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On Tuesday morning, the metal buckets Ron Wenzel attached to his maple trees were slowly filling up with sap. Wenzel would later collect the contents and turn it into pure maple syrup in preparation for the Hebron Maple Festival, going on this weekend.

It's the Sweet Time of Year

by Geeta Schrayter

On Tuesday morning, all was quiet at the Wenzel Sugar House in Hebron. Sap slowly flowed from the maple trees tapped by Ron Wenzel into nearly 400 metal buckets, but in the wooden sugar house nestled on the hill near his home on East Street, the air matched that of outside: crisp and cool. The evaporator he uses to turn hundreds of gallons of sap into pure Connecticut maple syrup sat empty. There was no steam rising up and out the chimney.

Soon, however, all that will change. Wenzel planned to collect sap that afternoon, and begin boiling the next day. When he does, a fire will be stoked in the evaporator, the air in the sugar house will become warm and sweet, and a cloud of white steam will billow consistently out the chimney as he boils most of the water out of the sap. The result will be more maple syrup to add to the 30 gallons he's already made as he prepares for the 23rd annual Hebron Maple Festival, going on this Saturday and Sunday.

Wenzel said this year could produce a record crop of syrup. The temperature has been cooperating with cool nights and warm day, and the ground has been nice and muddy.

"More mud means more sap," he said. "I don't know why but I can tell you that's true."

And since Wenzel has been making maple syrup for the past 25 years, it's safe to assume that's enough time for him to learn the tricks of the trade. Wenzel first began making syrup when he lived in Rocky Hill and discovered he had six maple trees on his property. His operation is bigger now, but he loves it just the same.

"It's a disease with no cure," he said. "I love it."

Wenzel said he planned on making maple syrup "until I'm on the other side of grass," and is a big fan of the product too.

"Oh gosh, yeah, I love it," he said, adding he likes using it for traditional purposes like soaking a stack of warm pancakes or filling in the crevices on a pile of waffles. His wife Joyce makes maple candy too, and whatever remains after the Maple Fest is over gets placed in the freezer. Wenzel said there's nothing quite like mowing the lawn in the summer and sucking on a piece of the cold candy – which he admits brings a nice sugar high since it's pure sugar.

Considering Wenzel's love of the product and the process, it makes sense that he's been involved with the maple festival since its onset – and in fact, it's a love of the process that brought the whole thing about.

Wenzel explained the festival was started 24 years ago by Hebron resident Seldon Wells. A fellow maple sugar producer, Wells had a "plethora of syrup" that year, and didn't know what to do with it.

"He got a hold of the library and says, How about a fundraiser? I'll make sugar on snow," Wenzel shared.

The fundraiser was held the second week in March, involved only Wells, was free to the public – and a hit. Wenzel said Wells was "so overwhelmed" people came to that first event that he contacted Wenzel and a couple of other sugar houses in town shortly after and asked if

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No World Language in School Budget

by Melissa Roberto

At its Feb. 28 meeting, the Marlborough Board of Education approved Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz's proposed 2013-14 budget – a spending package that does not include a world language program that a majority of the nearly 30 residents at the meeting were in support of.

The budget was approved at \$7,372,984, an increase of \$172,924, or a 2.40 percent increase over the current year.

The plan is \$5,500 higher than what Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz originally proposed Jan. 28. The extra money is for instructional supplies, and will boost the amount of money Marlborough Elementary School teachers receive each year to buy supplies for their classrooms from the current \$200 to \$300. Sklarz said that "years ago" teachers used to receive \$400 each year; the current \$200 amount, he feels, is a "small amount of money." He said he'd like to eventually get back up to \$400 per teacher in the 2014-15 budget.

But the controversial topic in the budget, one that was discussed at length by members of the

board and members of the public, was the inclusion of a world language program. Last year, the board cut the school's Spanish program, a controversial decision residents have rallied against ever since. The former Spanish program at MES consisted of one hour of Spanish a week that was split into two days with one 20-minute session and one 40-minute session.

Early in the Feb. 28 meeting, board member Robert Clarke made a motion for the board to "set policy for a world language program." Without specifying what he wanted the policy to be, Clarke told the board he believed the topic is "an issue that needs to be resolved decisively and quickly."

However, Clarke's request was defeated by a 4-3 vote, with board members Mimi LaPoint and Shannon Bielaczyc voting in agreement with Clarke, and members Betty O'Brien, Ruth Kelly, Louise Concodello and Karen Tyler voting in opposition.

Clarke's request also came after public comments where more than a dozen residents spoke in favor of a language program to be added into

the budget, and an additional four letters were read aloud by residents that were not present at the meeting that were also in support of it.

Several residents that spoke in favor of a language program being added to the budget said they were "sad" or "disappointed" to see a language program excluded from the budget proposal. Many parents – some with children at MES and others with children at RHAM middle and high schools – also were concerned that MES students will enter RHAM at a disadvantage as opposed to their future RHAM peers from Hebron and Andover who are currently being taught a language at their elementary schools.

Among the many residents in support of a world language program, Lindsay Cochefski, a junior at RHAM High School, also spoke in support of bringing back a language program at MES. She told the board that "if all goes well" she will graduate from RHAM with six UConn foreign language credits and that it was the Spanish program at MES that helped her succeed in French later on at RHAM.

"Spanish classes I took at an earlier age definitely helped me with the process of learning another new language," Cochefski said. "If Marlborough students aren't exposed to foreign language before they reach RHAM they'll have a much more difficult time adjusting to a new language when they haven't learned anything like it before."

Other residents told the board it was not putting "children first" by excluding a world language program from their curriculum.

Multiple comments were also made in opposition of the board's subcommittee, World Languages and Cultures, and its duty to study options for an afterschool language program.

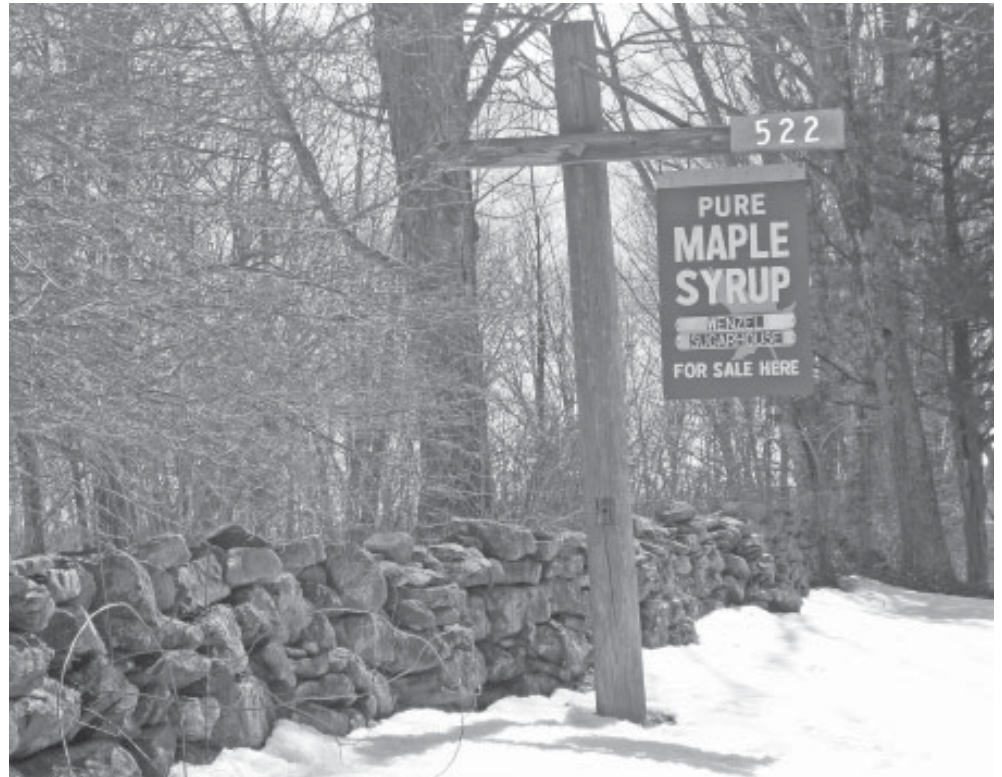
Resident Judy Benson-Clarke expressed her concerns with an afterschool language program.

"A second language is a necessary skill and it belongs during the school day," she said. "Offering a language program as an afterschool program in my opinion puts it in the same category as table tennis, a nice but not necessary skill."

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During this weekend's Maple Fest, visitors can find Ron Wenzel at his sugar house on East Street, showing how maple syrup is made. A cow from The Farmer's Cow will be there too, as will Gilead Congregational Church which will offer homemade maple cake topped with ice cream. And of course, as the sign indicates, plenty of pure Hebron-made maple syrup will be available for purchase.



Sweet Time cont. from Front Page

they wanted to open their sugarhouses for a day. They agreed – and the Maple Fest was born.

The event is still held during the second weekend in March, but it's grown since those early days, and this year visitors can expect to find a wide variety of activities, demonstrations and maple-flavored treats. New this year will be a tractor parade taking place at 11:30 a.m., on Sunday, while among the familiar offerings will be the Birds of Prey exhibit at AHM, the silent auction, craft fair and quilt show. There will be face painting and an ice cream eating contest, and there will be a Revolutionary War

encampment demonstration along with the ability to watch blacksmith's craft hand-forged items. Tours of the sugarhouses are available along with tours of the town's old one-room school houses and the World War II Observation Post.

But of course, it's the maple treats that will take center stage, and they certainly run the gamut: from maple milkshakes to maple cotton candy and sugar on snow, maple cookies to maple cake and maple flavored ham, egg and cheese sandwiches or maple ham grinders – there's something for everyone. There's also

a pancake breakfast held by the Knights of Columbus on Saturday, and another held by the Hebron Lions Club on Sunday.

And those looking to enjoy something non-maple related will discover bowls of chili, chili dogs, and hot dogs, cheeseburgers, French fries and fried dough.

Visitors can, of course, stock up on the sweet substance too - by the pint, quart or even half gallon.

In a press release from Economic Development Coordinator Randy Anagnostis, the event was touted as a great way to celebrate the onset

of spring.

"Each year, thousands of visitors from Hebron and the surrounding region converge on the town for two days of fun, entertainment and educational activities," he wrote, adding in order to truly experience the event, "plan on spending a significant amount of time wandering around to dozens and dozens of locations around town each offering something unique."

The Hebron Maple Festival takes place this Saturday and Sunday, March 9 and 10, from 10-4. For more information, visit hebronmaplefest.com.

School Budget cont. from Front Page

But a handful of residents also came forward to the board to express concerns about a different topic – higher taxation.

One resident, Midge Denno, applauded the board for "holding constraints" when developing its budget. Although Denno is a member of the Commission on Aging, she said she was speaking as an individual.

"The expense factor is a big one because the student population is declining," said Denno. "The senior population is increasing, and yes, many of them won't be able to afford [higher taxes]."

Resident Cliff Denniss, who is also vice chairman of the Board of Finance, did not give his opinion on the world language program. However, he told the board that he, like other senior citizens in town, cannot afford an increase in taxes. He added that senior citizens in town have come to him directly with the same concern.

"They don't mention the foreign language program, they are concerned with overall taxes and that has to be a concern also," he said.

But during the board's budget discussion, the world language topic was revisited as Mimi LaPoint made a motion to add a line item within the budget to cover the expense of a world language program.

However, Sklarz explained that a figure would need to be placed into the budget to cover the cost of the program. Clarke, with some guidance from Sklarz, estimated that \$85,000 would need to be placed into the budget to cover the expense of a teacher, supplies and program development.

The board then took a vote whether to add \$85,000 into the budget as a line item for a world language program, but for a second time the vote was split 4-3, with members Clarke, LaPoint and Bielaczyc in favor of it, and O'Brien, Kelly, Concodello and Tyler in opposition.

And the 4-3 vote pattern continued throughout the entire meeting, as the board's final vote on the overall budget total was split between members Clarke, LaPoint and Bielaczyc against it, and O'Brien, Kelly, Concodello and Tyler in favor of it – a vote that approved the budget without a world language program.

In response to the budget approval, multiple residents spoke to the board again saying they were "disappointed" with its decision to exclude

a world language program from the budget.

Resident Wes Skorski told the board he was "embarrassed" that it did not take the constituents' desires into consideration when making budget decisions.

"What I'm seeing here is that the members have their own agenda," said Skorski.

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski – also a member of the crowd at the meeting – spoke to the attendees and the board to explain that she, too, supports the creation of a world language program that starts in kindergarten. However, the selectwoman admitted that the approval of a world language program during the development of next year's budget would not give the administration enough time to develop a beneficial program.

"There's a lot of constraints on teachers and administrators and board members in getting this all to go forward," Gaudinski explained.

The selectwoman also informed residents that Gov. Dannel Malloy's proposed state budget could negatively impact the town of Marlborough if it is passed. Malloy's proposal to eliminate car tax could result in the town losing about \$1.2 million in tax revenue, she said. Also, Gaudinski said residents often come into her office expressing their concerns with their tax bills.

Lastly, Gaudinski told the public the Board of Education hasn't excluded a world language program from the school forever.

"I think everybody has to work together and I didn't hear from this Board of Education that foreign language won't be back," she said.

On Wednesday, Bielaczyc said that, although she was disappointed that the world language program is not part of the budget, the board will continue to move forward to do "what is best for the kids in town."

Also at last Thursday's meeting, the Board of Education approved the 2013-14 academic calendar. The calendar shows the school year will begin on Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2013, and will end on Thursday, June 12, 2014.

The Board of Education budget will be presented to the Board of Finance as part of the overall town budget Wednesday, March 13, at 7 p.m., also in the MES library. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 21, at 7 p.m., in the MES library.

East Hampton Police News

2/7: Robert Sweikert, 45, of 2583 Jagger Ln., Hebron, was arrested for failure to drive right and DUI, East Hampton Police said.

2/7: Samuel J. Clymer, 47, of 1935 Boston Post Rd., Westbrook, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle without a license and without insurance, police said.

2/12: Heather Miceli, 28, of 5 Colchester Ave., was issued a summons for disorderly conduct and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

2/16: Eric D. Cook, 27, of 7 Old Coach Rd., and Greg Sklodosky, 39, of 7 Edgerton St., were involved in a two-car motor vehicle crash at the intersection of Main and Edgerton streets, East Hampton Police said. Cook was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, possession of narcotics and failure to carry insurance, police said.

2/19: Piotr M. Bryzys, 38, of 121 West High St., was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

2/21: Adam M. Lay, 35, of 2 S. Main St., was involved in a one-car motor vehicle crash in the area of 81 Colchester Ave. (Route 16), police said. Lay was arrested for operating a motor vehicle under the influence, failure to drive right and failure to carry insurance, police added. Lay was also charged that day with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

2/21: Patrick S. Aiello, 24, of 3 Sears Pl., was arrested for second-degree failure to appear, police said.

2/22: Ryan T. Kirkland, 25, of 51a Grove St., Portland was issued a summons for failure to obey a control signal, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended/revoked license and driving without insurance, police said.

2/25: Arthur J. Maitland, 23, of 103 Sunset Rd., and Mitchell D. Anderson, 23, of 24 S. Main St., were both arrested for third-degree assault and breach of peace stemming from the same incident, police said.

Marlborough Selectmen OK \$4.52 Million Town Operations Budget

by **Melissa Roberto**

At its March 5 meeting, the Board of Selectmen approved the 2013-14 town operations budget at a total of \$4,526,682, or a 2.4 percent increase over the current year.

The town operations budget is just one of six portions that make up the town's overall spending plan. First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski shared with the board the other five portions that make up the town budget: Marlborough's portion of the RHAM middle and high school budget that was presented at its meeting last Monday at a total of \$7,457,004; the local Board of Education budget (which was approved by the school board last Thursday) at a total of \$7,372,984; a contingency fee of \$20,000 to help cover emergency expenditures; net capital, which was shown at \$0; and debt that is totaled at \$2,659,873.

The categories were then translated into percentages based on how much they increased or decreased over the current year. Debt was shown at the highest increase of 6.91 percent over the current year, which was then followed by the local Board of Education and the town operations portions, which each saw a 2.40 percent increase over current year spending; the Marlborough portion of the RHAM budget, which climbed 2.06 percent increase; contingency, which remained flat from current year spending; and a 100 percent decrease in net capital was shown, from \$115,839 in the cur-

rent year, due to a new proposal created by Gaudinski.

Gaudinski's proposal to exclude capital expenditures from the budget is currently being reviewed by town treasurer Mike O'Neil. The proposal – which has never been seen before in Marlborough's budget – calls to remove capital expenditures, otherwise known as "net capital," from the budget and to pay for them by the town's undesignated fund balance that is made up of surplus funds that aren't designated for any specific project.

Capital requests for the 2013-14 fiscal year include \$40,000 for the revaluation; a \$55,000 generator for the town emergency operations center; \$65,000 to replace the roof at Richmond Memorial Library; a \$40,000 rolloff truck for the transfer station; and a \$175,000 7-yard dump truck.

But the largest single component in the list of capital requests is \$332,819 for road improvements. Gaudinski highlighted Marlborough roads that are proposed to be repaired and paid for during the 2013-14 fiscal year. The highest priority is the reconstruction of a culvert on South Main Street – a project that Gaudinski said is still out for bid. Once bids are received, Gaudinski said, the town will then determine what funds will be used to complete road improvements and how much the road repairs will cost.

Other improvements of high importance in-

clude repairs to Jerry Daniels Road, Lafayette Road, Riverview Circle, Phelps Road, James Lane and Pond View Lane.

Gaudinski also explained that the various roads are proposed to be paid for by either road materials funds, Town Aid Road funds or Capital Non-Recurring funds.

The first selectwoman also presented the mill rate calculation to the board at 31.76, or .74 mills over the current year.

The town operations budget passed unanimously, and selectman Mike Gut reacted well to the proposed spending package.

"I'm satisfied," he said. "It's a reasonable proposal to go forward to the Board of Finance."

* * *

Also at Tuesday's selectmen meeting, Gaudinski updated the board with the current status of Phase 2 of the Stage Harbor Healthcare Center Sewer Project.

The project would pick up where Phase 1 of the project left off, with the construction of a sewer line at the southern intersection of Cheney Road and Lake Ridge Drive to the intersection of Cheney Road and Park Road, and will also hook up Beverly Lane and five houses on North Main Street.

The Marlborough Health Care Center (MHCC), which has also been referred to as the Stage Harbor Healthcare Center, would connect to the town's sewer line at Cheney and Park roads and pay for their private extension

separately. Town officials say that currently MHCC manually pumps its system once or even twice a day.

While the town and MHCC construction will be paid for separately, both entities will go out to bid together.

On Tuesday, Gaudinski said, she received a letter from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) that said the department approved the project plans. She said she expects the town to go out to bid for the project in the next few weeks.

"It's moving in the right direction," she said of the project.

Also, MHCC has made its first payment to the town to cover its portion of the design and bid document expenses at a total of \$20,000, which was a requirement in a contract signed by both entities.

* * *

Lastly, the selectmen appointed resident Judith Hanover Kaplan as a new member to the Board of Education to replace former member Corinne Chappelle for a term that will expire in November 2015.

The town budget will be presented to the Board of Finance on Wednesday, March 13, at 7 p.m., at the Marlborough Elementary School library. The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

EHHS Project Fate Could Soon Be Decided

by **Joshua Anusewicz**

It's won the approval of the High School Building Committee and the Board of Education, and earned a preliminary thumbs-up from the Town Council on Tuesday. But if the town is to move forward with the proposed East Hampton High School renovation project – and the residents are to get a chance to vote – the proposal will have to pass at a pivotal meeting of the Board of Finance today, March 8, at 12:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

Though no official action was taken, the council, with members Barbara Moore and Ted Hintz Jr., absent, was presented with the proposed concept for the first time on Tuesday. Glenn Gollenberg of the architecture firm SLAM Collaborative of Glastonbury, the designers of the concept, and Jim Giuliano of the Capital Region Education Council (CREC), the group tabbed as project manager, were on hand at the meeting to provide the councilors with an extensive overview of the project.

The council had yet to review the project, but the particulars of the design have been hashed out multiple times over the last month. Several weeks ago, the building committee settled on "Concept 2B," 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 the 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 parking 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 in the long run. Another cost-saving measure included in the plan is moving the Board of Education offices to the high school from their current location on Main Street, which is rented space.

"The project will touch all corners of the building," Gollenberg told the council Tuesday, adding that community accessibility was also factored in to the design concept.

With a concept in place, CREC was also able to put a price tag on the project; the "renovate as new" option that has been approved would cost \$52,471,220, with the town on the hook for \$28,834,540 due to the state reimbursement rate of 52.5 percent for renovation projects. Giuliano said that the price is based on similar projects that CREC has done in the past.

The project is expected to be financed by municipal bonds, which town finance director Jeff Jylkka said will be issued in the 2017-18 fiscal year. Early estimates, Jylkka added, are that the average interest rate over the 20-year repayment period is roughly 4.5 percent.

"It's a very good time for municipal bonds right now," added Michael MacDonald of Downes Construction of New Britain, the construction manager of the project. MacDonald also claimed that in over 75 years of business, Downes had "never gone over budget," usually returning funds at the end of the project, opening the possibility for other purchases.

The track record of Downes, coupled with the experience of SLAM and CREC, instilled confidence in the building committee and led them to their choice. "We have a great team with a lot of experience going forward," said High School Building Committee member Cindy Abraham.

But whether or not the project will be going

forward is the question on everyone's mind as the design concept – and its hefty price tag – reach the Board of Finance today. Town officials have expressed concern this week that the finance board is basically split on the concept, and that the future of the project could be in danger if the board doesn't approve it. According to the building committee, the hope is for the concept to be approved and sent to the residents for a referendum in early April, as an application has to be sent to the state by June 30.

Supporters of the project this week said that, at the least, the decision should be made by the voters and not a select group of elected officials. "It shouldn't be the decision of six or seven people," said council member George Pfaffenbach on Tuesday following the project presentation. "This should go to the people of this town."

If the concept passed the Board of Finance on Friday, it would then move to the Town Council again on Tuesday for an official vote to send it to referendum. If the project heads to referendum, a groundswell of support for the project has already begun, led by the formation of a political action committee (PAC) called EHHS Renovate to Educate, started by residents Joelyn Leon and Thom Cordeiro.

Cordeiro said Wednesday that the PAC was formed to wrangle support from parents, particularly in the elementary schools, as they would benefit most from the school, and educate voters using signs, mailers, and social media. The group has created a Facebook page that has already garnered close to 500 followers, a blog, ehhsrenovate.toeducate.tumblr.com, to disseminate additional information, and has sent a number of letters to board members in support of the project.

Cordeiro, a former council member and parent of three students in the district, echoed the thoughts of Pfaffenbach on Wednesday, believ-

ing the decision should be left to the voters. "I've heard that some boards aren't so sure, but I think it would be crazy if they didn't send this to referendum," he said, adding, "I had some original concerns [about the cost], but I realized that this is such a great opportunity to create a better place for the students and our community."

At Tuesday's meeting, Cordeiro made a passionate pitch to the council, outlining why he thought an updated high school facility was imperative. "When choosing a community, people look to the school system when making a choice," he said. "We have a fantastic school system now; let's ensure that we continue to have a great school system for years to come. I implore you to support this proposal and allow the residents of East Hampton to determine if this is the best way to spend their money. I am as concerned as you are about the cost, but the cost of doing nothing will be much more expensive."

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

Colchester Summer Camp Directors Opt Not to Return

by Melissa Roberto

While the Colchester Parks and Recreation summer camp lives on, two of its former co-directors will not return this year to help run it.

Resident Shannon Tamosaitis and her brother, Kyle, said they have chosen not to re-apply this year due to approved camp changes that will result in unsafe ratios and inconsistency in staffing.

Shannon worked at Camp Aboyer for nearly a decade, while Kyle began working for the camp in 2005. The camp is designed for kindergarten through sixth-graders.

As co-directors in 2012, Kyle said the two were responsible for planning the camp on a day-to-day basis prior to the start of the camp, plan field trips and book guests, as well as train other employees.

The “inconsistent” changes in staffing began last year, Kyle explained. Last summer, he said Recreation Manager Cheryl Hancin advised the two siblings to cut 7-8 staff members from the camp. He said each counselor was on-call on a weekly basis due to the varying number of camp participants each week.

On Wednesday, Hancin said staffing needs at the camp are determined based on ratio and participant enrollments.

“When camp had 130 participants we had all staff working; when camp had only 80 participants we had less staff working as there were less children to supervise,” said Hancin.

Kyle also said the change to on-call positions will continue during this year’s camp, which he believes has taken away aspects of the camp that were once so great. Shannon agreed.

“This will reflect inconsistency regarding staff, their relationship to campers, compromise with the integrity of the program and jeopardize communication with parents and the like,” said Shannon.

Hancin, however, explained that there were attempts made last year to increase enrollments last summer “to keep everyone working.” Some of the attempts included adding seventh-graders to the camp, adding a “Buddy day” to expose more children to it as well as increasing promotion of the camp.

But the efforts did not achieve results the Recreation Department anticipated.

“Unfortunately the program participation did not grow as much as we hoped and also the economy has affected parents’ decisions to send their child to camp,” Hancin said.

Hancin added that this year “many” staff members will be hired to work the entire summer and “few” will be hired on an as needed basis.

According to minutes posted on the town’s website, at its Jan. 7 meeting, the Parks and Recreation Commission accepted more changes to take place at this year’s summer camp. The changes include: the elimination of two specialists, elimination of the practice of hiring junior counselors for four weeks and instead hiring junior counselors for the full eight weeks of the camp, increase staff with flex/sub employees when appropriate based on weekly numbers, make all job candidates aware in writing that staffing needs are based on the number of campers, eliminate initial job assignments when hiring counselors, open and post all positions every year and keep wages consistent with 2012 salaries.

Shannon and Kyle said the additional cuts to staff will raise the number of campers one staff member is in charge of supervising.

“That alone scares me too much to represent the camp as a director,” Kyle said of the higher staff-to-camper ratio.

Shannon said during all the years she worked at the camp she kept the staff-to-camper ratio

at 1:5. But last summer as Hancin started to make cuts to staff, that ratio grew to 1:10, and at times was even 1:12 “when [Hancin] saw fit.”

Supervisor of the camp Anita Pizzutiello confirmed that the upcoming summer camp will have a ratio of 1:10, which she said is a recommendation from the American Camping Association and is lower than the ratios of camps in surrounding towns.

“Other neighboring states and towns in Connecticut have higher ratios up to 1:15 so we are confident our camp will be safe,” she said.

The summer camp uses 52 acres of land in town at the Colchester Recreation Complex at 215 Old Hebron Road. The area is open to the entire public – another reason Shannon said she did not feel that the staff-to-camper ratio should go up.

“These current camp changes are particularly interesting when one considers the heightened security schools across the nation are currently practicing regarding the [Newtown] tragedy on Dec. 14,” stated Shannon.

Another change accepted by the commission was a change made to Shannon and Kyle’s former positions as co-directors. This year, the camp will have one director and one assistant director.

Camp positions were advertised on the town website and the closing date for all applications was Feb. 19. Pizzutiello said that the Recreation Department received “several dozen applications” for the positions that include applications of “many” former Colchester staff members.

In fact, Hancin said Parks and Recreation veteran Cari Diugou has been hired as the camp’s new director. Since 2000, Diugou has held various titles at Parks and Rec. in various roles including assistant director of the

Kindercamp, Counselor in Training Leader and is currently continuing her position as a program instructor for youth and preschool programs.

Although Kyle knows former staff members that did reapply this year, Kyle said they no longer consider the camp their “first priority” because of the inconsistent hours.

Shannon said she knows of “several” summer camp veterans that will not return to the camp.

According to Hancin, the department has received a “competitive” pool of applicants.

Also, for the first time, Hancin said the camp is hiring counselors to supervise children with special needs “although we have always had staff with experience with special needs campers.”

While both Shannon and Kyle admitted it will be hard not to return this year for a job they both loved, they said they do not want to work for a program that they no longer support.

“The future vision of the camp is simply too far from our own and we cannot in good [conscience] place our name on a program which has been compromised, after so many years of success,” Shannon explained.

Kyle added that he wouldn’t be surprised if trips or guests from the camp are cut this year, as he said Hancin was originally making staff cuts “out of concern for budget.”

Pizzutiello said the camp offers arts and crafts and sports and games for the kids. She added that there will be eight weeks with a theme that give children opportunities to “grow, make new friends and [make] memories to last a lifetime.”

The department is still in the process of interviewing applicants, and time will tell how many past staff members will return.

Colchester Grand List Grows by 1.4 Percent

by Melissa Roberto

The Oct. 1, 2012, Grand List of assessable properties in Colchester is out, and town officials are pleased with the 1.4 percent increase over the 2011 list.

The net grand list totals \$1,202,303,420, an increase of \$16,198,580 over the 2011 list.

The Grand List represents Colchester’s net value of assessed property. The list is broken into three categories – real estate, personal property and motor vehicle – and although all of the categories saw an increase in 2012, Tax Assessor John Chaponis pointed out that the increase in motor vehicle assessments were so slight that they produced “only a fraction of one tenth of a percent” increase

Real estate assessments totaled \$1,030,323,120, an increase of \$7,362,470, or .71 percent over the 2011 list, personal property assessments came to \$42,820,090, an increase of \$6,565,190, or 18.1 percent from 2011, and the motor vehicle assessments slightly rose to \$115,460,210, an increase of \$70,920, or a scant .06 percent.

Chaponis said the nearly \$7.4 million increase in real estate reflected “new homes being built or renovated,” as well as “some commercial projects.” Two commercial projects that were built in 2012 included the new Stop & Shop gas station and a karate studio, Chaponis said.

Chiefly, the assessor said the \$6.5 million increase in personal property assessments was due to “heavy duty” construction equipment that was needed for ongoing and “large” con-

struction projects in Colchester during 2012. The assessor said the equipment, such as excavators and bulldozers, can be pretty costly. The increase in personal property was quite a jump from the year prior, which only resulted in a two million dollar increase.

The “stagnant” motor vehicle assessments could be a result of taxpayers “trading down,” or replacing a newer vehicle for a car that is worth less, Chaponis said.

“The fact that motor vehicle basically [stayed] the same makes the 1.4 percent Grand List increase all the more surprising,” said Chaponis.

He added that motor vehicle assessments actually went up by 6.6 percent the year prior.

To obtain the net Grand List total, Chaponis said totals are added up for what is currently known for real estate, personal property and motor vehicles. Then the assessor adds in an estimate for prorates and a motor vehicle supplement. The 2012 Grand List shows prorates at \$1,800,000 and a motor vehicle supplement at \$14,400,000.

Prorates, Chaponis explained, are “newly-constructed real estate/homes that are completed after the Grand List,” while motor vehicle supplement portion is made up of “cars purchased after the assessment date.”

Once a total of the prorates, motor vehicle supplement, and the list’s three categories is obtained, an estimate of what is expected to be taken off of the Grand List – by means of corrections or adjustments made by the Board of

Assessment Appeals (BAA) – is subtracted from the total. The overall total with the subtraction presents the Grand List net total.

The assessor explained that corrections are usually made because of vehicles that are sold, destroyed or registered out of state, as well as exemptions that are applied by veterans, volunteers, seniors or disabled residents.

While the Grand List net total shows nearly a \$16.3 million increase over the 2011 list, in Chaponis’ eyes it’s more of an \$18-20 million climb, due to factors he was aware of before the numbers for the list even came out. Chaponis said these factors included a “few” subdivisions that used to be taxed individually that are now taxed as one “larger parcel with a much smaller assessment” given the current state of the economy; personal property – mostly construction equipment – that was in Colchester in 2011 but did not stay in town in 2012; and reductions the BAA made to the 2011 Grand List after it was released.

Taking all of these into consideration, Chaponis said the 2012 Grand List presents a “very healthy increase,” given the current state of the economy.

Although he admitted it’s “not spectacular,” First Selectman Gregg Schuster said he was happy with the 2012 increase, especially because other towns in the state are not seeing the same results.

“Most towns are seeing a decrease in their Grand List or are seeing a flat Grand List and we’ve managed to grow ours by 1.4 percent,”

he said.

Schuster added that the Grand List increase also proves that Colchester is still expanding as a town.

“It’s a sign that Colchester is still doing fairly well in this economy,” he said. “We’re struggling like everyone else but people are still deciding to open business here, open facilities and live here.”

The top 10 real estate taxpayers on the Oct. 1, 2012 list were: Country Place of Colchester Ltd. Partners at \$9,211,100; SS1 Colchester LLC at \$7,232,900; City of Norwich at \$4,835,900; White Oak Development LLC at \$4,602,100; Genesis Health Ventures of Bloomfield Inc. at \$3,750,200; Gaia Colchester LLC at \$3,695,100; Sharr Realty LLC at \$3,518,000; S + S Worldwide Inc. at \$3,401,500; Gnd Too of Colchester LLC at \$3,117,000; and Keystone Shoppes LLC at \$2,768,700.

The top personal property taxpayers include: Connecticut Light and Power at \$11,992,780; Southern New England Eggs LLC at \$2,775,150; Stop and Shop Supermarket Co. at \$2,644,160; Alpha Q Inc. at \$2,640,620; Lawrence Brunoli Inc. at \$2,187,500; S + S Worldwide Inc. at \$1,396,730; William E. Dowty III at \$1,050,000; James Sorvillo at \$1,050,000; Jason Beebe at \$965,010; and The Connecticut Water Co. at \$653,350.

The BAA will begin hearings for appeals later this month and will be completed by the end of April.

Schuster Presents \$13.42 Million Colchester Budget

by Melissa Roberto

At a special Board of Finance meeting Monday, First Selectman Gregg Schuster presented his proposed 2013-14 town operations budget for the first time – a spending plan that totals \$13,420,676, which is \$663,310, or 5.20 percent, more than current year spending.

Also at the meeting, the Board of Education presented its proposed 2013-14 spending plan, which clocks in at \$39,376,054, an increase of \$1,851,894, or 4.94 percent, over the current year.

Combined, the budgets – which are voted on separately each year at referendum – total \$52,796,730 – an increase of \$2,515,204, or a 5.00 percent increase over the current fiscal year.

Of his proposed \$13.42 million budget, Schuster told the Board of Finance it is a “difficult number to look at...but I think we all recognize that this is a starting point.”

Schuster, who has been in office since 2009, said the challenges he faced when developing the budget were “nothing new.” He said the state is still in a “difficult economy” with high unemployment, and added that, like every year, his budget is dependent on the proposed state budget. In the next fiscal year, Schuster said the state budget proposal, if passed, could cause a “drastic change” in the amount of funding and programs the state delivers to municipalities, including Colchester. He shared with the board that Colchester could lose a net total of \$136,641 in revenue because of the proposed state budget.

One key cost driver in the budget is health insurance, which is listed at \$1,002,760, an increase of \$200,675, or 25.01 percent, over the current year.

A priority that Schuster said he took into consideration when developing the town budget was public safety, which he said Monday night is “the primary goal and responsibility of our government.”

Proposals within the budget that affect public safety include changes to the Colchester Hayward Fire Department and the Colchester Police Department.

At the fire department, Schuster proposed an additional \$75,000 to help fund volunteer incentives to staff ambulances. Recently the department has had difficulty staffing ambulances to get them out the door and on scene because of the gradual increase in emergency call volume at the department – an increase that broke a record in January for the highest number of calls the department has ever received in

one month. The \$75,000 would pay for volunteer incentives including \$15 per each six-hour shift a volunteer works, as well as an additional \$15 for each call a volunteer responds to.

Another increase in the fire department portion of the budget is affected by a change that Schuster said began approximately four years ago before he was in office – paying for the hiring of two full-time and two part-time emergency medical technicians/firefighters. When hired, the salaries of the four employees were paid for fully by a federal Safer Grant. But each year the amount of the salaries the grant pays for decreases by 20 percent, leaving the remainder of the salary to be paid for by the town. Next year’s fiscal budget shows \$23,500 each to cover the two full-time employees, and \$11,750 each for the two part-time employees.

Another change in the public safety account affects the Colchester Police Department. Schuster said a “major issue” concerning the department is that overtime has been underbudgeted in past years. Up until a year ago, he said, there were police officers that regularly were on worker’s compensation but now everyone is healthy and the amount of overtime hours worked is expected to rise. A total of \$100,939 was placed into the public safety account for overtime at the police department – an increase of \$30,030 over the current year.

Additionally, Schuster proposed a new position to be added to the budget – the only new position within the budget, he stressed. The position would be called deputy emergency management director, and it would assist the current emergency management director, Fire Marshal Reed Gustafson, at the town’s emergency operation center when the town is in a state of emergency. Also, the deputy emergency management director would take the place of Gustafson when he is not available. Schuster explained the new position would have a stipend at the same rate as the current emergency management director, which is “a little over” \$2,000. However, Schuster pointed out that the state would reimburse the town for half of the stipend.

Also in his presentation, Schuster proposed to fully restore the Saturday hours at the Cragin Memorial Library, which were trimmed by three hours last year; the library now closes at 1 p.m. each Saturday instead of at 4. At the end of the meeting, two residents supported the proposal and explained it has been difficult to bring their families to the library on Saturdays because of last year’s reduction in hours.

Another change in Schuster’s proposal was to place \$5,000 into the budget to help fund Colchester Collaborate for Children, or C3. The organization focuses on the well being of children from birth to age 8. Schuster explained that the town has never placed money into the budget to help fund the organization and that C3 originally requested there to be \$10,000 placed in next year’s budget.

Significant items also included in the budget regarded capital improvements to the town. “We need to go ahead and make sure we’re putting enough money in this [budget] into our infrastructure,” Schuster explained.

Schuster highlighted four initiatives of high importance that “have a public safety factor to it.” The four initiatives include: repairing sidewalks at Town Hall that he said have become “a nightmare” and have caused people to fall outside of Town Hall, repairing ramps at Fire Company 1, repairing doors at Fire Company 1, and to repair the Rescue 129 vehicle, a 20-year-old vehicle that is used in emergencies.

At its Tuesday night special meeting, the Board of Finance told Schuster it would like to see what small capital improvements could be paid for by the town’s equipment reserve. Board of Finance Chairman Robert Tarlov said after the meeting the equipment reserve is a fund that the town contributes to each year that covers smaller equipment needs. Schuster will report back to the board on Monday night to explain what the costs of the smaller capital needs are so the board can discuss whether they can be paid for by the reserve.

Also, Schuster proposed \$25,000 to be placed into the budget for the Senior Center building rental. Tuesday night, however, the Board of Finance said they would like to see that amount lowered. Originally, Schuster’s decision to include \$25,000 for the building rental came from a request that was made to him by the owners of the building, the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees. While the town has never helped pay for the Senior Center rent before and is only responsible for covering expenses such as heat, maintenance, etc., finance members told Schuster they’d like to lower it to \$3,705 based on what the town currently pays for the center.

Lastly in his presentation, Schuster included a breakdown of just where a taxpayer’s dollar goes. At the highest expense, 74 percent goes to education, followed by 7 percent to general government, 6 percent to public works and 5

percent to public safety. Also, 4 percent goes to debt, 3 percent to community services and 1 percent to transfers.

On Wednesday night, the Board of Finance also met to discuss the Board of Education budget and to perhaps make recommendations to lower its bottom line number. The Board of Finance only has the authority to recommend a total cost reduction they would like to see and then it is up to the Board of Education to determine what items in the budget to reduce.

The \$39.38 million proposed Board of Education budget was approved by the school board last week. The spending plan would expand all-day kindergarten in town, a move school board chairman Ron Goldstein said is “creating passion” within the town and has pleased several parents.

Another proposal within the budget that was briefly highlighted Wednesday night was the addition of a step in the teacher contract to make it 13 steps instead of 12. The additional step, however, is seen between steps 11 and 12, and is thought of as “11 A,” Goldstein explained. Each year teachers go up a step, and once a teacher reaches the final step they receive the highest pay. The additional step, however, prolongs teachers reaching the highest pay by an additional year.

Board of Finance members struggled to come up with a number they would like to see reduced from the school budget.

Member Thomas Kane admitted it was a high number but that he was “unsure” of how much to cut. “Probably more than half of the budget you can’t touch anyways,” said Kane.

Board of Finance members agreed that some of the biggest increases in the budget (health insurance and contractual negotiations) are not items either board has any control over.

While the Board of Finance members did not communicate a number they’d like to see reduced from the budget just yet, Goldstein said the board will continue to review it to look for ways to cut it down.

Shilosky added that he thought Schuster and the Board of Education did a good job putting the budgets together.

The next Board of Finance meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 11, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall where the board will further discuss the First Selectman’s budget. The Board of Education meeting will discuss its budget in its next regular meeting, on Tuesday, March 12, at 7 p.m. at Colchester Elementary School.

New Social Services Director Starts in Andover

by Geeta Schrayter

Last Monday, Feb. 25, Andover’s new municipal agent and social services director began her work in town. The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to offer Vernon resident Laurel Andrews the position at a special meeting held Feb. 11. Andrews will be working part-time, for an hourly wage not to exceed \$4,692 annually.

On Monday, First Selectman Bob Burbank explained the position of municipal agent and social services director had been combined in town, and Andrews would be performing – and being paid for – the duties of both. The maximum her salary could be as the municipal agent is \$2,040, and \$2,652 as the social services director.

Prior to Andrews, the work these positions cover had been performed by Cathy Palazzi. (Palazzi was also in charge of holding senior luncheons and scheduling senior transportation – something she has said she’d continue to do on a volunteer basis.) On Monday, Palazzi said she thought the new arrangement would work

out great.

“I’m excited about it,” she said. “I think [Andrews] is going to do an excellent job. I’ve got a lot of faith in her and I’ve been turning over a lot of information to her.”

The town website, andoverconnecticut.org, explained the Social Services Department “offers a variety of services for residents. We offer information and referral services to connect residents with regional, state and federal programs available to assist them.”

The director of social services is trained to help seniors and the disabled “find the most appropriate and helpful health insurance alternatives and programs,” according to the town site. In addition, families and individuals can contact social services for help during crises with emergency needs such as food, fuel and medical assistance, as well as crisis intervention and referral to area resources is also a vital part of the program.” Furthermore, the department helps provide food, gift boxes, and toys for kids during the holidays and camp programs

in the summer.

As municipal agent for the elderly, Andrews is also available to help seniors with issues regarding Medicare, Medicaid, housing, health issues, electricity, fuel questions, home care or transportation issues.

Andrews said she became interested in the position out of “the desire to continue helping people,” and Burbank said she was most qualified for the position due to her prior experience and current involvement in town; Andrews grew up in Andover and already volunteers at the food pantry.

“She has been doing some social services [work] on a volunteer basis both in Andover and in other towns,” Burbank said. “I know in Andover she’s been helping out at the food pantry for quite a while.”

“I’ve spent a lot of time at the food pantry volunteering and with the FoodShare truck that comes” to the First Congregational Church of Andover every other Wednesday, Andrews furthured, saying she was looking forward “to

learning more about what can be done to assist people.”

Palazzi said Andrews will now need to get to know residents, and added her volunteer work would be helpful to that effect. By working with FoodShare and the pantry, “she has already gotten familiar with some seniors.”

“I think that she’s going to be an asset to our program and the town of Andover,” said Palazzi.

Andrews will work four hours per week on average, but Burbank said that will change “depending on the seasons and the circumstances.”

“Certain times of the year, like when she’s assisting with tax preparation or grants that come around at certain times, you’re going to be putting in a lot more hours,” he said.

Burbank added that, while it was hard to make an assessment on Andrews’ abilities so soon after she started, he’d sat down with her a couple of times and she seems “extremely organized and efficient.”

Andrews can be reached at 860-798-6583.

Andover Grand List Growth Slight, But At Least Not a Drop

by Geeta Schrayter

The results of the Andover Grand List for the year ending Oct. 1, 2012 show only a slight difference from the prior year. But at a .26 percent increase, the number is still a welcome sight, considering last year's list decreased 6.9 percent.

Personal property went down \$223,960 to \$5,636,820 but real estate increased from \$228,212,910 to \$229,009,510 and motor vehicle assessments increased from \$24,060,780 to \$24,148,820. This amounted to a change in the net grand list of \$659,980.

But after including \$2,600,000 for the motor vehicle supplement, \$220,000 for prorates and removing \$200,000 for possible corrections and changes made by the Board of Assessment Appeals, Tax Assessor John Chaponis placed the net Grand List total at \$261,614,450. Chaponis explained in a memo that the additional \$679,980 in assessment meant another 21,000 in tax dollars would be needed based on last year's mill rate of 30.8.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad said Wednesday the increase wasn't much, "and of course, expenses have gone up."

She noted the RHAM school budget had been impacted sizably by insurance (the amount allocated for health care is proposed to climb 24.95 percent, from \$2,600,064 in the current year to \$3,208,633), and that Andover Elementary School's insurance spending has gone up as well. In the school budget, Object 200 line items, which include medical and dental insurance, retirement and unemployment, were shown in January as increasing by \$125,800. Conrad said the increases were due in part to the Affordable Care Act, as well as an increase in claims.

Conrad also said that, at this point, the town "had no idea" what the state planned to do as far as municipal funding. Still, while the rising insurance and state aid in a state of doubt may seem a recipe for a budget increase and, therefore, a tax increase, Conrad said the Board of Finance was going to work with First Selectman Bob Burbank to try and find a way to prevent the mill rate from climbing.

"That's our goal, since we increased last year [from 27.6 to 30.8]," she said. "It's a tough year. I thought last year was going to be tough. But

on top of last year, you can't go and raise the mill rate. It's just too hard."

Conrad said if the mill rate were to be increased, it would be kept to a small amount – perhaps moving from 30.8 to an even 31.

"But we're trying not to do that, even," she said.

On Wednesday, Burbank stated it was too soon to anticipate what would happen with the mill rate, but he agreed with Conrad in saying the hope was that it wouldn't go up at all.

"My goal is always not to have an increase and if it's possible I'm going to do that," he said. "But you've got to have the numbers there."

Like Conrad, Burbank mentioned the increases at both schools and said the town would need to make up the difference from what they won't be getting from the state.

"That will be an additional drain on the taxpayers, but it's hard to say what we're going to come up with," he said. "I'm going to try to offset some of that with monies from our fund balance."

The top taxpayers for real estate in Andover are: Whispering Hills LLC at \$905,200; Martin Marshall at \$790,200; Eastern Connecticut Housing Organization at \$781,800; B&B Realty Co. at \$765,800; Marcia, Kenneth R & Katherine at \$582,600; Gudz, Irene & Myron E at \$579,600; Hillside Self Storage Center LLC at \$578,300; Hatem, Pamela B at \$569,700; Andover Plaza LLC at \$524,700 and Rosewood Enterprises LLC at \$469,200.

Connecticut Light & Power Co. remains the highest personal property taxpayer at \$3,162,700 followed by Algonquin Gas Transmission LLC at \$484,520; Scott Electrocrafts Inc. at \$149,710; Andover Septic Tank Company Inc. at \$123,380; 7-Eleven Inc. at \$112,460; AT&T Mobility LLC at \$97,640; Cellco Partnership at \$89,340; Andover Landscaping LLC at \$78,800; Drake Petroleum Company Inc. at \$72,110 and Bisson, Ronald at \$59,160.

"It's nice to see that [the Grand List] didn't go down," said Burbank. "But it didn't go up, enough to make any substantial difference."

Portland Grand List Shows Slight Drop

by Joshua Anusewicz

A calculation of Portland's Grand List of assessable properties for 2012, released last week, shows a 0.26 percent decrease from the previous year.

The list put the total value of taxable properties in Portland at \$796,997,197, a decrease of \$2.05 million from the 2011 list, which totaled \$799,052,514. Though the number dropped, the decrease pales in comparison to last year, which saw a decrease of \$56.82 million from the 2010 list, mainly due to a state-mandated revaluation.

In the three main items of the Grand List – real estate, personal property and motor vehicles – the figures changed very little from the 2010 totals. The value of real estate went down slightly to \$695,515,070, a decrease of \$875,584, or 0.12 percent. The total for motor vehicles also went down, dropping 1.72 percent to \$69,115,440, a \$1,209,210 decrease.

Personal property was the only item that saw an increase, rising \$29,487 to \$32,366,687, a 0.91 percent jump.

Still getting his bearings, new town assessor

Richard Lasky said Wednesday that all of the numbers seemed "pretty normal," and that the main decrease – motor vehicles – is similar to what other municipalities are experiencing around the state.

Lasky also pointed out that the real estate values basically remained "flat," a welcome sight after last year's revaluation. In the 2011 Grand List, real estate properties went down 8.39 percent, from \$760,169,141 to \$696,390,654.

The Grand List represents the net value of assessed property in town, and is used to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The rate is determined by dividing the town's budget by the Grand List total. Residents can calculate their taxes by multiplying their total assessments by the mill rate. Currently, the mill rate in Portland is at 30.73. (A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So, for example, a person with a house assessed at \$200,000 pays \$6,146 in taxes on it.) These taxes are used by the town to cover expenses in

its budget.

The budget that is currently being proposed by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield puts the calculated mill rate at 31.35, a 0.62 mill increase, though changes could be made to the budget before an official adoption. (An article on the proposed budget appears elsewhere in this issue.)

Bransfield said Wednesday that the Grand List numbers were "as expected," and that the overall total, as an indicator of the town's economic standing, was "neutral."

According to the Grand List, the top 10 property owners in Portland are: Connecticut Light and Power, with property valued at \$13.22 million; St. Clements Foundation, at \$4.71 million; Jarvis Airfoil, at \$2.67 million; Buckeye Cattle Company (Quarry Ridge Golf Course), at \$2.63 million; Perry Portland Associates (owners of the Elmcrest Hospital/Portland TownPlace property), at \$2.46 million; Portland Care and Rehabilitation, at \$2.04 million; Woodgreen Portland, at \$1.83 million;

Clondalkin Pharma & Healthcare, at \$1.74 million; Oakwood Sports Center, at \$1.72 million; and Safety-Kleen Systems, at \$1.69 million

Combined, the top 10 taxpayers own \$34.72 million of taxable property in Portland.

Both Lasky and Bransfield pointed out that the main reason for the decreases, though mostly minimal, was due to the appeals process from last year, where property was reassessed at a lower value than had originally been assigned. Bransfield said that one of the largest appeals, Perry Portland Associates, resulted in the value of property dropping nearly \$2 million in an appeals process that went to superior court before being settled by legal counsel.

As for this year's appeals process, Lasky said that notices for property value increases have been sent out to residents, and that applications for appeals must be sent to the Town Hall by Wednesday, March 20, at 4 p.m. The town's Board of Assessment Appeals will begin hearing appeals in April, he added.

Portland General Budget Down, But Total Town Budget Up

by Joshua Anusewicz

With the Board of Education budget already approved, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield submitted the town's general government budget to the Board of Selectmen this week, requesting a 0.39 percent decrease from this fiscal year.

Combined with the Board of Education budget, the proposed town budget is \$30,861,603, with \$11,945,375 going to general government and \$18,916,228 going to the school board. Altogether, this represents a \$415,008, or 1.36 percent, increase from the 2012-13 fiscal year.

The 2012-13 budget was approved by referendum last year at \$30.45 million, \$11.99 million for general government and \$18.45 million for education.

Bransfield explained Tuesday that the amount allocated for education is a reduction from what the Board of Education had requested; in January, the school board approved a request for \$19.10 million, a \$645,532, or 3.50 percent, increase from the current fiscal year. After a meeting with Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sally Doyen, however, Bransfield said she reduced the education budget by \$461,532, which represents a 2.5 percent increase.

The selectmen, Bransfield said, can't make any particular cuts to the school budget, so it would be up to the school board to decide where the budget reductions would be made if the budget were defeated.

As for the reasoning behind reducing the school budget request, Bransfield said it was due to "a great deal of uncertainty" in the town and state budgets. "I try to be conservative in my approach to budgeting," said Bransfield. "What we want is for the town to be able to provide the same services that it is providing right now."

On the general government side, that will be accomplished with the proposed budget without any spending increases. Bransfield said that this was done in several ways, including lowering the town's debt service by reissuing bonds at a more "favorable rate," changing all town building to natural gas, and accepting retirements from a handful of town employees. The town's revenue streams also remained mostly steady, she added.

Bransfield said the town has also been able to grow its fund balance over the last year, mostly due to FEMA and insurance reimburse-

ment due to the series of catastrophic storms in the past fiscal year. She said that the budget proposal includes using some of that fund balance to make minor upgrades at the town's schools, including new windows and resurfacing parking lots at Brownstone Intermediate Schools.

Other significant changes in the budget include a 4.17 percent increase in vehicle maintenance in the public works department, an 11.04 percent increase in funding for the senior center, and a 6.96 percent increase in technology upgrades. The town will also realize savings with the hiring of new assessor Richard Lasky, as the budget for the assessor's office will decrease by 12 percent.

Spending increases were also included in staffing for the public works department and the public library, but Bransfield said a decision has not been made on whether those positions will actually be filled. "They were budgeted but not filled," she said of the two vacancies. "We're going to look at how well the departments are operating. We need to seriously look at how we staff [our departments]."

One of the hot-button topics headed into

budget season – school security – was not specifically addressed in the proposed budget, Bransfield said, but measures are being taken now to make necessary upgrades at some Portland schools. Bransfield said that the town is prepared to absorb the costs of increase police presence at local schools and the upgrading of school locks in the general fund of this fiscal year's budget, which she estimated would cost roughly \$42,000. She stated that the police presence is expected to continue until the end of the school year, and that the locks will be installed in the coming months. (A story about the school locks, which were officially approved by the Board of Selectmen at its meeting this week, appears elsewhere in this issue.)

"If grants are available [for additional school security measures], I would certainly apply," Bransfield added.

The budget will now head to a public hearing on Tuesday, March 12, at 7 p.m. at Portland High School auditorium, where residents will be able to weigh in. The budget will then go through a series of workshops by the Board of Selectmen before being officially adopted and brought to a town referendum for approval.

Andover Selectmen Agree to Retrofit Library Lighting

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday approved a contract between the town and Connecticut Light & Power to retrofit lighting in the town library, as part of the CL&P Small Business Energy Advantage Program.

During last month's meeting, Andover Public Library Board of Directors member Mimi Boxwell explained the library had recurring maintenance issues and outside lighting issues that make certain areas outside the library "very dark and unsafe, especially in regards to elderly patrons."

Due to this, Boxwell said from a management standpoint the decision was made to see if something could be done to make the lighting more efficient. While researching possibilities, Boxwell met with John Muro, vice president of ECHO, a company which "helps municipals, commercial customers and consumers realize the full benefits available through energy conservation and sustainability solutions," according to the website echo4us.com. Muro informed Boxwell of an audit and upgrade program offered at no cost to small businesses including non-profits. After he conducted an audit of the building, it was determined the library was a potential candidate for the program. An additional audit was then performed by CON SERV, Inc., a CL&P contractor, which detailed work that could be done to make the library lighting brighter and more efficient.

The program would upgrade lighting outside the library as well as some of the fixtures inside including 12 downstairs lights, another in the downstairs bathroom and five upstairs.

"It's a turnkey program," Boxwell explained. "The contractor comes in and does the work and bills CL&P."

The total cost to the library would be \$2,494.14 after \$1,420.57 in savings from a conservation fund incentive, and would be paid for with a no-interest loan from CL&P. The loan would be paid back over three years from projected energy savings.

Vice First Selectman Jay Linddy said the elementary school took advantage of the program in 2002 for the lights in the gym and recommended the town approve the contract.

However, at the February meeting First Selectman Bob Burbank had expressed concern because he hadn't seen a breakdown of the work and signing the contract was tabled until this week's meeting.

"The idea behind upgrading is not only to save energy and therefore save money," Boxwell said Wednesday, "but also to give us better lighting inside and outside."

Muro furthered the program was structured so that the monthly savings are estimated to be the approximate monthly payment on the loan. While the loan is being repaid, the budgeted amount for energy will remain the same. However, once the loan is paid off, selectwoman Julia Haverl noted the payment will be gone, and the budget will decrease.

With all the details presented, Burbank was ready to move forward with the contract.

"The cost to the savings is basically zero," he said. "Okay, well, I can certainly support that!"

The motion to approve the contract between CL&P and the town of Andover for the Small Business Energy Incentive Program passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

Portland Selectmen Approve School Locks, Park Cameras

by Joshua Anusewicz

At a meeting on Wednesday, the Board of Selectmen approved funding requests for upgraded classroom locks at several Portland schools and security cameras at the Riverfront Park.

The need for new locks in the classrooms at some Portland schools was raised during a series of forums between the selectmen and the Board of Education, which has included input from school administrators and staff, as well as parents. The purpose of the meetings was to review school security in the wake of the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December.

One of the major issues raised was classroom locks in several Portland schools, which are considered antiquated. "When these buildings were built, we didn't need these locks," said school board chairman Christopher Phelps on Wednesday.

The locks, which will be the same used at other Portland schools, will be purchased by the town and installed by the district's buildings and grounds crew. According to Paul Bengston, director of buildings and grounds, the total cost to the town would be \$27,500, which includes a discount from the manufacturer.

"This covers everything," said Phelps, adding that purchasing the locks all at once assures a better price, and that prices could increase as the demand from other school dis-

tricts in the state gets higher.

"This is a good project," said First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield. The selectmen agreed, approving the funding 5-0. Selectmen Mark Finklestein and Carl Chudzik were not present for the vote.

The selectmen also approved a funding request from the Brownstone Quorum for security cameras at the newly-constructed Riverfront Park and pavilion, which has been the target of several acts of vandalism over the past year.

According to Howard Rosenbaum and Jim Tripp of the Brownstone Quorum, the vandalism has included vehicles and dirt bikes tearing up the grass, tree cutting, and even an attempt to start a fire on a picnic table. Rosenbaum said that by adding security cameras within the park and the nearby parking lot, vandals would be deterred or identified with high-resolution footage.

"It's the smart thing to do for the town," he added. "You never know when it could get worse."

The Quorum, which raises funds to protect the park and the local brownstone quarries, requested \$5,000 for the cameras, and the request was approved, 6-0. Finklestein was not present for the vote.

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

Andover Police News

3/3: Lori Souza, 52, of 98 Lakeside Dr., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

You almost have to feel sorry for Gov. Malloy.

He's been taking it on the chin, as far as the budget goes, from basically the minute he took office. He recently proposed eliminating the car tax, a charge that seems to be oft decried by people in this state. He probably thought this would be a popular move; doing away with a major tax in a state that's been referred to for years as the "Tax You to Death State" would be a good thing, right?

Wrong. The towns hate it – and it's not tough to see why.

The money generated from car tax goes straight to the cities and towns that charge the tax. The state doesn't see it. In tough times, towns are worried about seeing this loss of revenue.

Many town leaders took to Hartford Monday to blast Malloy's proposal. Among them was Rocky Hill Town Manager Barbara Gilbert, who said, "It's an unfair mandate, and it's going to cripple people."

Gilbert's use of the 'mandate' word stood out to me – because that's the word that came to mind when I first heard about the car tax and the towns' reactions to it. When I first started covering Hebron, one of that town's selectmen at the time, Catherine Marx, would often speak out at selectmen meetings against what she would call "unfunded mandates" – various things the state would force towns to do, often with little or no financial help. The state would shove these requirements down the towns' throats, the towns would have to foot the bill, and that would be that. Catherine would routinely blast this practice – and rightly so.

I sometimes tell people there's no better way for a young, fresh-out-of-college kid to learn about town budgets and finances than to have a town beat for the local newspaper. (Oh, I suppose you could be an accountant or something, but that wouldn't be nearly as interesting.) You're confronted with numbers you typically have never given much thought, and you hear fiduciary observations and ruminations (column title shout-out!) that you have never pondered before.

Catherine's was one of them. I began to look into the matter myself and, she was right. There was an awful lot of things the state wanted towns to do and offered little or no financial help in return. (And there still are; the *Connecticut Post* reported last fall that, according to the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, a bipartisan as-

sociation of towns and cities in the state, there are more than 1,200 unfunded or partially-funded mandates.) I'm not saying these mandates are stupid or ill-intentioned; I'm saying it'd be nice for the state to offer a little help if it wants the towns to enact them. That only seems fair.

So, ditching the car tax seemed to me basically like another take on the "unfunded mandate." The state would be forcing municipalities to do away with what's been a pretty key source of revenue to them.

Yes, we're talking some pretty big bucks here. According to the *Courant*, Hartford would lose \$21 million in taxes under the proposal, Bridgeport would lose \$17.4 million, and New Haven would lose \$14.5 million. And the smaller towns would feel the pinch too; the *Courant* reported Weston First Selectwoman Gayle Weinstein has said her town would lose \$2.37 in automobile taxes.

Keep in mind these towns would have to continue to, you know, function. Towns would almost certainly turn to raising homeowners' taxes as a way to make up for that lost money. Coventry Town Manager John Elsesser, for example, told the *Courant* the Malloy plan would lead to taxes going up 8.5 percent on homes in that town. North Branford Mayor Anthony Candelora said the average homeowner would see an increase of \$480 a year due to the elimination of the car tax.

Look, personally speaking, I'd love to do away with the car tax. In fact, living in an apartment, the car tax is really the only tax bill I pay to the Town of Manchester. So I'd benefit a lot by not having a car tax. But, knowing how much it benefits my town and all the towns across the state, I just don't see how it would be responsible to cut it without having some other revenue source to make up for it. One that isn't raising homeowners' taxes. (And besides, if homeowners' taxes go up, it'd stand to reason my rent would too.)

Without that other revenue source, this really is just another, unfortunate, unfunded mandate.

* * *

See you next week – and don't forget to check out the Hebron Maple Fest this weekend! Also, don't forget to move your clocks ahead either. Daylight saving time resumes this Sunday, at 2 a.m. Yeah, we'll all lose an hour of sleep that night, but in exchange, it'll still be nice and sunny at 6 p.m. at night. I think most of us will take that trade-off.

Colchester Police News

2/25: Cameron Mack, 24, of 122 Maple St., New Haven, was charged with fourth-degree larceny, Colchester Police said.

2/26: Bryan St. John, 22, of 157 Pine Brook Rd., was charged with DUI, failure to drive in proper lane on a multiple lane highway and distracted driving, State Police said.

2/27: State Police said Katherine Hall, 26, of 87 Elm St., was traveling southbound on Route 149 approximately 398 feet south of Felicia Barber Road intersection in Colchester when she crossed over the center line and entered the northbound travel line. Hall's vehicle then traveled off the side of the roadway and struck a Connecticut Light and Power utility pole. Police said Hall sustained a minor laceration to her right hand/finger as a result of the collision. Hall was deemed at fault for the collision and was issued an infraction for traveling too fast for conditions, police said.

3/1: Colchester Police said at approximately 9:30 a.m. the owner of KAP Nail Salon located

at 139 South Main St. reported that \$60 in cash was taken from the salon sometime between 8 p.m. on Feb. 28 and 9 a.m. on March 1. Colchester Police are currently investigating the case.

3/1: Brittany Sidler, 24, of 424 Saybrook Rd., Higganum, was charged with drug paraphernalia and possession of narcotics, Colchester Police said.

3/2: Bruce M. Contois, 65, of 20 Beech Place, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

3/2: Colchester Police said Alexandra Jennes, 20, of 252 Norwich Ave. Apt. C, was charged with drug paraphernalia and Kristopher P. Kahle, 29, of 37 Davidson Rd., was charged with operating a motor vehicle when license is suspended and possession of narcotics.

3/3: Michael Staples, 19, of 18 Joe Williams Rd., Moodus, was charged with drug paraphernalia, Colchester Police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Laurie Englehart

Laurie (Kmiec) Englehart, 66, of Colchester, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, Feb. 28. Born Sept. 15, 1946, in Manchester, she was a daughter of the late John and Lorna (Peterson) Kmiec, Sr.

She was a 1964 graduate of Manchester High School and went on to work at Pratt & Whitney working for nearly 20 years before her retirement.

She leaves two daughters, Taylor Duckworth of Portland and Victoria Englehart of New London; two granddaughters, Rachael and Stephanie; two brothers, John, Jr. of Tolland and Steven of Coventry; her best friend, Frank Englehart of Colchester; and numerous extended family members and friends.

The family would like to extend thanks to the professional staff of Middlesex Hospital Home Care.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the American Diabetes Assn., P.O. Box 11454, Alexandria, VA 22312.

Portland

Judith Kelsey Hale

Judith Lee (Kelsey) Hale, 71, of Fitchburg, Mass., and former longtime resident of Portland, passed away peacefully at home Sunday, March 3.

Judy was born Jan. 5, 1942, to Edwin P. and Helen M. Kelsey of Great Hill Road, Portland, where she grew up and graduated as valedictorian of PHS Class of 1960. She attended Becker College in Worcester, Mass., then worked as an engineering aide at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford, CT.

In 1962, she married Portland resident and PHS classmate George W. Hale. They built a home on Kelsey family land on Great Hill Road, where their two sons, Jim and Tim, were born.

In 1974, the family moved to Plymouth, Mass., where their sons grew up. For several years, Judy worked part-time at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but her wholehearted focus was on raising her sons, attending their many sporting events, and encouraging them to become excellent students and caring human beings.

After George retired as produce buyer for the Stop and Shop Corp., Judy and George spent more than 10 happy years in Virginia. In 2007, they moved to Fitchburg, Mass., to be near their family.

Besides being a math whiz and a writer with style and wit, Judy was known throughout her life for her creativity and many artistic accomplishments. In her younger years, she designed and sewed everything from prize-winning doll clothes to evening gowns and tailored suits. For almost 60 years, she was an avid knitter, quilter, and creator of children's toys, especially her unique style of fashionista sock monkeys. She was also a talented sketch artist and painter. More recently, she found great fulfillment in compiling magnificent memory books for her cherished grandchildren.

Judy is survived by husband George, and two sons, James and his wife Suzanne of Plymouth, Mass., with granddaughter Ashley; and Timothy and his wife Tammy of Shirley, Mass., with granddaughter Alexa and grandsons Christopher and Ethan. She also leaves sister Sue Kelsey Tester and brother-in-law Jefferson, of Ithaca, N.Y., as well as beloved nieces and nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Interment will be at Center Cemetery, Portland. By Judy's request, there will be no service.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in her honor to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA, or to the American Cancer Society.

Portland Memorial Funeral Home at 231 Main St., Portland, has care of the arrangements. To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

Marlborough

Marjorie M. McCormack

Marjorie M. McCormack, 85, of South Glastonbury passed away Sunday, March 3, at the Marlborough Health Care Center after courageously battling a number of health challenges for the past 45 years, which included five open-heart surgeries.

The daughter of the late Catherine (Griffin) Allaire and Louis Allaire was born on May 4, 1927, in Dorchester, Mass. She was the loving wife of Robert M. (Mike) McCormack for 55 years.

Marjorie graduated from St. Gregory High School in Milton, Mass., and Boston Teacher's College. As a devoted parishioner of St. Augustine Church in South Glastonbury she served on the altar guild for many years. An avid golfer, she was a member and served as a past president for the Portland Women's League, in addition to also being active in the Tallwood Golf Course's Women's League. Marjorie enjoyed her winter vacations on Marco Island, Fla., and traveled in the United States and Europe.

Besides her devoted husband, Mike, Marjorie will be fondly remembered by her sister, Joan Paton of Cohasset, Mass.; her son Douglas and his wife, Dorothy, of Hebron; her grandchildren, Daniel and Emma; and several nieces and nephews throughout the country.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Augustine Church in South Glastonbury on Wednesday, March 6. Burial followed at the Veterans Cemetery in Middletown. In accordance with her wishes, there were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston, 637 Cambridge St. Brighton, MA. 02135 (www.csjboston.org), or The American Heart Association.

Mulryan Funeral Home has been entrusted with arrangements. For online condolences, visit www.mulryanfh.com.

Colchester

Elijah Gibson Jr.

Elijah Gibson Jr., 83, of East Hartford and formerly of Colchester and New Haven, widower of the late Geraldine (Hill) Gibson, passed away Sunday, March 3. Born Jan. 23, 1930, in New Haven, he was one of the 17 children of the late Elijah and Mabel (Byrd) Gibson.

Mr. Gibson worked as an agent for the New York Life Insurance Company for 40 years before his retirement. He was a member and past President of the Colchester Rotary Club, had served with the State Police Auxiliary and as Colchester Tax Assessor.

In his spare time, he loved to travel with his wife and was an avid fan of the New York Mets and Giants, as well as the UConn Huskies. He will be fondly remembered for his smile and his willingness to lend a hand or an ear at any time.

He is survived by three sons, Michael of East Hartford, Anthony of West Haven and Craig of Rocky Hill; his daughter and son-in-law, Deborah and Vaughan Mitchell of East Hartford; two grandchildren, Jahmal and Brandon Mitchell; seven sisters, Ethel Pope of New Haven, Violet Newton of West Haven, Minnie Richard of Hamden, Corine Browne of New Haven, Christine Turner of Las Vegas, Nev., Debbie Carney of West Haven and Gwendolyn Walker of Georgia; two brothers, Raymond of Middletown and Joseph of West Haven; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his loving wife of 56 years, who died Nov. 7, 2010, he was predeceased by two sons, Alan and Balery; four sisters, Joyce Butler, Beverly Dease, Odessa Mayfield and Mamie Gibson; and three brothers, Fred, Harold and Isaiah.

The family will receive guests starting at 8 a.m. Saturday, March 9, at the Crossroads Community Cathedral, 1492 Silver Ln., East Hartford, followed by the Funeral Service at 9 AM. Committal will follow in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

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



Portland

Anthony R. Coiro

Anthony R. Coiro, 92, of Portland, husband of Mary (Wetmore) Coiro, passed away Monday, March 4, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late Giralamo and Elvira (Pellacia) Coiro.

Born Aug. 20, 1920, in Lawrence, Mass., he lived in Hartford and Wethersfield before residing in Portland for the last 23 years. He worked at Hamilton-Standard until his retirement and he was a U.S. Army veteran having served during World War II. He was a member of the New Britain Elks, the VFW in Cromwell and the Church of St. Mary in Portland.

Besides his wife, he leaves a brother, Sylvio Coiro of West Hartford; a sister, Carmella DeAngelis of Florida; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by many brothers and sisters. Funeral services will be held today, March 8, at 10 a.m., from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a Mass at 11 a.m., at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial will be in Mount St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield. Relatives and friends call Thursday, March 7, at the funeral home.

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

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

Portland

Robert P. Wojciechowski Sr.

Robert Pawel Wojciechowski Sr. 44, passed away suddenly at his home in Portland Saturday, March 2. Born in Stamford Sept. 1, 1968, he was the beloved son of Edmund and Stanislaw (Komsta) Wojciechowski.

Robert was born and raised in Stamford. He was a graduate of Westhill High School and Eastern Connecticut State University. In his youth he served as an altar boy at Holy Name of Jesus Church. After graduation Robert worked for the State of Connecticut as an eligibility services supervisor at the Central Office in Hartford.

Ever active in the church, he was a Eucharistic minister and money counter at St. Mary's Parish in Portland. He was a devoted and loving father who was actively involved in his children's lives. As a former cubmaster of Pack 49, Portland, the cubs and webelos have great memories of his legendary campfire cooking and Arrow of Light ceremonies.

Family and friends will miss his ready smile, his summer parties which were highlighted by his brilliant firework displays, and his December "Men's Party" during which carried on the tradition started by his late father-in-law, Ray Bankoski Sr.

He is survived by his loving parents, Edmund and Stanislaw Wojciechowski, of Stamford; his daughter and son, Allison Wojciechowski and Robert Wojciechowski Jr. and his former wife, Sandra Franco, all of Portland; his sister, Beata Wojciechowski, of Stamford; his mother-in-law Donna Bankoski; his brother and sister-in-law Brian and Tonia Bankoski and their children Ava, Ella, Clare and John, of Portland; his brother and sister-in-law Ray and Cindy Bankoski and their children Sarah and Ethan, of Higganum; his brother and sister-in-law Kenneth and Holly and their daughter Julie, of Moodus; his brother-in-law Russell, of Cromwell; and many cousins and their children.

Robert, a generous and selfless soul, will be sorely missed by all those who knew and loved him.

The Wojciechowski family welcomed friends and relatives Thursday, March 7, at Bosak Funeral Home in Stamford. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, March 8, at 11 a.m., at the Holy Name of Jesus Church, 305 Washington Blvd., Stamford. The committal service and interment will immediately follow Mass at Woodland Cemetery in Stamford.

The family entrusted the funeral arrangements to Bosak Funeral Home, 453 Shippan Ave., Stamford. If you wish to leave an expression of condolence online please sign the guestbook on bosakfuneralhome.com or visit Bosak Funeral Home on Facebook at facebook.com/bosakfuneralhome and share your fond memories of Robert with his family.

Amston

Frank A. Swider

Frank A. Swider, 86, of East Hartford, formerly of Amston, loving husband for over 60 years of the late Helene M. "Pat" (Wasniewski) Swider, died peacefully Monday, March 4, at Hartford Hospital, surrounded by his loving daughters and family. Born in Salem March 8, 1926, a son of the late Edward and Caroline (Dzubia) Swider, he had resided in East Hartford for the past 61 years.

Frank and his late wife, Pat, were the most devoted couple, an example to their children and grandchildren. Frank was a proud veteran of the U.S. Air Force during World War II. A pioneer in electronics, Frank was the owner and operator of the family business, "Television Service Corporation" in East Hartford for over 30 years until his retirement. Frank was a member and former officer of the East Hartford Lions Club. A devout Catholic, Frank was a longtime faithful communicant of St. Christopher Church, East Hartford.

A lover of the outdoors, he cherished their summers at Amston Lake, quiet times fishing and exploring with their children and then grandchildren. Raised on a farm, he was an exceptional gardener who excelled at starting seeds and raised seedlings and plants for family gardens, both vegetables and flowers. Frank was an avid fan of the New York Yankees who used to enjoy those "fun baseball nights" when they would play his wife's Boston Red Sox.

Frank is survived by his three devoted and caring daughters, Beth Sullivan and her husband, Jim, of Stonington, Pat McLarney and her husband, Tom, of South Glastonbury, Chris Jackson and her husband, Ray, of Stafford Springs. He was a devoted, proud and loving grandfather to Megan Sullivan Young and her husband, Nick, Emily Sullivan and her fiancé, John Biederka, Katie McLarney and her fiancé, Rene Fiallos, Jim McLarney and his fiancée, Sarah Kane, Sarah Higley, Melissa Higley, Jenna Higley, and Christine Jackson. He also leaves a very special caregiver and companion, Maria Danaj; along with many nieces, nephews, former customers and friends.

Besides his beloved wife and parents, he was predeceased by six brothers, John, Joseph, Stanley, Walter, Edward Jr. and Michael Swider.

Funeral services will be held today, March 8 (Frank's birthday), with a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated at 11 a.m. at St. Christopher Church, 538 Brewer St., East Hartford. (Everyone is asked to go directly to the church this morning). Private burial will be held at the convenience of the family. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Frank's name may be made to the Connecticut Audubon Society, 1361 Main St., Glastonbury, CT 06033 or to the Connecticut Farmland Trust, 77 Buckingham St., Suite 5, Hartford, CT 06106. The D'ESOP- East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford has been entrusted with the care of the funeral arrangements.

For online expressions of sympathy to the family, visit desopo.com.

Portland

Mona Hazel Elizabeth Hartigan

Mona Hazel Elizabeth Hartigan, 78, of Deep River passed away on Saturday (March 2, 2013) at the Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. She was the beloved wife of the late Ronald F. Hartigan Sr.

She was born in Portland March 24, 1934. Mona attended Old Saybrook High School. She had resided in Old Saybrook and Essex prior to moving to Deep River in 1966.

She leaves her children, Ronald "Randy" and his wife Marcia (Budney) of Lady Lake Fla., Coleman, of Nashua, N.H., Colleen and her husband, John Piatak, of Stratford; her five grandchildren, Isaac Hartigan, Meghan Piatak, Matthew Piatak, Kyle Piatak and Haley Hartigan; her brother, Frank McBeth and his wife Janet, of Sun City, Texas.

Besides her beloved husband Ronald (Nov. 14, 1929-Dec. 12, 2007), she was predeceased by her sons, Shaun (Sept. 24, 1958-July 18, 1978), Mark (May 2, 1954-Aug. 26, 2011) and her daughter, Sioban (Aug. 3, 1964-Dec. 31, 2002).

Funeral services will be held privately with her burial being in the family lot at Resurrection Cemetery in Westbrook. Should friends desire; memorial contributions may be made in her name to the charity of the donor's choice.

Arrangements are by the Robinson, Wright & Weymer Funeral Home in Centerbrook. To share a memory of Mona or send a condolence to her family, visit rwwfh.com.

Colchester

Richard K. Alexander

Richard K. Alexander, CDR USN (Ret.), 79, retired naval submarine officer, died Wednesday, Feb. 27, from complications of a lung disease at Harrington Court in Colchester.

He was born in Upland, Pa., on March 23, 1933, the son of Marian (Parsons) and Andrew Alexander. He grew up in Ridley Park, Pa., where he graduated from Ridley Park High School. He was a graduate of the Class of 1958 from the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., and had a career in the submarine force.

He served aboard the USS Kearsarge, CV-33, trained at the U.S. Naval Submarine School in Groton, served aboard the USS Spinax, SS-489, served aboard and was a plank owner of the USS Woodrow Wilson, SSBN-624, transferred to COMSUBRON 14 Staff in Holy Loch, Scotland, served aboard the USS Bang, SS-385, and was the executive officer for the USS Tusk, SS-426. He served in the administration of the Guided Missile School in Dam Neck, Va., assigned as the administration officer at SUPSHIP of Electric Boat, and finally as the director of Basic Enlisted Training at the U.S. Naval Submarine School at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton.

After retiring from the U.S. Navy in June 1978, he worked at Mystech Associates in Mystic, Barnes Engineering in Stamford, Kaman Aerospace in Bloomfield, and was an adjunct professor of management for years and served as the director of business services at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich.

He was a current member and past president of the Connecticut Marine Model Society. He also was a member and a volunteer of the Retired Activities Organization at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base, Groton, a past member and president of Ledyard Rotary, the Gales Ferry Fire Department and Fire Police, and a treasurer at the Gales Ferry United Methodist Church, where he also taught Sunday school to senior high school students.

Cdr. Alexander earned a master's degree from George Washington University, Washington, D.C. in 1971, and another master's degree from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., in 1974.

After retirement, he and his wife, Barbara, enjoyed visiting places around the world such as Alaska, Hawaii, Australia, Egypt, the Caribbean, Ireland, Russia, Scandinavia, the Mediterranean, the Panama Canal, Mexico, and South America.

He married Barbara Harlow on June 7, 1958, three days after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara; daughter, Nancy Oaks, her husband, Brian, and their children, Emily and Ian of Tolland; daughter, Judy Marano, her husband, Sal, and their children, Erica and Ryan of Glastonbury; son, Scott, his wife, Annette, and their children, Rachel and Nathan of Colchester; and daughter, Debbie Iannacito, her husband, Tom, and their daughters, Stephanie and Danielle, and his daughter, Marisa of Torrington. He is also survived by a sister, Joyce (Alexander) Leap of Runnymede, N.J.

He was predeceased by a granddaughter, Rebecca.

The family sincerely appreciates the outstanding care and support provided by the nurses and staff at Harrington Court to Cdr. Alexander and his family.

A celebration of Richard's life will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 16, at the Gales Ferry United Methodist Church. Burial will be private at the U.S. Naval Academy Columbarium in Annapolis, Md. There will be no calling hours.

Funeral arrangements are being coordinated by Byles Memorial Home, 99 Huntington St., New London, CT 06320.

The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, gifts be made to the Gales Ferry United Methodist Church, 10 Chapman Ln., Gales Ferry, CT 06335.

Visit Byles.com for directions, to sign the guestbook or to share a memory.

Colchester

Nancy Lee Barch

Nancy Lee (Carico) Barch, 73, of Ocala, Fla., formerly of Colchester, passed away Friday, Feb. 22, 2013. Nancy was born in Baltimore, Md., on Aug. 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 44 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

Hebron

Angela Goiangos

Angela "Lena" (Scagliotti) Goiangos, of Manchester, passed away Sunday, March 3, at Manchester Memorial Hospital.

Lena was born in Manchester Nov. 21, 1923, to Guisippe and Mary (Zeppa) Scagliotti. She grew up in Hebron and graduated from Windham High School in 1941.

She went to work at Manchester Modes where she met her future husband, John Goiangos. They were married on June 8, 1946, in Manchester, and resided there together for 60 years until his death in 2007.

She leaves behind three children and their families, John Jr., and his wife, Claudia, of South Windsor, Alfred T. (Fred/Al) Goiangos and Susan Bouton, with whom she lived, Enes (Goiangos) Martineau, and her husband, Wayne, of Lebanon. She leaves six grandchildren, Stacy Goiangos, Eric Goiangos, and his wife, Kirsten, of Old Lyme, Anthony T. (Tony) Goiangos, and Alex T. Goiangos, Lindsay Martineau of South Windham and Jim Martineau of Lebanon. She leaves three great-grandchildren, Aiden Goiangos, Avery Goiangos, and Isabel Goiangos; a special niece, Tina (Goiangos) Gallo, and her husband, Paul; and nephew, Joseph Goiangos Jr. Also to mourn her are three first cousins, two in Coventry, one in California; and several cousins in Italy and Australia, whom she had met.

She was an avid UConn basketball fan, and adored the New England Patriots football team. She will be sorely missed by all, especially her Monday morning visits from Mary and her Friday card games with the ladies.

Funeral services will be held today, March 8, at 10 a.m., with a Mass of Christian Burial at St. James Church, 896 Main St., Manchester. Burial will be in St. James Cemetery in Manchester.

Calling hours were held Thursday, March 7, at the Watkins Funeral Home, 142 E. Center St., Manchester.

Memorial donations may be made to the John DeQuattro Community Cancer Center, 71 Haynes St., Manchester, CT 06040; or to the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 11454, Alexandria, VA 22312.

To sign the online register book go to holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Portland

John Bednarz

John Bednarz, SFC (Ret.), 76, of Portland, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 27, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. He was the devoted husband of Virginia (Campion) Bednarz. John was born in New Britain, son of the late Joseph and Jean (Bingiel) Bednarz, stepson of the late Andrew Bednarz.

He was predeceased by his first wife Barbara (Bothe), and his son Christopher.

He is survived by his brothers Andrew and wife Ann of Grapevine, Texas, and Robert and wife Linda of Ft. Pierce, Fla.; sisters Joyce Ciaffaglione of Farmington and Joan Smith and husband Daniel of Ft. Pierce, Fla., and by his children Elaine, John, William and wife Diane, and James as well as stepchildren Brian and wife Patricia, Carol and husband Greg, and Bruce. He dearly loved his grandchildren Sheri, Amanda, Kimberly, Ali, Kyle, and Dylan as well as his great-grandson Landon and many cherished nieces and nephews.

John proudly served in the U.S. Army, Connecticut National Guard, Connecticut 1st Co. Governors Foot Guard and was a member of American Legion Post 1771, Officers Club of Connecticut, 169th Infantry Veterans Corps and numerous other organizations.

Calling hours were Sunday, March 3, at Brooklawn Funeral Home in Rocky Hill. A Mass of Christian Burial took place Monday, March 4, at St. Mary Church in Portland, followed by interment with full military honors at Connecticut Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

In Lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, 360 Broad St., Hartford, CT 06105.

For an online guest book and more on John's life, visit Brooklawnfuneralhome.com.