a price tag for the project – \$52.48 million, though after expected state reimbursement the cost to the town would be \$28.583 million.

Representatives from the project's architect, SLAM of Glastonbury; project manager, Capital Region Education Council (CREC); and the construction company, Downes Construction of New Britain, were on hand at Monday's meeting to present the final layout to the board, who ultimately oversees the building committee. The choice of the committee came after multiple meetings with the three entities, as well as with school faculty and staff and town residents at public forums.

After reviewing multiple proposals, the committee settled on what was referred to as "Concept 2B." The layout, which will renovate and upgrade the existing structure, will include a newly-built science wing in the front of the building, move the library to the current location of the gymnasium, move the gymnasium to current location of the locker rooms, and create additional room in the cafeteria, as well as the music and art departments.

The plan will also create additional hallways throughout the school to improve circulation, and will remove all "dead end" wings, partly by demolishing the two wings on the north side of the school. In their place, an additional park-

ing lot would be built and an access road to the back of the school would be created to provide a better flow of traffic during the mornings and afternoons.

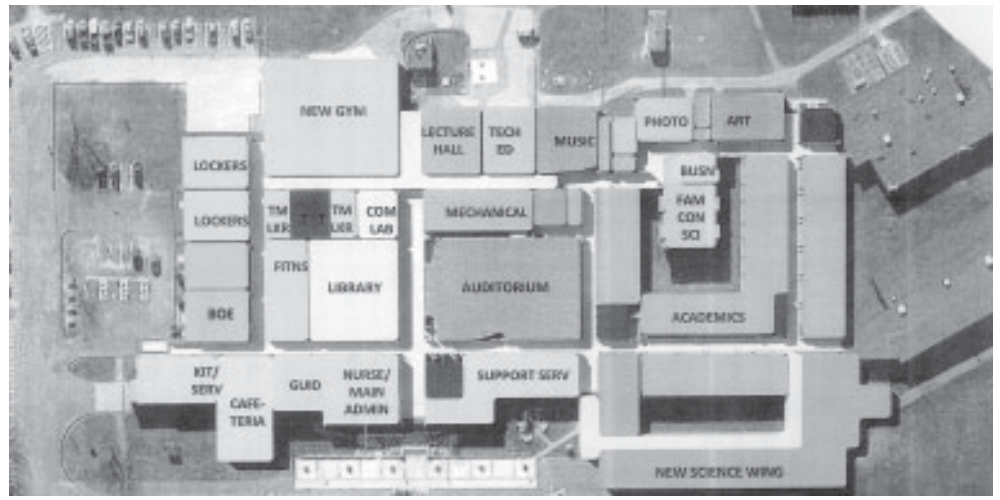
The new plan would also incorporate major upgrades to the school's infrastructure, making the building more energy efficient and, ultimately, saving the district money. Another cost-saving measure included in the plan is moving the Board of Education offices to the high school from its current location on Main Street, which is rented space.

According to the plans provided by SLAM, the square footage of the school would increase by 1,900, from 125,200 to 127,200. Of this, 107,980 square feet would be eligible for reimbursement from the state.

With a concrete plan in place, CREC has now been able to put a price tag on the project, as well. According to Cindy Abraham of the building committee, with the "renovate as new" option that has been approved, the total cost of the project would be \$52,471,220; with the state reimbursement rate 52.5 percent for renovation projects, the total cost to the town would be \$28,834,540, which includes costs ineligible for reimbursement.

For comparison, Abraham showed that if the town were to choose to build a brand new facility, the cost would be almost \$70 million. The reimbursement rate would be 42.5 percent for a new facility, leaving the town on the hook for over \$43 million.

The need for an extensive renovation of East Hampton High School, particularly in the areas of science and technology, was highlighted



The Board of Education recently approved the recommended plans, shown here, for the East Hampton High School renovation project, which is designed to improve circulation in the school, make the facility more energy-efficient, and expand in the areas of science, music and art.

in a 2007 report from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), which is tasked with putting schools through an accreditation process over 10 years.

Now, with the district over halfway through the accreditation process, the district has had to show NEASC that it is taking considerable steps toward reaching its accreditation in 2017. To meet the requirements, the Board of Education formed the High School Building Committee in early 2012 to oversee the operations

of the proposed project, which must be designed and planned before heading to a town-wide referendum for approval. The proposal, along with an approval from the town's voters, must be submitted to the state by June 30, to possibly receive state reimbursement.

With the plans approved by the building committee and the school board, the plans will now be brought before the Board of Finance for possible approval, at a meeting that has not been scheduled as of press time.

# Portland District Moving Forward with Safety Measures

by Joshua Anusewicz

After holding a joint meeting in January to discuss school safety in light of the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, the boards of education and selectmen reconvened on Tuesday night to discuss safety measures that have been taken or are being planned in Portland schools.

With a turnout of roughly 50 residents at the January meeting, board members were noticeably disappointed that only a handful of residents came out for Tuesday's meeting, though it didn't keep the elected officials from having a constructive dialogue on the matter.

The meeting began with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sally Doyen discussing the measures that had already been taken to ensure better security, many of which were brought up by residents at the January meeting and discussed at meetings of the school safety committee, headed by Brownstone Intermediate School Principal Laurie Boske.

According to Doyen, many of the changes have incorporated the police and fire departments, which have recently toured each school in town to familiarize them with the facilities. The changes included providing the police department with floor plans of each school, color-

coding the hallways of the buildings for quicker response, and increasing police presence during arrival and dismissal times.

Doyen also said that efforts have been made to regularly check the school grounds – particularly before students go outside for gym class or recess. Identification badges have been provided to faculty and staff, and a more stringent sign-in process for visitors to the school, including parents, is in place.

"We're on the right track," Doyen said. In the coming weeks and months, Doyen said the district would continue looking into additional improvements, which will include additional and upgraded cameras, as well as new door locks at some schools. The district also has plans, Doyen said, to revise and streamline each school's safety plan for teachers, which she described as being "awkward" right now.

The elected officials in attendance were pleased to hear the efforts being made to ensure safety at the schools, and praised the work of the safety committee and the residents for providing common-sense ideas. "It's very useful to have different points of view," said Board of Education Chairman Chris Phelps.

Phelps said he was also happy to see that even though many changes have taken effect or have been planned, the district's schools were already in good standing safety-wise. "My big takeaway from this is, for the most part, that there was nothing glaring," Phelps said.

One of the major hurdles of any future plans, however, will be funding, an issue that both boards were inherently aware of. Selectman Brian Flood explained that although the board hasn't had any formal talks about school safety yet, he doesn't expect "any resistance" to the ideas, but does see funding as a possible obstacle.

"Going forward, we're going to have to address that issue," Flood reiterated.

To that end, Phelps said that the school board would be monitoring whether any state or federal funding would be available to cover the costs of any major upgrades for school security. Board of Education Vice Chairwoman MaryAnne Rode added that if there was funding available, the district should act quickly to procure the funds, as it might be a competitive process with other municipalities in the state in the same position in terms of school security.

The boards also discussed the possibility of assigning volunteers to each school to monitor the entrances of the schools, particularly during arrival and dismissal. Selectman Carl Chudzick pitched the idea, with school board member Betsy Smith agreeing, stating that it was a "good time to call out to our community and look for volunteers."

With few residents present, the boards were unable to get as much input as at their previous meeting. However, resident Sue Wild reported to the boards that the security measures that have already been implemented are making a difference, and that parents understand the need for such changes.

"I get why these rules are here," Wild said. "And the parents I've seen have been receptive to the new guidelines and procedures."

And as the conversation on school safety continues, more guidelines and procedures may be on the horizon.

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The next regular meeting of the Portland Board of Education is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12, at 7 p.m. at Portland High School, 95 High St.

# Selectmen Balk at Schuster's Attempted Executive Session

by Melissa Roberto

First Selectman Gregg Schuster's attempt to discuss clerical union negotiations in executive session during the Feb. 21 Board of Selectmen meeting was deterred after two selectmen, Jim Ford and Rosemary Coyle, alleged that his effort to discuss a deputy tax collector position in private before discussing it publicly would be illegal.

The two selectmen claimed they knew nothing about a proposed deputy tax collector position until hearing a clerical union staff representative speak about it that night during public comments.

In an effort to stop the selectmen from entering into an executive session – which is not open to the public – that Coyle believed would be illegal, the selectwoman made a motion to adjourn, which was supported by selectmen Ford and Stan Soby, canceling the executive session and ending the meeting.

The deputy tax collector position was first mentioned by Troy Raccuia, representative of Colchester town employees, as he applauded Schuster in the beginning of the meeting for his efforts to negotiate the proposed deputy tax collector position. "It's a perfect example of the town and the union coming together to move the town of Colchester forward," he said.

Before the executive session – which the agenda stated would include negotiations with the clerical union – Colchester Tax Collector Tricia Coblenz asked Schuster to be invited into the executive session if her office was going to be the basis of the discussion.

But Schuster simply said he would not discuss what was going to happen in executive session.

After hearing Raccuia's comment, Coyle said she assumed a discussion of the deputy tax collector position is what the session would

be about, but when she asked Schuster if she was right, he restated he was not going to discuss the content of the executive session.

"I don't know why we would be negotiating with a union if the Board of Selectmen hasn't even discussed the issue at all," Coyle said, "so if that's what this is about I don't think we should be going into any executive session until we have a discussion about what this deputy tax collector position is all about and that should be in public session."

Ford agreed, claiming that discussing the job in private session before a public session would be a violation of the Freedom of Information Act.

"We couldn't just walk in saying 'we're going to talk about a deputy tax collector' and come out and vote [on] a job description without having considered that whole process of

the job description in the public session," said Ford.

Schuster disagreed with Coyle and Ford's interpretations of the executive session agenda item. "This is the agenda item we've always had to discuss negotiations," he said. "It's my intention, it's my desire, to have a discussion with this board about negotiations with this union."

On Monday, Schuster reflected on the executive session being turned down last week.

"I don't know why anyone would want to talk about negotiations with unions in open session," Schuster said. "It never happened before and I don't know why it would happen now."

He added that the item most likely will not be added to the agenda for the upcoming selectmen meeting in March.



# Colchester Board of Education Approves \$39.38 Million Budget

by Melissa Roberto

On Tuesday night, the Board of Education approved Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Mathieu's 2013-14 proposed budget with a change that lowered the total to \$39,376,054, a 4.9 percent increase over the current year.

The change eliminates the capital outlay expense for the William J. Johnston Middle School (WJMS), which was originally proposed at \$1,243,410.

In his initial presentation of the budget to the board during the Jan. 30 Board of Education meeting, Mathieu presented the budget at \$40,619,464, which was an 8.25 percent increase over the current spending package.

The capital outlay account in Mathieu's first presentation included several repairs to the middle school, which town officials have explained in past meetings are in dire need of repair. The most critical damage at the school include two broken boilers – one that does not work and a back-up boiler also in need of repair – windows that would fall out if opened, a broken heating system, various repairs to exterior and interior doors and entryways, and a faulty PA system.

WJMS is the only Colchester public school that has yet to be renovated, and the town is currently involved in the process of proposing a building project that includes renovations and additions to the school, as well as a senior center and youth center. The building committee that was charged to assist in the project has been working with Tecton Architects in Hartford for over a year developing a site plan. The cost estimate was communicated to town boards in January with a price tag of \$68.5 million – with WJMS construction and renovation totaling \$48.1 million alone.

The decision to eliminate the WJMS expense from the capital outlay account in the budget is due to the proposed building project site plans, which have yet to gain the approval of town boards. In a tri-board meeting on Feb. 7, the boards of selectmen, education and finance discussed the process of the project and ultimately decided that a town referendum date would not happen during the current fiscal year, and will most likely take place in the next fis-

cal year if the boards approve it.

Mathieu explained that the project has left the school board contemplating whether or not they should keep the WJMS capital expenses in the budget. "Capital was kind of undecided because we know we have a potential building project going on," he told the board.

He added that the WJMS expenses in the budget would be put off. "For us to spend the \$1.2 million just doesn't make sense at this time so we are proposing that we are going to delay that \$1.2 million number for next year and see what's going to happen with the middle school project," he added.

The board approved the change, while leaving the rest of the capital outlay expenses in the budget. The capital expenses include a total of three repairs at Bacon Academy – the replacement of a light near the auditorium entrance, HVAC repairs and air conditioning repairs in the graphics lab – at a total of \$83,700, and two repairs at Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS), including the replacement of interior doors and retaining a wall, for a total of \$14,200.

Additionally, Mathieu gave one more brief presentation of his proposed budget to the board, highlighting its major changes. His proposal includes a request to provide all-day kindergarten for the first time (which parents were pleased with during his first presentation) and a total reduction of 2.6 teachers in the four schools, as well as adding a step to the teacher's contract, making it 13 steps in an effort to break the bubble of wage increases at the end of the contract.

Another change that could potentially lower the budget is an adjustment to the pupil transportation account, which includes school transportation for the public schools. Although nothing was decided on Tuesday, Mathieu explained that if the proposed all-day kindergarten is passed, seven mid-day school buses could be eliminated. He told the board that a cost of one bus is \$12,398 and the elimination of seven buses would be \$86,786.

However, due to the contract the school system has with the M&J Bus Company, the po-

tential cost reduction is still being negotiated, he said. Also, Mathieu reminded the board that the potential reduction is also dependent on all-day kindergarten being approved.

Also in the meeting, the school board approved the addition of an emergency access road to be built at Bacon Academy. The suggestion came from a committee made up of First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Fire Chief Walter Cox, Colchester Police Sgt. Marc Petruzzi, Public Works Director Jim Paggioli, Mathieu and the Bacon Academy principals that are responsible for creating a crisis plan for traffic outside of the four schools if the schools are in a state of emergency. Through their research, the committee found that Bacon Academy only has one entryway to the school, which could potentially block emergency responders from entering the school if an emergency were to happen in front of that entrance. Therefore, in order for emergency vehicles to come onto the school's property, a gravel road, which will be constructed along the property line of the school east of Chestnut Hill Road, will cut through the roads and would connect to the playing fields and track.

Mathieu informed the board that the Wetlands Commission already approved the road and the cost of placing down gravel is \$35,750.

Also at the meeting, Greg Plunkett – who has recently retired from his position as Director of Educational Operations, but has still assisted the town in the last month – gave an overview of the current changes happening within the four public schools to make them more secure.

Plunkett said the changes were based on an audit that was conducted by Petruzzi in each of the four schools last December. Plunkett said "push buttons" were installed in three of the schools – Colchester Elementary School (CES), JJIS and Bacon Academy – earlier this week to assist in the fire alarm system. The push buttons are located within the schools in "strategic places," Plunkett said. If pushed, the buttons send an audio signal throughout the school, advising students and staff that they are in a lockdown, while also sending a message to the

monitoring company to notify the police immediately. The push buttons will also close all fire doors.

Plunkett said "at the push of a button" all of these things will happen, which will make the schools more secure during a lockdown, and will eliminate the process of having to dial 911.

WJMS, however, will not receive the same push buttons because the fire alarm system is too old. But Plunkett said "something similar" is expected to be added at the school that would notify the monitoring company and, eventually, would deliver an audio signal over a PA system.

Also, Plunkett said a security keypad was recently installed at JJIS at a staff entry door – a door that used to be open all morning. JJIS staff members are now responsible for entering a key code that lets them into the building. Another keypad will be installed in the future at the back entrance of the building, which is used at night by staff.

Plunkett explained that another adjustment would be made at Bacon Academy. At the school's entrance, the corridors will be blocked with doors. By blocking the hallways, visitors would be forced to go directly into the school's office instead of being able to travel down the school's hallways.

A request for proposal (RFP) was sent out earlier this week and Plunkett said the town should receive prices in "three or four" weeks. He added that the doors will still make it possible for students to travel down the hallways, but will keep the building "a bit more secure."

The security improvements in each of the schools were paid for by existing security money within the current budget and the improvements will continue to take place in the schools during the current fiscal year, which is why Mathieu said the proposed 2013-14 budget does not include money for security.

The Board of Education will present its 2013-14 budget to the Board of Finance on Monday, March 4, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12, at 7 p.m. at the CES cafeteria.

## POCD Plans Cause Controversy in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

A lengthy discussion was held at last week's Board of Selectmen meeting on the Planning and Zoning Commission's proposed revisions to the town's land development regulations – and multiple residents balked at the commission's plans.

Town Planner Adam Turner and Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Joe Mathieu were present at the Feb. 21 meeting to discuss the matter.

Over the last month, the Planning and Zoning Commission has held meetings to obtain public feedback on the regulations. According to the town's website, the regulations are not being noticed for adoption but the commission is obtaining feedback for an initial draft for review. Then, the commission will review public comments and revise the document prior to the beginning of an adoption process.

At the beginning of the meeting, five residents expressed concern to the board in opposition of the commission's actions, mentioning that the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) should be revised first before the land development regulations.

Resident Chris Bourque said he believes forming a special committee would be beneficial to updating a POCD. "The right way is to get public input on a POCD that would guide the regulations so that there would be less conflict in adopting those regulations," said Bourque.

Other residents were concerned with the amount of time it takes to update a POCD, saying that the town's delay on doing so will create a problem in the future. "It's usually at least

a one-year process," said resident Dave Wasniewski. "To me it's a backward process."

Colchester's POCD was last updated in 2001. The state requires that a municipality's POCD be updated once every 10 years. However, Mathieu explained that the latest state statute extends the amount of time a town has to update its POCD. He added that Colchester has until July 1, 2014, to do so and the Planning and Zoning Commission has the authority to ultimately pass the town's POCD.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle said she does not understand the commission's resistance to including citizens in the process of updating a POCD. She also made a motion for the board of selectmen to encourage the commission to begin work on the POCD simultaneously with the land development regulations, which was seconded by Ford.

Mathieu admitted that the POCD does need to be "tweaked," but said the commission feels it is not in "dire need of revamp," and found the zoning regulations to be "much more in need of wholesale revision."

Selectman Stan Soby, who is the Planning and Zoning Commission liaison for the selectmen, said he has attended the commission's meetings and feels that there has been "a lot" of work done by the commission on the land development regulations.

However, residents also urged the commission to make the town more farm-friendly with resident Darren Cugno admitting that he is currently in the process of looking to buy a larger farm and Colchester is not on the top of his list of places to do so.

In response to the community feedback, Turner and Mathieu told the public to come to them with their concerns in order to create revisions that the residents feel comfortable with.

Coyle postponed her request to encourage the Planning and Zoning Commission to start work on the POCD until the next board meeting.

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Also at the Feb. 21 meeting, the board approved a supplemental appropriation of \$34,000 from the town's undesignated fund balance to the fire department's payroll in the current budget. At the board's Feb. 7 meeting, Fire Chief Walter Cox requested the appropriation, stating that the department had concerns about maintaining its staff due to the recent spike in call volume. The \$34,000 appropriation will provide volunteer incentives, such as paying \$15 to volunteers for each six-hour shift worked, and an additional \$15 for every call volunteers respond to.

The selectmen also approved a supplemental appropriation of \$6,250 to be used in the process of the proposed William J. Johnston Middle School building project, which would renovate and expand WJMS to incorporate a senior center and community center. The appropriation would come from the town's undesignated fund balance and would pay for the architects of the project, Tecton Architects, to create a "menu of items" that would show a list of construction items included in the project. The menu would be given to the boards of selectmen, finance and education for review to make recommendations to possibly eliminate

or adjust construction work to lower the cost of the project, which was first proposed at \$68.5 million in January.

Tom Tyler, chairman of the building committee behind the project, told the selectmen that the menu of items would most likely be available to the boards in early April.

Also, First Selectman Gregg Schuster announced the success of the ProAct Inc. discount prescription drug cards that residents received in the mail last November.

The program is for residents who do not have insurance or are underinsured. The cards can be used on prescription drugs that are not covered in residents' insurance plans. Schuster shared with the board that 57 discount cards were used in December and resulted in \$4,891.91 savings, while the month of January saw "quite startling" numbers with 61 cards being used and a total of \$54,459.29 savings. The selectman recommended residents promote the card benefits to all since it is already "off to a good start."

Discounts on prescription drugs are based on the value of the drug and savings will vary. Residents who do not have a discount card or have lost theirs can obtain one by going to the town website, [colchesterct.gov](http://colchesterct.gov), and clicking the "Rx" link on the front page. Residents may also obtain a discount card at Youth and Social Services in Town Hall.

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



# First Full Hibachi Restaurant Comes to Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

A new form of entertainment has come to Colchester and it involves savory Asian cuisine that can be tossed, chopped and flipped right in front of your eyes.

Toyo Hibachi and Asian Fusion is the first restaurant of its kind to come to Colchester, and it certainly adds an interactive twist to dining. Although another restaurant in town offers hibachi, it does not provide diners with the right-before-your-eyes dining experience that includes full of blasts of fire and volcanoes made out of vegetables.

But even if customers are looking to dine in a relaxing atmosphere or make a casual trip to the bar for appetizers and cocktails, owner Jimmy Pan said the restaurant has something to offer everyone, with what he calls “three restaurants under one roof!”

At 464 South Main St., Toyo Hibachi and Asian Fusion consists of three rooms that each offer their own unique experience. The most exciting dining area, Pan said, is the hibachi room that features six hibachi tables that seat a total of 50 people. The hibachi experience provides diners with a chef that cooks their meals just inches away from customers’ seats and manager Robyn Wlodarczyk said the chefs are sure to entertain.

“The laughter that comes out of this room is unbelievable,” said Wlodarczyk while next to one of the hibachi grills.

But for a more relaxed setting, customers are also able to dine in the sushi dining room, which consists of booths and a sushi station where chefs hand roll sushi. Just behind the sushi station is also a picturesque wall of lights that

change color, providing a “New York-style” atmosphere, said Pan.

Diners looking to unwind and socialize over dinner and drinks can also choose to do so in the restaurant’s lounge that is complete with a 16-person full bar. Dimmed lighting also makes it easier for sports fans to enjoy the five mounted televisions within the lounge.

Although each area sets a different mood, Pan said customers of every room can choose from anything on the menu – a menu that includes 150 items to choose from.

The large menu includes a variety of Asian dishes including Chinese, Thai, Japanese and Vietnamese cuisine.

“This is a really, really Asian culture,” Pan said of the restaurant’s food.

Pan explained the menu varies from hand-rolled sushi and sashimi that is made from “top shelf seafood,” to authentic chicken dishes, and a long list of hibachi combinations that are grilled in front of the customers.

The menu also features a variety of noodles, fried rice, tofu and vegetable dishes to accommodate customers that might prefer to stay away from poultry or seafood.

Pan added that the prices are “modified” for the portions that customers are served. On average, he said customers pay about \$20 per person for a sit-down dinner.

And the food is just as eye-opening as the restaurant’s interior. The Toyo chefs create plates that not only excite one’s taste buds, but also are pleasing to the eye, full of color and made with detail, like the placement of an edible flower onto a plate.

“It’s like a rainbow,” Wlodarczyk said of the plates that come out of the kitchen.

Residents that enjoy Asian cuisine might be familiar with Pan, who also owns the traditional Chinese and Japanese restaurant Gung Ho, which is located across from the town green in the heart of Colchester. Pan said his inspiration to open up the hibachi restaurant came from his Gung Ho customers, who told him they’d like to see a hibachi restaurant in town that provides the entertaining dining experience. Pan said he is “so happy” he could provide that for them.

“It’s a great opportunity; I know so many people in town,” said Pan, who has lived in Colchester for most of his life. “I’m happy I can introduce this to the neighborhood.”

The restaurant consists of 20 other employees and Pan explained that all of the chefs are able to create all of the dishes on the menu, ranging from using the hibachi grill to rolling sushi. Pan said the workers are also just as di-



**Toyo Hibachi and Asian Fusion chefs stand amongst manager Robyn Wlodarczyk, middle left, and owner Jimmy Pan, middle right, inside the new restaurant’s hibachi room. The hibachi restaurant is the first of its kind to come to Colchester that offers meals cooked right in front of customers, while also offering a wide variety of Asian cuisine.**

verse as the restaurant’s atmosphere and food because half of the employees are American and the other half are Asian.

“It’s a good mix,” he said of his employees.

Pan and Wlodarczyk agreed that they make a great team and have been teaching each other various trades within the restaurant. For example, Pan is helping Wlodarczyk learn about the Asian dishes, while Wlodarczyk, a past bartender, is helping create an exotic drink menu full of tropical martinis and cocktails, which she said will come in about two weeks.

Also coming to the restaurant in the future will be an outdoor patio for the upcoming spring and summer seasons, as well as the possibility of adding a little American cuisine to the menu, but that’s “down the road,” Pan said.

The restaurant held its soft opening on Sunday, Feb. 17, but Wlodarczyk said last weekend was the restaurant’s first full weekend in town; it was a hit, she said, with every room of the restaurant full and a thirty-minute wait for hibachi.

Pan has already seen his regular Gung Ho customers at the new restaurant and said he’s received great feedback about the food so far.

As manager, Wlodarczyk said her goal is to

make sure every customer leaves satisfied. “I don’t want one unhappy person in here,” she said.

Yesterday was the first day of the restaurant’s grand opening, which was planned to continue today and last throughout the weekend, Pan and Wlodarczyk said.

Residents interested in trying the new hibachi grill can dine in or get take-out at Toyo Hibachi and Asian Fusion on weekdays from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. or on weekends from 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Those interested in learning more about the restaurant or to order take-out can also call 860-537-3800.



**Pictured above is one of the many sashimi dishes found on the new restaurant’s menu, which shows just how creative the sushi chefs get when creating dishes.**

# Meet Colchester’s New Director of Educational Operations

by Melissa Roberto

A new director is coming to Colchester’s school district, but acclimating to the four schools is probably one of the only things Kendall Jackson will be challenged with in his new position as Director of Educational Operations, as he held almost the same exact position in Middletown for nearly 19 years.

A Cromwell resident, Jackson said he isn’t too familiar with the town of Colchester but has had his fair share of learning the ins and outs of school facilities throughout his career.

Jackson will be replacing veteran Greg Plunkett, who has held numerous titles within the school district since 1995 and was Colchester’s Director of Educational Operations from 2006 until his retirement in January.

As Director of Educational Operations, Jackson will be responsible for monitoring equipment inside of the four Colchester public schools, overseeing school transportation, and supervising the custodial staff, as well as assisting in the approval and implementation of building projects within the schools.

But the first thing he plans to do when he walks into his new office on Monday is some-

thing that he also likes to call a “philosophy,” which is to “come in and learn.”

Jackson said he was “very pleased” to find out he got the job in Colchester. He recently retired from his position as Director of Facilities and Transportation for Middletown Public Schools – a larger district than Colchester – after he was offered an early retirement incentive that he admitted was “too good to pass up.”

But Jackson said he wasn’t exactly ready to retire. When he saw the job posting on Colchester’s website, he said it was “very, very similar” to what he did in Middletown.

Alongside his predecessor Plunkett, Jackson said he has already been given a tour of each of the four schools and was happy with what he saw.

“The facilities are in reasonably good condition already,” he said. “That’s a good way to start.”

Jackson’s experience within school districts is an asset that he feels will help him succeed in Colchester. Prior to Middletown, Jackson also worked for Westport Public Schools and Cheshire Public Schools in the early ‘90s in

similar positions to what he held in Middletown. During that time, he has assisted in projects that are similar to current projects going on in Colchester, providing oversight to approximately \$220 million worth of building projects in his career.

In Middletown, he also assisted in the approval and implementation of the Honeywell energy conservation project, an initiative that was recently approved in Colchester.

When asked what he thinks about the proposed \$68.5 million building project at William J. Johnston Middle School, Jackson admitted it will be a “tough” decision for the community but that he will do his best to assist in the process.

One duty he will be responsible in doing for the first time, however, is supervising cafeteria staff at each of the four schools. “That’s more of a management function than a cooking function and that’s in everyone’s best interest,” he joked.

Jackson attended Monday night’s Board of Education meeting and was introduced to the board by Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey

Mathieu – Jackson’s new boss. Mathieu shared with the board many of Jackson’s past duties, as well as reading aloud several “glowing recommendations” from his past co-workers and superintendents.

After the meeting on Monday, Mathieu said he was happy to bring Jackson on board. “He’s so qualified, so knowledgeable, and he’s been doing the exact same job in Middletown,” Mathieu said of Jackson.

Jackson said one of the challenges he will face in his new role is replacing Plunkett. “He’s very well-received in the schools and the community in general,” said Jackson.

But that won’t stop him from giving it his all. “I’m certainly going to give it one hundred percent,” he added.

Besides doing what he loves, Jackson said another plus he’s going to enjoy is working for the benefit of the kids in Colchester that attend the schools he will oversee. “It’s very rewarding as far as a career goes,” he said.

Jackson will start his new position in town on Monday, March 4.



# East Hampton Receives 52 Applications for Police Chief

by Joshua Anusewicz

At a meeting of the Town Council on Tuesday night, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco announced that the town had received 52 applications for police chief to replace the retiring Matthew Reimondo. The last day to submit an application was Monday, Feb. 25.

Maniscalco said Thursday that the applications were "a 50-50 mix" of in-state and out-of-state candidates and that, after a preliminary look, he was "very impressed" with the applicants.

With the help of a hired consultant, Maniscalco said, the applications will now be reviewed by a collection of retired and current police chiefs throughout the state. That committee will put the candidates in order of suitability before bringing the applicants to an oral board, he said, which will supply the town with 3-7 candidates, rated either "recommended" or "highly recommended."

When that list is supplied to the town, it will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the council, comprised of Barbara Moore, Kyle Dostaler and Derek Johnson, as well as two community members that will be chosen by the subcommittee. Maniscalco added that these council members will be coming up with questions to ask the candidates, and will grade the candidates based on these questions.

The findings of the subcommittee will then

be supplied to Maniscalco, along with the top three candidates, in order, for the town manager to make the final decision.

Despite the seemingly arduous process, Maniscalco said the target for hiring a new police chief is May, and he hopes to have the new chief marching in the Memorial Day parade.

"It's a very aggressive timeline, but I do think it's attainable," he said.

The town announced in January that Reimondo would accept a retirement package after 28 years of service in the East Hampton Police Department. The town had expected to hire an interim to start at the beginning of February and stay until a new chief was hired, but the town was unable to meet that deadline; instead of hiring an interim, Maniscalco elected to bring Reimondo back on an interim basis.

As an interim, Reimondo is receiving \$36.92 an hour, and will receive a \$6,000 stipend for health insurance at the end of his interim contract. During his time as interim, Reimondo will not receive any of his retirement benefits, nor will he accrue any additional benefits.

\* \* \*

The next regular meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

## Obituaries

Colchester

Valery A. Lesick

Valery A. Lesick, 92, wife of the late Frank Lesick, passed away at home Friday, Feb. 22. She was one of 12 siblings born to the late Maryanna and Andrew Rambush.

She is survived by two children, Pat Bayerowski of East Hampton and Gary Lesick of California; two sisters, Barbara and Christine of Texas; as well as several grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and two loving caregivers.

She was predeceased by grandson Scott Fowler.

She will be remembered for her musical and artistic abilities, her love of animals and the beauty of nature.

Services are private. There are no calling hours. Donations may be made to the American Heart Association.

Hebron

Raymond Edson

Raymond Edson, 26, died unexpectedly Wednesday, Feb. 13. Ray was a lifelong resident of Connecticut, primarily of Hebron and Enfield, until he had recently moved to Tennessee to be with his father.

Raymond had a great sense of humor, and loved to laugh. He also loved music. Though he faced many hurdles along the way, he had just finally in recent weeks achieved his goals of successfully completing his GED, gaining employment with his father, and having a place of his own to live.

Raymond leaves behind his mother, Jennifer Marques Edson and her fiancé, Jeff Benson, of Hebron; his father, Herb Edson of Tennessee (formerly of East Hampton); his brothers, Dustin and Jesse, his sister Chelsea, his maternal grandparents, Roy and Sigrid Marques *all?* of Hebron; his paternal grandparents, Betty and John Bard of East Hampton, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Ray will be missed by all.

A private memorial service will be held by the family.

East Hampton

Margaret Thienes Bolles

Margaret "Peggy" Thienes Bolles, 88, beloved wife of Richard H. Bolles of East Hampton, passed away peacefully Sunday, Feb. 24. Born in Hartford Sept. 2, 1924, to the late Rev. Elmer T. Thienes and Jean (Hood) Thienes, she lived in Marlborough before moving to East Hampton in 1986. She was a graduate of Glastonbury High School and Sargent College in Boston.

Peggy's loving personality and zest for life blessed her with many lasting friendships that spanned generations. In addition to being a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend, she was an active member of the Congregational Church, Podium Players and the East Hampton Belltones. Peggy was founding partner of the Marlborough Country Barn and worked as a substitute teacher in local school districts.

In addition to her loving husband of 26 years, Peggy is survived by her daughter, Debbie (Zirkenbach) Leonard, formerly of Middle Haddam; son Carl D. Zirkenbach and his partner Karen Goguen of Colchester; grandchildren Kevin MacGranor and wife Michele of Marlborough, Sarah (MacGranor) Bangert and husband Mark of Colorado, Karly Zirkenbach of Colchester; and great-grandchildren Madelyn and Scott Bangert. Peggy's "Bonus" children and their families include Richard Bolles Jr. of Dennis, Mass., Susan Petell of East Hampton, Kathy Bolles of Glastonbury, Joanne Murphy of Haddam Neck, Keith Bolles of Essex and James Bolles of Old Lyme.

The funeral service was held at the Congregational Church of East Hampton, 59 Main St., on Thursday, Feb. 28. Burial will be at the convenience of the family at Lakeview Cemetery, East Hampton. There were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in her memory to either the Congregational Church of Marlborough, PO Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447 or the Congregational Church of East Hampton, PO Box 237, East Hampton, CT 06424.

East Hampton

Lucius U. Tallman

Lucius "Lou," "Huck," U. Tallman, 85, a longtime resident of Glastonbury, and more recently of East Hampton, passed away peacefully Saturday, Feb. 9. Born March 29, 1927, in North Charlestown, N.H., he was a son of the late Lucius S. and Grace (Gerber) Tallman.

Lucius was a graduate of Glastonbury High School, he served in the United States Merchant Marines and was a proud Korean War veteran of the US Army. He was a lifetime member of the VFW Post 7659, Mason Columbia Lodge 25, a past member of Goodale-Ramaker American Legion Post 56 and a member of the Glastonbury P.O.C.

Lucius was known for his caring and generous nature, he was outgoing and a friend to many. He was the founder of Lou Tallman Landclearing, which he started in the early 1950s. He loved to play cards.

Lucius will be dearly missed by his children and their families: daughter Renée Tallman-Millar and her husband Bruce of East Hampton, and her children, Roger C. Savage of New Hampshire, Christine Colfer of Connecticut, Michael Savage of New Hampshire and Benjamin Savage of Connecticut; son Lester R. Tallman and his wife Kathleen (Moore) of So. Acworth, N.H., and their sons Lester and Jamie Tallman of New Hampshire and Matthew Tallman of Massachusetts; son Lucius M. Tallman and his wife Sandra (Kinney) of New Milton, W.V., and their sons Lucius, Thomas and David Tallman. Lucius also leaves to cherish his memory sister Catherine Schmidt, brother Walter Tallman and sister Ella Jewell, 11 great-grandchildren along the Eastern seaboard from New Hampshire, Connecticut, West Virginia and North Carolina; and many nieces and nephews throughout the United States.

In addition to his parents, Lucius is predeceased by his brothers Ralph and Bill Tallman, and his sisters Geneva "Ginny" Bell and Marion McKee.

Friends and family are invited to attend a period of visitation today, March 1, from 4-7 p.m., at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury. A memorial service is to be held Saturday, March 2, at 10 a.m., in the Congregational Church of South Glastonbury, 949 Main St., South Glastonbury. Burial is private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-1718, or visit [cancer.org/involved/donate/otherwaystogive/donate-by-mail-or-phone](http://cancer.org/involved/donate/otherwaystogive/donate-by-mail-or-phone); or Disabled American Veterans, Attention: Gift Processing, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301, or visit [dav.org/donate/Mail.aspx](http://dav.org/donate/Mail.aspx).

To leave an online condolence, visit [glastonburyfuneral.com](http://glastonburyfuneral.com).

Portland

Norma L. Werdelin

Norma L. Werdelin of Portland died peacefully at her home Saturday, Feb. 23. She was the daughter of the late Victor and Anna Werdelin.

Norma was predeceased by her sister, Winnifred Hand and leaves her nephews, Cadet Hand III and Gary Hand.

Norma was a graduate of Portland High School and the University of Connecticut. She was incredibly talented in many ways, but especially as an artist making pottery and silk screen prints. She was also an amazing seamstress and made all her clothes and coats. She had a very interesting career, having worked at Berkely University of California as an assistant to a future Nobel Prize-winning chemist. She met many renowned scientists and typed many a PhD thesis.

Later, she moved to New York, living in Greenwich Village. She worked as an assistant to a professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology. There she had many fashion friends especially her dear companion, Manny with whom she traveled extensively, both in the U.S.A. and Europe.

Norma was easily recognized around Portland driving her yellow VW convertible on her errands. She greatly appreciated all the people who helped her, especially Linnette who was her constant aide and friend this last year.

There will be no funeral for Norma and burial will be at Swedish Cemetery in Portland after the snow is gone. Contributions in Norma's memory can be made to the Portland Historical Society or the Portland Public Library.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit [portlandmemorialfh.net](http://portlandmemorialfh.net).

From the Editor's Desk

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Hey, I saw a Best Picture winner!

I don't always get to say that every year, but last weekend, when the Academy Awards were handed out, *Argo* fetched Best Picture. I saw the movie about a month and a half ago. It was very entertaining; fast-paced, dramatic (with comedy relief at just the right moments) and, for a true story that you pretty much knew had a happy ending, it was pretty suspenseful too.

*Argo* was a well-made film all around, and I was happy to see it take home the gold – and happy for Ben Affleck as well, who directed and starred in it and, as such, this was very much his baby. Affleck delivered a terrific, heartfelt speech, which delivered some nice advice at the end:

"It doesn't matter how you get knocked down in life, because that's gonna happen. All that matters is you've gotta get up."

Oh, and a very neat part about *Argo*'s win. It was announced by none other than the First Lady herself, Michelle Obama. Jack Nicholson – who has being Jack Nicholson down to an art, I gotta say – took to the Dolby Theatre stage to introduce the Best Picture nominees, but also introduced Obama, who appeared live via satellite from Washington, D.C. After Nicholson read off all of the nominees, Obama got to do the honors of opening the envelope and announcing the winner.

So not only did Affleck's movie win best picture, he got to hear the news direct from the First Lady of the United States. Pretty cool.

This year, I saw four of the films that were nominated for Best Picture: *Argo*, *Django Unchained*, *Les Misérables*, and *Silver Linings Playbook*. So I didn't see all the nominees. But of those four, yes, I can say *Argo* was the best. *Les Miz* was a close second. Having never seen the Broadway production, or heard any of the songs before, I had nothing to compare the movie to, and I was instantly taken with it. I found

it highly entertaining, and everybody involved really could sing. (Anne Hathaway did a stupendous job, and was justly awarded the Best Actress Oscar. Was it a shock? No. She'd pretty much had the award locked down ever since *Les Miz* opened in December. But that didn't make her any less deserving.) If there's a knock on it all, it's that maybe it was a little.... overproduced.

*Django Unchained* was a well-done movie, very funny at times, but I'll be honest, I felt a little uncomfortable by it. Not so much by the heavy use of the 'n' word; I mean, the movie was set in a pre-Civil War south. I'm sure the 'n' word was very heavily in use.

No, what I found uncomfortable was all of the gunfire – mainly the climax of the movie, which is a massive, very bloody shootout that was frankly, no pun intended, overkill. And it didn't help that I saw the movie less than two weeks after the Sandy Hook shootings. So I didn't find the gargantuan bloodbath at the end entertaining so much as a reminder of what played out in my state just days earlier. All of the scenes of people getting shot in the head, the spray of gunfire, just reminded me too much of Newtown.

Now, by the time I saw *Silver Linings Playbook*, I already knew it had been nominated for Best Picture. And I came out of it thinking, "Really? Best Picture-worthy?" It was entertaining, through and through, but it just didn't seem like a Best Picture type of film. The performances in it were great, though; Jennifer Lawrence won Best Actress in it, and she greatly deserved it. She did a terrific job. I'll probably see *Silver Linings* again at some point in the future, and I do recommend it. It was a very good – just not a great – movie.

\* \* \*

See you next week.



## Portland

### Dominic Limanni Funeral Rescheduled

Dominic Limanni, 92, passed away Saturday, Feb. 2, at Yale-New Haven Hospital. The original funeral arrangements were postponed due to extreme weather.

Dominic's family will receive relatives and friends at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Saturday, March 2, from 12:30-2 p.m. Funeral services will follow at the Church of St. Mary at 2:30 p.m. for a Mass of Christian Burial. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery.

The original obituary was published in the Feb. 8 *Rivereast*. A complete obituary can also be found on the Portland Memorial Funeral Home website, [portlandmemorialfh.net](http://portlandmemorialfh.net).

## Amston

### Barbara Ellen Dennis

Barbara Ellen (Roncaioli) Dennis, 83, of Suffield, formerly of Windsor and Amston Lake, loving wife of the late Robert "Bob" Dennis, passed into God's loving arms at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, with her family at her side.

Born at home in Windsor, daughter of the late Salvatore and Ruby (Harrison) Roncaioli, she lived in Windsor for 73 years, moving to The Suffield House nursing home in 2002. During her youth she enjoyed Girl Scouts and later as a Junior and Brownies leader in Deerfield and Wilson. She received the Ellsworth DAR Good Citizenship Award for Deerfield School. Barbara graduated from John Fitch High School in 1946 and was a class officer and on the reunion committee for several years.

Barbara enjoyed entertaining family and friends at the summer home Bob built on the shore of Amston Lake. She spent many happy hours with Tobacco Valley Campers NAFC and camping in New England and New York. She loved her cruises to the islands while Bob preferred hunting and fishing in Maine. They made frequent trips to Florida, but most enjoyable were vacations to Disney World with the entire family. Barbara was always ready for bingo and seldom missed a tag sale. She enjoyed reading newspapers and magazines and pounding on her ancient typewriter.

She was a member of the Windsor Seniors, Diabetes Club, TOPS 110, GOPS 135 and was past president of the Suffield House Resident's Council. She was employed by Crane Co., Bidwell Hardware and retired from Capital Temporaries as an executive secretary in 1979. Barbara attended religious services with parishioners of Sacred Heart Church held at the Suffield House.

Barbara is survived by the joys of her life, devoted daughter, Kathy Wassell, cherished granddaughter, Autumn Skinner, precious great-granddaughter, Eva Marie, and former son-in-law, Donald Wassell, all of Windsor; nieces, JoAnne Harrison-Becker and Karen Yacone; a special sister-in-law, Barbara Irene Normandin; and nephew Steven Normandin.

In addition to her beloved husband, Bob, of 57 years, and her parents, Barbara was predeceased by her brother, Theodore "Ted" Roncaioli Sr., and his wife Gloria, nephew Theodore Jr., and niece Gayle Bushnell; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Rolland and Jessie (Toepfer) Dennis; and maternal grandmother, Rosa Ann Harrison.

She also leaves treasured friends, Marion Kearney, Rosemarie Levack, Elsie Carlson, Bill and Dottie Fagan, Joe Miller, Joyce Castorino, Marilyn Luciuk, Barbara Ayoub, Joe Dyer, JFHS classmates of 1946 and 1948, Gilbert and Barbara Hale, Jim Murray, Vic and Sue Simmons, Janet Kurlick, Jack and Frances Garvan, Claire Okon, and Gladys Lane.

Sincerest thanks for your cards and visits to which she looked forward and enjoyed during her illness. Our deepest appreciation to Barbara's "adopted daughter", Diane Smith and dear roommate, Lee August, for helping her so much. Her family wishes to extend a special "Thank You" to the entire staff at The Suffield House for their friendship and compassionate care, especially nurses Ken and Heidi and CNAs in A Wing, Pam, Cathy C. Shereen, Cheryl, Vicky and Jen B.

Her family also wishes to thank the staff at St. Francis Hospital Cardiac Care Unit for their kindness, especially her physicians, Dr. Larry Suecoff, Dr. Dushyant Parikh, and Dr. Steven H. Brown. Barbara's family wishes to thank all of her religious friends who brought her much comfort during her long illness. Barbara truly enjoyed her golden years with staff and residents at The Suffield House.

There are no calling hours. A private burial will take place at the Windsor Veteran's Memorial Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the Suffield House Residents' Council, 1 Canal Rd., Suffield, CT 06078.

Carmon Windsor Funeral Home has care of the arrangements. Visit [carmonfuneralhome.com](http://carmonfuneralhome.com) for online condolences and a picture tribute.

## East Hampton

### Louis P. Brunette

Louis P. Brunette passed away Tuesday, Feb. 26, after a brief but courageous battle with cancer at the age of 95. Born in Cromwell to Guitano and Sebastiana (Fortuna) Brunette in 1917. Lou lived most of his life in New Britain, Rocky Hill and his lakeside house in East Hampton.

A totally self-made man, Lou graduated from the State of Connecticut Trade School of New Britain with a trade apprentice certificate as a machinist in 1934 and owned his own machine shop by age 21. After prospering through the war years by doing defense work, Lou sold his company, Brunette Tool, in 1951. Looking for a new venture, Lou bought a dump truck load of government surplus milling cutters and started what would become his life's work, Industrial Surplus. This company would go on to become one of the largest machine tool dealers in the country. Many now-prosperous Connecticut businesses owe their start to machines Lou sold them on a handshake and their promise to "pay when you can."

Lou was a true entrepreneur, as was evident by the many business ventures he was involved with over the years from Connecticut to California. Never a man to just accept what life handed him, Lou took life by the horns and lived every minute to the fullest. Whether he took to water or snow skiing or playing tennis, Lou outperformed men far, far younger than he. In business he always battled for the best end of a deal but once the deal was made, he stood by it even if a better offer would come along from someone else.

Lou enjoyed working in his flower and vegetable gardens, his early Saturday morning poker games at the casinos where he acquired six royal flush hands, which he would then be presented with his prized royal flush jackets. He was also an avid fisherman as he loved both salt and fresh water fishing whenever he could. He amassed a collection of fishing gear and kept a pole or two in the back of his car at all times just in case the right stream or lake was within his travels.

He loved his vacations at Bear Spring Camps in Rome, ME with his daughter Susan's family and his very special friend and companion of 30 years Valerie Liistro and her two sons Greg and Matt.

Lou is predeceased by daughter Carol Guzewicz; sisters Angelina Muzzicato, Ida George, Carm Cannata, and Ann Coyne; and brother Mike Brunette.

Surviving are children Louis Brunette Jr. from Ashland, Ore., Susan and Paul Gaffney from Newington, Karen and Guy Brunette from Glastonbury; and son-in-law Jack Guzewicz from Cromwell; his grandchildren, Zachary, Alex, Kaitlin, Paul, Jr., Michael, Trevor and Thomas; two great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Relatives and friends may call on Lou's family today, March 1, at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., from 4-7 p.m. Funeral services will begin on Saturday, March 2, at 9 a.m. at Newington Memorial to Church of the Holy Spirit, where a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Burial will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery, New Britain.

Diabetes research was always an important issue in Lou's life since his daughter Carol was first diagnosed with diabetes at an early age. As a memorial donation to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, 20 Batterson Park Road, 3rd Floor, Farmington, CT 06032, would be appreciated, he was also an avid gardener and loved flowers too.

To leave an online expression of sympathy for the family, visit [duksa.net](http://duksa.net).

## Colchester Police News

2/19: Peter Kevorkian, 28, of 44 Brainard Rd., was taken into custody for an active warrant for sixth-degree larceny, Colchester Police said.

2/22: State Police said Rachael Balch, 20, of 13 Oak Knoll Rd., East Hampton, was charged with evading and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

2/25: State Police said Steven Oungthongdy, 21, of 52 Crown St., Bristol, was charged with violation of probation.

## Portland

### Ileana L. Natale

Ileana L. Natale, 87, of Glastonbury, passed away Saturday, Feb. 23, in her home, with her family by her side. Born in Portland, she was the daughter of the late Nicola R. and Christina N. (Sancero) Natale and grew up in South Glastonbury, attending Glastonbury schools.

She worked for United Technologies for 38 years, serving as an executive administrator for Dr. John Gallivan, Harry Gray and Alexander Haig. Ileana cared for and supported multiple animal rescue organizations and loved her Brusels Griffon, Noodles.

Ileana dedicated her life to caring for her family, her mother Christina and her sister Christina in particular, as well as having an exceptionally close relationship with her brother, Justin. She will be greatly missed by her family and her large circle of friends, including two "angels," Diane Milne and her caregiver Colleen Campbell.

Ileana is survived and will be dearly missed by her devoted brother, Justin J. Natale and his wife Aileen of Glastonbury; her nieces and nephews, G. Justin Natale and his wife Katie, Jane N. Gionfrido and her husband Joseph, Charles Longo and his wife Betty Lou, Lynn Riotte and her husband Eugene, Gary J. Natale and friend Wendy Abrahms; and a host of grandnieces and nephews.

Ileana was predeceased by her siblings; Nahama A. Conte, Vinzella N. DiAngelo, Marie N. Longo, Nicola R. Natale and Christina A. Natale.

In keeping with her wishes, Ileana's services will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family will be pleased with donations to a charity of your choice in her memory.

The Glastonbury Funeral Home was entrusted. To share a memory, visit [glastonburyfuneral.com](http://glastonburyfuneral.com)

## Portland

### Daniel W. Culver Jr.

Daniel Willard Culver Jr., 48, of Hamden, died suddenly at his home Tuesday, Feb. 26. Born in Middletown, he was the son of Dorothy (Hills) Culver of Middletown and the late Daniel W. Culver Sr.

Dan grew up in Portland and was a graduate of Vinal Tech, Class of 1983. He was a master carpenter and took great pride in his remodeling projects. He was an avid fan of the Miami Dolphins, Boston Red Sox and NASCAR. Dan enjoyed playing in his pool league and was proud to be 1 in 36.

Along with his mother, he is survived by two sisters, Doreen P. Culver and Debra Thody and her husband, Donald, all of Middletown; a nephew and two nieces, Joshua Culver, Ashley Thody and Nicole Thody, all of Middletown; a four-legged niece, Lexie; and many loving aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

A graveside service will be held Saturday, March 16, at 11 a.m., in Pine Grove Cemetery, South Main Street, Middletown with Rev. Stefanie L. Bennett officiating. Friends and family may call Saturday, March 2, from 3-6 p.m., at Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown, and in lieu of flowers, may make donations in Dan's memory to the charity of their choice.

Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).

## Hebron Police News

2/22: State Police said Maria M. Ortiz, 48, of 93 Sycamore Rd. Apt. A, Manchester, was traveling southbound on North Street when she lost control of her vehicle and proceeded across the northbound lane of travel striking a snow bank located off of the roadway. Police said Ortiz was transported to Hartford Hospital by the Hebron Fire Department for complaints of chest pain.

## Andover Police News

2/23: State Police said sometime between Feb. 12 and Feb. 22 a residence on Bear Swamp Road was forcibly entered and a larceny of medication was committed. Police said this case is still under investigation.

## Colchester

### Nancy Lee Barch

Nancy Lee (Carico) Barch, 73, of Ocala, Fla., formerly of Colchester, passed away Friday, Feb. 22. Nancy was born in Baltimore, Maryland on August 22, 1939. She graduated from Belair High School in 1957.

Nancy lived in Aberdeen, Md., and worked as a hostess and manager of a restaurant. While there, she met and married Walter Barch, a submarine sailor, on May 9, 1968. Shortly after their marriage they moved to Connecticut, where they maintained a home until recently. In 1973, Nancy became Mom to Walter's three young children, Theresa, 11, Jane, 10, and Gary, 9, and also in 1976 her brother's daughter, Christina 9. Since Walter was a sailor and went to sea for extended patrols, she was not only Mom, but also filled in as dad. Throughout her life she always had open arms for kids and animals that needed help. Nancy and Walter were married for forty-four wonderful years and she will be missed dearly.

While in Connecticut they lived in Colchester and then Lebanon. Nancy had many different jobs over the years, including school bus driver for twenty-five years in Colchester. She enjoyed children, animals, gardening, needlework, ceramics, bowling, travelling in their RV and most of all, living life to the fullest.

Nancy is survived by her brother Frank Carico and his wife JoAnn, her husband Walter, her children Theresa Nebraska and her husband Todd, Jane Carson and her husband Tim, Gary Barch and his wife Brenda, and Christina Carico. She is also survived by her seven grandsons, Matt Carson, Steven Carson, Mark Nebraska, Sam Nebraska, Eric Barch, Kevin Barch and Zeke Carico. They will miss Grandma's hugs, famous stockings at Christmas, and the Easter baskets filled with goodies.

A memorial service in celebration of Nancy's life was held Sunday, Feb. 24, in Ocala, Fla. Family and friends gathered to share memories. Private memorial celebrations will be held in Michigan and Connecticut at a later date.

Memorial gifts may be made to Hospice of Marion County, 3231 Southwest 34th Ave, Ocala, FL. 34478.

To share a memory or offer a condolence, visit [memorial.yourtribute.com/nancyleebarch](http://memorial.yourtribute.com/nancyleebarch).