

RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

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**Relaxing on the Rock...** On Sunday, April 7, a group of 80 adults and children explored the site of Camp Wopowog in East Hampton. Here, hikers are relaxing on a rock along the Salmon River where over 100 years ago campers spent their summers living in tents and cabins. They swam, boated, played tennis and baseball, went to dances and attended lectures. Today, the land is a state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Wildlife Management Area. East Hampton Parks and Recreation sponsors monthly walks that are organized by the Chatham Historical Society. The next event will be a Bird Walk at Hurd State Park Sunday, May 5, at 9 a.m.

## Concerns Grow for Colchester Senior Center

by Melissa Roberto

In recent weeks, town officials and residents have come forward to voice their concerns about the current status of the Colchester Senior Center – a building that some are worried may need to be vacated sooner rather than later.

The concerns revolved around three issues that have produced a stream of bad luck at the center in recent months – the first being the departure of the senior center director, followed by the van used to transport senior citizens breaking down. The latest issue is broken floor joists in one of its multipurpose rooms, which has since been deemed unusable by a building inspector.

“It’s in desperate need of repair,” First Selectman Gregg Schuster said this week of the room. “I’ll be bringing some thoughts on that at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.”

Though the building – located at 95 Norwich Ave. – is owned by the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, Schuster said the town is going to do its best to help the situation.

The proposed William J. Johnston Middle School building project would include a new senior center – as well as a new community center – but, due to concerns over its price tag, the status of that project is currently up in the air.

In December, senior center director Patti White stepped down to take a similar position

in Glastonbury, and that same month, damage to the senior center van left the vehicle out of commission.

At last Thursday’s Board of Selectmen meeting, however, Public Works Director Jim Paggioli – from the audience – shared some positive news about the van situation. He said a Subaru Forester, which is currently used by the Collaborative for Colchester’s Children (C3), will now be shared with the senior center Monday through Friday.

The vehicle was expected to be delivered to the center earlier this week.

As for the floor joists that broke, Paggioli said it would cost \$8,000 to repair. In addition, he attached a \$56,000 price tag to all of the other deficiencies at the center, like its windows and siding, that are in need of repair.

Fortunately, Paggioli said officials have begun discussing ideas for a “contingency plan,” or temporary plan, if the senior center as a whole is deemed unusable because of its deficiencies. He explained that a building “up the street” from the current senior center has offered 5,000 square feet of space for rent if the center does, in fact, need to be relocated.

However, Paggioli said the town could run into a problem if the town’s proposed building project was approved and finished while rent for the center is being paid for elsewhere.

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## Finance Board, Council OK EHHS Project

by Joshua Anusewicz

Those hoping the voters would get the opportunity to decide the fate of the proposed East Hampton High School renovation project got their wish this week, as both the Board of Finance and the Town Council approved the proposal at meetings.

After an original proposal was shot down by the finance board last month, the High School Building Committee and the agencies tasked with designing the project put forth a new concept for the board to vote on. On Monday, the Board of Finance voted 5-1 to approve the project, with board member Patience Anderson in opposition.

The Town Council on Wednesday then approved the resolution 5-1, with Ted Hintz Jr. opposed and George Pfaffenbach not in attendance.

The project, which is expected to cost the town approximately \$28.3 million, will now head to a town meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, and a town-wide referendum on Tuesday, June 4. This schedule is expected to meet the June 30 deadline for applying for reimbursement from the state.

The design that was approved has been dubbed “Concept 5,” which was reworked in recent weeks after the previous design, “Concept 2B,” was scrapped. Both concepts incorporated a major overhaul of the entire school and its infrastructure, including increased space

for science, upgraded technology, moving the library and gymnasium to a central location for easier access, and new hallways for a better flow of students; however, “Concept 2B” included additional space to move the school district’s central offices to the high school facility and lights for the school soccer field.

Members of the Board of Finance felt that moving the school offices and the lights were unnecessary additions to the proposal, and requested that the building committee redo the concept without them. The new concept turned into “Concept 5,” which the building committee and the Board of Education approved, albeit begrudgingly, to move the project forward.

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 Town Council formed the 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.

According to estimates from the project designer, SLAM of Glastonbury, the Capital Region Education Council (CREC), the project manager, and construction manager Downes Construction, the cost of the new concept would be \$51.7 million, with the town paying roughly \$28.3 million after a 52.5 percent reimbursement. The town is expected to bond the project over 20 years, beginning in 2018.

With the design concept changed, the finance board had little to say on Monday before approving the resolution. Chairman Matthew Walton said that the project would be “a burden on the town,” but one that was necessary for the future of the community.

“I’ve gone through the numbers and we can afford it,” Walton said. “But we’re going to struggle. It’s up to the voters now to decide this. It’s up to the taxpayers.”

Patience Anderson, who cast the lone dissenting vote, said she still had too many concerns about the cost of the project, its effect on the residents and the effect on future town projects.

“I’ve struggled with this and lost sleep over it,” admitted Anderson. “But I feel this project is going to tie our hands for several years and push back other projects... [T]his is a great level of debt.”

The opinions of the finance board members

were closely mirrored by the council, as the votes were similarly split. Hintz opined that by tying up a large amount of money in the high school project, other town services could suffer and other possible projects would be overlooked, including upgrades at the town’s other schools.

“I can’t support this from a financial standpoint,” Hintz said.

Councilor Kyle Dostaler said that not moving forward could prove costly, as an unaccredited high school would lower property values and affect, as a whole, the school district, which is the town’s largest employer. “To not move forward would be, in the long run, much more costly,” said Dostaler. “We’ve been playing the short-game for too long.”

Vice Chairman Glenn Suprono said he looked past the accreditation and asked whether or not the high school facility was suited for the community.

“This facility is not designed for the world around us,” Suprono stated. “We need a new school because this one is not appropriate for our kids.”

Despite the feelings of the various board members, each official still only counts for one vote, which will be a minuscule fraction of the electorate when the referendum rolls around. This project will now come down to the votes

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**Senior Center cont. from Front Page**

But the concern that got the most attention at last Thursday’s meeting – which Schuster was absent from – was the status of the vacant senior center director position. One resident, Gary Siddell, who serves on the Commission on Aging, stressed how important it is to fill the position.

He told the selectmen “the people [who work there] do a good job just keeping the lights on and the doors open [but] they are not in the position to actually move the programs forward nor are they in the position to view problems as they arise.

“We’re really concerned about getting that position filled,” he added.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle prompted a conversation on the position with her fellow board members. While she said she was also concerned with the van situation and the faulty floor, she stressed the need for the director position to be filled, and made a motion that the board interview “the final two candidates for the senior center director position, and have the resumes sent to the board members ahead of time and do this before the next meeting.”

All members seated said they agreed with

Coyle, and unanimously approved the motion.

On Tuesday, Schuster confirmed that three candidates were originally interviewed but that one dropped out of the interview process. Since then, Schuster said he planned to recommend one candidate to the board in a special selectmen meeting that was to take place Thursday afternoon, after press time.

However, Schuster’s decision to recommend one candidate to the board contradicted the board’s vote from last week’s meeting.

Back at the Dec. 6 selectmen meeting, the board approved a hiring process for the senior center director. Schuster confirmed Tuesday that the approved process allows the board to interview recommended candidates at the board’s discretion.

“It’s up to the board,” he said. “If they want to continue [with interviews], they can.”

Yesterday’s special meeting was also to include discussion of other issues that exist at the center. A full story about that meeting will appear in next week’s *Riverast*.

According to Freedom of Information laws, the vote to hire the new director will need to be made in a public session.

**EHHS Project cont. from Front Page**

of the citizens, who have expressed a wide range of opinions on the project over the past year.

At most meetings, residents have rallied behind the project for the future of the community and have stated that they are willing to take on the tax burden. But, as with the elected officials, the residents who have publicly shared their opinion – mostly parents of schoolchildren – will only count for a small portion of the vote in the referendum.

At Monday’s meeting, both sides of the argument were heard. Thom Cordeiro, a father of three schoolchildren and founder of the public action committee EHHS Renovate to Edu-

cate, stated that “the time to act is now.” George Coshov, a senior citizen, said that he felt the NEASC report “has no merit at all” and he would work to defeat the project. Fran Klein, also a senior citizen, called the high school one of the town’s “greatest assets” and that the town has the opportunity now to improve it.

And that, roughly, is how public opinion has been split, which should make for a close vote in the upcoming referendum. For comprehensive information on the building project prior to the referendum, visit [easthamptonct.org](http://easthamptonct.org) and click on the link for the high school renovation project in the middle of the homepage.

# Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

Well, that was a very sad display in Washington last Wednesday, now, wasn’t it?

Every single thoughtful gun-control proposal championed by President Obama following the horrific shootings in Newtown last December was shot down by a cowardly Senate that seemed more focused on the support of gun lobbyists than doing the right thing for the country – or, for that matter, doing what their constituents actually wanted them to do.

Ban on military-style assault weapons? Defeated. Ban on high-capacity magazines? Yup, also gone.

But, most surprisingly, expanded background checks – background checks! – were also defeated. That one I just can’t wrap my head around at all. The proposal would have extended background checks – which would screen out criminals and the seriously mentally ill from getting firearms – to sales at gun shows and online. Checks are currently only needed if you buy a gun from a licensed firearms dealer.

Seriously? This got defeated. Why?

Well, some Republicans who voted against it said it would’ve eventually led to a national gun registry. Of course, language in the proposal would’ve prohibited such a registry, but since when have Republicans allowed facts to get in the way of a good story?

Then there’s the mind-numbingly dumb “well, criminals wouldn’t submit to background checks anyway.” (And I wish I were exaggerating; Sen. Charles Grassley, a Republican from Iowa, said, “Criminals do not submit to background checks now. They will not submit to expanded background checks.”) The *Journal Inquirer* on Monday, in a brief editorial called “The Senate’s Shame,” mentioned Grassley’s quote and opined, quite rightly, “So are criminals going to tell the government which laws they will obey?”

The JI had an excellent point. And if we base our decision to pass a law on whether or not a criminal will obey said law, well, then why bother having any laws at all? Criminals steal cars. So why make it illegal to steal cars?

Oh, by the way, did I mention the vast majority of the American public actually wants background checks? In a *Washington Post-*

ABC News poll conducted earlier this month, 86 percent of respondents said they were in favor of expanded background checks. A CBS News poll showed 90 percent. A Quinnipiac University poll: 91 percent. It seems pretty clear what the people want here. And yet the out-of-touch Senate told them to jump in a lake, and instead cowed to the will of the NRA. Shameful.

As I’ve written here before, I have yet to hear one realistic, supported-by-the-facts reason from anybody as to why expanding background checks is a bad idea. How in the world does it hurt? Is it really a matter of inconvenience? Forgive me if I put the lives of the Newtown victims, or the Aurora, Colo., victims, or the Tuscon, Ariz., victims, or any victims of gun violence ahead of “Man! This paperwork is a pain!”

I would’ve loved all of the gun control proposals to pass the Senate last week. I didn’t think all of them would, but I never dreamed *none* of them would. Some gun control supporters have suggested Obama should’ve started the push for increased gun control sooner – after Aurora, after Tuscon – and not waited until Newtown to really get behind it. There simply hasn’t been enough time to get a movement going. I’m not sure I agree; you’d think if ever there was a time people would be moved to act, it’s when the deaths of those 20 innocent children was still painfully raw. But, regardless, Obama has vowed this isn’t over, calling last week’s defeat “round one” during a rather angry speech at the White House rose garden.

“I believe we’re going to be able to get this done,” he said. “Sooner or later, we are going to get this right. The memories of these children demand it. And so do the American people.”

I hope he’s right. And if “sooner or later” doesn’t come before the mid-term elections of November 2014, then I hope the public remembers last Wednesday when they go to the polls.

Common-sense gun legislation we need. Cowardly politicians who bow to the NRA we don’t.

\* \* \*

See you next week.



# Marlborough Problem Solvers Headed to International Competition

by Geeta Schrayter

When most students think of June, they think about the start of summer vacation: of relaxation, fun and much less thinking. But for some Marlborough students, prior to thoughts of summertime pleasures are thoughts of – and preparation for – an international conference that will test their problem-solving skills.

From June 6-9, 10 students from Marlborough will be traveling to Bloomington, Ind., to compete in the international conference with Future Problem Solving International Inc. This is a program that, according to the FPS website, “stimulates critical and creative thinking skills, encourages students to develop a vision for the future, and prepares students for leadership roles.”

In order to qualify for the conference, each of the students – either individually or as part of a team – needed to take a top spot at the state competition held March 22-23. During that competition, Karen Castiglione, affiliate director for Future Problem Solvers Connecticut, explained there were a couple of different categories and divisions based on grade level.

First, there’s Global Issues Problem Solving. Here, students are required to use the program’s six-step creative problem solving process to solve an issue in a hypothetical future, in which a current problem has evolved or escalated.

The steps students need to apply are to, first, read about the hypothetical future or “Future Scene” and identify the challenges, concerns and possible problems that exist. Then, using the list that was generated, students need to determine an underlying problem followed by a list of possible solutions. Criteria is then created in order to decide which solution will be the most effective in solving the problem and finally, students develop an action plan which explains how the problem is solved, how the plan is implemented and how the Future Scene is affected.

“I think problem solving skills are highly underrated today in education,” Castiglione said of the program’s importance. “And I think they’re probably one of the most essential things that kids need to succeed.”

As a team, Marlborough Elementary School sixth-graders Sophie Caplan, Erin Bowen, Seth Valentine and Elizabeth Wilson took home first place in the junior division (fourth through sixth

grade).

The team’s coach, MES teacher Julie Caron, called the students “motivated” and said she was “very proud” of all the students who participated “for doing their very best.”

Bowen was also the first place winner of Individual Global Issues Problem Solving, where she worked individually to solve a problem. However, since she’s already heading to the conference to compete with a team, second place winner Isabelle Benson-Clarke will be competing instead. Isabelle was coached by her mother, Judy Benson-Clarke, who said Isabelle was “extremely proud” of her individual accomplishments as well as the work of her team.

“The children are all incredibly inquisitive and eager to learn,” said Benson-Clarke, who decided to form a home school team – the Deep Sea Thinkers – with her husband so Isabelle could participate in both the math enrichment program at MES (during school hours) and Future Problem Solvers.

“We were excited and motivated by how much the children learned,” she added. “It was hard to stay ahead of them on research and we ended up letting them lead how far we would go with the content.”

Watching the children work, she said, “gave us a lot of faith in the next generation.”

There was also a winning Global Issues Problem Solving team in the middle division, which encompasses grades 7-9. The Virginia Rail Homedogs, a home-school team coached by Joe and Irene LaBella, took the top spot. Joe LaBella explained the home-school team was formed three years ago when cuts were made to the enrichment program at Marlborough Elementary School.

“My wife formed a home-school team just to make sure that at that time, students would have an opportunity to compete,” he said. Although students at the school can now compete through MES, the LaBellas have continued to coach home-school teams, which include students from different schools. The winning team is made up of RHAM students Jack Caplan and Patty Brosseau, Tara Peng, who attends the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy, and Michael LaBella who attends Xavier (all ninth-graders).

“This year’s topic [of the winning team] was ocean soup which is plastic pollution in the ocean,” LaBella explained. “So for the last



**A number of students from Marlborough will be heading to Indiana in June to test their problem-solving skills at the International Conference with the Future Problem Solving Program. In order to attend, the students needed to win top-spot at the Connecticut Conference that was held in March – a success garnered by 10 kids from Marlborough.**

couple of months students have been studying that.”

Another reason the LaBellas have kept up with the home-school teams is because not all of the schools – like MES – provide coaching for another aspect of the competition: Scenario Writing.

“The last two years we’ve done a home-school team for scenario writing and that was primarily because Marlborough Elementary School doesn’t offer that,” LaBella said.

In scenario writing, which LaBella called a chance for kids to apply “some additional creativity in addition to critical and futuristic thinking,” the students write a short story that takes place at least 20 years in the future on one of the year’s chosen topics. The scenario they create depicts a possible outcome of the subject, which, in addition to ocean soup, could have been the culture of celebrity, the robotic age or megacities.

“It’s just, really, a lot of fun for them because they get to create this entire world,” LaBella said, and of the students he coached,

two won first place for their writing. Sophie Caplan won in the junior division for her story on the robotic age, while Patty Brosseau won in the middle division for her piece on the culture of celebrity.

However, on Monday LaBella explained Tre Baroncini, who also wrote about the robotic age, will be attending the conference in Caplan’s place since she’s participating as part of the team. Brosseau is as well, but at this point, LaBella wasn’t sure who would be filling her spot.

And now, all of the above students will be working to hone their skills even further, in preparation for the International Conference, where they’ll compete against students from all over the world

“The kids did fabulous,” Castiglione added of the conference in March – and she’s greatly looking forward to June’s international conference.

“We’re thrilled with the program and really excited to take these kids to compete with kids from all over the world” where, she said, “the best of the best” will be determined.

# Andover Budget Heads to Town Meeting, Sans Tax Increase

by Geeta Schrayter

Next Thursday, Andover residents will have the opportunity to weigh in on the proposed 2013-14 budget of \$10.68 million at the annual budget meeting – a proposal that, while a spending increase, would actually feature a slight decrease in taxes.

The figure is an increase of \$110,382 over the current year’s budget, or 1.03 percent. It would result in a mill rate of 30.77, or .03 mills less than the current rate. A home valued at \$200,000 is currently paying \$6,160 in taxes, whereas under the new mill rate it will pay \$6,154.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad explained most of the budget increase was due to the Affordable Health Care Act, which resulted in a health insurance increase of about 4.6 percent for both the town and schools. The town’s employee benefits also increased nearly 20 percent due not only to health insurance, but other state-mandated fees and expenses.

Additionally, Conrad noted these increases were the same for Andover Elementary School, which had a proposed \$4.33 million budget, up from \$4.18 million. The Region 8 school district also experienced similar insurance increases; however, Andover’s levy for RHAM decreased from \$4.03 million to \$3.96 million due to a decrease in students.

The budget features funding for four capital projects: \$75,760 to replace 16 Scott air packs for the firefighters; \$37,500 to lease-to-own an angle plow truck to replace a truck from 1987 (this will continue for five years and, in the end, total \$185,000 at 2.5 percent interest); \$12,500 for a planning consultant to help the Planning and Zoning Commission produce a new Plan of Conservation Development as mandated by

the state; and \$7,124 for 10 portable radios for the fire department.

Other expenditure increases in the proposed budget include: \$2,100 for senior transportation, bringing the total to \$11,303. This is for vehicle maintenance and an increase in fuel due to more medical runs. The Public Works Department budget is to climb about \$3,100, due to contractual raises, bringing the total to \$231,921, while the resident trooper account is proposed to go from \$116,322 to \$119,429 also due to contracted salaries. Similarly, Conrad explained most of the library line-item increase of \$1,345 is due to payroll.

As far as revenue, Conrad said it was nearly the same as the current year’s estimate. Non-tax revenue is estimated to be \$2,557,587 which is actually a \$34,468 increase from the current year. Money from the state Education Cost Sharing fund is listed as increasing \$39,281 while miscellaneous monies from the state are listed as increasing \$18,000, money from the previous year’s taxes are listed as going up \$15,000 while town clerk fees and funds from permits increase \$5,000 each.

However, there are quite a few revenue decreases, the largest of which is the loss of \$22,257 from the PILOT program, which provides payment in lieu of taxes on state-owned property and is a program Gov. Dannel P. Malloy eliminated in his proposed state budget. Malloy also proposed removing \$100,000 worth of funding for school transportation, a move that reduced the expected revenue from the transportation grant in Andover by \$4,436. A decrease of \$3,070 in revenue from the Mashantucket Pequot/ Mohegan Fund Grant is also expected, but Conrad explained nothing is certain at this point as the state budget hasn’t

passed yet.

“We don’t know what the governor’s budget is going to be – what part is going to pass and what isn’t – and that’s a little scary,” she said, “but there’s nothing we can do about that. We can only go by what we know from prior years.”

Conrad explained past figures and keeping up-to-date on any changes that may be forthcoming aid in crafting the budget.

“All of the income that we’re projecting is just that – a projection,” she said. “It’s the best guess based on history and information I got off of the Office of Policy and Management website.”

In addition, in the beginning of the budget process Conrad explained RHAM had told the town the Andover levy would drop \$75,000, or perhaps a little more. To be safe, Conrad said the Board of Finance had contemplated taking off only \$50,000, but the board decided to stick with a \$75,000 placeholder, as anything less would have resulted in a mill rate increase – something she said the board did their “darnedest” to ensure wouldn’t happen.

And the board was successful in this quest (and the town’s levy ended up decreasing \$75,831), as the mill rate is proposed to decrease slightly from 30.80 to 30.77 something town officials were pleased with.

“I’m feeling pretty comfortable for us in Andover,” said Vice First Selectman Jay Lindy. “The mill rate is going to stay the same. It took a lot of work from the Andover school and the town.”

Lindy added the budget process was “tough” but everyone pulled together to get it done.

“The Board of Finance did a great job to

work in line with the Board of Selectmen and the schools,” he said, “and I think the people are going to be satisfied when they come because they’re not going to see any increase at all.”

First Selectman Bob Burbank mirrored Lindy’s thoughts.

“I think it’s a good budget. Again, we’ve been able – working with the Board of Finance – to put together a budget that has no tax increase for the residents and *that* I’m extremely happy with,” he said. “We’re addressing some of the town’s needs with this budget – and future needs.”

But Burbank added cuts in state funding were a continued concern, commenting on the proposed cutbacks in funding for, as mentioned previously, school transportation, PILOT funding and the Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Fund.

“There are always concerns where we’re getting fewer dollars from the state,” he said. “It becomes more and more difficult to absorb those losses.”

Even so, Burbank said he hoped the budget would be well-received.

“I think people should be happy that we’re moving forward – and one of the few areas and one of the few towns that do not see a tax increase,” he said.

The Annual Budget Meeting, where Conrad said residents can weigh in on the budget, ask questions and suggest areas they’d like to see decreased – but not increased – will be held Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m., in the Andover Town Office Building, 17 School Rd. The budget will then be approved and sent to referendum.



# No Competition in Andover Finance Board Race

by Geeta Schrayter

For residents of Andover, April showers bring May flowers – and municipal elections, too. With May just around the corner, it's time for residents to contemplate the candidates who are running for various boards and commissions in town.



**Georgette Conrad**

On the Board of Finance, this includes Republican incumbent and current chair Georgette Conrad along with Republican Jeffrey Murray and Democrat Nathaniel Houle.

All three are running unopposed for the finance board.

This is Conrad's fourth year on the board, and she said she was willing to serve again since she knew it was difficult to get people to run, and she enjoyed working with finances.

"I do enjoy being on the Board of Finance and I make it a point to look into everything," she said. "I just want to make sure that the people in town – the taxpayers – are thought about; that we do take them into consideration because we're all taxpayers. Even though there's lots we want to do [in town] we can't do them all."

Conrad added it was partially her willingness to participate that qualified her for the board along with the fact that when it comes down to it, managing the town budget was just about "dollars and cents."

"It's just dollars and cents," she said. "If you balance your checkbook – and I balance mine – you can do it."

As far as challenges, Conrad said the biggest one was the budget process at the state level and the unfunded mandates "that they dump on the towns."

"And until we replace some of those people that have been there for years and years and years we're not going to see improvement," she said. "I don't care whether it's a Democrat or a Republican – we need people who are fiscally responsible [in office]. Both parties have a hand in this mess."

However, she added, the scene was better in Andover.

"I feel, in town, that the representatives have done a very good job and I hope [residents] continue to elect representatives who continue to do a good job," she said. "It's up to the tax-



**Jeffrey Murray**

payers."

Also on the finance board ballot are Murray and Houle – and one would be slightly more new to the finance board than the other.

Murray, who moved to Andover from Rocky Hill about a year ago (but grew up in town), said he felt it was important to keep spending in line "and keep our taxes reasonable." He added with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a minor in business and accounting "I understand finance."

Murray said his goal was to maintain fiscal responsibility.

"I just want to continue fiscal responsibility and making [that] a priority and gaining the most out of every tax dollar," he said. "I would treat all the taxpayers' money like it's my own, as a taxpayer myself. I would make sure financially that we don't spend more than we bring in."

Like Murray, Houle also returned to town after living elsewhere. He moved back three years ago, but was also born in Andover, and said he was running because he wanted to be involved.

"I'm just interested in helping out," he said.



**Nathaniel Houle**

In addition, Houle said finances were his area of expertise, and that he "used to work at a hedge fund in New York."

He said he felt Andover was in "fairly good shape financially," and there was "not particularly" anything he thought should be changed.

Houle said he's been attending the Board of Finance meetings since January, and, after the elections, serving on the board won't exactly be a new experience. Houle was actually appointed earlier this month to replace James McCann, who resigned. However, since McCann's term was up this May, Houle needs to be officially re-elected.

In other elections, Republican incumbents Leigh Ann Hutchinson and Robert Russell and Democrat challenger Patrick Dougherty are vying for two spots on the Planning and Zoning Commission. Then, two Democrats – incumbent Walter Weir Jr. and John Handfield – are running unopposed for two spots on the Zoning Board of Appeals, while Donald Keener is looking to become the Zoning Board of Appeals alternate. Lastly, Democrats Barry Hansen Sr. and Greg Vincek and Republican Gerald Wright are all hoping for one of the two spots on the fire commission. Hansen is currently a member of the commission, while Vincek and Wright would be newcomers.

Elections will be held Tuesday, May 6, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Andover Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

# Three People Vying for Two Slots on Andover School Board

by Geeta Schrayter

With the municipal elections fast approaching, two incumbent Board of Education members – Whitney Covell and Christina Tamburro – will be looking to keep their seats and stay on for a second term. Lisa Hewett, meanwhile, hopes to take one of their spots.



**Christina Tamburro**

Covell, a Republican, is finishing up her first term on the board, and said she wanted to continue to serve in order to stay on top of what's going on.

"I still have a child in the elementary school and with all the changes in education that are going on in the state right now I feel that [being on the board is] something that's important," she said. "I need to be ahead of [things] for my kids and the kids in town."

Covell said this week funding was "absolutely" a challenge for the board, but she added Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia did a "fabulous job" ensuring kids had everything they need without putting a huge burden on taxpayers.

"I'm pretty happy with the way things are

going" she stated, adding her familiarity with the school was a reason to keep her on board, along with the active role she'd taken in other capacities in town which meant residents were familiar with her.

"I have a pretty good feel about how the people in town feel and they're always coming to me if they have concerns, and I bring that back to the board," she explained.

Tamburro, a Democrat, is finishing up her first term as well and said it's important to her to be a part of the board as a way to give back.

"It's a terrific school," she said, and, considering Tamburro has one child who currently attends Andover Elementary School, two who have already passed through and she attended herself as a child, she should know. "We've been able to accomplish a lot. We've got a wonderful staff and superintendent. I feel really lucky to be able to serve the town. ... [Being on the board is] just a way to give back to the town and help continue the excellent education."

Tamburro said she was qualified for the board since she's done some teaching, has a liberal arts background and an array of customer service related experience as well as experience looking at budgets, analyzing contracts, resolving problems and other such "translatable" skills.

As far as challenges, Tamburro said things seem to be "fairly good" for the most part but

as a public servant a challenge "is always to meet the needs of the community as they arise, and one never knows when that may be."

In addition, Tamburro said while the hope is the school would never have to deal with one, crisis management is important as well.

"We need to keep abreast of [this] and how a public entity such as a school should respond," she said.

But in general, Tamburro said there were no real changes she wanted to see and keeping her on the board was important for continuity.

"I think it's helpful to have continuity on the board," she said, adding she and Covell had the most longevity, which meant "you don't have to sort of, recreate the wheel from ground zero" when issues arise. "Experience is a good thing."

Hewett, a Democrat, is the newcomer on the ballot and has two kids in town, one of whom is a fourth-grader at Andover Elementary School.

Like the other candidates, Hewett commented on the quality of the school system and



**Lisa Hewett**

said she wanted to help maintain it.

"I know I can help to maintain, if not make it better, and that's something I look forward to doing," she said. "It's one of those cliché things – you want the best education for kids that the budget can buy."

In addition, Hewett said she wanted to be a voice for parents and students "and understand the ins and the outs." Hewett currently owns her own business and as such, she said she's responsible for handling finances, policies and procedures.

"I think a lot of that ties into the business end of the things on the Board of Ed.," she stated.

Like Covell, Hewett said the budget was the biggest challenge. She explained it was important to be financially responsible to the community "so there's obviously a budget they'll agree to" but then work within those parameters to provide students with the best education possible.

And as far as selecting her to join the board, Hewett said her open-mind in terms of listening and finding solutions, and her business background make her a good candidate. In addition, she said she's able to "listen to the needs of the people and able to interpret that back to the board."

Elections will be held Tuesday, May 6, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

# Only One Bid Comes In for Sewer Project in Marlborough

by Melissa Roberto

Following a series of lawsuits and delays during Phase I of the town's controversial sewer project, town officials were determined to make Phase II a success. But bidding for the final stretch of the project didn't turn out to be as successful as officials anticipated, as the town received only one bid for the construction.

"Surprised" is the word First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski used earlier this week to describe how town officials reacted to the news.

"It's unusual to receive one bid," Gaudinski admitted.

According to Town Clerk Nancy Dickinson, "about 20" bid contracts were picked up last month by contractors.

Phase II of the project was proposed to pick up where Phase I 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 would also hook up Beverly Lane and five houses on North Main Street.

The Marlborough Health Care Center (MHCC) makes up the second portion of the Phase II construction. The center would connect to the town's sewer line at Cheney and Park roads and pay for their private extension sepa-

ately.

Currently, the MHCC pumps its system once or twice daily. Officials have stressed in recent months that the MHCC is in dire need of a sewer system, and if it continues to suffer without one, the town could lose the center as one of its largest taxpayers.

Though both parties went out to bid on the project together, each is responsible for paying its own portion of construction. Hubble Construction of Burlington was the company that supplied the offer to the two parties, with a price tag of \$2.22 million.

The cost of the town's portion came to \$721,892.50 – a price Gaudinski said was "in the ballpark" of what town officials were anticipating.

The MHCC wasn't as lucky. The cost – which came in at \$1.50 million – is "higher" than what the center was expecting, Gaudinski said.

The cost and timing of the project depended on the bid results, and with only one price to look at, Gaudinski said a number of questions still need to be answered before the town has that information.

The first question is whether the town will be able to receive state reimbursement for the project with just one bid. If the town is unable to receive reimbursement, the town would most likely need to re-bid, Gaudinski said.

"We don't want to jeopardize any potential reimbursement from the state," Gaudinski said Tuesday.

Also, MHCC is currently in talks with Hubble Construction to possibly lower its cost of the project.

When asked what would happen if the town needed to re-bid for the project, Gaudinski said she wasn't sure whether or not both parties would once again bid jointly.

If a decision needs to be made on the future status of the town's portion of the project, the Water Pollution Control Authority Commission (WPCA) would need to take a vote, which would then go to the Board of Selectmen for ultimate approval.

If a re-bid is the answer, Gaudinski said the initial spring/summer start date would most likely be pushed back to the fall.

What did give Gaudinski peace of mind, however, was hearing why other contractors –

those that initially picked up bid contracts last month – chose not to place a bid.

"Most of the contractors I spoke with said the timing of the spring/summer start of the anticipated project was conflicting with other projects the contractors were already committed to," she explained.

The selectwoman added that other contractors said they did not place a bid because they were concerned with the design work needed at the MHCC sewer pump station and the construction that would need to take place underneath the Route 2 overpass.

For now, it's tough to tell if the project will continue on its original timeline or if the lonely bid will cause a setback. Gaudinski confirmed Tuesday that both parties, the town and MHCC, are waiting for some answers that affect the decision of a re-bid.

In a special WPCA meeting held Wednesday night, the commission discussed the bid but took no action concerning the project. A joint meeting between the WPCA and Board of Selectmen was scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, to further discuss the status of the project.



# Colchester Numerologist Finds Calling, Opens Business

by Melissa Roberto

For most workers nearing their 70s, retirement is probably just around the corner, but, for 70-year-old Colchester resident John Fedus, it's never too late to start a new career, especially if it's one driven by passion.

And passion is exactly what it took for the 70-year-old to begin his new – and quite-specialized role – as a numerologist.

Fedus recently opened his own business, Numerology 101, to provide consultations to people interested in learning more about themselves through numerology – what he defines as the “science of numbers.”

Each consultation Fedus conducts is based around two pieces of information: a client's birth name and date of birth. Fedus translates the letters that make up a client's name into numbers, and through simple math, he also reduces a client's birth date down to one number. These numbers are then used to define all aspects of a person including their qualities, abilities, urges and relationships.

The numbers also give meaning to the challenges a person will encounter throughout their life and can help with key decisions including his/her career and relationships.

To put it simply, Fedus says his readings pro-



John Fedus

vide clients with a “blueprint of their lives.”

Fedus also offers individuals the opportunity to purchase a life plan analysis, or a two-page hard copy that is sent to clients after the initial consultation. The life plan identifies the challenges and opportunities a person experiences throughout his/her life as well as pinpointing his/her current life period.

Books about numerology first began to pile up in Fedus' home in Colchester just two years ago, after he learned about numerology through a friend. He said it seemed fitting to research a method based on numbers, since he spent 35 years in the finance industry working for major firms, including Prudential Bache Securities and E.F. Hutton.

Though he describes himself as a guy who has “always been good with numbers,” Fedus said his favorite aspect of the job isn't about calculating numbers. Instead, he enjoys giving people information that can help them make major life decisions, just like his own reading helped him.

“I discovered a very accurate picture of the successes and the failures of my life and this covered all areas, personal, business...stuff like that,” he explained.

Fedus said the “very, very accurate” representation of himself made him want to continue conducting readings, especially because one of his numbers revealed that he was a “very intuitive” person.

“One doesn't choose a new career unless something unusual happened,” he said.

To test its accuracy, Fedus began conduct-

ing readings on close family members and friends, who also confirmed that the interpretations were exact.

“Then I started doing charts for people I didn't know anything about and again they were right on,” Fedus added. “Extremely right on.”

The inspired 70-year-old then received a certification in numerology in just one month by taking an online course through [numerologyuniverse.com](http://numerologyuniverse.com).

With Fedus' career change also came an opportunity that he is most thankful for – the ability to help people.

“The bottom line is the help that I can provide,” he said. “I don't make a ton of money but I get great satisfaction from helping people.”

Fedus said he normally does consultations out of his home over the phone, but will also travel to meet clients in person as well. Since he started his business at the end of last year, Fedus has already consulted with people all over the greater Hartford area, and has traveled as far as Watertown.

Fedus said he doesn't mind traveling to do in-person consultations but his one request is to conduct them in a “relaxing environment.”

Numerology is believed to date back to “well over” 5,000 years ago, Fedus said. He added that his method is based off of Greek mathematician Pythagoras, who wrote several books on the topic.

Through his new business, Fedus said his hope is to reveal the “undiscovered” field to others. He also stressed that numerology is unlike any other interpretations, like tarot card

readings or astrology.

“If you talk to three different astrologers you're going to get slightly different pictures from each,” he said. But “if you talk to three very competent numerologists you're going to get the same picture.”

Currently the cost of a life plan analysis with a two-page hard copy is \$65 per hour and it takes approximately one and a half hours to complete. As for a regular consultation, Fedus is currently charging \$60 per hour, but expects that rate to increase after the summer.

Fedus couldn't be more excited to enter into his new adventure. His goal is to continue the method because he hopes to reveal to others what they could, perhaps, be searching for.

“A lot of people are looking for answers,” he said, “and I think this is one of the areas that can define them.”

To see what numerology is all about before receiving a detailed analysis, readers can attend the Psychic Fair at the CT Sanctuary in Waterbury from noon-5 p.m. on May 4. There, Fedus will provide quick 20-minute consultations for \$20, which will identify a person's life plan, career decisions, relationships and more. For more information about the event, readers can call 203-437-8364.

Fedus regularly provides consultations and life plan analyses during the regular business hours of 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. To schedule a private consultation with Fedus, readers can email him at [johnfedus@gmail.com](mailto:johnfedus@gmail.com) or call him at 860-531-9532 or 860-705-6332.

## \$52.225 Million Budget Off to Referendum in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

Town officials, local board members and residents filled the meeting room at Town Hall Wednesday night for the town's annual budget meeting, and sent the \$52.225 million proposed 2013-14 fiscal year budget to a May 7 referendum.

The budget is an increase of \$1.94 million over current-year spending, or a 3.87 percent increase. It also calls for the mill rate to climb 1.48 mills over the current year's tax rate, to 30.28.

In terms of dollars, a property valued at \$200,000 would be charged \$6,056 in taxes, up from the \$5,760 it was charged in the current fiscal year.

About 81 residents attended Wednesday's meeting and voted on both the town operations and Board of Education budgets separately. All in the room voted in favor of each.

The meeting adjourned quickly but ended with some residents applauding its turnout.

Aside from familiar faces of the members of the boards of selectmen, education and finance – who have spent the last few months adjusting the bottom-line numbers of the budget – several parents attended the meeting to support the school board budget because of its all-day kindergarten proposal.

Currently, the district offers six half-day kindergarten classes and two all-day classes. The two all-day classes are made up of students that are chosen based on a lottery number.

One Colchester mother, Lynn Dickey, who has attended every meeting concerning the local Board of Education budget this year, made sure she came to the town meeting to support the school budget once more. Like several other parents, Dickey has voiced concerns about the

current lottery system but has a unique situation when it comes to sending her children to kindergarten next year.

Dickey is a mother of two twin boys, who ended up on opposite ends of the spectrum when it came to their lottery numbers. If the school budget doesn't pass and all-day kindergarten is removed, Dickey said she might consider magnet schools. She added that she's also in support of the program because it can be done while retaining three full-time teachers.

“Obviously I'm a mother and my kids going to full-day kindergarten is important,” she said, “but it's almost as important that we're giving back to the community and the people that help our children.”

When it came to the turnout of the meeting, Dickey added that she hopes to see the same results on Tuesday.

“I hope that it passes referendum and I hope that we have this kind of activity that day,” she said.

Selectman Stan Soby had similar feelings. He said the next challenge will be to get people out to the referendum to vote.

“Too often we don't get as good of a turnout as we'd like to have,” he said. “The more people who vote on the budget, the better the process becomes.”

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein stressed the same idea.

“Obviously the [referendum] vote is what's most important,” he said.

While the chairman was pleased with Wednesday's turnout he said he hopes to see a big crowd on Tuesday.

The budget referendum will be held Tuesday, May 7, at the Town Hall from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

## East Hampton Council Approves Budget With More Reductions

by Joshua Anusewicz

The Town Council Tuesday pushed forth the proposed town budget after making additional reductions to the Board of Education budget, bringing the increase down from 4 percent to 3.07 percent.

The council approved the reduction by a 4-1 vote, with Barbara Moore opposed and George Pfaffenbach and Glenn Suprono not present.

The reduction, proposed by councilor Derek Johnson, reduces the Board of Education budget by \$249,447, leaving the total proposed increase to the school budget at \$820,023. Johnson stated that the 3.07 percent increase figure would represent a 1 percent increase in “real expenditures” from the current year.

The council also opted to add \$10,000 to the town operations budget to help fund the Middle Haddam Public Library, a request that was made by library president James Royster to help alleviate shortfalls in the library's budget. This would bring the total increase to the town operations budget up to \$299,538, a 3.17 percent increase.

The budget now totals \$39,237,975, an increase of \$892,213, or 2.33 percent, from the current fiscal year. Of that total, \$9,734,919 would be for town operations, \$27,530,863 would be for education, \$1,102,277 for debt service, and \$869,916 for fund transfers.

According to Finance Director Jeff Jylkka, the proposed mill rate, if voters approved the budget as is, would be 26.63, a 0.66 mill increase from the current fiscal year. To explain the tax impact, Jylkka said that a property valued at \$200,000 would pay \$5,326 in taxes for year, down from \$5,426 in the budget that was originally proposed.

The reduction to the school budget is another sizeable decrease for the Board of Education to handle, as the proposed increase has dropped nearly 3 percent during the budget season. Originally proposed by Interim Superintendent of Schools Mark Winzler at a 5.94 percent increase, the budget was reduced to 5.19 percent by the school board due to lower insurance costs and reshuffling of faculty. The Board of Finance

then unanimously reduced that number to a flat 4 percent increase earlier this month.

The concern the majority of the council members had was whether the increases to the school budget were sustainable, as the Board of Education budget's share of the town's overall budget has continued to rise in recent years. Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. said that, like struggling businesses, the town should be accountable for spending within its means.

“Every other business has had to cut back or make layoffs,” said Hintz. “We cannot keep ratcheting this up. How can we continue to do this?”

Johnson agreed, citing statistics that show, in recent years, family income in East Hampton has decreased and the unemployment rate has increased, while the town has approved additional expenditures in that same amount of time.

“The school budget is unsustainable, and I think the service side is being squeezed,” he added.

Moore said her main concern was the low amount of funds designated for capital improvements, but otherwise supported the budget. She added that “no one is ever happy with the school budget,” implying the major reductions made to the Board of Education budget during deliberations over the past few years.

“I can't support a reduction now,” Moore stated. “Let the public decide.”

Chairwoman Sue Weintraub agreed that the budget increases were too high, and supported the opinion of Johnson. She added that if the budget were to fail at referendum, she would “strongly advocate” for additional reductions to the school budget, possibly 2 percent, for a potential second referendum.

The proposed budget will now head to a town meeting on Monday, April 29, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St., to send the budget to a town referendum. The referendum is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at East Hampton High School.



# East Hampton YPCCA Show to Benefit Sandy Hook Scholarship

by Joshua Anusewicz

With a mix of young and old cast members and a classic musical soundtrack, the Young People's Center for Creative Arts (YPCCA) upcoming production of *Oliver!* is sure to have something for everyone when it premieres next weekend.

"And people think it's dark, but it's actually really funny," said director Steve Jones. "People forget how funny it is."

*Oliver!* is a musical adaptation of the Charles Dickens classic *Oliver Twist*, which tells the story of a young orphan taken in by a den of thieves. With the help of strangers who become like a family to him, Oliver is turned away from a life of crime and able to be a normal boy. Jones, who said the story sticks very close to the Dickens novel, will serve as the director, with Jim Kane as assistant director, Rachel Mansfield as producer, Jen Friday as choreographer and Melanie Guerin as music director.

"It's an honest depiction of what the times were like then," added Kane of the show, which takes place in England in the 1830s. "So it's almost educational for the cast, too."

A popular musical for community theater, this year's production will be particularly meaningful for YPCCA. Performing *Oliver!*, Jones said, brings the organization "full circle," as the show was the first performance YPCCA ever had back in 1982, a show Jones performed in. Having a large mix of performers – roughly 30 children, 15 teenagers and 30 adults – was exactly what YPCCA's founders, the late Mike and Adina Mansfield, had in mind when they founded the group.

"That was the purpose [of YPCCA], bringing the community together," said Jones. "We're all having a great time and we have a lot of talent here."

Since the 1990s, YPCCA has used its spring musical as a fundraiser for its scholarship, which is given in honor of Mike and Adina to a graduating East Hampton student who plans to pursue a degree in either theater or education. This year, however, will be a little different, as YPCCA has announced the funds raised from the show will be given to the Sandy Hook School Memorial Scholarship Fund at University of Connecticut, which will support the tuition costs for the family members and classmates of those who were killed in the shooting in Newtown last year.

The idea was pitched by Rachel Mansfield – the daughter of Mike and Adina – earlier in the year, and Jones said that everyone involved in the show agreed it was a great idea. "We're happy to contribute what we can," said Jones, adding that Mike and Adina "would've loved it."

The founders of YPCCA likely would have loved the cast as well, which represents a mix of experience and young enthusiasm. Playing the lead role of Oliver is 10-year-old Nicholas Johnson, who will be performing in his first-ever show. Johnson admitted he's been a little nervous and has worked hard to get his lines right, but that he's enjoyed every second of the experience so far.

"I've met a lot of great people here," said Johnson. "I'm probably going to do another show."

Also in the cast are Chris Mansfield – the son of Mike and Adina – in the role of the villainous Fagin, Jay Gagne as the equally-villainous Bill Sykes, Allison Mohler as Nancy and Carli Villa as the Artful Dodger.

Many of the other performers in the cast will be part of the ensemble, which will take part in well-known tunes like "Consider Yourself,"



The upcoming YPCCA production of *Oliver!* will feature a cast filled with both youth and experience in its lead roles. The role of Fagin will be played by veteran Chris Mansfield, left, Carli Villa as the Artful Dodger, right, and 10-year-old Nicholas Johnson as Oliver in his first-ever production.

"Food Glorious Food," and "I'd Do Anything." "You'll find yourself saying, 'That's where I know that from,'" said Kane of the soundtrack. "Most people probably don't realize they know the songs."

And for a particularly special show, Jones and Kane said there will be a few surprises for the audience, but didn't reveal any secrets just yet. To find them out, and to enjoy a great pro-

duction of community theater, you'll have to come out on one of the four days the show will run: Thursday, May 2, through Saturday, May 4, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, May 5, at 2 p.m. All of the shows will take place in the East Hampton High School auditorium, 15 N. Maple St.

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors and students, and can be purchased at the door or prior to the show at [ypcca.org](http://ypcca.org).

## Group Hopes to Bring a Turf Field to RHAM

by Geeta Schrayter

The fields at RHAM need some love.

According to a news release sent out by the RHAM Sports Boosters, a self-proclaimed group of sports enthusiasts who work to support and enhance the athletic programs at RHAM, the fields are over-used and under-maintained, and games are often at the mercy of the seasons and the weather. And now, the Boosters are looking to help change all that with the formation of a committee that will work to improve the fields and facilities at the schools.

Sports Boosters president Pam Fromme said there's a laundry list of things that are needed – from lighting to more bleachers, a press box and a concession stand (which is currently in the works) – but the focus has recently honed in on a particular item: an artificial turf field.

And, according to athletic directors at both schools, such a field would be a welcome addition.

"I think it would be awesome," said Kevin Kanaitis, the athletic director at the middle school. "It's a wonderful idea. I think it would only enhance our athletic programs and definitely make them more accessible when dealing with weather-related issues."

Kanaitis, who has been the athletic director at the school for six years, explained how weather can impact sports, saying when it rains too hard, water ends up pooling on the competition field – which is where a new turf field would be built. Those areas then become muddy and consequently unsafe.

"And if that happens, if it becomes a safety issue, we have to cancel or postpone" the game, he said.

Kanaitis added adamantly that teams "never play or practice on a field deemed unsafe."

In addition to rain, the change in seasons can be problematic as well. Kanaitis referred to the switch from winter to spring as "a waiting game," because the ground needs to defrost and grass needs to grow before the fields are utilized. This is so the fields aren't torn up during use, and if the ground is hard, it becomes a safety issue when a student falls.

"Now when the fields thaw, they're wet,"

Kanaitis laughed, "so we wait for it to dry out a bit to get out and work."

With an artificial turf field, Kanaitis added, "these things won't be problematic," as "there are special draining areas, water can be moved around, the field won't retain the moisture like a regular field and it's easier to maintain."

Kanaitis said attempts are made to maintain the current fields to prevent some of the above issues, but whether fields can be prepped in time for practice or a game depends on when the rain ends.

"It can make things difficult," he stated.

In addition, Fromme said there wasn't enough manpower to adequately maintain the fields, but from a school standpoint, that's something that hasn't yet made it into the budget. She explained Sports Boosters and high school athletic director Mark Logan have been trying for several years to get some improvements made to the fields, "but it's always taken out of the budget."

During the process for the 2012-13 budget, for example, money was initially included for an additional groundskeeper. However, when the Board of Education was tasked with lowering the budget number, that was one of the initiatives that were cut.

Fromme added the intention is for the focus – providing a lighted, artificial turf field – to be something the community at large will support. She said the idea is that members from the entire community will be able to benefit from the field's addition and be able to use it.

The group is currently in the exploratory stages of the field project and, as such, there is no cost estimate in mind. But the group said in its news release it believes the field will be "user-friendly for RHAM High School and Middle School and all youth groups in our community."

With the new field, "We envision tournaments, CIAC games and meets" and year-round use, the Boosters added in the release.

"It just will be a resource to the whole community not just the high school," said Fromme, and Logan agreed.

"I think that this would be a benefit to the



If all goes well with the RHAM Sports Boosters field improvement initiative, the competition field at RHAM will, at some point, be replaced with an artificial turf field, thereby eliminating weather-related issues which can cancel and postpone games.

community at large and would provide a place to play in which weather is less of a concern," he said, adding, "There are many who believe [adding a turf field] would be a wise move."

Logan furthered Kanaitis' points, explaining the high school teams don't use the fields if they're deemed unsafe – a decision that's made by officials.

"We did play some state playoff soccer games [elsewhere] due to unplayable conditions at RHAM; we rented the turf field at [Eastern Connecticut State University]," he said.

Logan added some of the practice fields are in good condition, but "our competition field used for soccer, football and lacrosse needs some work." He added the field is used during the spring and fall season (in the fall there may be four games in seven days, while in the spring, there can be four or five lacrosse games in a

week), which means it only rests during summer and winter. These, he said, are "not the best times to grow grass."

But whether the turf field comes to fruition and helps remedy the situation with the fields at RHAM will be up to the Sports Boosters, the new committee and ultimately, Logan said, the community.

"It is up to the community to do this," he stated.

Individuals who are interested in joining the working committee to raise money, apply for grants, lobby the boards in each town and develop a plan to provide the turf field – and tackle some of the other needed athletic improvements – are invited to a community meeting Monday, May 6, at 7 p.m., in the RHAM Middle School cafeteria. For more information, call Fromme at 860-228-4320.



## Obituaries

### Colchester

#### Raymond Ruzsala Jr.

Raymond J. Ruzsala Jr., 65, of Colchester and Norwich, passed away Friday, April 19, at Hartford Hospital.

He was born July 27, 1947, in Norwich, son of the late Raymond and Mae Gyome Ruzsala. Ray worked for many years for the Teamsters Union driving trucks.

Surviving is a sister, Faith Donovan of Burlington; nephew Kevin Ruzsala and his family, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and a dear friend, Vina Sorenson of Meriden. He was predeceased by his brother, Edwin R. Ruzsala.

The funeral service will be held Saturday, April 27, at the Belmont Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, at 10:30 a.m. Burial will follow in Linwood Cemetery. Visitation at the funeral home will be on Saturday, from 10 a.m. until the time of the service.

### East Hampton

#### Tadeuz Urban

Tadeuz "Ted" Urban, 89, of East Hampton, passed away Sunday, March 3, under hospice care at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. He is survived by a brother, Teofil Urban of Ontario, Canada, and a sister, Cecylia, of the United Kingdom.

Ted was predeceased by his parents, Ludwig and Maria, and two brothers. Special friends that will remember him fondly include Bob Gastia, Helen Pirog and the Hecht family.

Born on Oct. 17, 1923, in Poland, he was the eldest of five children. At the outbreak of war, Ted's family lived on the Russian side of the River San in Poland and he happened to be visiting his grandmother, who lived on the German side. His family was taken by the Russians to Siberia while Ted remained on the German side. It was his wartime job to help Jews escape from the German side across the river to the Russian side; a very dangerous task. Ted evaded the Nazis by hiding in the hillsides.

In post-war Poland, Ted was a gamekeeper mounted on horseback who loved sleeping under the stars and often in trees to avoid the bears. He was issued a rifle to protect the horse, not himself. After a time he outwitted the KGB by leaping off a moving train to escape to freedom in Germany.

Ted spent some time in Great Britain before making a new home in the United States, where he became a citizen in 1995. Ted worked in East Hampton as a mason's assistant for many years. In his later years, the very independent Mr. Urban lived in the Bellwood Court Apartments, where he took frequent walks and preferred being outside.

Memorial donations in his name can be made to Middlesex Hospital and Palliative Care, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Ted wished to have his ashes spread in a wooded area. There will be a service for him in the spring/summer at Bellwood Court. An announcement of the date and time will be posted on the Bellwood Court bulletin boards.

### Colchester

#### Raymond L. Tirone

Raymond L. Tirone, 89, of West Hartford, passed away peacefully Saturday, April 20, at Harrington Court Healthcare Center in Colchester.

Born May 17, 1923, Ray was a World War II veteran of the U.S. Army Air Forces and a lifelong resident of West Hartford. He worked in the automotive industry for many years. Ray loved to travel, watch the N.Y. Yankees and spend time with his family.

He is survived by his son Blynn "Spike" Packard of West Hartford and his friend Cindy Bond of Enfield, son Thomas Tirone his wife Beth, and their children Brodie and Corey of Hebron and several close relatives and friends.

He was predeceased by his wife Corrine "Coco" Tirone, sister Alma Boero and brother Edmund Tirone.

The family would like to extend their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the entire staff at Harrington Court for their professionalism, support, care and love given to Ray and his entire family.

Funeral services were held graveside at Fairview Cemetery (section 5-A), 200 Whitman Ave., West Hartford, Wednesday, April 24.

Online expressions of sympathy may be made at [molloyfuneralhome.com](http://molloyfuneralhome.com).

### Portland

#### Lucille R. Bartolotta

Lucille "Dolly" R. Bartolotta, 82, of Portland, passed away Monday, April 22, at Middlesex Hospital. She was the daughter of the late Joseph and Lucy (Mendello) Bartolotta.

Born Aug. 16, 1930, in Middletown, she was a lifelong resident of Portland. She worked as a central supply technician at Middlesex Hospital for 20 years until her retirement and continued working for the Middlesex Surgical Center. She was a member of the Church of St. Mary in Portland, she loved playing cards, singing and the UConn Huskies women's basketball.

She leaves a son, Ricky J. Mosca of Marlborough; a daughter, Beverly M. Jervis of Trumbull; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a brother, Salvatore Bartolotta, and his wife, Patricia.

Funeral services will be held today, April 26, 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 St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday, April 25, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

### East Hampton

#### Karen Cooper Pfaffenbach

Karen Cooper Pfaffenbach, beloved and cherished wife of George Pfaffenbach, passed peacefully Wednesday, April 17, surrounded by family and friends. Karen was born on July 7, 1954, one of seven children of the late Mary and George Cooper of Glastonbury.

Raised in Glastonbury, she graduated from Glastonbury High School as part of the Class of 1973. Karen was a talented hairstylist for close to 40 years, serving many of her clients for her entire career. Karen created a warm environment, even serving home-baked goodies, when she opened her own salon, The Hideaway, in Glastonbury. Born with a spirit of adventure, Karen always enjoyed the beach and being on the water. Karen was a passionate gardener, acquiring the love and clippings from her mother, Mary. Her true love, besides her husband George, was spending time with her friends and family, of which there were many.

Karen is survived by her husband, George; her son, Ken and his girlfriend Amy Scrivens; her daughter, Kristen and her husband Dr. Rick Balotti; her brother, George Cooper and his wife Kathy of Troutman, N.C.; sisters, Ann Dillon of North Yarmouth, Maine; Pam Shores and husband Fred of East Hampton; Peggy Hobson and husband Tom of East Hampton; Bunny Brown and husband Steve of New Hartford, N.Y.; and Joanne Scanlon and husband Donny of Rocky Hill. She was expecting to be a proud grandmother in the near future. Karen is also survived by many nieces and nephews to whom she opened her heart and home.

Calling hours were Sunday, April 21, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Funeral services were Monday, April 22, in the Spencer Funeral Home. Burial will follow in Lakeview Cemetery in East Hampton.

Donations in Karen's memory may be made to the Sandy Peszynski Breast Cancer Foundation, 93 East High St. East Hampton, CT 06424, Captain Grizzly Scholarship Fund, 70 Main St. East Hampton, CT 06424, or the Protectors of Animals, 216 Wopowag Rd. East Hampton, CT 06424.

George and the rest of Karen's family would like to thank the staff at Hartford Hospital for their extraordinary skill and compassion throughout the last few days.

"There are people we meet in life that make everything seem magical... cherish them."

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).



### Marlborough

#### Ellen M. Isleib

Ellen (Welcome) Isleib, 78, wife of Gordon Isleib of Marlborough, died peacefully in her sleep Tuesday, April 16, at Chestelm Health Center in Moodus after a 13-year battle with Alzheimer's disease. Although she had lost all memory of her past, she still retained her pleasant nature and love of singing that most remember.

She and her husband lived in Chelmsford, Mass., for many years before moving to Marlborough in 1993. Ellen was known for her caring nature and readiness to help anyone in need, especially children, the elderly, and pets. She helped care for her mother-in-law for many years. She was active in the churches where she attended and can now rest in peace with her loving savior.

Born in Greenfield, Mass., Ellen was the daughter of Lawrence and Maud (Nichols) Welcome. In addition to her husband, Gordon, she leaves four sons; Warren Isleib and his wife, Brenda, of Nashua, N.H., Wayne Isleib and his wife, Laurie, of Tyngsboro, Mass., Gary Isleib and his wife, Emily, of New London, Mo., and Daniel Isleib and friend, Rachel, of Holly Springs, N.C., and a daughter, Wendy Nichols and her husband Michael, of Marlborough. She also leaves a sister, Eva Marturano of Greenfield, Mass., and four brothers: Lawrence Welcome Jr. and his wife Barbara of East Deerfield, Mass., Everett Welcome and his wife, Judy, of Hemet, Calif., Dennis Welcome and his wife, Beverly, of West Deerfield, Mass., and Donald Welcome and his wife, Joan, of Cornville, Ariz. She was predeceased by her brother, Howard Welcome.

In addition to her husband, children, and siblings, she leaves seven grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Services will be held Saturday, April 27, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Friends are invited to visit with family at 10 a.m. prior to a memorial service at 11. Burial will be at the Marlboro Cemetery following the service.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 2075 Silas Deane Hwy, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### Colchester

#### Mary Hoffmeister

Mary (Lightcap) Hoffmeister, 92, of Colchester, widow of the late Gilbert Hoffmeister, with whom she shared 67 years of marriage, passed away Sunday, April 21, surrounded by her loving family. Born July 7, 1920, in Germantown, Pa., she was the daughter of the late John and Marian (Link) Lightcap.

Before moving to Connecticut in 2000, Mary and Gilbert had lived in Dunnellon, Fla., for 20 years and King of Prussia, Pa., for the 25 years prior to that. Mary was a devoted wife and mother, as well as an active volunteer and Girl Scout leader for many years. Mrs. Hoffmeister was musically inclined, as a vocalist, piano and organ player, talents that she shared over the years at various churches.

In addition to his loving wife of 67 years, she is survived by three children and their spouses, Susan and Gary Rodimon of East Haddam and Lloyd and Laura Hoffmeister and Barry and Kathy Hoffmeister, all of California; seven grandchildren; five step-grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Care of private arrangements, with burial in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown, has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester

### Hebron

*Note: An incorrect version of this obituary appeared in last week's issue.*

#### Ann Keefe

Ann Keefe, 88, of Hebron, died Tuesday, April 16, at Windham Hospital. She was the widow of Edward Keefe.

She leaves her sons, Edward Keefe and Kenneth Keefe; her daughter, Anita Keefe; her granddaughter and the light of her life, Heather Hellstrom; and a special niece, Patricia Roberson.

She loved UConn women's basketball and watching the wildlife and birds at her home.

There are no calling hours. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. Memorial contributions can be made to the Hebron Volunteer Ambulance Fund.

Arrangements are through the Potter Funeral Home, Willimantic. Visit [potterfuneralhome.com](http://potterfuneralhome.com) for online memorial guestbook.

### Hebron

#### Jayne M. Repoli

Jayne M. (Lavoie) Repoli, 73, of Hebron and Myrtle Beach, S.C., died Monday, April 22, at St. Francis Hospital. She was the beloved wife of Michael W. Repoli Sr. for 56 years.

Born in Leominster, Mass., daughter of the late Harry and Ruby (Schofield) Lavoie, she grew up in Hartford and lived in Hebron for the last 40 years. Jayne worked at Morland Valve Corp., Manchester, for 25 years as an executive secretary to the president, Thomas DeMarco.

She is survived by her loving husband, Michael; her son and daughter-in-law Michael W. Repoli and Karen of Summerville, S.C.; her daughter, Melissa Repoli Gaboury of Manchester; grandchildren, Tricia Gaboury of Newport News, Va., David Gaboury and his wife Erin of Bloomfield; her brothers, Ronald LaVoie and his wife Marie Mascolo LaVoie, Harry LaVoie and his wife Margaret Forcash LaVoie. In addition, she leaves nieces and nephews: Gloria White, Lissa LaVoie Mink, Steven LaVoie, Jayne LaVoie Broderick, Chelsea LaVoie and Andrew LaVoie.

She was predeceased by her brothers Donald "Red" LaVoie and William "Buddy" LaVoie.

She loved gardening, bird-watching, traveling, spending time at the beach and watching sports, and was an avid Yankees fan. After retirement, she truly enjoyed cooking and trying new recipes. Jayne will be remembered as a devoted wife, mother, sister, aunt and grandmother. Her grandchildren were paramount in her life. We have lost an angel and she will be truly missed by all who knew her.

Family and friends call at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington, Thursday, April 25. Her funeral service was held that evening, with Rev. Dr. Bruce Fletcher officiating.

Memorial donations may be made to the John A. DeQuattro Cancer Center, 100 Haynes St., Manchester, CT 06040.

To share a memory with her family, visit [newingtonmemorial.com](http://newingtonmemorial.com).

### Marlborough

#### Charles J. Rubano

Charles J. "Charlie" Rubano, 86, of Marlborough, husband of the late Rosemarie (Puglisi) Rubano, died Saturday, April 20, at Marlborough Health Care Center in Marlborough.

Born in New Haven, he was the son of the late Anthony and Rose (Cappella) Rubano and lived in Hernando, Fla., for 15 years, prior to moving to Marlborough six years ago. He was the owner and operator of Lombard Motors in New Haven, retiring in 1992. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the U.S. Army.

He is survived by three children: a son, Charles A. Rubano of Hamden, two daughters, Donna Getchell and her husband David of Inverness, Fla., and Linda Fisher and her husband Shawn of Marlborough; a brother, Pasquale Rubano and his wife Grace of North Haven and a sister, Rosemary Consiglio of East Haven. Charlie also leaves seven grandchildren; Regina Kessler and her husband Micah, Ashley Rubano, Chuck Rubano and Sonny Rubano, Nathan Fleischmann, Alex Fleischmann and Garrett Fisher as well as four great-grandchildren; Ava, Gianni, Brayden and Bryn. In addition, Charlie leaves a dear friend, Verne Schadle, with whom he made his home.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Katherine, two brothers, Anthony and Alfred and a sister, Dorothy Russell.

The funeral service will be today, April 26, at 11 a.m., at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield, CT 06109. Burial will be in Rose Hill Memorial Park, Rocky Hill, with full military honors. Calling hours will be from 10-11 a.m., prior to the service, at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel.

For online expressions of sympathy, visit [desopo.com](http://desopo.com).

## *Portland*

### **Michael E. Muskatello**

Michael E. Muskatello, 92, of Windsor, husband of the late Theresa (Pandozzi), died peacefully Tuesday, April 16, at Middlesex Hospital. He was born Sept. 21, 1920, son of the late Sebastiano and Sebastiana (Bartolotta) Muskatello.

Michael grew up in Portland and served the country during World War II with the U.S. Army. A resident of Windsor since 1953, he worked as a service manager for Selig Ford, Calia Ford and the Windsor Garage. In his spare time he enjoyed fixing TVs and radios for the neighborhood and was always willing to help others. A kind, caring and devoted father, grandfather and friend, he will be greatly missed by all.

He leaves two sons, James Muskatello and his wife Suzette of Southington and Robert Muskatello of Ellington; two daughters, Nancy Galo of Bolton and Linda Welti and her husband Dean of East Windsor; five grandchildren, Matthew and Christopher Galo, Andrew Muskatello, and Lauren and Michael Welti. He was predeceased by his siblings, Joseph, John, Rose and Mary.

His family received friends Thursday, April 18, at the Carmon Poquonock Funeral Home, 1816 Poquonock Ave., Windsor. Family and friends also gathered Friday, April 19, at the funeral home, which was followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Gertrude Church, Windsor. Burial followed with military honors at Windsor Veterans Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the American Heart Association, 1 Union St., Suite 301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691.

Visit [carmonfuneralhome.com](http://carmonfuneralhome.com) for online condolences.

## *Colchester*

### **Marion Theresa Labonosky**

Marion Theresa Labonosky, 71, of Colchester, beloved wife of Benjamin III, passed away Wednesday, April 24, at home, surrounded by her loving family. Born Oct. 13, 1941, in the Bronx, N.Y., she was a daughter of the late Harold Clark and Lillian (Schnell) Clark Finnegan.

Along with her husband and family, Marion was the proud owner and operator of Benjamin's Restaurant. Her graciousness, kindness and caring nature will be remembered fondly by the countless patrons that she served through the years. Those qualities, along with her deep love and dedication to her family, will be deeply missed by her family, especially her grandchildren, whom she adored.

In addition to her loving husband of 46 years, she leaves two sons, Ben IV and Stephen, and a daughter, Susanne Zahacefski, all of Colchester; seven grandchildren, Jamie, Jessica, Taylor, Kyle, Noah, Shane and Cory; three siblings, Lorraine Hayes, Lillian Wilson and Robert Clark, all of Florida; and numerous extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by two siblings, Dorothy Hayes and Harold Clark.

A celebration of her life will be held and announced at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Center for Hospice Care SECT, 227 Dunham St., Norwich, CT 06360, in recognition of their care and compassion extended during Marion and her family.

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

## **Portland Police News**

4/20: John Sullivan, 62, of 80 Collins Hill Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive in established lane, Portland Police said.

## **Andover Police News**

4/21: State Police said Thomas Rice, 48, of 232 Skinner Hill Rd., Coventry, was charged with DUI and restricted turn.

## **Colchester Police News**

4/17: State Police said Isabel Medeiros, 55, of 62 Apple Hill, Wethersfield, was charged with DUI, speeding, and failure to carry registration.

4/18: Colchester Police said Lisa Vidtor, 44, of 10 School St., was charged with third-degree forgery and fifth-degree larceny.

4/19: Colchester Police said Justin M. Piggot, 38, of 73 Windham Ave., Apt. A, was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and evading.

4/20: Colchester Police said Edward E. Kerwin, 61, of 50 Lane 1, Warwick, R.I., was charged with DUI, failure to drive in the proper lane and drinking while operating a motor vehicle.

4/20: Colchester Police said at approximately

## **Marlborough Police News**

4/15: State Police said Clifford Wolters, 34, of 10 Wellswood Rd., Amston, was charged with sixth-degree larceny.

4/17: State Police said Michelle M. Adams, 41, of 7 Ivy Ct., Colchester, was charged with second-degree criminal mischief, third-degree larceny and third-degree burglary.

4/20: State Police said Shawn M. Grondin, 35, of 117 Stage Harbor Rd., was charged with DUI, failure to drive right, insurance coverage failing minimum requirements and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

4/19: State Police said Jerry Abney, 57, of 156 Flood Rd., was traveling westbound on

## **East Hampton Police News**

4/10: A 16-year-old juvenile of Cobalt was issued a juvenile summons for possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, East Hampton Police said.

4/18: Catherine Lynch, 50, who police had no certain address for, was arrested for two counts of second-degree failure to appear stemming from two separate incidents, police said.

9:34 a.m. a reported burglary and larceny occurred at the International Package store located at 199 Lebanon Ave. Colchester Police is still investigating the incident.

4/21: Colchester Police is currently investigating a burglary/larceny/criminal mischief that occurred at the Colchester Recreation Complex located at 215 Old Hebron Rd. Police said items belonging to the Colchester Baseball and Softball League were taken from a locked storage shed at the complex. Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact Colchester Police Officer Shannon Owens at 860-537-7500.

4/21: State Police said Bridget L. Merril, 39, of 247 Usher Swamp Rd., was charged with DUI.

West Road when Rita Normandin, 24, of 21 Denler Dr., was making a left-hand turn onto the Route 2 westbound on ramp when the two vehicles collided. Police said Normandin was transported to Middlesex Hospital by the Marlborough Fire Department for minor injuries.

4/20: State Police said Michael Rossi, 21, of 123 Landing Hill Rd., East Haddam, was charged with DUI, failure to maintain proper lane, and failure to carry registration.

4/21: State Police said Jean Rodriguez, 72, of 56 South Rd., was charged with DUI.