

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 38, Number 6

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

May 24, 2013



JJIS Students Hear from the President... Recently, a group of students from Jack Jackter Intermediate School in Colchester sent a letter and petition to President Barack Obama. Students were concerned about the safety and welfare of tigers, so they contacted the White House for the president's assistance. They were delighted to receive a package from the president, which included a reply letter to the students, an autographed picture, and interview responses from the president answering questions such as, what is your favorite book or sport and who is your best friend? The president offered many answers. He also included a map of the White House and even a picture of his pet dog, Bo. Pictured from left are students Vin May, Meri Davies, Riley Perham, Maureen Murray (JJIS paraprofessional), William Rivers and Arianna Brennan.

Budget Nixed; New One to Voters

by Melissa Roberto

Marlborough finance board member Beth Petroni's amended 2013-14 budget – which was abruptly presented and then passed at a town meeting last week – has been deemed faulty, prompting the Board of Finance to craft a new one, which will head before voters June 3.

At the annual town budget meeting on May 13, Petroni stunned voters with her own version of the 2013-14 budget – a \$21.45 million spending package that featured a \$200,000-plus cut to what was originally proposed for town operations. Petroni's budget was then passed, via a tight 61-56 vote.

However, First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski told the Board of Finance at its meeting last Thursday, May 16, that she had spoken with the town's counsel and bond counsel, who informed her it would be "inappropriate" for the finance board to set a mill rate – the traditional next step after a budget is passed – because the May 13 budget vote was a "flawed approval."

"While the town charter allows a reduction at a town meeting, it does not allow an increase," Gaudinski told the finance board. "There were increases in this amended motion."

The increases Gaudinski was referring to included an increase to the educational dues and fees line item in the town operations budget, a higher total of the RHAM surplus, and increases made to revenues.

Gaudinski added that Petroni's budget that was passed included "several inaccuracies," and

bottom line totals of expenses and revenues that "didn't even match."

Petroni's last-minute amendment to the budget marked a first in Marlborough town budget history, town officials have said during the past week. Her budget also produced a drop in taxes of 3.47 percent, and an overall decrease in the budget of 0.46 percent.

Petroni explained to the board last Thursday how she achieved her proposal.

"I took the actuals that we got from April 30 and projected those out," she said. "If the town gave a certain department a certain amount of money last year and they didn't spend it, it got cut. That's really how all of this was done. There was no animosity; there was no targeting."

But Petroni's budget – which several residents referred to as a display of "disrespect" and "circumvention of the democratic system" – was quickly overturned, and finance board members, including Petroni, went to work making trims to the initial \$21,665,665 budget they had planned for taxpayers to vote on at the May 13 town meeting.

The new proposal knocks off close to \$55,000 from the original town operations budget proposal, for a total of \$4,437,315, down from the \$4,491,748. The new town operations budget represents a .37 percent increase over current year spending, which is up from the 3.24 percent decrease Petroni's budget represented,

See Budget Nixed Page 2

Hebron Voters OK \$34.95 Million Spending Plan

by Geeta Schrayter

Hebron voters didn't exactly rush the polls Tuesday, but enough showed up to handily approve a \$34,953,289 budget for the 2013-14 spending year.

The spending package is \$75,000 less than what was defeated by a scant 37 votes at a May 7 referendum.

The new budget passed by a 703-439 tally. "I'm happy, I'm very happy," Town Manager Andy Tierney said this week. "I was optimistic that it would pass and now I'm happy that it did and I want to thank all the voters that came out."

Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt felt similarly.

"I'm always happy to have the budget be passed and know that we've got enough people that are feeling supportive of what the Board of Finance, Board of Education and town put forward," he said. "I think we've got to continue to earn that vote from the voters every single day and I think the Board of Selectmen are ready to get down to business."

The approved budget includes \$14,668,976 for Hebron's portion of the RHAM budget (to-

taling \$25.94 million, the RHAM budget was approved May 7); \$11,955,923 for the Hebron Board of Education; \$6,679,757 for town government; a \$558,325 contribution to the Capital Improvement program (which was also approved May 7); a \$100,000 contribution to open space and \$990,308 in town debt service.

The budget is a \$1,177,038 increase over the current year and resulted in the mill rate being set Tuesday night at 34.70, up from 33.55. The mill rate is used to calculate a taxpayer's property tax based on the assessed value of their property. For a resident with a home assessed at \$200,000, the new mill rate equates to a tax increase of \$230, from \$6,710 to \$6,940.

After the originally proposed budget failed May 7, the Board of Finance decided to cut \$75,000 from the number; \$50,000 from the Board of Education and \$25,000 from the town. At this point, no definite areas where the cuts will come from have been decided upon.

"We still have to figure where the \$25,000 is going to come out," said Tierney, explaining he'd come up with recommendations to present

to the selectmen. One possibility, he said, could be an increase in Local Capital Improvement Program (LOCIP) funding from the state. Tierney said the amount of LOCIP funding in the state budget was changed through the Appropriations Committee and could equate to more funding for Hebron. However, he noted the state budget is still not finalized so he wouldn't know for sure "for another few weeks."

"Then I'll have to figure out some further selections – it's a very tight budget," he said.

On the education side, a Board of Education meeting was scheduled for Thursday after press time, where board chair Kathy Shea said various actions would be taken including "identifying and nailing down exactly where that \$50,000 worth of reductions that the Board of Finance previously reduced us by is going to come from."

Although the votes in favor of the budget were substantially more than the votes against it at the prior referendum, voter turnout at both referendums remained close – and low. On May

7 there were 1,151 voters and on May 21 there were 1,142, which represents 17.5 percent of the town's registered voters.

Board of Finance Chairman Mike Hazel commented on the number, and said the difference this time was an increased push by different groups in town to get residents out to vote.

"Turnout was still very low but it was overwhelmingly in favor," he said. "There was a lot more 'get out to vote' activity among certain groups than the first time" including the PTA and various education groups.

Hazel also said some of the original 'no' votes may have been due to dissatisfaction with the RHAM budget.

"As far as the 'no' vote goes, there was also a big focus on the RHAM budget," he said, "and because that had passed I think a lot of people, who had not necessarily a concern with the town budget, didn't show up."

Watt agreed, explaining since the number of voters didn't change too much, it was the makeup of voters that must have.

See Spending Plan Page 2

Budget Nixed cont. from Front Page

and down from the 1.61 percent increase in the original budget proposal.

The new town operations budget proposal also lowers the bottom line total of the entire town budget from the initial \$21,665,665 to \$21,611,232. The new town budget represents a .28 percent increase of spending, a decrease in taxes of .86 percent and a 30.76 mill rate over the current year.

To achieve the \$55,000 cut, the finance board went through each of the accounts Petroni had changed and made adjustments accordingly. For example, Petroni’s \$50,000 reduction in legal fees was readjusted to a reduction of \$20,000. The board also changed Petroni’s \$50,000 reduction in snow removal supplies to a \$20,000 reduction.

Other readjusted reductions included: \$3,295 from election expenses; \$2,000 from the salary of board clerks; \$1,500 from the resident trooper grant; \$1,000 from advertising and legal notices; a \$500 reduction in personal mileage reimbursement; \$300 from the Board of Finance education dues and expenses and \$250 from the board’s office supplies; and \$200 from educational dues and expenses in the Land Use Department account.

However, some of Petroni’s cuts were restored in the new budget proposal. For example, the raises of Town Hall-appointed and elected officials are included in the new proposal, the \$2,500 cut to cemetery maintenance was put back in, and the \$4,000 cut from the Senior Center clerical account was restored.

Some of the board’s reductions were made after Assistant Treasurer Hayley Wagner communicated what has been spent in the current fiscal year as well as listening to residents who sat in the crowd.

Resident Gordon Islieb presented himself as a member of the cemetery committee who was disappointed in the aforementioned cut from the cemetery account.

“That mows it once a year,” he said of the \$500 Petroni left for the cemetery. “Once instead of six times and it does not provide anything like picking up leftover flowers, limbs, emptying trash...”

But one account that remained the same as Petroni’s proposal was the cut of \$4,888 from van drivers for the senior van that is used to transport senior citizens who are unable to drive on their own – a cut some members of the crowd didn’t agree with.

While each of the finance members worked together to produce the new budget last Thursday, Petroni chose to abstain when it came time to vote on the new number. All of the other members – Evelyn Godbout, Cliff Denniss, Ken Hjulstrom, Doug Knowlton and Susan Leser –

approved it, sending it to the June 3 meeting.

“I’m abstaining from the vote because I don’t think we have the authority to do that,” Petroni said of the new budget proposal.

Board of Finance alternate member Lauren Cragg, who was present at the meeting, had similar feelings. She questioned who determined that the vote on the amendment was flawed and furthered that the town counsel should have been present at the meeting to communicate the news to the board. “Right here,” she said.

Petroni’s elimination of \$45,000 for the future capital expenditure reserve that was passed at the town meeting was not discussed by the board Thursday. Gaudinski said this means the original proposal of \$350,500 for capital items will go before voters on June 3.

Petroni stated at the finance board meeting that she eliminated the \$45,000 for the capital reserve in her proposal because she did not feel comfortable with putting money aside so the selectmen “can spend it however they’d like.”

Earlier this week, however, Gaudinski said that’s an “absolute fallacy.”

“We would still follow the process of going to the Board of Finance and the town voters,” Gaudinski said of capital spending.

Though the finance meeting was much calmer than the town meeting turned out to be, town officials and residents still spoke against Petroni’s process of her town meeting proposal.

“I’m very disappointed in you, Lauren and Beth. You had every opportunity to comment in all the meetings here instead of putting us through this today,” selectman Mike Gut said at last Thursday’s three and a half hour meeting.

Resident Shannon Cieslowski said she saw a flyer about the amendment being passed around the room in the beginning of the meeting that had only been handed out to select people.

“I asked for one and was told several times that I did not need one and I heard several people say to make sure they were ‘passed out to our friends,’” she said.

Petroni’s son, Michael Petroni, said he did not intentionally pass the flyers out to select people in the crowd.

At Tuesday night’s Board of Selectmen meeting, Gaudinski stressed that she hopes to see a good public turnout at the second town meeting on the budget.

Voters will have a chance to approve or disapprove of the new budget proposal crafted by the entire board at a town meeting on Monday, June 3, at 7 p.m., at the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria.

cess for information or to ask questions. He said the town was looking for suggestions on how to get more people to vote since a number of options – flyers, signs, letters in the paper, info on the town website, informational meetings and public hearings – were already utilized.

“We work for the people of Hebron,” he said. “We’re looking to do things better.”

The \$34.94 million budget will go into effect at the start of the 2013-14 fiscal year, on July 1.

Spending Plan cont. from Front Page

“Voters that didn’t come out the first time did this time and some that came out the first time didn’t vote the second time around,” he said. “But I think the message that I think I’m hearing is that people were feeling that enough cuts were made at this time and they wanted the town government to kind of move forward and provide services.”

Tierney added he felt the budget was “very responsible” and said the doors at the town office are always open if residents want to come in during the year or during the next budget pro-

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

As someone who’s been there, I know car shopping isn’t always a pleasant experience. After all, it’s probably one of the single biggest purchases you can make, and you want to make sure you get it completely right. This isn’t choosing between fries or onion rings at Burger King.

So I understand people can be a little on edge to begin with. And add then what they may view to be a less-than-pleasant experience with a dealer and, well, it can be a bad day. I’ve certainly had bad days at car dealerships. Friends and family have shared horrible stories of encounters they’ve had with various dealers over the years.

But, still, don’t get yourself arrested.

I saw in the East Hampton police news last week an item that truly caught my eye. Alexa Bristol, 26, of Maybrook, N.Y., was arrested after, according to police, she threw a cup of water on a local auto dealer.

Apparently, on the afternoon of May 1, Bristol was having what police called a “customer service issue” at a dealer in town. Specifically, there was a dispute over the condition of the car. The dispute got heated, police said, and a cup of water got thrown. The dealer wound up with a wet shirt and pants.

Bristol, meanwhile, wound up with a summons for breach of peace.

* * *

Regular *Rivereast* readers may be pretty familiar, by this point, with *Anything Goes*. In a little more than a year’s time, stories on local productions of it graced the cover no less than three times. In February 2012, Bacon Academy in Colchester put it on. It was selected to be the AHM summer musical last July. And this past March, it was performed at Portland High School.

You’d think having edited three different stories about the play, and having seen it myself (in, yes, another high school production; this one at Manchester High School in 2002), I may know all there is to know about the hit

Cole Porter musical. Think again. I came across a piece of trivia this week that struck me as rather interesting. “Friendship,” one of the more memorable numbers from the play, wasn’t initially a part of the play, wasn’t initially a part of *Anything Goes* at all.

Twenty years after the musical made its 1934 Broadway debut, a one-hour adaptation was concocted for the *Colgate Comedy Hour*, a TV variety series. Only thing is, it was a two-and-a-half hour play, getting condensed to fit into a one-hour time slot (actually more like 52 minutes, once you factor in commercials), so stuff had to go. And stuff did. Half the book got tossed, and two-thirds of the songs were excised.

Oddly, though, with all that slicing and dicing, an addition was made. Stars Ethel Merman and Burt Lahr (the latter more famous today as the Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard of Oz*) insisted they wouldn’t do the TV show unless the song “Friendship” was added to it. It was another Cole Porter number – only thing is Porter wrote it for the musical *DuBarry Was a Lady*, which Merman and Lahr happened to star in.

While *Anything Goes* has been revived a bunch of times since its debut, not just on the youth theater stage but on Broadway as well – including a Tony Award-winning revival in 2011 – *DuBarry* has pretty much died out, and is now relatively obscure. (The only reason I had even heard of the musical was I’m a big Lucille Ball fan; a movie adaptation of it was produced in 1943, and for her role in the film, Ball, a natural brunette, dyed her hair red for the first time. She obviously liked the way she looked.)

Merman and Lahr knew of what they spoke, and the inclusion of “Friendship” was a big hit – so much so that when *Anything Goes* is revived these days, “Friendship” typically is included.

* * *

See you next week.

Marlborough Selectmen Recommend \$1 Million Appropriation for Sewer Project

by Melissa Roberto

The Board of Selectmen unanimously approved the recommendation of a \$1 million appropriation for the town’s portion of Phase II of the sewer project in its regular meeting Tuesday night.

The recommendation will now head to the Board of Finance for approval, and if approved, the finance board would be responsible for scheduling a public hearing.

The appropriation is for \$1,010,000 that would cover the costs of planning, acquisition and construction for Phase II of the project. The cost is based on the one bid that the town received last month from Hubble Construction of Burlington.

The town’s portion of Phase II would hook up the east side of Lake Terramuggus River, Bill Lardi of the Water Pollution Control Authority Commission (WPCA) confirmed Tuesday.

The construction would pick up where Phase I of the sewer project left off, with the construction of a sewer line up Cheney Road, and would also hook up five or six houses each on Beverly Lane and North Main Street.

Though the town is only responsible for paying its portion, the second portion of the project will be paid for by the Marlborough Health Care Center (MHCC), whose construction involves a sewer extension from the center to connect with the town’s extension. First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski said Tuesday that the MHCC has been in need of a new sewer system for the last seven to 10 years, as its two systems have failed.

“This is very critical for them,” Gaudinski explained. “They are the third-largest taxpayer in town and it will also complete a section of our sewer project at the same time.”

The selectmen’s recommendation, if approved by the finance board, would allow the

town to borrow the \$1,010,000 to pay for the project. The recommendation comes after the town received confirmation from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) that moving the project forward after receiving only one bid meets bid procurement requirements.

Though the appropriation requested would cover the full scope of the town’s portion of the project, the town could still receive Clean Water funds in the future that would lower its cost. Gaudinski told the board that the town’s financial advisor, Janette Marcoux, is currently calculating estimates of what the costs would be if the town received those funds. The estimates will be communicated to the Board of Finance at a special finance board meeting next Wednesday, May 29, at 7 p.m., at the Marlborough Elementary School library.

“I hope we get clean water fund money because it would save us a big chunk of money,” Lardi told the selectmen.

All of the selectmen were in agreement of moving the project forward.

“I don’t think I ever knew this much about any other subject we’ve ever worked on besides this,” said Dick Shea.

Following the selectmen’s recommendation, the appropriation will head to the Board of Finance for approval, which would then have the authority of scheduling a public hearing. Thereafter, the finance board would then vote to send the proposal to a town meeting for the public to vote on.

The date of the public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 5, with the town meeting tentatively set for Wednesday, June 19. If the finance board approves the appropriation at next week’s meeting, it could make those dates official.

New Sports Court in Marlborough School's Future?

by Melissa Roberto

A group of Marlborough Elementary School dads have hit the ground running to raise money for the installment of a multi-use sports court at the school that all students could utilize.

And with help from the Marlborough Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and MES administration, the initial stages of the project are already underway.

The project calls for a 50-by-90-foot multi-use sports court to be installed behind the school, where children go when they depart from the classroom each day for recess. The idea is to add two to six basketball hoops of varying heights around the court so students of all grade levels can reach the rims. Lines for a basketball court and foursquare courts would also be included so students can use it for different activities.

More than just a place for students to interact with one another, supporters of the project said the court would also foster healthy and active lifestyles for MES students in addition to providing them with more choices at recess.

The initial discussion of the idea began last spring when dads Dave Polochanin and Greg Hester were sitting on the sidelines of their children's soccer game. The two discussed growing up playing basketball around their former schools' basketball courts when they were kids, and realized that was one thing MES was lacking.

"I want MES students to have a place while they're at this school to play during recess and even after school," said Hester, who added that he's "extremely passionate" about moving the project forward.

Hester said the two began tapping the shoulders of other dads in town, who jumped on board. Since, the dads have formed a committee called the Multi-Use Sports Court committee and have accomplished quite a lot over the last year.

The committee has been in talks with Town Planner Peter Hughes, who Hester said verbally supported the project, but will hopefully be submitting his support in writing soon.

Polochanin, a teacher in Glastonbury, said the committee researched other schools in nearby towns such as Glastonbury, East Hartford, Hebron and Manchester, to get an idea of what they're providing for students at their outdoor playgrounds.

The committee also reached out to contractors for cost estimates, which ranged from \$16,000 to \$20,000 – totals that Hester said

could change depending on the scope of the project.

But with the combined efforts of the committee, PTO and MES Principal Scott Nierendorf, about \$11,000 has already been raised.

The first donation of \$4,650 was collected through the Fund-A-Wish program that took place at the PTO's winter fundraiser in March. Another \$6,000 was contributed from the PTO in early May.

"All of us on the committee are extremely pleased and grateful for that level of commitment," Polochanin said of the PTO's contribution.

And just last week, letters were sent home with students to make parents aware of the school's initiative. As of Wednesday, another \$450 was received.

With the project scope and specifications outlined, and a stack of designated money that continues to grow, the project, which was initially anticipated to take two years to complete, may be done sooner than expected.

"They've moved fast and furious," said Nierendorf, who admitted that he's "very excited" about the project.

Nierendorf added that the additional recess space would not only create more room for the 150-180 students that have recess at one time, but it would also be used for number of purposes in addition to recess.

For example, Nierendorf said it would be a "great" location for students to participate in team building activities, as well as a place for gym classes to be held when the weather is nice.

The principal added that installing a new court could also prompt the school to look into other phases of construction to the school's existing playgrounds, such as extending the current path behind the school into a loop so students have a path to walk on outside during recess if they'd like.

"Part of the goal is for kids to be active outside," said Nierendorf, while adding that it could also be used for outdoor afterschool activities.

Currently, the recess area in the rear of the school includes two playscapes, two large sets of swings and a small paved area with one basketball hoop. Nierendorf admitted that the paved area includes a foursquare court that students can hardly use if basketball is being played, and the one basketball hoop that is in place is "due for an upgrade."



Marlborough PTO members, school administration, and students gathered on the site of a proposed multi-use sports court behind Marlborough Elementary School. Shown with a group of MES students, from left, are Greg Hester, co-chair of the sports court committee; Dave Polochanin, chair of the sports court committee; Dawn Tavolieri, PTO co-Treasurer; Stacey Demosthenous, PTO member; Scott Nierendorf, Principal; Deb Dalton, PTO co-president; and Holly Cruz, PTO co-president.

PTO co-treasurer Dawn Tavolieri said she believes the project would be an "excellent addition" to MES.

"Putting money into a long-lasting addition to our school that directly relates to the enjoyment and health of our children is exactly what the PTO wants to be involved in," she said. "It's a no-brainer!"

The project has already been split up into phases but Polochanin said the school has already received enough money for the excavation and paving of the court. Additional hoops, lines, and other project initiatives would come sometime thereafter if funding becomes available.

For now, the committee and MES community believes it's possible the project could begin sometime this summer. Of course, Hester explained, a written approval from Hughes, as

well as going out to bid for contractors, would need to take place before that happens.

But those who have assisted in the process say it's looking like the project is in good shape.

"It will be something exciting to tell kids in the future," Nierendorf said.

The project was to be discussed at last night's Board of Education meeting, which occurred after press time.

To donate money for the court, people can send in cash or a check made out to Marlborough PTO – Sports Court Fund and mail to: Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall School, 25 School Dr., Marlborough, CT 06447. All contributions are tax-deductible, as the PTO is a non-profit organization.

To request further information, people can also email Dave Polochanin at dpolo22@comcast.net.

Colchester Operations Budget Holds Up Under Recount

by Melissa Roberto

Last Thursday's recount of the town operations budget confirmed that it has indeed passed.

The recount – which came after resident Tearice Peters petitioned for it – produced the same results as the May 7 referendum. The results showed that a total of 1,199 people voted in favor of the town operations budget, while 1,164 voted against it – a narrow margin of 35 votes that determined its approval.

Initially, Peters petitioned for a recount of both the town operations and the local Board of Education budgets that went before voters at referendum. She said she chose to file a petition due to the slim margins that determined the outcome of each budget, as well as hearing from multiple residents that they'd like to see a recount.

Like the town operations budget, the local school budget passed at referendum by a double-digit margin, of 48 votes. However, based on the requirements stated in the town charter, the Board of Education budget wasn't

subject to a recount.

The town charter states a budget may be subject to a recount upon a petition if a vote that was taken at an annual referendum is decided by a margin of less than 2 percent of electors that cast votes. This year the number of electors was 2,339. Therefore, any vote that passed with less than 46.78 votes (the determining number for the 2 percent margin) was subject to a recount.

With a margin of 48 votes, the Board of Education surpassed the 2 percent margin, while the town operations budget, with a margin of 35 votes, fell under it.

The recount took place at Town Hall on Thursday, May 16, at 5:30 p.m. and was open to the public. Town Clerk Nancy Bray said the process was "very smooth," with moderator Betty Wagner and registrars working together with other poll workers.

Bray said there wasn't a "huge" public turnout, but Peters said she was one of the resi-

dents that attended.

"I'm pleased the town did the recount and that the checks and balances were put in place," she stated Monday. "The residents can be happy to know that we have a charter that makes sure every vote counts."

Peters also thanked Bray and others for assisting in the recount process.

Just about an hour before the recount took place, however, some areas in Colchester, including Town Hall, lost power. The power outage was a result of a surge in wires near the state Department of Transportation construction site at the intersection of Lake Hayward Road and Route 85. The outage left 2,642 customers without power in town, and an additional 600 customers without power in East Haddam, for one to two hours, according to Connecticut Light & Power spokesman Mitch Gross.

Bray said a generator at Town Hall was pressed into service on the bottom floor, so the recount was not delayed.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster also confirmed that CL&P responded quickly to the outage in town. Schuster said he was pleased that the Town Hall generator could be utilized, as well as the fact that the budget passed once more.

"The people who run the polls do a very good job in making sure that the counts are accurate," said Schuster.

Though it was what Schuster believed to be the first time a recount has occurred on the town's annual budget referendum vote, he said the town did a "good job" following its charter requirements.

"It's just a part of the process in our charter," he said, "and I'm happy that things turned out exactly the same."

The town operations budget of \$13.15 million, and the Board of Education budget of \$39.08 million will go into effect at the start of the 2013-14 fiscal year, on July 1.

Local Colchester Veteran Marks One Decade at Golden Age Games

by Melissa Roberto

Take a dose of passion, a bout of competitiveness and a heavy measure of enthusiasm and you've got Colchester resident Martin Lopez, a veteran whose next agenda is participating in the National Veteran's Golden Age Games for the tenth year in a row.

A teammate of the Connecticut Mullet Marauders, Lopez looks back at his memories of the games with pride, and also looks ahead with an eagerness to cap off what will be his tenth year as a participant starting on May 30.

"It is hard to believe it will be 10 years," Lopez said recently. "Ten years is a long time."

The Golden Age Games are held each year for veterans all over the country age 55 or older, who are currently receiving care via a Department of Veteran Affairs facility. The set-up is similar to the Olympics, with a total of 16 events, giving participants a chance to show off their athleticism while enjoying a week-long camaraderie with fellow veterans.

The event is held at a different location in the United States each year. On one of Lopez's jackets is a list of all the nine cities he's already attended as a result of the games, and in another week he'll be able to add Buffalo, N.Y., to that list.

For Lopez, the games are much more than a chance to travel and get together with other veterans. Though he admits those are pluses, the games also allow him to do the one thing that he once feared he'd never be able to do again: play sports.

At age 54, Lopez had a stroke that stole his ability to speak and left him with limited use of his right side. However, the former Air Force and Vietnam veteran still communicates by using a computer he types into with his left hand and uses a scooter that helps him get around.

Lopez's love of sports began as a young boy, where he delved into every sport imaginable and then lived out his dream of playing for the Los Angeles Dodgers in the 1960s, and continued coaching baseball and basketball for youth groups as he grew older.

"I have loved sports all my life," he said. "The games are a way for me to still participate in doing what I love."

Lopez's sense of competitiveness is easily noticed when he arrives to the games each year. The veterans are allowed to enter into a total of four events during the week, and it doesn't take long for those who know him to guess how many events he has signed up for.

"He always does the maximum," his coach

Pam Moran of Connecticut Veterans Affairs said. "He does as many as he can."

This year, Lopez will participate in nine-ball, shuffleboard, table tennis and horseshoes. Each year he is a player in the wheelchair category, which is just one of the categories available for veterans with disabilities.

In the nine years he's been participating in the Golden Age Games, Lopez has racked up a total of 22 medals. He said his goal is to bring home another four from Buffalo this year.

But for as competitive as Lopez is in the games, many say he's equally as sociable. Moran said his inability to speak does not impede his ability to interact with others.

"He certainly brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm," Moran said, while adding that he often cheers on teammates and jokes with his opponents.

A familiar face at the games, Lopez is also a likeable guy in the local area. In order to pay for the travel and participation expenses for the games each year, Lopez sells raffle tickets for food gift certificates outside the Stop & Shop in Colchester and East Hampton, and Noel's Supermarket on Broadway. The proceeds from the raffle tickets help Lopez afford his annual trips to the games.

"He's got quite a little history behind him," said Bob Crowell, store manager of Noel's. "He's done really well here. A lot of customers know him and he's very good at taking care of them."

"I salute all [my] customers," Lopez said. "[They are the reason] why I still go year after year."

When looking back at nearly the last decade he's spent participating in the games, Lopez reminisced about the many highlights and setbacks he's experienced.

He recalled the memorable moments of serving as president for his team for three years, being chosen to hold the Connecticut flag in 2005, and the games in Hawaii that were held in "paradise."

However, one year, Lopez got an infection in his hip and doctors told him he wouldn't be able to participate in the games. (But just one day before the games started, he was let go from the rehabilitation center he was in and still made it.) Also, in 2010, Lopez left his donation box outside of the Colchester Stop & Shop for a brief moment and in that time frame it was stolen.

Even this year began as a setback, Lopez said, but everything wound up working out anyway.



Resident Martin Lopez stands with his wife Connie while sporting their National Veteran's Golden Age Games jackets. Lopez, an Air Force and Vietnam veteran, will head to Buffalo, N.Y. next week to attend the games for the 10th year in a row.

"You see, this year's games were canceled," Lopez explained last week. "I was heartbroken."

According to published reports, the National Department of Veterans Affairs supposedly canceled the games due to financial concerns just ten weeks before the May 30 start date but by the end of March the decision was reversed following the pleas of various participants and politicians.

After learning the Golden Age Games were canceled, Lopez signed up for the Wheelchair Games in Tampa, Fla., because he still wanted a chance to participate in some form of a game. But just one day after he signed up, Moran called him with the news that the Golden Age Games were back on.

"I'd say he felt like a kid feels on Christmas morning," his wife Connie said.

With the games underway, Lopez said it's a year that he can't wait for. But other than the 2013 games marking a decade of his participation, the veteran added that this year is special for one more reason.

"I'm dedicating this year to my idol, Don

Mullet," Lopez said.

Lopez's dear friend is the reason the Connecticut team is named the Mullet Marauders. He was a veteran from Connecticut who participated in the Golden Age Games for 23 years but became sick in 2010 and could no longer participate. Earlier this year, at the age of 97, he passed away.

Lopez said he plans to do something this year to honor Mullet, who he said will always hold the title as Lopez's "hero."

With a series of setbacks, but an even greater number of accomplishments behind him, Lopez says he is more than ready for this year's games. Like always, he said his wife Connie will be by his side, who he always requests come up with him on the pedestal each time he receives a medal.

"We're a team," he said about his wife.

Last year nearly 800 veterans participated in the games. For Lopez, he admits it's hard to go through each of the ten years, but "you can bet," he said, "each one is better than the last one."

Colchester to Form Third Political Party

by Melissa Roberto

Colchester voters could see something new on their ballots in the November municipal elections.

In what it described as an effort to bring more choices to town government, a group of residents, including former First Selectwoman Linda Hodge, James McNair, Deanna Bouchard and Tearice Peters, have begun the application process with the secretary of the state's office to form a new party in town – the Colchester Independent Party, or CIP.

The process began May 7 during the town's budget referendum vote. McNair, Bouchard and Hodge communicated the idea to residents outside of Town Hall, and those interested signed a petition to support the formation process.

In a matter of just 10 minutes, Hodge said 35 people signed the petition – 10 more signatures than the state requires to begin the formation process.

"That's because people would overhear and ask us if they could sign up," Hodge said about the extra signatures.

Of all the people that were asked, Hodge said "only one person" chose not to sign – a person who explained they strongly support the two-party system currently in place, Hodge said.

The effort to form an independent party in Colchester is something Town Clerk Nancy Bray said she believes is a first in Colchester.

And the process is one that Hodge described as "multipronged."

The first step of receiving 25 signatures has already been accomplished. The next step involves candidates actually running in the upcoming municipal elections, which for the town of Colchester are held in November. But before the party can be made official for each board or commission, each CIP candidate on the ballot would need to receive support from 1 percent of voters.

"So if we put up someone for first selectman and get 1 percent of those voters, then [the CIP] will become [an official option] for that board," Hodge explained.

The former first selectwoman added that the

interest in the party actually came from other residents in town, and Hodge, McNair, Peters and Bouchard were interested in making it happen.

"I'm excited about it bringing a lot of people together, about the potential for getting more people and different people engaged in the town government process," Hodge said.

Other than that, Hodge said the third party would give the town more choices as well as candidates that will be accountable to the voters and not to a specific party.

She added the third party could interest people in town who normally aren't involved in the local government.

"One of the reasons we're doing this is we're finding we need to get the public engaged again in local government," Hodge said. "It seems to us they're becoming increasingly disengaged."

While Hodge feels the interest is already there, she said the group is now looking for candidates who wish to run as candidates for the CIP.

"You can be a Democrat, Republican, an Independent, a non-affiliated," she said. "We're interested in everybody...in all Colchester voters interested in running for a position."

After serving as first selectwoman from 2007-09 as a Democrat, Hodge said her affiliated party won't change.

"I'm still a Democrat. I still believe in what I believed in," she explained. "But government is about people. For me this whole third party is just opening up more opportunities to be involved in the decision making process."

The former selectwoman added that there are already six different groups of people in Colchester who have asked how to become involved.

Anyone interested in either running as a potential candidate, assisting in building the new party or assisting in the campaign should contact CIP organizer Deanne Bouchard at 860-222-4617 or CIP06415@gmail.com

The organizers expect to announce a full slate of candidates by July 1.

East Hampton Service Man Coming Home

United States Army SPC Elliot Pratt is expected home for Memorial Day and will marching in the Memorial Day parade on Monday, May 27. The parade starts at 9 a.m.

Pratt is assigned to the Attack Reconnaissance Battalion as an Apache mechanic/crew chief.

After being stationed in Germany he was deployed to Afghanistan for a 10-month rotation participating in Operation Enduring Freedom.

All are invited to come out and welcome him and his family as he cuts his ribbon off the tree.

Rollover Crash on Route 2 in Colchester

Two Manchester residents sustained minor injuries in a rollover crash on Route 2 last weekend, State Police said.

On May 19, at around 4:42 p.m., police said, Demario Hanson, 26, of 108 McKee St., Manchester, was traveling on Route 2 east, approximately five-tenths of a mile west of exit 18 in Colchester, when he veered to the right and collided into a section of the metal beam guide rail. His vehicle then entered back into the right lane, where it rolled over.

Police said Hanson suffered an abrasion to the forehead and his passenger, Carla Witham, 23, of 122 Birch St., Manchester, sustained a laceration to her right hand and fingers. Both were transported to Hartford Hospital by the Colchester Hayward Fire Department for evaluation and treatment.

Police said Hanson was later issued an infraction for failure to drive within the established lane.

Body Found in Portland

A body was discovered last weekend near Gildersleeve Island, Portland Police said.

At around 5 p.m. May 18, police said, people gathering wood near the island discovered a body in some branches about five to six feet off the shore. The body was badly decomposed, police said, indicating it had been there for quite some time.

As of press time Thursday, the body had yet to be identified. The state chief medical examiner's office conducted an autopsy Wednesday, but as of press time, the results had yet to be released.

Hebron Police News

5/19: State Police said a residence on Deepwood Drive was entered into by approximately three people while the victim was home and a small amount of money was taken. Police said the case is still under investigation.

Portland Police News

5/10: Jeremy Castelli, 24, of 550 Penfield Hill Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to obey a stop sign, Portland Police said.

5/15: Laura Nazlian, 42, of 19 Crane Rd., Ellington, was charged with third-degree assault, disorderly conduct, second-degree criminal mischief, risk of injury to a minor and operating under suspension, police said.

5/16: A 16 year-old juvenile male was arrested for disorderly conduct and criminal mischief, police said.

Colchester Police News

5/15: Colchester Police said Jacob Pinard, 18, of 5 Meadow Dr., Apt. 1, was charged with drug paraphernalia, possession of a controlled substance and second-degree failure to appear.

5/16: State Police said Meghan Peck, 27, of 601 Colchester Rd., Uncasville, was charged with first-degree failure to appear.

5/17: Colchester Police said Juanita Broe, 65, of 17 Coates Farm Rd., Amston, was charged with DUI and failure to signal a turn.

5/20: State Police said Keith Charbonneir, 28, of 183 Barker Rd., East Haddam, was charged with first-degree failure to appear.

5/20: State Police said Daniel C. Omara, 23, of 26 Berry Rd., East Haddam, was charged with sixth-degree larceny.

East Hampton Police News

5/11: East Hampton Police said Shyam A. Kulkarni, 26, of 127 Berlin St., Middletown, was observed driving in his Nissan Versa at a high rate of speed, swerving over the yellow center line and making an abrupt right turn without signaling. Kulkarni was charged with DUI, failure to drive right, failure to have a head lamp, failure to signal a turn and failure to renew license, police said.

5/12: Michael R. Chamis, 63, of 28 West St., and Isabel Sequin, 21, of 47 Cone Rd., were involved in a two-car motor vehicle accident on Route 66 at the Route 151 intersection, police said. Chamis was charged with DUI and following too close.

5/12: Police responded to a complaint of suspicious motor vehicles parked at the dead end of Terp Road. As a result, Tyler B. Provost,

24, of 201 Hog Hill Rd., was issued a ticket for possession of less than one half ounce of marijuana and Bradley J. Davignon, 23, of 23 Middletown Ave., was issued a ticket for possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than one half ounce of marijuana.

5/15: Leonard Lucian Bazar, 55, of 31 Rock Landing Ln., Haddam Neck, was charged with three separate counts of violation of probation and one count of second-degree failure to appear, police said.

5/16: Joshua Phillip Pollard, 24, of 68 Childs Rd., East Hampton was arrested for failure to appear, police said.

5/17: Robert Martinelli, 33, of 614 No. Aurora, Ithica, N.Y., was arrested for third-degree assault and interfering/resisting an officer, police said.

Obituaries

Portland

Carl E. Fitzgibbons

Carl E. Fitzgibbons, 73, of Portland, died Thursday, May 16. He was born in Meriden July 23, 1939, and was the son of the late Thomas M. and Loretta (Bergin) Fitzgibbons.

Carl served in the U.S. Navy on the Destroyer, USS Wren and was an avid New York Yankees fan.

He leaves his wife, Marjorie (Johnson) Fitzgibbons, his daughter, Amy Fitzgibbons and son-in-law, Dennis Kane, of S. Boston, Mass.; and his son Kyle, and daughter-in-law, Reagan, of Portland, and three grandchildren, Tara, Paige and Colin Fitzgibbons. Carl is also survived by his brother James and his wife Rosalie, of Sarasota, Fla., and his sister and her husband, Patricia and Fred Danby, of Southington, CT and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brothers, Thomas Jr. and Robert.

Relatives and friends called Monday, May 20, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the state veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, Carl's family asks that memorial donations be made to the American Lung Association or the International Mesothelioma Program or the Portland Volunteer Fireman's Association.

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



Marlborough

Richard W. Moody

Richard W. 'Dick' Moody of Citrus Springs, Fla., passed away Monday, May 6, in the loving care of his family at Hospice of Citrus County. He was born Friday, Jan. 26, 1934, in Danforth, Maine, to Wendell and Marjorie (Bancroft) Moody.

Dick was a veteran of the United States Army and served during the Korean Conflict, where he spent two years in Korea. He worked at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford, and 30 years as a rural mail carrier in East Hampton. Dick enjoyed hunting and fishing at his camp in Weston, Maine.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife of 59 years, Jean (McKnight) Moody; son, Steven Moody and wife Jackie of Granby; daughter, Linda Myers of Citrus Springs, Fla.; son, James Moody and wife Heidi of Marlborough; brother, Wayne Moody and wife Mary Ellen of Janesville, Wis.; sister, Helen Warner and husband John of Salem, Ore.; and grandchildren, Brett and Kraig Moody of Enfield, Alexa and Allison Gattinella of New Britain, Amber and Abby Myers of Citrus Springs, and Matthew and Becky Moody of Marlborough.

Memorial contributions may be made to Hospice of Citrus County or the Marlborough Ambulance Association, Marlborough, CT 06447.

A memorial service will be held at the American Legion Post 197, Route 66, Marlborough, on Saturday, June 8, at 3 p.m.



Marlborough

Arthur Lawrence Turkington Sr.

Arthur Lawrence Turkington Sr. 82, of Marlborough and formerly Vernon, Hebron and Manchester, passed away after an extended illness early Monday morning, May 20, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice.

Born in Manchester June 7, 1930, he was the son of the late Lester and Lillian (Thompson) Turkington.

Arthur was a proud veteran of the US Army, having served in Germany during the Korean War.

He retired several years ago after having worked as a machinist for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. Prior to that, he worked in the insurance industry, owning and operating his own agency in Vernon and later working for the Scottish Union Insurance Co.

Arthur was active and greatly involved with the Power Squadron in Manchester where he was also former Commander. He was also a member of the American Legion Post 102, Manchester and the Legion Riders.

He was an avid bowler, he loved motorcycle riding, fishing and he was a fan of the Red Sox and UConn Women's Basketball team. He will be remembered for his positive attitude, quick wit, fun sense of humor and, most importantly, for the love he generously gave to his family.

He was predeceased by his wife of 15 years, Merle I. Turkington in 2001.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by those he leaves behind. Survivors include his partner and friend, Ruth Posuniak, with whom he made his home, two sons, Arthur and his wife Vicki Turkington of Andover; Thomas Turkington of Ocala, Fla.; three step-children, David and his wife Laura Combs of Columbia, Jennifer Tow of Glastonbury, Jo-Ann and her husband Mark Connelly of Hebron; eleven grandchildren, Sherry, David, Brandi, Krystle, Lee, Keith, Alexander, Morgana, Leo, Jeremy, Sienna; six great-grandchildren and numerous extended family and friends.

Memorial calling hours were held Thursday, May 23, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A memorial service followed that day, at the funeral home. Burial was in New Hebron Cemetery.

Andover

Irene Zocco

Irene Zocco, 65, passed away on May 20, at Windham Hospital, after a long illness. She was born in Belgium of the late Mary and John Nazarczuk. Irene grew up in Hartford, and also lived in Andover, Columbia, and Hebron.

Irene worked at her parents' bakery in Hartford during her youth. In addition, she worked at Ramada Hotel in East Hartford along with Ted's Supermarket in Hebron.

She is survived by her daughter, Christina (Zocco) St. Jean, and husband, Christopher of Andover; and two grandchildren.

Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Irene's name to The NephCure Foundation, 15 Waterloo Ave., Berwyn, PA 19312 nephcure.org/donate

Portland

Richard Stebbins

Richard Stebbins, 83, of Portland, passed away Thursday, May 16. He was born in Middletown July 31, 1929, the son of the late Raymond T. and Wanda (Cyronwicz) Stebbins. Rich was raised by his stepmother Helen T. (Mikulski) Stebbins.

He lived in Middletown for 50 years before moving to Portland to live with his son, Raymond, and best friends, his grandchildren, Raymond, JR and Tyler. It was a move that made a strong family stronger.

Rich was a hard worker and provider, working till he was 72 years old. He was one of the premier softball players in Middletown for many years, including playing for and organizing the State Moose Lodge Softball League. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army serving in Germany during the Korean War. Rich traveled many times to Europe with his longtime companion, Vivian Arrigoni. They never needed a tour guide, with all the friends they made along their journeys.

"To all my friends that went before me and to all I leave behind, I love you all. God Bless." Rich.

Rich is survived by four sons, Richard R. Stebbins Jr. and his wife Shirley of Hartsville, S.C., Tim Stebbins and his wife June of Corinth, Miss., Richard Stebbins II and his wife Karen, Raymond T. Stebbins and his companion Angela; two daughters, Kathleen M. Daley and Frances A. D'Amico; numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren; and the one true love of his life, Carol Giesbrant. He is also survived by his brother, Henry Stebbins of Florida, and his sister, Mary Lou Stebbins Cappello of Middletown.

He was predeceased by two sisters, Patty Stebbins Barone and Lorraine Stebbins Dasconio.

The family would like to give a special thank you to Richard's daughter Frances for the extra care and compassion she shared with Richard and her strength to help the family through this very difficult time.

Funeral services were held Monday, May 20, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home prior to the service. Burial with military honors was held at the convenience of the family.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project at 4899 Belfort Rd, Suite 300, Jacksonville, FL 32256.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit biegafuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Agnes Keller Committal Service

A committal service for Agnes Keller of Palmetto, Fla., formerly of Colchester, who passed away Oct. 15, 2012, at the age of 79, will be held Sunday, June 9, at 2 p.m. at the Colchester Federated Church.

Interment will be at the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

Amston

John Raymond

John Robert Raymond, 85 of Aiken, S.C., beloved husband of Coralee Pagach Raymond, passed away peacefully with his wife and caregiver by his side on Sunday, May 12.

As a very young man, he worked at Pioneer Parachute in Manchester. He served his country proudly in the U.S. Army. He was also employed at Electric Boat in Groton, where he worked on two nuclear submarines, *The Nautilus* and *The Sea Wolf*. He was also a mechanic for Marvin's Toyota in Colchester. His favorite job, however, was hauling guns, ammunition and parts for Remington Arms. John was a very talented man who seemed to excel at any and all endeavors.

He was predeceased by his parents, Charlotte and Edward Raymond; his brothers, Edward Dean Raymond of Canterbury, Douglas Raymond of Amston; and two grandchildren, Sarah and Steven Raymond.

Other than his devoted wife Coralee, he also leaves his brother George and wife Natalie Raymond of Proctorsville, Vt.; a sister, Betty Brousseau of Canterbury, and sister-in-law, Alice Raymond, also of Canterbury; a son, Robert and wife Joyce Raymond of Littleton, N.H.; three grandsons, Robert, Kurt and Lance; two great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild; stepdaughter, Christine Keklak of Shrewsbury, Vt.; stepson Jonathan Keklak and wife Michelle and their children Michaela and Jared.

He leaves many nieces and nephews, a host of in-laws, and very caring and loyal South Carolina friends, whom he loved most dearly.

A service was held Wednesday, May 22, at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 30 Church St., Hebron, CT 06248 or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

Expressions of sympathy may be left at southcarolinacremation.com.

Hebron

Grayson Minney

Grayson Minney, 28, of Hebron, passed away Saturday, May 11, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. He was born June 24, 1984, in Hartford, the loving son of Frederick and Ava Minney of Hebron.

Grayson graduated from RHAM High School Class of 2002 and was near completing studies at Central Connecticut State University. He was a singer, songwriter and musician with his band Columbia Fields, and was employed by Wood-n-Tap of Vernon.

Besides his parents he is survived by a sister, Jessica Minney of Colchester; a brother, Rick Gates of East Granby; two nephews, Cameron Minney and Dylan Gates; maternal grandparents, George and Vina Odelius of West Hartford; numerous aunts, uncles, cousins; and his beloved fiancée, Ewelina Malek, and her loving family of Colchester.

Funeral services and burial are private. There are no calling hours. A memorial celebration service of Grayson's life took place Sunday, May 19, at RHAM High School, 85 Wall St., Hebron.

Memorial donations in Grayson's name may be made to Frederick Minney c/o First Niagara Bank, 31 Main St., Hebron, CT 06248. A charitable foundation will be established.

For online condolences, visit pietrasfunerahome.com.

East Hampton

Bartholomew A. Cusack

Bartholomew A. Cusack, 63, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully at his home Tuesday, May 21. Born March 30, 1950, in Glasgow, Scotland, he was the son of the late John Francis and Antonietta (DiMaio) Cusack.

He had worked in real estate for many years and at the time of his death was employed in retail sales. He had served in the British Armed Forces before moving to East Hampton. He was an avid golfer and a big Red Sox and Patriots fan and critic. He also enjoyed reading and writing.

He is survived by his five sisters, Anne Mikullitz, Marie Mangiafico, Kathleen Lanou, Frances Hall and Antonietta Innes, and a brother, James Cusack, all in Connecticut. He is also survived by three brothers in Scotland, Gerald Cusack, John Cusack and William Cusack.

He was predeceased by a brother in Scotland, Anthony Cusack.

A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Saturday, May 25, in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial followed in St. Patrick Cemetery. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, this evening, May 24, from 6-8 p.m.

Memorial donations in Bartholomew's memory may be made to the American Heart Association, 1 Union St. No. 301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691-4183.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.