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RHAM High School senior Alex Cascio is raising funds for those affected by last month's Oklahoma tornadoes by selling T-shirts.

RHAM Senior Selling Shirts for Oklahoma

by Geeta Schrayter

Even though Alex Cascio has more than enough to think about with graduation looming, recently she found her thoughts drifting over 1,500 miles away, to the victims of the May 20 tornadoes in Moore, Okla.

Cascio said she was "taken aback" with the destruction, and, with a nudge by Bevin Perry, co-advisor of the Peer Helpers at RHAM High School, she decided to help.

"Alex has been one of the leaders of [Peer Helpers]," Perry explained this week, "so I approached her with the idea of doing something for Oklahoma following the devastating tornado. She took the idea and ran with it."

Cascio, a Hebron resident and RHAM senior who will attend Loyola University Maryland in the fall, decided to use her time, creativity and determination to design and sell T-shirts in an effort to raise money for those affected.

"I found out about [the tornado] on the news and was so taken aback," she said. "Schools, houses, police stations – it was all wiped out."

Cascio said she was hoping to help with the rebuilding process that would eventually bring those things back and added choosing to do so through the sale of T-shirts was an easy decision to make. Cascio explained she played sports all year round: soccer in the fall, track in the winter and tennis in the spring, and she and her teammates always got excited about ordering team apparel.

"We love getting new clothes," she said. "So I thought a T-shirt sale would be a good way to raise some money. I want people to be aware, to understand they can do something, even if they donate just \$1; it will help build a home or a school."

And so, Cascio went online and designed the black and orange shirts (after the colors at Oklahoma State University) that feature a picture of the state and the phrase "Strength means you'll be OK." She's been selling the shirts for \$10 with the help of her friends, and all proceeds, after the school is reimbursed for purchasing the shirts, will go to the Red Cross.

Perry said the response to Cascio's efforts has been positive.

"The response from the RHAM community, and then from Alex's church (Church of the Holy Family), has been wonderful," she said. "Alex has recruited friends to help sell them during each of our lunch waves. I am so proud of her for coming up with this idea, and seeing it through."

Last Friday, Cascio said over 100 shirts had been sold. The school has to be paid about \$1,200 for getting the shirts, and once all of them are sold that will leave about \$1,000 to donate.

RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie called Cascio's efforts "awesome," and noted she wasn't intent on designing only one T-shirt;

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Three 'Great Kids' Moving On from Local Band

by Melissa Roberto

As a live, upbeat sound radiates from the basement of his Marlborough home, Bruce Phelps looks at three graduating members of his band, The Modern Riffs, with a smile accompanied with a feeling he defines as bitter-sweet.

"They're all great kids," he said of the three, who will graduate from high school in a few short weeks.

Phelps founded The Modern Riffs back in 2008, and now the band includes seven high school students, and another adult, Kim DuBois of Colchester. Each week the band gathers in Phelps' homes to perfect its repertoire of songs, which exceeds 60.

The band shares its eclectic style – which ranges from jazz and swing tunes to modern pop and rock songs – with crowds all over Connecticut, and will continue to do so at its three upcoming shows, the first of which is coming up just next week.

Though the makeup of the band will soon change, Phelps is happy knowing he helped each young musician improve their musical skills while giving them a chance to express themselves along the way.

The high school seniors – two who will graduate from RHAM and one from Bacon

Academy – will be heading to different regions of the country come September.

Hebron resident Nathan Van Meter, the band's keyboardist, will head up to Saratoga Springs, N.Y. to study environmental science with a concentration in chemistry. The 18-year-old hopes to squeeze in a minor in music, and hopefully foreign language, if his schedule allows. Greg Matunas of Marlborough, the Riffs' guitarist, will be heading in the opposite direction, down south to Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Matunas plans to major in forensic science and enroll in the campus' ROTC program, while strumming strings in his spare time.

Trumpet player Rosalind Goodrich of Colchester, however, plans to make a career out of music, as she has already been accepted into the music program at the University of Southern Maine. The brass player hopes to one day become a middle school music teacher.

Other band mates include DuBois on bass, Ryan Litwin plays tenor sax, Kyle McCormick on drums, Alisha Kapur supplies the vocals, Corinne Cannon plays trombone, and Phelps plays alto sax, and often alternates with other woodwind instruments as well.

The Modern Riffs is unique in that it can

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The Modern Riffs, a local band made up of seven high school students and two adults, have three upcoming shows in the area. The first will be next Thursday, June 20 outside of Sadler's Restaurant on North Main Street in Marlborough. Pictured in the back row from left are Greg Matunas, Nathan Van Meter, Bruce Phelps, Ryan Litwin, Kyle McCormick and Kim DuBois. The bottom row from left are Rosalind Goodrich, Alisha Kapur and Corinne Cannon.

RHAM Senior cont. from Front Page

she had actually come up with another for the senior class.

Each year, members of the graduating class gets a senior T-shirt given to them for free. Cascio explained not everyone was a fan of this year’s design, so she took to Facebook to post a number of designs she’d created for seniors to vote on. She ordered the shirt that received the most votes and has been selling them to the seniors for \$10, too.

If all of them are sold, Cascio said that should equate an additional \$1,000.

“So we should have about \$2,000 for Red Cross,” she said.

Cascio said she hopes this becomes a community event, and as such, has not only been selling them at school but at her church and elsewhere in town.

Leslie said this week bringing them to church had proven quite successful. In fact, he said he got a call late last Saturday that Cascio had sold all the shirts she’d taken home to bring to church and needed to get into the building to retrieve more.

“It took a number of people with the right keys to get them in [the building] but just the

fact that she went to that effort to make sure that it all worked out [is great],” he said. “So it wasn’t just getting the shirts, but she’s been working really hard to make sure that they get sold.”

Perry called Cascio’s efforts inspiring. “Alex has inspired others to want to help, whether it be by giving up their lunch period to sell shirts, posting things online, or buying a shirt, they are all helping this cause,” she said. “I was happy to be a part of this with her. Her enthusiasm is contagious and inspiring.”

But for Cascio, the fundraiser was all about doing something for those who couldn’t do anything when it came to saving their homes.

“People in Oklahoma really couldn’t do anything – their houses were just taken. There was nothing to do but start over and be positive,” she said. “Nothing can replace a family’s memories but at least they can start rebuilding.”

Cascio added the money donated would help give those affected “a foundation to grow from.”

Anyone interested in purchasing a shirt can call RHAM High School at 860-228-9474.

Great Kids cont. from Front Page

adjust its style in a matter of minutes. The band represents a multitude of genres, which can easily be noticed during its two-hour sessions each week. In its session last Sunday, the band busted out “My Old School” by Steely Dan, “Mr. Zoot Suit” by Ingrid Lucia & The Flying Neutrinos, and some Sheryl Crow and Norah Jones.

“We basically play a little bit of everything,” said Van Meter.

But the band’s gigs vary just as much, if not more, than the songs they play, Matunas explained. As the current high school member who’s been around the longest, Matunas recalled some of the venues he’s had the pleasure of playing at with the band.

“Probably the biggest crowd we’ve ever had was playing at Harkness [Memorial] State Park opening up for The Temptations,” he said excitedly.

The band has also played in local restaurants, outdoor arenas, and even in ballrooms – where the Riffs’ music has prompted listeners to get up and dance, band members pointed out.

The band’s crowds aren’t the only ones who appreciate its music, however. Its three parting members recalled what being in the band has done for them earlier this week.

As a keyboardist, Van Meter said the instrument is commonly known as a supporting role but the band has given him a chance for solos, too.

“It’s not like I’m just the wingman,” said Van Meter. “I get my moment too. It’s a good balance.”

Matunas said his favorite aspect of the band has been performing.

“It adds a whole level of excitement above just playing for yourself at home and not really having an audience,” he said.

For Goodrich, whose been playing the trumpet since the sixth grade, the band has helped her overcome stage fright and of course, she said, make new friends.

“It’s opened doors,” she added. “I’m going to miss it but they’ll know when I’ll be back to visit.”

DuBois said she’s seen several students come and go over the years from the band.

“That’s the reality of working with high school students,” she said. “Especially these kids because they excel in everything they do. I’m really happy for them.”

DuBois added that she is “always so impressed” with what the experience provides for the kids, and she credited Phelps for making that possible.

For Phelps, filling in new spots isn’t too difficult. He said news of open positions travel via word of mouth and he remains in good relations with his former members, who often become mentors to their successors. While the members gave him most of the credit for helping them succeed, he said the younger generations bring a lot of energy that he is thankful for as well.

“I sometimes think I learn as much from them as they learn from me,” Phelps said.

In the next few weeks, the Modern Riffs will be able to showcase their unique balance of funk, rock, jazz, hip-hop, pop and swing to people in the area. The first event will take place on Thursday, June 20, at the Marlborough Music Fest outside of Sadler’s Restaurant on North Main Street in Marlborough. There, the band says the outdoor atmosphere gives them a chance to play a little louder, and rock out a little harder.

Up next, the Riffs will play indoors for folks on Friday, June 28 at the Marlborough Arts Center, also on North Main Street in Marlborough. The concert will be two hours long, and Phelps promised the band will cover a variety of styles that night. The next day, on June 29, the band will also play at a benefit for wounded soldiers in Glastonbury called Hike for Heroes.

“We’ll be having a good time at that one,” Phelps said of the benefit. “We’ll really let that one rip.”

To find out more information about The Modern Riffs, readers can log onto the band’s website at modernriffs.com or log on to its Facebook page at facebook.com/TheModernRiffs.

Colchester’s Day Pond Remains Closed

Day Pond State Park’s swimming area in Colchester was closed earlier this week and state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection officers confirmed it was still closed as of Thursday morning.

DEEP spokesman Dwayne Gardner said the swimming area had been closed due to “poor water quality,” because of weather conditions. Gardner said DEEP officials test all state swimming areas each week, and a test taken at the pond early Tuesday morning showed there was bacteria in the water.

But Gardner said the bacteria is not necessarily a threat to swimmers. Instead, he said the pond was closed as a “precaution.”

Gardner explained that runoff from the rain had caused bacteria to enter the pond. Due to the weather throughout the week, he said, it’s difficult to tell when the pond will be reopened.

“As long as it continues to rain, it will probably remain closed,” Gardner said.

DEEP officers resampled the pond again Thursday morning. Gardner expected to receive Thursday’s results after press time. He said the area will be reopened once testing proves the water is no longer of poor quality.

To check out the status of the state’s swimming areas, readers can log on to ct.gov/deep/beachstatus.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Every Wednesday at the *Glastonbury Citizen/Rivereast News Bulletin* offices is Doughnut Day. A dozen of the tasty fried pastries are made available for staff. While occasionally a random mom-and-pop place might make an appearance, usually the doughnuts are from Dunkin’ Donuts. Dunkin’ doesn’t do a bad doughnut; they’re not the best on the planet, but they’re consistent, and let’s face it, the variety is generally pretty top-notch. There’s always some sort of seasonal special going on; this month, it’s the key lime pie and lemon pie doughnut. I’ve had the key lime; it’s pretty tasty.

And while I’m a Starbucks junkie, I do go to Dunkin’ for iced coffee. Starbucks’ old blend frankly is just too strong for my liking. Plus, Dunkin’ has so many different flavor combinations for their iced coffees.

But I don’t venture outside of doughnuts, iced coffee and the occasional bagel or muffin when it comes to Dunkin’ visits. I’m a little wary of their attempts in recent years to shake up their menu. Some of the items have been passable, others, like a chicken parmesan wrap, have been, frankly, terrible (I should note that item is no longer on the menu; others doubtlessly felt the same way I did). There’s a new offering on the menu, though, that I may not be able to withstand, and it’s one you may have heard of: the glazed doughnut breakfast sandwich.

I know, I know; it sounds horrid. It’s a fried egg, bacon and a slice of cheese, sandwiched between two glazed doughnuts. It sounds like American decadence at its worst (although really, when are those disgustingly huge portions at Japanese fast food restaurants ever going to get called out?), but for curiosity’s sake, I just may have to try it. And, somewhat shockingly, the thing only boasts 360 calories, which is less than that sandwich on a bagel would be, although it has more fat and saturated fat. At 20 grams of fat (eight of them saturated), it’s not healthy by any means, but it’s not even the worst-for-you breakfast sandwich you can get at Dunkin’. (That would be a sausage, egg and cheese. Even on an English muffin it’s worse for you than the glazed doughnut sandwich.)

It doesn’t even sound tremendously appealing, to be honest. And I doubt I’d eat a whole

sandwich. But these crazy food creations appeal to the adventurous side of my taste buds. I’ve gotta see what they’re like. Such an appeal led me, a few years back, to try the then-new Double Down sandwich at KFC. It’s still on the menu, I think, although it’s barely advertised these days. For those of you who don’t remember that initial advertising blitz – and the accompanying “what have we become?” response that is greeting the glazed doughnut sandwich – the Double Down is a sandwich that features bacon, cheese and a secret sauce. So far, not bad. Only thing is, instead of a bun, the sandwich is on *two boneless chicken breasts*. Decadence, indeed.

I tried it, and, well, didn’t like it. With the bacon, the sauce and the fried chicken breasts, it felt like I was eating a fatty blob of salt. And there was no escaping how disgusting I felt while eating it. I was glad I did it, if only to say that I did it, but there are better ways to blow 540 calories and 32 grams of fat.

* * *

Talking about food is one of my favorite uses of my column, and so, of course, is writing about the Mets. For those of you who can’t stand either topic, I’ll make my Mets mention brief this week. Frankly, there’s not much to say, other than that this is a pretty lousy season for them so far, with a few bright lights (the revelation that is Matt Harvey, the continued solid play of David Wright and Daniel Murphy) and a lot of black holes and question marks.

But I do have to make mention of this: the Mets were swept by the Marlins in a rain-shortened two-game series last weekend at Citi Field (one of the games went an amazing 20 innings), which led to a pretty sorry statistic. Entering into Monday’s action, the Marlins, who once again were the joke of baseball in the offseason after their owner decided to dismantle a team he had spent tons of money to assemble just one season earlier, are now 8-3 against the Mets. Against every other team in baseball, they’re a combined 10-41.

From the Mets’ point of view, that’s frankly pathetic. But from the Marlins’ well, I’m guessing they love seeing the orange and blue come to town.

* * *

See you next week.

Colchester Police News

6/3: Colchester Police are currently investigating the theft of scrap metal from a property on McDonald Road. Anybody with information regarding the incident is asked to contact the Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

6/3: State Police said Mark Porter, 51, of 26 Georgia Rd., Oakdale, was charged with violation of a protective order and first-degree stalking.

6/4: State Police said Antoine D. Jones, 26, of 388 Park Ave., East Hartford, was charged with reckless driving and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

6/6: Colchester Police said the asset protec-

tion officer for Stop & Shop on Linwood Avenue reported that two white males stole Red Bull and frozen shrimp from the store sometime on May 29, and additional frozen shrimp were stolen from the store sometime on June 3. Colchester Police are currently investigating each case.

6/9: State Police said Dylan G. Kermodé, 20, of 51 Sashel Ln., was charged with sixth-degree larceny.

6/10: Colchester Police said Timothy Baker, 47, of 91 Amston Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

Rollover Crash on Route 2 in Colchester

Two people sustained minor injuries in a rollover crash on route 2 last weekend, state police said.

On June 8, at approximately 7:05 p.m., police said, Johnny Rodriguez, 28, of 549 Maple Ave., Hartford, was traveling on Route 2 west in the area of Exit 18 in Colchester when he lost control of his vehicle and left the roadway, striking a large group of trees. His vehicle then rolled over and came to a final rest on its passenger side.

Police said Rodriguez and his passenger, Heather Hayes, 26, of 35 Main St., Newington, suffered minor injuries.

Both were transported to Hartford Hospital by the Colchester Hayward Fire Department.

RHAM's Top Two Students Have No Plans to Slow Down

by Geeta Schrayter

The RHAM High School graduation is just over the horizon; it will be here before the blink of the seniors' eyes, and then it will be over. For some, the end of high school will herald a few months of fun in the sun and relaxation before they head off to college or down some other post-secondary path. But for others, like Colin Howard and Andrew Breckel, this year's valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, it means another period of hard work, followed by another period of working hard.

Hard work is something both students are familiar with – and welcome, even. As the top two in this year's graduating class, Howard and Breckel, both Hebron residents, have GPAs over 5.0 and lengthy high school resumes.

Technically, Howard attends two high schools. In the morning he attends classes at RHAM, then takes a bus at noon to the Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science. Howard explained he decided to do so because he really likes science – “now I really like math” too, he added – and the magnet school offered more courses in those subjects than RHAM.

In addition to shuffling between two schools, Howard has a plate full of extracurricular activities that include involvement with the Leos Club, a community service club; Mock Trial, where students present fictional court cases; as well as Model UN, the math team, philosophy society and the National Honor Society.

“I'm very busy,” said Howard. “I don't get a lot of sleep, that's pretty much how I do [everything].”

Breckel's schedule is similarly packed. He's vice-president of the Leos Club, has been captain of the math team for the last two years, is co-captain of the tennis team, which he's played on throughout high school, and has participated in Future Problem Solvers, a critical thinking program, since the sixth grade as part of a team that has consistently made the state-level competition.

And while for some such a schedule might mean grades falter, for Breckel, keeping busy did the opposite.

“Keeping busy actually helped me keep my grades up because it makes me sit down and be efficient,” he said. “Structure is needed to fin-



Colin Howard

ish the work; it gave me better time management and concentration.”

Regarding his classes, Breckel said his favorite was calculus BC. He explained there are two sections of calculus at RHAM: AB and BC, with BC covering the topic more extensively.

Breckel added his favorite teacher Shaun Keane taught the course, along with some of his other math classes and instructing him in tennis.

“I enjoy how he teaches math,” Breckel said of Keane. “He's thorough and covers it all in an interesting manner. You never go into a test without knowing what he wants from it. He has a passion for what he does.”

On Wednesday, Keane said in his 12 years of teaching, Breckel was the most driven student he'd ever seen.

“He is very humble and demands the most out of himself,” he said. “It has been a wonderful experience [teaching him] and I wish him the best.”

Breckel's guidance counselor Jennifer Mott – whom he said he visited “so many times”

during any given week this year she probably got sick of him (but always helped) – had similar things to say.

“[Breckel] has made an impression as being one of our most gifted and talented students,” she said. “He is talented academically, athletically and musically.”

Mott went on to say Breckel is well-liked and respected by his peers as well as adults and is a strong leader who has done over 100 hours of community service.

Likewise, Howard's favorite teachers, engineering instructor David Ruddick and world language teacher Stephen Pingree – both of whom he said had a passion for what they teach and gave him a sense of direction – had only positive things to say about him.

Howard “was both a pleasure and a challenge to have” in class, said Ruddick. “On the one hand, he is the usual, normal high school student, confident in his opinions but tempered by his lack of real world experience,” he furthered. “On the other hand, [he is] an exceptionally intelligent, thinking, analytical person who can – and does! – dissect most peoples' less-than-well-thought-out arguments with aplomb.”

Ruddick said he believed everyone would read about and benefit from Howard's achievements in the future.

“I loved having him in class,” he stated. “It made my day, every day.”

Pingree, who taught Howard Latin, said Howard was “a perfect example of self-motivation.” He said he never had to worry about whether Howard would complete his work or not and added he always finished his assignments “almost to perfection.”

“It was a joy working with [Howard] at RHAM,” he continued. “Added to his work ethic, he has shown great maturity in his reflection on various topics and has shown respect for his teachers and peers.”

Pingree said he was confident Howard would find success at college; he's heading off to Columbia University, while Breckel is bound for Boston College.

And although their schedules come fall are expected to be just as packed – if not more so – than their high school career has been, for the most part neither student intends to use sum-



Andrew Breckel

mer as a “breather” period.

Howard will be interning with United Technologies Aerospace Systems during the week and Breckel will be working as a tennis assistant at the Hebron Parks and Recreation Department and with the Excursion in Learning educational enrichment program at Manchester Community College.

And so, it will end up being their families who make certain their summer doesn't pass without at least a bit of leisure; Howard's family is planning a trip to Europe or Hawaii (Howard is hoping for Europe) and Breckel will be going on a family cruise, ensuring there's a bit of play among all the hard work of this year's valedictorian and salutatorian.

The RHAM High School graduation is scheduled for Tuesday, June 18 at 6 p.m. on the softball field adjacent to the high school, 85 Wall St, Hebron. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be moved inside to the gymnasium. If the ceremony is held indoors, each student will receive four admission tickets and admission will be by ticket only.

Amphitheater Dreams Discussed with Hebron Selectmen

by Geeta Schrayter

If the members of Friends of Hebron Parks have their way, there will soon be an amphitheatre at Burnt Hill Park.

Friends of Hebron Parks (FOHP) presented its proposal at the June 6 meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Susan Brosseau, treasurer of FOHP, explained the organization is a non-profit established in 2008 to assist Hebron in acquiring items for the parks “that for whatever reason are not in the town budget or seem to be a little bit beyond what is provided.”

At first, Brosseau said the organization's members were looking to focus on sport-related enhancements, but they then realized they wanted to do something that would instead benefit everyone in town.

“We kind of kicked ideas around,” she said, explaining the group had already bought some picnic tables and done things at the Maple Fest, “but we felt ready to take on a larger project.”

Brosseau noted back before RHAM High School was renovated, Hebron used to hold “really great concerts.” That stopped after the school was completed, since it came with the new auditorium and consequently space to hold such events.

But “we thought ‘wouldn't it be great if we could put something in this beautiful park that's already there that would be conducive to that kind of event,’” Brosseau said.

And so, the idea for an amphitheatre was

born.

Research, planning and design was conducted with the University of Connecticut Community Research and Design Collaborative which, for a relatively low cost (no more than \$4,000), provided planning and design services headed by an associate professor at the school alongside graduate and undergraduate students.

“We were able to get good resources through UConn,” Brosseau said. “The beauty of it is [associate professor Peter Miniutti] brings in undergraduate and graduate students for credit. It's a win-win situation.”

As a result of their work, a conceptual proposal and design for an amphitheatre in Burnt Hill Park was formed.

At the June 6 selectmen meeting Parks and Recreation Department director Rich Calarco said in the original master plan that was done for Burnt Hill Park an amphitheatre had been included as a long-term goal. He said it would be located at the top of the hill, which boasted a view that was “quite spectacular.”

The conceptual plan, he said, shows an amphitheatre with step seating that would hold anywhere from 250-500 people. Since the theatre would be built up into a hill, people could seat themselves on the hill behind the seating as well, and more chairs could be placed at the top if needed. He said there would be some parking near the amphitheatre for handicapped individuals, but most people would park in the

existing lots and walk up past the pond to get to the theatre.

Although members of the Parks and Recreation Commission voted at their May 20 meeting, where they first saw a presentation on the proposal, to present the concept to the selectmen with a preliminary cost of \$450,000, no set number was shared at the selectmen's meeting. Calarco said he hoped to have “more solid budget numbers in the next month or so.”

Brosseau acknowledged putting in an amphitheatre would need to make economic sense for the town and FOHP felt that it did.

“There really isn't a facility like this near here,” she said, adding FOHP envisioned the amphitheatre being used from summer through the fall for a number of events including graduations and fundraisers or any public gathering. She said the group started off thinking about the Parks and Recreation Department utilizing it for musical events but the idea “took off from there.”

“It would be very, very nice for the town,” she said, adding it could actually be an economic boost since it would likely bring people in from out of town that would then use some of the other Hebron businesses during their visit.

“It could be a cultural center,” she said, adding the group “very respectfully” asks that the project be included in the town's Small Town Economic Assistant Program (STEAP) grant

list and the application round slated for Aug. 1. After the presentation concluded, selectwoman Gayle Mulligan excitedly shared, “We can have jazz festivals!”

“I think it's a wonderful idea,” she furthered. Selectman Brian O'Connell added he had walked the Burnt Hill Park property when the town was originally looking to put in the park, and someone had mentioned then that particular area would be a great spot for an amphitheatre.

“So I'm really happy you're trying to pursue this,” he said. “It's not only a wonderful idea but the repercussions, as you touched on – you could do a lot of good for this community.”

O'Connell added it was also a great way to get people to use the park who don't play sports.

“It's going to open the park up to a lot of people,” he said, calling the addition an “economic benefit to the community.”

Mulligan furthered the group had done good work in terms of reaching out to UConn. She said having a project this far along in the planning process “makes a huge difference moving forward with getting STEAP grant money.”

The project is looking to be funded through grant monies and donations. To donate and help make the amphitheatre dreams in Hebron a reality, contact Brosseau at sbrosseau@comcast.net.

Veronesi Resigns from Hebron Schools

by Geeta Schrayter

Kathryn Veronesi was principal of Gilead Hill School before becoming interim superintendent of schools late last year. However, she won't be returning to her former position.

Veronesi last week submitted a letter of resignation to the Board of Education; her last day in the district will be June 30. The board was expected to formally accept the resignation at its meeting last night.

In the letter, dated June 5, Veronesi expressed "tremendous gratitude" for the years of leadership she'd garnered in town; Veronesi began working for Hebron in July 2006.

Veronesi was in the running for permanent superintendent of schools in Hebron, but wound up withdrawing her name from consideration; Colchester resident Jeff Newton was ultimately named superintendent, and will start July 1.

Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea said this week she didn't officially know Veronesi was resigning until she'd received the letter, although Veronesi had been talking about the possibility. Shea added she was "deeply

disappointed" Veronesi was leaving.

"We really like [Veronesi]," she said. "She's a very hard worker and an excellent administrator, so we were disappointed [to receive the letter]."

Shea said Veronesi has been an excellent leader, building principal and acting superintendent – something she knew she would be from the start.

"When she began as the principal of Gilead Hill School I was on the hiring committee and we had a lot of candidates back then," Shea shared. "I can remember the committee saying 'we need to narrow it down to two [candidates]' but I knew she was the one we needed to have and kind of sent the committee into disarray because I said 'I don't have two to pick and if we can't have [Veronesi], if we can't hire her, we need to go back out'" for more candidates.

Shea said Veronesi "took charge" of Gilead Hill School and quickly gained the respect of parents, students and staff.

"All of the students who have had her as their

principal remember her," she said adding the parents like her, too. "She's just warm, friendly and inviting yet a firm administrator and really, she ran that building quite well as the principal."

Earlier this week, Veronesi declined to comment on her decision until after last night's meeting. In her letter, she didn't mention her reasons for resigning, but focused instead on the positive qualities of the Hebron district and all she'd learned.

"It is without hesitation that I say I have had the good fortune to work with the finest administrators, educators and staff," she wrote, later adding, "the work of our schools is cradled within a community that cares deeply for its children and each other."

Veronesi said she was immediately welcomed and embraced by the community when she arrived and felt she returned that same respect and affection.

"Together, we have enjoyed historical and happy times and supported each other through

uncertainty and loss," she said. "I have marched in parades, tapped maple trees, surveyed piles of snow on school rooftops, and held the hand[s] of distraught mothers and children upon the unexpected loss of their husbands and fathers."

Veronesi concluded that as the Hebron school district moves forward, she was proud the next chapter would open with the current team and Newton as its leader.

"I believe calmer seas and continued brilliance are forecasted in Hebron's future," she said. "I am honored to pass to [Newton] the brilliant light that will lead you all into the future."

But with Veronesi leaving, the chapter Newton opens will start with the search for some new staff. In addition to a new GHS principal, the school system has three other positions to fill – business manager and two math specialists.

"Our new superintendent is going to have plenty of work as he begins July 1," said Shea. "There's a lot of hiring to be done."

Douglas Library Looks to Become Hebron Town Property

by Geeta Schrayter

As the result of recommendations brought forth earlier this year by the Library Study Task force, Douglas Library Association president Gail Richmond explained at a public hearing June 6 the association was looking to make the Douglas Library municipal.

At the hearing held prior to the Board of Selectmen meeting, Richmond explained the task force, established last August, had a charge "to study and review alternatives for the provision of library services, the framework for the future of the Douglas Library and the agreement between the town of Hebron and the Douglas Library of Hebron Association."

Richmond said the task force gathered and reviewed historical materials and then she and administrative assistant Donna Lanza visited libraries throughout the state – both association and town – and interviewed library directors and board presidents. After that was completed, the findings were summarized at two meetings meant to determine what model works best.

"Both meetings were very informative and gave much material," said Richmond, adding those involved were "struck with the clarity of our findings."

"The library should transfer from an association to the town," she said. "The property should be owned by the town. The association

doesn't maintain the property nor have money to do so."

After the study by the task force was completed, six recommendations were made. In addition to making the library municipal, these were: that the name remain the Douglas Library of Hebron; that the Library Association continue even after the library becomes municipal in order to provide support and guidance and continue to receive income from the Douglas Trust; that the association transfer ownership of the library property to the town; that a governing board of trustees be established by the town; that library staff remain town employees and the library budget funded by the town.

"I must emphasize the average patron will not see any difference" from these changes, Richmond said. "Instead this will formalize what already is taking place."

The changes were viewed as a "win-win," Richmond furthered, explaining they would make it easier for the town to undertake major repairs on the building. If it's town owned, she said, it would be easier to receive funding.

Selectman Dan Larsen agreed. Larsen explained the town and library are somewhat "hobbled" because the library isn't town-owned, and changing that would allow for alternate forms of financing, like different grants, to be applied for.

Town Manager Andy Tierney echoed those sentiments. He explained when the town approved the Siemens project, a lease-agreement under which a number of town buildings underwent repairs to make them more energy-efficient, the library wasn't included since it wasn't part of the municipality.

"The building wasn't owned by the municipality so it wasn't eligible," he said, so it prevented a boiler replacement and lighting upgrades from being done in the building.

Now that the recommendations have been brought forth, Richmond said the next steps were to hold a special town meeting to accept the property transfer and the ordinance which in part states that the library become a municipal library.

After that takes place, Richmond said board members would need to be recruited for the governing board that will have authority of and responsibility for the library and be able to set policies. The board would be comprised of six members designated by the association and three by the town manager and/or selectmen.

The selectmen would also need to appoint a new board of trustees. If that took place in August, Richmond said there could be a September effective date.

After the hearing closed and the Board of Selectmen meeting began, the selectmen voted

to schedule a special town meeting regarding the library changes for Thursday, July 11 at 7 p.m.

* * *

Also at the meeting, the selectmen unanimously approved the refinancing of some existing debt amounting to about \$1.1 million. During a presentation by Webster Bank it was explained refinancing the town's debt – specifically the 2004 bonds – would provide savings with a net assessment of \$50,000.

Selectman Brian O'Connell said since Webster is the town banker, "they know Hebron, they know the credit risk and know we're a very solid [low] credit risk."

"Therefore they looked to say 'can we save you some money?'" he stated.

O'Connell said he saw the presentation the bank had already made to the Board of Finance (the finance board voted to move approval of the refinancing forward to the selectmen), and "it made a lot of sense."

"It's pretty short and sweet," he said. "We're going to save the town, approximately, over the life of the loan, \$50,000 give or take." And that, he noted, is 50,000 in taxpayer dollars.

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 20, at 7:30 p.m. in the Hebron town office building,

Meet the New Colchester Senior Center Director

by Melissa Roberto

After a six-month vacancy, the position of director of the Colchester Senior Center has at last been filled, by a Glastonbury resident whose experience comes from an entire career dedicated to the senior center population.

Next Monday, June 17, Patricia Watts will walk into the senior center, located at 95 Norwich Ave., to get to work. Watts brings with her experience from assisting in senior centers in multiple Connecticut towns, but she admits Colchester is a community that is fairly new to her.

"I'm very excited," Watts said of her soon-to-be new location. "I'm eager to get in and get to know the staff and the people who utilize the senior center. I'm really hopeful that we're going to accomplish good things together."

Watts said she first learned of the position when Patti White, also of Glastonbury, left in November. With that news, she said she felt it would be a "wonderful" opportunity.

Watts has worked with senior citizens since she graduated from Houghton College in Houghton, N.Y. She began her career as a recreational specialist at Hebrew Home in West Hartford, now called Hebrew Health Care, and

then moved to Chicago with her husband and ran an assisted living program at the Devonshire of Lisle – a community that is a part of Brookdale Senior Living, the largest provider of senior housing in the nation.

Watts later returned to Connecticut and started a family but began working again after her two children went off to school. Since, she's worked at Manchester Senior Center and the Wallingford Senior Center.

Watts said she's "always had an affinity" for seniors.

"I was fortunate growing up to have my grandmother live with us," she explained. "That kind of molded me in a way that I love seniors and I've always enjoyed being around seniors."

Though she hasn't started yet, Watts said she's aware that the town's senior center has been a popular topic of discussion in recent months, as the building has undergone repairs, has the potential of relocating and is a part of the William J. Johnston Middle School building project proposal.

"It's specifically at a crossroads," Watts said of the senior center. "It's a good time for strong leadership to come in and guide them through

the next chapter, whatever that may be."

Along with her excitement to begin working in a new facility, the most important part, Watts said, is getting to know the people she will spend her time with. On a tour during the interview process, Watts said she received positive impressions of the current staff and seniors who were at the center.

"They were very warm and very friendly," she added.

Also, Watts has already done research at her future place of employment. She said the center's slogan, "Proud to be a part of the community," symbolizes exactly how she feels about her new position.

Her new boss, First Selectman Gregg Schuster, is also excited to have Watts come to town.

"I'm just happy to bring Patty on board," the selectman said. "It's important that the senior center have good leadership and I'm confident that Patty is going to do a fantastic job over there."

Watts was among 50 other candidates who applied for the position. Her duties will include the planning, organizing and coordinating of

community services for Colchester seniors including recreational, educational and health activities. Also, she will oversee human services and special classes and programs.

Chairwoman of the Commission on Aging, Rose Levine, said the commission is "so excited" to welcome Watts, especially because of her extensive experience and because she has a vision of including all seniors in town – "whether they are 55 or 105 years old."

"She is very vibrant, very outgoing and very forward looking," Levine said. "We know she has wonderful ideas to engage seniors of all ages."

Earlier this week Watts said she understands the center is "rolling out the red carpet" for her on Monday. Her first day will begin with a Father's Day brunch, and will also include a meet and greet session, which will give her a chance to meet the very members she'll be serving.

The Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Watts says she's looking forward to gaining a sense of the operations there, and is eager to meet the people she'll be spending much of her time with.

Colchester Fire Captain Honored for 50 Years of Service

by Melissa Roberto

For Colchester resident John Jones, helping others comes naturally. But his longtime service to Colchester, including 50 years as an active volunteer for the fire department, is being recognized not just by the people he works alongside each day, but by the entire town, as Saturday, June 15, has been declared “John Jones Appreciation Day.”

Jones’ rare dedication to his fellow residents, volunteers and even strangers is what people instantly recall when they hear his name. As a gentleman who has worn a variety of hats in town, – so many that even he had trouble recalling them all – Jones says he’s just doing what he can to help the community.

Regardless of his humble nature, those close to Jones say the list of titles he’s held in Colchester is almost as big as his heart.

“John Jones is a giant, both literally and figuratively,” said First Selectman Gregg Schuster. “He’s one of those people who just has a huge heart.”

Jones’ experience in volunteerism is a lengthy tale. Over the years, he has served as a member of the Police Commission, a football coach, an umpire for the Colchester Little League, a basketball coach for the youth league, a Justice of Peace, and is currently a fourth-degree knight for the Knights of Columbus. He is also popularly known as a fire police captain and life member of the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department, which he has actively been a member of for a total of 50 years – the reason behind his big day.

But the list doesn’t stop there.

Jones’ early career in law enforcement also began in Colchester. He first became a constable in town – an elected police officer – for eight years before becoming an auxiliary state trooper at Troop K. Then, he became a full-time police officer for the Willimantic Police Department, where he spearheaded the Explore Post, a program for kids who want to become police officers.

After leaving his mark in Willimantic, Jones worked as a graduate apprentice in sheet metal at Pratt and Whitney in its plants all over Connecticut for 18 and a half years. On the side, Jones assisted in Special Olympics as a coach.

Though much of his early career was out-

side of town, his volunteering didn’t stop. The Colchester Rotary Club once named him Colchester’s Citizen of the Year.

But in 1993, Jones made his way back to the local area to work. He began working for the Colchester Highway Department as a Maintainer 2 plowing roads and doing outdoor labor, and three years later was promoted to a Maintainer 3. In 2002, Jones became the Assistant Supervisor for the Highway Department and held that title until he got the job as the Director of Operations, taking over for Kevin Kelly, in March of this year.

Though his hat often changes throughout the day, one thing has remained a constant in Jones’ life: the Colchester Hayward Fire Department.

At the age of 14, Jones joined the local fire department as a junior member. As he grew, so did his number of titles there. He served as chief of the juniors for three and a half years, and in 1972, became the fire department’s first emergency medical technician (EMT).

In 1998, after serving for 25 years, Jones became a life member at the department. But to achieve 50 years of *active* service is an accomplishment most volunteers seldom reach – an achievement that upgraded his title to a double life member.

“I think once the fire department got in my blood it just never came out,” Jones said.

President of the Fire Department David Martin – who’s worked with Jones there for 22 years – said his “incredible dedication and driven attitude” has made him stand out.

“To reach the milestone of 50 years is fantastic in and of itself but to reach it as an active member is what’s so special,” Martin said. “That means maintaining training and responding to emergency calls – which John does without question on a daily basis.”

Jones’ eyes widened when he thought about his last 50 years at the department. He said the time went by quickly.

“The first 25 went by – boom – like that. And the second 25, I don’t know where they went,” he said.

Over the last 50 years, however, Jones said he’s proud of how much the department has evolved. He recalled a time when the department would get 50 calls per year, “and now it’s like 2,000.”



Captain John Jones of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department, who also serves as the town’s director of operations, stands outside of his office next to his truck that is equipped with a sign that reads “Captain.” The town has declared Saturday “John Jones Appreciation Day” to honor his 50 years of active service with the fire department.

Mainly, Jones said, his highlights at the department have been watching the younger members come up through the ranks – “seeing people accomplish things that they never thought they’d accomplish.”

Several who spoke highly of Jones also pointed out that he’s been a great role model for those younger members.

24-year-old EMT Keith Erickson called Jones “one of the nicest guys around,” adding that he’s always at the fire house supplying “good one-liners,” along with some helpful advice, too.

Besides the camaraderie, Jones said the main reason he will continue to do what he’s already done for so long is to “help people and be there

for people.” Over the years he said he’s responded to some “pretty nasty calls,” including car accidents, house fires and more.

“I figure if I can try to help somebody get through one of these bad moments and if I can succeed in it, then that’s one good thing I have done for the day,” Jones said.

On Saturday, Jones will venture down to the fire company on Main Street and be greeted with a pasta dinner, and a large group of his fellow firefighters, co-workers, family members and friends there to congratulate him.

And among all his duties and titles, Jones said the last 50 years hasn’t slowed him down yet.

“Nope, still going,” he said.

Andover Board Members Discuss Potential New Field

by Geeta Schrayter

At Wednesday’s Board of Education meeting, school board chair Jay Lindy shared the possibility a new field could be built in the wooded area in back of the school.

Lindy explained the project was something that had been in the works since 2007. He said the proposal hadn’t been brought before the Board of Selectmen yet, but he wanted to show the plans to the Board of Education to get their overall feeling on the possibility since the property is in back of the school.

The project entails the construction of a multi-use field which would be used mainly for soccer and lacrosse along with a walking track and hopefully, Lindy added, a pavilion.

“We’re hoping we have the money to put up a pavilion,” he said, so the school could use it for events such as field day and families could call the town and ask to use it for birthday parties or picnics.

Lindy explained money for the project was already in line because the town had been awarded a \$225,000 grant for the field. In addition, that money was coupled with another \$225,000 grant originally intended to help build

a new senior center. However, the cost for that project was projected to be over \$1 million – too much for the town to cover – so rather than lose the grant money, the town grabbed it and bundled it with the grant for the field.

Originally, the proposed complex was going to be located by the ball fields on Long Hill Road. However, once the engineers who had been hired for the project began looking at the property they discovered it came into wetlands. As a result, that particular area couldn’t be used.

Lindy said a number of other properties in town were then looked at as the possible location but none of them panned out.

“So we decided after looking everywhere [else] ‘let’s revisit in back of the school,’ he said.

Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia explained if anyone were to take a walk behind the school they would come across a tree line then, after heading into the woods, a gas line which is overgrown by weeds.

“Beyond that is the property where the parking lot and field would be,” he said.

Maneggia added the only concern he had was

the location of the access road to the fields. The plans have the road passing between the school and the town hall. Maneggia said he had asked the road be moved as far as possible to the town side to prevent any situations with traffic and children.

Lindy agreed, adding the general public wouldn’t be allowed to use the park until after school hours.

Maneggia furthered the project could potentially make the school a bit safer. He said he had suggested the trees in back of the school be taken down which would open up the sightline from the school out to the proposed field.

“Right now anyone can come out of the woods and we wouldn’t see them until they’re on school property,” he said. “If we took that line [of trees] down, we’d get to the gas line, then the [proposed] soccer field. So theoretically we could see from the school all the way to the field.”

Maneggia also noted the town, not the school, would be responsible for maintaining

the area.

Lindy said now that the Board of Education had been appraised of the situation, the next step was to go to the selectmen.

“The selectmen haven’t seen this yet but I wanted to bring it here to say we’re going to be neighbors,” he said.

After the selectmen look over the proposal, a public hearing will then need to be scheduled to inform the public about the project and answer any questions people may have.

The concept and plans were accepted unanimously by the board.

“This was a long time coming,” said board member Christina Tamburro.

The board also voted at the meeting to cancel the regularly scheduled board meetings for July and August, with the option to schedule a special meeting in August if needed. As a result, the next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School library, 35 School Rd.

Colchester Senior Center Options Cause Confusion

by Melissa Roberto

While the senior center may still be included in William J. Johnston Middle School renovation and expansion project, town officials last week presented several alternative options for the senior center's future – a presentation that sparked confusion and frustration among some residents.

The presentation was given at last Thursday's Board of Selectmen meeting by Public Works Director Jim Paggioli and Building Official Tim York, who said First Selectman Gregg Schuster advised them to research options of relocating the town's senior center, which has undergone extensive repairs in recent months and is continuing to depreciate.

According to Schuster, the presentation was given just to show what options could be looked at if the center needs to be vacated sooner rather than later. However, members of the board and several in the crowd argued that the presentation conflicts with the current status of the William J. Johnston Middle School renovation project, which includes additions and renovations to WJJMS, including renovations to the existing space to house a senior center and community center – a project that ultimately was supported by the boards of selectmen, education and finance Monday night to go through the referendum process.

The presentation included four options – each with a different cost and scope. But before the price tags were delivered, York explained just what the current condition of the senior center – currently owned by the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees – is. For starters, York explained that there was a “pretty good failure” in the floor joists of one of the rooms recently, which he deemed unsafe.

Though the floor has since been fixed, York said there is still a long list of damages that are in desperate need of repair. He said the center is in need of new windows, an entry door, as well as retiling of floors and repaving of the parking lot and driveway.

“This building has not been maintained,” he explained. “If you don't maintain a building the deterioration accelerates.”

Additionally, York highlighted other concerns. He estimated that an additional 20-30 feet of flooring has water damage, and explained that the lighting fixtures need to be

updated. Also, he said the restrooms of the building are not handicap accessible – a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“That's disgusting in my mind,” York said of the lack of handicap accessibility.

Four options were then presented to the public, which ranged from an annual lease payment of \$19,090 to the cost of the senior center included in the WJJMS project – what Paggioli said was \$5.9 million.

The first option was to continue the existing lease, but to alter it so the town could potentially own the building instead. Paggioli said the cost is currently being offered to the town by the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees at \$19,090 per year. (A cost Paggioli said has only been negotiated but is not part of a lease document.)

Option two was to lease the commerce center at 188 Norwich Avenue. Paggioli showed a picture of the building's layout, which included 5,000 square feet of space– nearly half of the amount of space of the current center – at a cost of \$50,000-60,000 each year, for five years with an option for extension. Paggioli highlighted that this option would include oil service and repair, snow removal and a heating and propane system, among other services, that the owner would be responsible for.

The third option consisted of two cost estimates from two separate developers – an option that included building a new senior center from the ground up. The estimates featured \$2 million and \$3 million price tags, and were based upon buildings between 8,500 and 9,000 square feet, with a drive-through canopy and parking areas.

The last option Paggioli highlighted was the current \$5.9 million proposal of a senior center as part of the WJJMS building project, which will now, based on the outcome of Monday night's tri-board meeting (see related story below), go before voters at a town meeting, and if approved, to a referendum sometime this fall. However, Schuster pointed out last Thursday that no matter if the project moves forward and passes, it would still take five years to complete. He stressed that the options were a part of a “contingency plan” in case the fate of the senior center falls into the selectmen's hands in the meantime, or if the project doesn't move

forward at all.

“Just to clarify, we're not sitting here saying ‘pick this,’” said Schuster. “Understand that there would have to be a process. This is just for everyone to know what an option could be.”

Regardless of Schuster's explanation, members of the crowd were appalled by the presentation of options, so much so that the board listened to public comments during the meeting, instead of waiting until the end.

Chairwoman of the Commission on Aging, Goldie Liverant, said she was concerned with the timing of the presentation.

“I just can't understand why all the sudden this upheaval is beginning all over again,” she said. “We're stepping backwards. I think we should go ahead with what the plans are and let the building committee get back to work.”

Others used “disgust” to describe their frustration with the presentation, and many argued that communicating the options before the fate of the WJJMS project had been decided was a disservice to the Building Committee, which many pointed out is made up of volunteers who have dedicated their time for the last two years to generate the WJJMS project proposal.

Even members of the board – Democrats Rosemary Coyle and Jim Ford – seemed to find the presentation confusing. The two made it clear that these options had not been delivered to the fellow selectmen members beforehand, and that Paggioli and York's work had been conducted following a request from the first selectman and not the board as a whole.

“You weren't charged by this board,” Coyle informed York.

Also, the selectwoman said she didn't have concerns with a majority of the options, but was concerned that a stand-alone building, built from the ground up, was an option.

“That's not a contingency plan; that's a permanent solution,” Coyle pointed out.

But Coyle wasn't the only one with concerns.

Resident Mike Caplet said he was “shocked” by the process that he also deemed “wrong.” As a former Board of Finance member for the town, he said the presentation did not follow the correct process.

“As far as I'm aware through reading minutes and listening to meetings, this is the first time it's ever come up and it's not part of an

official request for proposal process,” he said. “You're sharing this at a public meeting. It's very much a comparative analysis of one option to the other and that is wrong.”

But Schuster again stressed that the options solely served as a chance to show the public what the options could be if the center needs to be evacuated – a point also stressed by Republicans Greg Cordova and Stan Soby.

“I have grave concerns over what's going to happen in the next five years,” Schuster said. “If [the project fails] we're left with some of the options we have now. I thought it bears some conversation.”

Ford said he'd like to know more about the negotiations between the town and the trustees. He also requested further information about the other buildings Paggioli researched and what developers offered the estimates to the two officials.

Board of Education member Michael Egan was also visibly frustrated with the presentation, and communicated that before walking out of the meeting.

“From the building committee that you guys commissioned, has anybody looked at these numbers?” Egan asked, to which Schuster replied that he reached out to Building Committee Chairman Tom Tyler who was looking over the numbers with the Tecton Architects, who have assisted in the project. “This wasn't even sent to the Board of Finance last night [at its meeting]. So you're presenting this to the public without verifying the numbers?”

“Who do you think is going to friggin' work for this town in a building committee in the years to come after this?” he continued. “It's disgusting. It is totally wrong... I think you're totally undercutting that building committee. I can't believe this is happening in the town of Colchester.”

Though the discussion about the presentation turned sour, Ford made a motion to form a Board of Selectmen subcommittee to research options of how to address the current senior center concerns along with members of the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees. The board tabled Ford's request to a future meeting.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 20, 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

WJJMS Project Moves Closer to Referendum

by Melissa Roberto

Two studies, four years of research, and several tri-board meetings later, it looks like the William J. Johnston Middle School/Community Center/Senior Center project will ultimately head before voters.

In a tri-board meeting held Monday in the Bacon Academy cafeteria, the boards of selectmen, finance and education moved the project forward to a referendum process, meaning that the \$56.97 million project would head to a town meeting, and if approved, go to a referendum.

Though no date has been set yet, the boards will work with a bond counsel to develop the resolution over the next two months before a town meeting can be scheduled.

The room was filled with a majority of senior citizens, as well as several parents, many of whom spoke at the beginning of the meeting to support the project moving forward to a public vote. Following public comments, each board came to a unanimous consensus rather quickly on Monday night.

The project calls for renovations and additions to the current school to house the sixth grade in its western wing, and a three-story addition to house the seventh and eighth grades. The plans locate the community center at the existing school; the facility would house the Parks and Recreation, Social and Youth Services Departments. The community center would include a gym, as well as a health room, game room, counseling room, technology room, lounge and library.

The plans also call for the senior center to be at the existing school, in the cafeteria wing. Its offerings would include a bistro/café, gift shop, lounge, library, counseling space, health room, hair salon and more.

The estimated project cost is \$56.97 million, with an estimated state reimbursement of \$19.67 million; the net cost to the town is estimated at \$37.29 million.

Originally, the project was pegged at \$68.5 million, but was reduced when the Building Committee and Tecton Architects of Hartford – the architects who have assisted in the project

design – provided alternatives to the boards at lesser costs and eliminating construction.

The first board to voice their support was the Board of Education. Chairman Ron Goldstein spoke on the board's behalf by stating that the board believes the project to be “exciting and innovative in that it brings together all the communities and all the important constituencies in the town into one facility that can serve many needs.”

The support continued as Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov spoke about the finance board's role over the last two years while hearing several alternatives come and go.

“We looked at trying to not only analyze the numbers but also the pluses and minuses,” Tarlov explained to the crowd.

Tarlov also admitted that both the initial price tag and the current estimated projections are “shocking,” but he stressed multiple times that “there is a cost to not doing the project,” as he feels both the senior center and the existing youth center are in need of renovating.

“It isn't a matter of if we spend money doing this project or if we spend no money,” Tarlov stated.

The finance board chairman stated that the board looked at several costs – including the cost of just renovating the existing school and alternatives to incorporating all three entities as originally planned. After state reimbursement, Tarlov said, the reduced cost of all three entities and the cost of just renovating the school ended up being only a \$6-7 million difference.

“That still does not solve the problem of the current senior center [and youth center],” Tarlov said of just the school renovation cost.

Lastly, Tarlov said the board as a whole felt, after years of research had gone into the project and a number of alternatives came and went before the board, it, too, was in support.

Quickly thereafter, selectman Stan Soby made a motion for the board of selectmen to “begin the referendum process” for the project as presented by the building committee “to be

completed in sufficient time to meet the Nov. 30, 2013, filing deadline.”

For the town to receive state reimbursement – which is possible since the project includes school construction – the town needs to submit its paperwork to the state by Nov. 30.

While the town officials seemed to all be on board, a few residents in the crowd did voice concerns with the hefty price tag associated with the project.

Resident Jim Kelly requested Tarlov to communicate what the mill rate was going to look like. Tarlov explained that the “high point” in the mill rate would be an increase of 2.13 mills, in the year 2029. He did, however, say the town would begin its payments in 2017.

Another resident was concerned with a spike in property taxes. He estimated that homeowners would see \$400-600 additional taxes each year as a result of the project.

“That includes all you folks here on a fixed income, social security, unemployed,” the resident stated.

Tarlov agreed that would be the affect. However, others spoke against that argument as well.

Resident Eileen Fazekas said it could be possible in another 12 years that “by some miracle” the town could have more development and a growing tax base.

“You don't know what will happen,” she said. “There's a chance the mill rate might go down.”

Board of Education Vice Chairman Don Kennedy also pointed out that the amount of taxes is “unique in each of us.” He stressed that the amount depends on the assessed value of a person's home.

Tarlov then stressed a point he felt was important the public to understand: that not moving the project forward wouldn't necessarily be cheaper.

“If we just fixed up the current school basically you're looking at more than \$400-600 [in taxes] to take that school and bring it up to shape,” he said. “And that still wouldn't take into account the problems with the senior center and youth center that still need to be fixed.”

East Hampton Town Council Looks into Ongoing Projects

by Elizabeth Bowling

The recently-passed high school project and the town's lack of a Right to Farm ordinance highlighted discussion at Tuesday's Town Council meeting.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said now that the town has voted to move forward with the high school renovation project and the Board of Education approved the Education Specifications for the project, the next step is to electronically submit a grant application to the state before the June 30 deadline.

Maniscalco also noted the Board of Education's interest in a tri-board meeting between it, the Board of Finance and the Town Council to discuss the approved budget for the project and what areas should expect to see cuts.

Last week, on the day of the high school project referendum, Superintendent of Schools Mark Winzler used the East Hampton Schools Emergency Alert System to remind East Hampton parents, but no other residents, about the referendum vote via a voice-recorded phone call.

Coincidentally, Connecticut passed a law Tuesday that will disallow boards of education to use those notification systems to remind residents about an upcoming vote, assuming the

governor signs off on it, which is expected, starting July 1, Maniscalco said.

The council also discussed East Hampton's lack of a Right to Farm ordinance. The town manager said he started drafting an agriculture commission resolution so the agricultural population could talk to the council about possible guiding principles regarding local farming, perhaps similar to those of East Haddam, Maniscalco said.

East Haddam's ordinance provides protection to farmers against litigation and pledges to support local agriculture.

An agricultural workshop is tentatively scheduled for East Hampton June 27 at 7 p.m. with Joan Nichols from the Connecticut Farm Bureau, Maniscalco said. The location is to be announced.

Maniscalco said the Right to Farm discussion first came up when an East Hampton Animal Control officer encountered an increased amount of issues related to livestock and local farm life and brought it to Maniscalco's attention.

Another ongoing matter is the town's public water system operating budget and water use

rate. Maniscalco said East Hampton's water usage rate "falls close to the middle of surrounding towns."

After an introductory meeting with the Town Council a few weeks ago and a public hearing that was unattended by the public, the Water Pollution Control Authority came to the council for its second reading. The council unanimously approved the budget that was presented by WPCA's Vincent Susco.

Effective July 15, the expense budget for both systems will remain the same and the water billing rates for two community water systems that are owned by the town and operated by WPCA will increase 2.1 percent and 4.6 percent.

A town water system has been in talks for decades. In 1972, the St. Clements site on Oakum Dock Road was identified as a potential source of groundwater. In 2001 East Hampton sought to secure the land but in 2007 the town voted down a \$28.5 million water system, which would have served about 5,300 people.

The Board of Finance allotted money for the project in 2009 after the Town Council arranged an easement agreement on the land. Now the

WPCA puts together an annual budget of water use rates and a system operating budget.

Tuesday night, the council also unanimously approved the town's Registrar of Voters Emergency Plan, which was brought about by major storms the past couple of years and was designed to be simpler than the state's emergency plan. Weintraub said the East Hampton plan "should be less detailed than the state's," because it's a small town.

The deadline for the plan was March 1, so the council approved it and may adjust it moving forward if necessary.

The council was also introduced to a C-PACE program, which is a Property Assessed Clean Energy program, Maniscalco said, that collaborates with an interested business to upgrade a building's energy. The business pays the company back through its property tax bill.

C-PACE will be brought through the council again before it is acted upon, Maniscalco said.

The next regular meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for Tuesday, June 25, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

Two Retiring MES Teachers Will Cherish Their Memories

by Melissa Roberto

As the school year will come to a close next Tuesday, two longtime Marlborough Elementary School teachers will close the doors of their classrooms one last time.

Third-grade teacher Linda Garrett and preschool special education teacher Betty Metzler have spent a majority of their teaching careers at MES and they look back on their many years there with smiles, and much laughter.

Come Tuesday, Garrett will retire finishing up her 32nd (and a half) year at the school where she's had the pleasure of teaching grades kindergarten, first, second, and for the last "seven or eight" years, third grade. Before MES, Garrett worked as an elementary school teacher in Portland for six years, but also took time off to raise a family.

Metzler, a preschool special education teacher at the school, assisting children with special needs, will retire after wrapping up her 16th year at MES. Starting at MES in 1997, Metzler brought with her 15 years of experience teaching special education at EASTCONN, a regional educational agency, where she primarily taught preschool students and worked with infants from birth to age 3.

But teaching preschool was always the most enjoyable, Metzler said.

"Where else do you get paid to sing and dance all day?" she said with a laugh.

Though their reigns at MES are ending soon, the two agree they will begin new chapters of their lives with memories of MES they could talk about for years to come.

For Garrett, she's always enjoyed her students' "spontaneity and expressiveness."

"It's a nice time in their lives," she said about her third graders. "They let themselves go and they have fun and laugh."

She also referred to her students as authors, since they often write her notes – just one of the many little things they do that she cherishes.

Metzler teaches students that are a bit younger than Garrett's, ranging from 3 to 6 years old, and she recalled sledding as one of her favorite memories she got to share with them over the years. She recalled teaching them how to suit up in warm clothes, and how to go down the slopes. She often took her students on nature walks too, around MES – a school she said has "beautiful surroundings."

Asked why she chose to teach children who are identified with special needs, Metzler said it's "always" been nice to teach students who need a different approach. She said it motivated her to help her students communicate when at times that's what they often struggled with.

"It's a challenge that is rewarding," Metzler said of her job.

During their time at the elementary school, the two put in extra work outside of their classrooms. Metzler served as president of the Marlborough Education Association – the teacher's association – for one year, while Garrett enjoyed reading to students at a festival that takes place in town each winter. There, Garrett would sit in a rocking chair in the cold outside of the school reading to students who came to listen no matter how freezing the temperatures were.

The two credited the administration, staff, and of course, they said, the students, for making their years at MES worthwhile, and for being part of the reason why they stuck around so long.

"I'll miss the network of friends that we work with everyday," Garrett said. "We spend more time with the people here than we do with the people at home."

"And the families," Metzler added. "I'll miss the really, wonderful families."

The two agreed that not heading back to school in the fall will bring mixed emotions.

"It's bittersweet," Garrett explained. "This is who I am."

However, they both have already considered coming back to visit.

Metzler said when writing IEPs, or individual educational programs, for her students for next year, she thought to herself, "I've got to come back and help!"

For Garrett, she's already been in talks about coming in as a "mystery reader" – a fun event the school does for students, where a parent or relative of a student comes in to read for the class and surprise their youngsters. Garrett already has two grandchildren at the school, and will soon have four there. She says she's looking forward to the day she gets to surprise them, which won't be too difficult since she only lives five minutes down the road.

However, Garrett did admit there's one thing that she does fear once she leaves the school system for good: "That I'll forget the holidays!"

The veteran teacher said one of the things she's enjoyed throughout the years has been watching her students get excited for holidays and help decorate the classroom.

The two admitted that having time to lay low will take some getting used to.

"First I have to learn how to *not* do," Metzler said Wednesday afternoon as she was creating graduation tassels for her students. "I can't sit still. It will take a bit of time to find a new rhythm."

Garrett agreed, but said she's already got things in mind to keep her busy this summer. She plans to travel with her family to Oregon



Two MES teachers, Linda Garrett (top) and Betty Metzler savor their last few days inside Marlborough Elementary School. Garrett will retire after spending over 32 years at the school, and Metzler, 16.

and Kennebunkport, Maine, and in the future hopes to get back to Europe and possibly cruise the Mediterranean. She said she's even got ideas to write a children's book.

Metzler, also, is looking forward to downtime with her family but also hopes to study equine massage, as the Willington resident owns two horses.

And just as much as the two will miss the Marlborough school district, the faculty has made it clear that the retirees will be greatly missed as well.

"I feel fortunate to have been able to work alongside them for the last few years of their distinguished careers," Principal Scott Nierendorf said. "We wish them all the best in their retirement."

Third grade teacher at the school, Linda Harbec, described the two as teachers who are "very hard workers who have dedicated a lot of time and energy in this school."

Specifically, Harbec recalled Metzler's "caring" personality and "outstanding" style of teaching for kids in need of a strong support system. She added that Garrett's dedication to the school was easily noticed as she often witnessed Garrett's old students come back to greet her over the years, which she said had "always" been proof that Garrett gets to know her students well, and inspires them.

While the two teachers will soon say goodbye to the local district, they agreed their memories of MES are too immeasurable to forget.

East Hampton School Board Decides Budget Cuts Won't Touch Technology

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Board of Education approved its \$27.53 million budget Monday, which had been cut \$565,000 by the Town Council and Board of Finance since originally adopted earlier this year.

The board voted 6-2 in favor of the budget's recommended reductions, with BOE members Don Coolican and Josh Piteo opposed.

The school board decided that the \$560,000 in savings will come from various cuts, including the elimination of planned new positions in kindergarten and high school English and music.

The budget will go into action July 1 and run through the 2013-14 school year. Interim Superintendent of Schools Mark Winzler originally proposed a \$28.3 million school budget, or 6 percent increase, earlier this year. The BOE trimmed down his initial proposal to a 5.19 percent increase, then the Board of Finance cut it down to 4 percent and, finally, the Town Council further reduced it to 3.07 percent.

Monetarily, that 6 percent to 3.07 percent reduction is about \$565,000 less than what the school board originally approved; thus, cuts needed to be made in the upcoming year's plans.

Regarding funding for technology, Winzler said, "\$50,000 of it is coming this year because we have the funding now."

The cost of technology for the 2013-14 school year was set for \$250,000, Winzler said, but the board will use this year's \$50,000 surplus toward necessary technology purchases.

Thus, next year's \$250,000 technology budget is reduced to \$200,000.

"This district is in prehistoric times in terms of technology," Winzler said.

He said the technology-based purchases are necessities, not a "buying extravaganza" and they should be ready in time for the upcoming school year.

Winzler said the state is mandating online testing in two years and East Hampton wouldn't be able to complete testing within the given time period using its current technology. In addition to the 198 new desktop computers, the district will also need to update its systems and install dependable wireless Internet and modern projectors, Winzler said.

Budget reductions will come from health insurance, teachers who have retired or resigned, savings from the superintendent contract and other excess costs, among other areas. No full-time kindergarten teachers will be hired because the board created three full day and four half-day classes with existing kindergarten teachers instead.

The restructuring of buildings and grounds operation positions will also save approximately \$41,000, making the total budget savings \$565,447. The job description for the director of buildings and grounds is a consolidation of operations manager and a maintenance position, two pre-existing positions, Winzler said.

No cuts have been made to plans for a new special education position, technology improvements, football and other athletics support, daily

rates for substitutes and teacher evaluation training.

The board plans to meet with the Town Council and the Board of Finance and review the cuts more in-depth.

Members of the board stressed the town's students are their priority.

Winzler said, "The budget's a program, not numbers. It's a program for kids." He also described it as a "recognition" that the BOE is acting on behalf of its students.

This prompted Piteo to respond, "What's the best thing for our children? Teachers. We need our teachers."

Piteo suggested that savings from administrative cuts, like the consolidation of administrative positions, go toward the teachers.

Winzler said three non-tenured teachers were at risk of losing their jobs until recent budget adjustments in April, which secured their jobs for another year. The board also decided to hire a .4, or part-time, music teacher for the high school.

But Coolican said there is no need for more teachers because the district is seeing fewer students. He also said he wants more funding for the arts, because currently athletics receive twice as much funding as the arts, he said.

Head of the Finance Committee Carol Lane, however, said, "On the whole it's a good budget."

Board member Scott Minnick agreed, saying, "I think the community should be happy with what we were able to do with the money

we have."

Board of Education Chairman Mark Laraia described the spending plan as one that he feels is moving the school system forward.

"The winds were changing and they've changed and they're blowing in the right direction," he said.

The school board also voted unanimously in favor of the Education Specifications of East Hampton High School's "Renovate as New Project," which must be approved by the board in order for the building project application process to continue.

The education specifications addressed New England Association of School and Colleges' requirements for EHHS to receive re-accreditation.

* * *

Also at Monday's meeting, the board honored and celebrated the careers of five retiring teachers and administrator Karen Fitzsimmons, who is resigning as principal of Memorial Elementary School and becoming principal of Louise Duffy Elementary School in West Hartford.

Winzler and Laraia presented each retiree with "a token on behalf of the Board of Education for [their] years of service," Winzler said.

* * *

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, June 24, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

Marlborough Residents to Petition for Start of World Language Program

by Melissa Roberto

A group of Marlborough residents passionate about early foreign language learning have established themselves a name and one common goal: to petition for a world foreign language program at Marlborough Elementary School to be brought back into the school day curriculum sooner rather than later.

Members of the "Action Group of Marlborough" – or AGM for short – say they are in full support of seeing a program be brought back to the elementary school "as soon as possible."

The group is made up of at least 15 residents, though members say they've got a good amount of supporters behind them as well. The members include MES parents, residents who have no children at the school, and even a few educators themselves, including one who specifically teaches foreign languages.

The formation of AGM was triggered by frustration that stemmed from an event that occurred last year when the Board of Education was developing the current fiscal year's budget: the elimination of the former Spanish program at MES. Over the last year, the school board researched alternatives for providing an after school program in the interim phase before a program is brought back, and recently approved a feasibility study of a world language program, which is currently being conducted by MES administration, with a timeline that ends in October – when the administration's findings will be reported back to the school board.

Meanwhile, members of AGM and other Marlborough residents attended the Board of Education meetings voicing their support of bringing a program back. But AGM – which has grown since small grassroots groups gathered in Marlborough living rooms throughout

the winter – has an agenda for October as well: to head to the board with a petition to bring a program back in a cost effective manner along with a list of signatures from Marlborough residents who are in support.

Specifically, AGM's goal is to show just how many people in the community are in support of bringing a world language program back. Of course, Christie Moraga, one of the members, said that the goal is to reinstate a "high-quality program during the school day."

But members also mentioned what they plan *not* to do. Resident Lisa Seethaler said that the group "will not deem ourselves experts to tell the board what we want." Instead, Seethaler said the petition would prove that other residents in town who do not regularly attend the Board of Education meetings also view a new program as "a value to the town."

And a value to the town is exactly what AGM members agreed a high-quality program would be.

"What our children need, what our school needs and what the town needs to make us competitive," said resident Theresa Brysgel of a new program.

Another AGM member, Wes Skorski, added that a program would "greatly" increase property values in town.

Another point stressed by members was that they are not against the Board of Education. In fact, resident Dave Porteous explained that the group "100 percent" supports the feasibility study that the board approved.

However, the point of the petition is the timing – what caused all of the frustration in the first place, members explained.

"We just wish it had happened earlier,"

Brysgel said of the feasibility study.

But the group is in hopes that their petition will jumpstart a program that's been absent from the school for over a year.

Members of the group said their concerns grew over the last year when their constant requests of researching a program continued to go unaddressed. Residents recalled that the board had not placed a discussion of a foreign language program on its agenda after their persistent requests, and added that although few members vied for a discussion on it, a majority of members constantly voted down the discussion.

"We felt we weren't being heard," said Brysgel.

Group members also explained that they believe the petition would be able to show that the lack of a foreign language program at the school "is not just a parent issue." The group said it has already received support from about 10 local business owners and individuals who don't even have kids in the school system at all.

"We understand we don't have legal standing," Porteous added, "but we do have moral standing."

The group hopes to receive signatures over the next few months before delivering it to the board in an October meeting. The group's mission is to hopefully progress the action of reinstating a program once the study is complete.

Members acknowledged how pleased they were with the MES administration thus far. They explained that they understood the administration team has already been in talks with others to explore what is needed to bring a program back.

"We support them," Moraga said.

Moraga – a French and Spanish teacher in Farmington, who also once worked at MES teaching Spanish – said she's "personally invested" in an MES world language program because she's had the pleasure of witnessing the former program first-hand. She pointed out that the key word to use when discussing a future program is "early," as she believes it should begin in kindergarten, and even preschool if possible.

Now that their name is established and their motivation is in full force, up next on the group members' agenda is to gather support from the community and raise awareness about the importance of a future program. While they do not plan to deter the MES administration's current study, members said they hope to receive a long list of signatures in the next few months.

"Let's start at hundreds and go from there," Porteous said to the others at a gathering of the group Tuesday night.

AGM is also currently in the process of developing its own website that will be launched in the near future. It would contain information about early foreign language learning, supported by research and evidence from national organizations like American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) and National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) as well as statewide organization, the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (CT COLT).

As the group plans to hit the ground running looking for support, they welcome anyone to contact them by email at info@actiongroupmarlborough.com.

Highest-Ranking Portland Highlanders Are Moving On

by Elizabeth Bowling

Portland High School's graduating class is driven by support, not competition, according to this year's valedictorian and salutatorian.

Valedictorian Adam Harris will remain in Connecticut and attend Yale University next year where he will major in chemistry while salutatorian Alexa Decina will attend Duke University in North Carolina and major in finance.

Harris said the lack of competition between the two has made their high school academic achievements possible. Without the mutual support, it would have been more difficult to excel in their classes, Decina said.

"We made it fun – as fun as we could," Decina said.

PHS principal Andrea Lavery described Harris and Decina as remarkable, modest and dedicated students. "They always challenge themselves," Lavery said. "We're going to miss them a lot."

Both high-achievers thanked their parents for supporting them. "We both grew up in households where we were expected to work hard," Decina said.

Decina wants to work on Wall Street someday and experience the fast pace of New York City, which she hopes will be a stark contrast from Portland.

Harris said he wants to go to medical school after he earns his undergraduate degree in chemistry. He said his biology and American studies

teacher, Patricia Ponko, who is retiring after this school year, solidified his interest in medicine and biology.

"She really shaped my ideas of what I was going to do in the future," Harris said of Ponko, his favorite teacher.

Ponko said it wasn't hard to focus Harris' interest in the sciences because he had a clear passion to go into the medical field.

"He came in his freshman year with a natural curiosity," she said. "I'm at the end of my career, and Adam is one of those students you get only once or twice a career. He's extremely focused and dedicated to his studies."

Harris and Decina both listed advanced placement chemistry, taught by Joanne Merola, as their favorite class at PHS. Merola said it was a privilege to teach both students. She described Decina as "highly motivated, high achieving and a wonderful role model" for other students in the small school.

And despite the small size of their advanced classes, which consisted of the same 10 to 20 students and made an already-tiny graduating class of 83 students feel even smaller, Decina said, the two graduates said they are going to miss this town.

Harris said he's going to miss Portland's small community, where everyone knows each other. His graduation speech will explore the pros and cons of growing up in a small town, but will "definitely focus on the pros."

"I'm excited to meet a lot more people. I'm

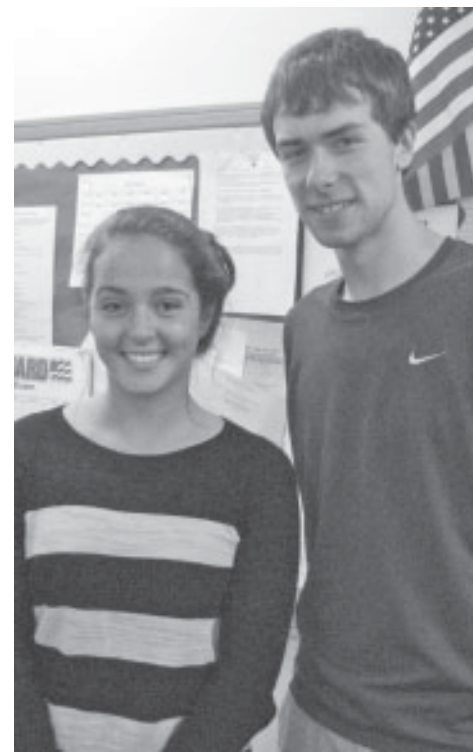
happy to be leaving. It's bittersweet, but more sweet," Decina said, adding she hasn't written her graduation speech yet. "[Portland's] been a great place to grow up but I think we're all ready to meet new people."

But extracurricular activities created some variety in the past four years. Harris played tennis and ran track and cross-country. He is an Eagle Scout, a volunteer emergency medical technician in Newington and the drum major, or conductor, of the PHS marching band. Harris was also the vice president of his class, a title he held all four years of high school.

Decina played softball, ran cross-country and was the president of the National Honors Society. Decina was recently named a scholar athlete in softball and Harris in the track program, Lavery said.

Both will have an opportunity to branch out further this summer; Harris is working in upstate New York at a recreation job at Mohonk Mountain House and Decina is going to Ireland with her family before she goes on a weeklong program at the Outer Banks that will allow her to participate in activities like sailing, kayaking and camping. She plans to travel in college, too, through a program offered by Duke called DukeEngage.

The Portland High School Class of 2013 will graduate on Tuesday, June 18 at 6 p.m. at Portland High School, 95 High St.



Portland High School valedictorian Adam Harris, right, and salutatorian Alexa Decina are friends, not rivals. Harris will attend Yale and major in chemistry next year and Decina will attend Duke and major in finance. Both will speak at graduation Tuesday.

Portland Main Street Improvements Go to Public Hearing

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday scheduled a public hearing on improvements to the Brownstone Intermediate School and the Village District Park on Main Street for next Wednesday, June 19, at 7:20 p.m., at Portland Public Library.

The two-part public hearing will address the resolution to move forward with the project and to have a special appropriation of \$150,000 to complete all aspects of the project.

After the hearing next week, the board will have its regularly scheduled meeting and consider adoption of the project.

Paul Bengston, director of Buildings and Grounds for the Board of Education, said this project calls for repaving the entire parking lot

at Brownstone School, rebuilding two catch basins, replacing the curbing, painting lines on the new pavement and improving signage.

"They're going to basically pulverize everything and then they'll use that material as a base. Then they'll roll it, compact it, grate it," Bengston said of the construction process.

Bengston said if the project is approved within the next couple of weeks it should be completed by the end of the summer.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield wants to "get the best bang that we can for the dollar."

"We feel that now is a good time to try to get this done," she said. "The prices of asphalt this

season is a lot better than it had been."

The other aspect of the project is to improve the recreational facilities at the Main Street Park, for example add a regulation-sized basketball court.

Portland resident and father Eric Peterson said, "Basketball in this town has become so huge. Outside of the gym there's no place for [kids] to go that's a safe environment."

"We're excited that we're having this discussion," Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman Ralph Zampano said. "This is an opportunity to extend some of the programs we already have."

New outdoor basketball courts will bring

opportunities for fall and spring basketball programs, adult basketball leagues and off-season training for the high school teams, he said.

But selectman Carl Chudzick said he wants to see a better-defined plan, specifically in terms of where the basketball courts and other recreational areas will be and what they will look like.

Board member Ryan Curley said, "I have a soft spot in my heart for Main Street and anything that can improve it."

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held next Wednesday, June 19, following the public hearing, at Portland Library.

Gay City Remains Closed to Swimming

by Geeta Schrayter

As of press time Thursday, Gay City State Park remains closed to swimming, due to an excess of indicator bacteria in the water.

The park has been closed for swimming since Memorial Day weekend, when water samples tested by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection first showed the bacteria excess. According to DEEP, indicator bacteria aren't disease-causing pathogens, "but are one of the tools used by public health and environmental protection authorities to evaluate the potential contamination of water bodies."

The water at state parks is tested by DEEP on a weekly basis from the week before Memorial Day through Labor Day, and Gay City is no exception. Heidi Fitzpatrick of the DEEP Eastern District Headquarters said Thursday the park continues to be tested, "but with all this rain it's probably going to be closed for a while."

Water quality is usually poor after rainfall, due to contaminants from run-off, according to DEEP.

However, while there's no swimming at Gay City, DEEP said "the public can still enjoy the trails and picnic areas at Gay City."

For information on the status of Gay City or any of the other state parks, visit ct.gov/deep/beachstatus or call 1-866-CTPARKS option no. 5.

Hebron Police News

6/3: State Police said Erin Pagano, 26, of 4 Summit Rd., Columbia, was leaving Ted's Supermarket at 127 Main St. when she pulled out in front of Patrick Sweeney, 27, of 389 Route 66, Columbia, who police said was unable to stop. Police said the Hebron Fire Department transported Pagano to Marlborough Clinic for evaluation due to being pregnant. Pagano was found at fault and later issued a stop sign violation.

6/9: State Police said James B. Lunt, 56, of 84 London Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

Marlborough Police News

6/7: State Police said a two-car crash occurred at the intersection of route 66 and Spaeth Road. Linda Gagnon, 62, of 71 Old Marlborough Rd., East Hampton, was traveling east on route 66 in the right lane when Margaret S. Ayer, 87, of 151 Pond Rd., Franklin, was executing a left turn from Spaeth Road and failed to grant the right of way when she struck Gagnon's vehicle. Police said Gagnon sustained minor injuries and was transported to the Marlborough Clinic by the Marlborough Fire Department. Police said Ayer was given a verbal warning for violation of failure to grant right way at an intersection.

6/7: State Police said Dustin Edson, 24, of 197 Wall St., Hebron, was charged with DUI, evading and traveling too fast for conditions.

Police News

5/27: Carly M. Loura, 20, of 229 Tartia Rd., was issued a summons for disobeying traffic control and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, East Hampton Police said.

5/29: Ralph Stone Jr., 56, of 15 Barbara Ave., was issued a summons for reckless driving, making unnecessary noise and creating a public disturbance, police said.

Also, on 6/1, Stone was arrested for third-degree intimidation and disorderly conduct, police said.

5/30: Matthew Gaudreau, 36, was charged with third-degree assault, police said.

5/30: Police officers were conducting a seat belt check point on Route 66 in the area of Childs Road when they observed a Green Dodge Durango traveling at a high rate of speed toward the line of vehicles stopped at the check point. The driver of the Durango then proceeded to pass the line of vehicles ignoring the officers' instructions. Police placed Katherine E. Measimer, 40, of 17 Whittier Rd., East Hampton under arrest for disobeying officers' signals and DUI.

6/1: Police responded to a report of a man charging at someone while swearing in the area of Barbara Avenue. Police placed Ralph Stone Jr., 56, of 15 Barbara Ave., under arrest for third-degree intimidation and disorderly conduct. Also, on 6/2, a resident reported to police that

a man driving a Hyundai Elantra had threatened to kill her. The resident provided police the last three letters of the license plate, which led to the arrest of Stone on charges of second-degree threatening.

6/2: Elson Canuto, 23, of 45 Ann St., Norwich, was pulled over by police after his vehicle was observed weaving within its own lane and then cross the double yellow center line. Police said they charged Canuto with DUI, failure to drive right and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana.

6/4: Paola Mastroianni, 30, of 46 West St., Cromwell, was issued a summons for misuse of a registration plate and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

6/5: Police responded to a report of a woman screaming for help and the sound of a horn honking at Nichols' Bus Service shortly after 1 a.m., and located two intoxicated adults on the property. Jessica Anne Way, 35, of 100 Young St., was placed under arrest for DUI, police said.

6/7: Police conducted a routine motor vehicle stop for a loud muffler. A computerized check of the driver, Aaron Freeman, 33, of 50 Old West High St., revealed there was an active PRAWN (Paperless Arrest Warrant) for his arrest. Police placed Freeman under arrest for failure to respond to an infraction.

Obituaries

Colchester

Barbara T. Young

Barbara T. Young, 45, of Colchester and formerly of Bozrah, passed away after a tragic accident Monday, May 27. Born May 14, 1968 in Norwich, she was the daughter of Hillary and Barbara (O’Laughlin) Young of Bozrah.

Barbara attended school in Bozrah and graduated from St. Bernard’s High School before attending business school in New London. She was a para-professional, working with Unique Learners at Bacon Academy in Colchester. Barbara was also a coach for Unified Sports with the Unique Learners.

Barbara will be remembered for her fun loving nature and most importantly for the care she gave to those in need of assistance.

In addition to her parents, survivors include two children, Kevin “KJ” Surratt and Jessica Surratt, both of Colchester; two brothers and their spouses, James and wife Renee Young of Bozrah, Hillary and wife Janet Young of Putnam; her former husband, Kevin Surratt of Lisbon; the Unique Learners at Bacon Academy and numerous extended family members and friends.

Family and friends are invited to attend calling hours Friday, June 14, from 3-6 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated on Saturday morning at 10 a.m. directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will follow in the Gardner-Buckley Cemetery in Bozrah.

Donations in her memory may be made to benefit her children’s education fund, c/o Dime Savings Bank, P.O. Box 293, Uncasville, CT 06382.

Barbara’s family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the countless members of the community who have reached out with love and care after the tragic loss of Barbara. Your gestures of kindness will never be forgotten.

Portland

Joanne Abbott Luppi

Joanne Abbott Luppi, 81, of Portland, wife of the late Stephen Richard Luppi, passed away peacefully at Hartford Hospital Saturday, June 8, with her daughters at her side. She was the daughter of the late A. Gordon and Aubine Abbott.

Joanne was born Jan. 8, 1932, in Willimantic, and later attended Eastern Connecticut State Teachers College. She married Steve on Feb. 20, 1954, and moved to Portland soon after. She taught at Portland Junior High School for many years, and enjoyed meeting her many former students around town. She led Girl Scout troops as her daughters were growing up, and served as town chairperson for years.

Her passions were many; she was a founding member of the Portland River Valley Garden Club 55 years ago, was active in the Saintpaulia Society and the Connecticut Horticultural Society, which recently awarded her the society’s service award. She was also active in many environmental organizations, such as the Mattabesack Audubon Society, the Inland Wetlands Commission, Clean Water Action and the Clean Energy Task Force.

She was never happier than with her hands in the soil of her garden, or the clay at Wesleyan Potters, where she served as the longtime chair of the education committee. Her other passion was birding; many may remember birding with her as Christmas Bird Count Captain, growing her life list and the “Puffin Patrol.” A consistent theme in her life was teaching; she took great joy in igniting the spark of learning, and was recognized in 1989 with the Rockfall Foundation Award, a Certificate of Honor for her role as an educator.

Throughout her life, Joanne nurtured deep friendships just as she did the flowers in her garden. Every summer, in between her many globetrotting adventures, she renewed her spirit at the family camp on Spednic Lake with her family and friends.

She is survived by her devoted daughters Faye Luppi of Poland Spring, Maine, Carol Luppi of Winthrop, Mass., and Cynthia Luppi of Winthrop, Mass.; her son-in-law Mark Hyland; her adored grandsons Ethan and Matthew Hyland; her brother and sister-in-law Robert and Lura Abbott of Idaho; her sister Pauline Abbott Florence of Voluntown; many nieces and nephews; and her “adopted” daughters.

Memorial contributions may be made to in her name to the Wesleyan Potters Education Committee, or the Connecticut Horticultural Society Scholarship Fund. The family will host an open house to celebrate her life at her home Saturday, June 15, from 1-5 p.m. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

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

Colchester

Rita D. Guard

Rita D. Guard, 90, of Colchester (formerly of Lisbon), passed away at Harrington Court in Colchester Friday, May 31. She was born in Norwich June 6, 1922 to the late Joseph and Mary (Kenyon) Blanchette.

She was married to Peter Lukasiewicz and then later to George G. Guard. They both predeceased her.

Rita is survived by a daughter, Patricia Nastalczyk and her husband Waclaw of Colchester, and a daughter Joyce Novajovsky and her husband Frank of Florida. She also leaves behind grandchildren Lawrence Fedus, Robin Wiodarczyk, Frank Novajovsky, Tammy Wachsmuth and Melanie Novajovsky as well as many great grandchildren, great great grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

She is predeceased by a son Gary Luccas, six brothers and five sisters.

Family and friends may visit Labenski Funeral Home, 107 Boswell Ave. on Saturday, June 22, from 9 a.m. until the time of the memorial service at 10 a.m. Burial will immediately follow at St. Joseph Cemetery in Norwich. The family requests that you wear bright colored clothing to the service in remembrance of Rita.

Visit labenskifuneralhome.com to leave an online condolence for Rita’s family.

Colchester

Paula Jean Lemire

Paula Jean Lemire, 63, of Colchester, beloved wife of Paul, passed away Tuesday, June 11, from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident. Born March 23, 1950, in Frenchville, Maine, she was a daughter of Omerine (Lavertue) Bourgoin of Colchester and the late Onizime Bourgoin.

She married Paul July 6, 1968. Soon after, the couple moved to Colchester where they raised their family.

Paula worked for Apple Rehab (formerly Liberty Hall) in Colchester since 1977. She served many roles and in many capacities. Most recently, she worked in public relations and community outreach for Apple Rehab.

Paula was a longtime member and she served on the Board of Directors for the Colchester Business Association. Paula also acted as committee chairperson for the annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest as well as other community event committees. Paula enjoyed volunteering. She was involved with the Colchester Senior Center and assisted many seniors with home visits and help. Just last month, Paula was inducted into the Colchester Lions Club.

While she was not serving the community-at-large, she could be found working in her beautiful flower gardens and caring for her beloved grandchildren, to whom she was eternally devoted. Paula will be remembered by many for the frequent random acts of kindness she was known to impart on family, friend or stranger.

In addition to her husband of 44 years, she leaves three children, Michelle and her husband Steven Budwitz of Avon, Michael Lemire and his friend, Brennda Stomberg of Lebanon, Rachael and her husband Keith Kudej of Lisbon; six brothers, Ronald of North Carolina, James and wife Elaine of New Hartford, John, Robert and wife Theresa of E. Hartford, Gary and wife Kathy of Newington, Marcel Bourgoin of East Hampton, two sisters, Joyce Miller of Cromwell, Toni Corby of South Carolina; four grandchildren, Peyton, Parker, Collin, Madison; numerous extended family members and friends and many dear and special friends at Apple Rehab.

Visitation will be from 1-4 p.m. Sunday, June 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated Monday, June 17, at 10:30 a.m., directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will be private.

Donations in her memory may be made to Apple Rehab, Recreation department, 36 Broadway, Colchester, CT 06415.

Marlborough

Erich John Aust

Erich John Aust, 72, of Marlborough passed away peacefully on Wednesday, June 5, after a final battle with cancer of which he was a five-year survivor. Born in Mallets Bay, Vt., on July 16, 1940, son of the late Rudolph and Alice Aust, he was predeceased almost a year ago by his loving wife of 45 years, Patricia H. Aust.

Erich graduated from Cranston High School in 1958 and was a regular high school reunion attendee. After high school he joined the United States Air Force and studied Chinese at Yale University and became an interpreter stationed overseas. He graduated from Central State University and pursued a career in computer programming. He ended up working for Aetna in Hartford for 30-plus years. He loved to golf and after he retired he maintained a membership in the Aetna Golf League until his death.

His final job was working for the State of Connecticut as an insurance examiner – a job where he made many, many new friends. After he retired he served on the AHM Youth Board and volunteered as the treasury secretary for the Marlborough Congregational Church and sang in the choir. Erich loved to garden. Plants from his yard will live on in his friends’ and family’s gardens all across the east coast.

Erich is survived by his beloved daughter Laura Aust-Olkin and son-in-law Mathew Olkin of Windham, his son Jay Aust, his sister Martha DiMezza, brother-in-laws Marco DiMezza of Cranston, R.I., Tom O’Rourke of Glastonbury, Fred Hinckley of Milford, Robert Hinckley of Woodbridge; sisters-in-law Nancy Aust of Plantsville, Cilla Carroll of Andover and Kathy Hinckley of Woodbridge, and his uncle Russell Thompson of Glastonbury.

Calling hours were Saturday, June 8, at the Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury. A memorial service was held Wednesday, June 12, at Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., Marlborough.

Contributions can be made to the AHM Youth Services or the Marlborough Congregational Church.

To leave an online condolence, visit glastonburyfuneral.com.

Colchester

Gail W. Joslin

Gail W. Joslin, 64, of Colchester, passed away peacefully with her family by her side after a courageous battle with cancer Monday, June 10. Gail was born in Orono, Maine, on April 24, 1949, and was the oldest child of Nora Thompson and Dr. George K. Wadlin.

Gail earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of Connecticut and a master’s degree from Hartford Seminary. Gail was instilled with her mother’s passion to help others and was a life-long advocate for young children and families. Gail’s teaching career began at the Colchester Co-Op Nursery School in 1971, followed by opening her own in-home preschool, The Learning Tree. Over the years, she continued to positively impact children and adults through her work at Hebron Center Nursery School, the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, the ACCESS Agency, Wheeler Clinic, and most recently as the Assistant Director at the Women’s League Child Development Center in Hartford.

Gail’s volunteerism was unmatched and she gave countless hours of her time to the community and to the Colchester Federated Church, where she was a parishioner for over 40 years, as well as a deaconess and an active member of numerous groups and committees. Gail’s many interests include: collecting sea glass along the Maine shore, making wreaths, decorating her home, gardening, travel, and she loved to read.

Gail was married to her loving husband David Joslin for 42 years and raised three wonderful children who cherish her memory and will miss her greatly: Erik Joslin and his wife Cheryl Joslin of Warren, Vt.; Gregg Joslin and his wife Heather Joslin of Stamford and Rebecca (Joslin) Rondeau and her husband Andy Rondeau of Putnam. Gail is survived by the lights of her life, her five wonderful grandchildren: Mercedes Joslin, Halle Joslin, Eva Joslin, Zak Joslin and Cam Joslin. She is survived by her younger siblings, George Wadlin and wife, Jill, of Philadelphia, Pa., and Lela Wadlin and her husband, Roger of Monroe, Mich.

A memorial service will be held today, June 14, at 2 p.m. at the Colchester Federated Church in Colchester, followed by a time of fellowship.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Women’s League Child Development Center of Hartford and/or the Colchester Federated Church.

Visit Gail’s “Book of Memories” at vincentfuneralhome.com for online condolences.

Cobalt

Diane Grimaldi Donahue

Diane Grimaldi Donahue, 61, of Cobalt, entered into eternal rest Thursday, June 6, after a courageous battle with ALS. She was the cherished wife of 41 years of Daniel F. Donahue and devoted and proud mother of Allison Diane Donahue of Bologna, Italy.

Diane was a very special person who provided inspiration to many by her incredible strength, resolution and devotion to her faith. Diane was a graduate of Middletown High School, Class of 1969 and the Vinal Regional Technical School/Middlesex Hospital LPN Program. She worked for many years in the office of Thomas P. Lambe, MD as well as Dr. Dominick Cerritelli’s office, both in Middletown.

Diane was a communicant of St. Francis Church and had been a Eucharistic minister and pre-marriage counselor for a number of years. Diane also served as a member of the St. John’s School Board while Allison was a student there. Diane was very talented and enjoyed doll making, sewing, creating stuffed animals and various other crafts for her family and friends. In the last two years, Diane became the family resource for training on the use and enjoyment of “The Kindle.”

For many years family holiday events were held in her home and everyone anticipated and enjoyed her cooking and baking, especially her famous “Easter Bunny Cake” and her cheesecakes. Diane loved to travel and enjoyed several trips to Ireland, Italy, Germany, Spain and the Bahamas with Dan and Allison.

Besides Daniel and Allison, Diane leaves her parents, Vincent and Angelina (Fazzino) Grimaldi of Cobalt, her sisters, Joanne Brown and her husband Joseph of Rocky Hill, Jane Behm and her husband Jerry of Middletown, and Susan Behm her husband Gary of Middletown, and many nieces, nephews and cousins. Diane had a special place in her heart for animals and she also leaves her two best dogs, Rocco and Zoe.

Dan and Allison want to acknowledge Diane’s love and gratitude to her best friends Catherine Daley (sister-in-law) and Jane Behm (sister) for their many acts of love and kindness throughout the years. Also very special thanks to Dr. Kevin Felice and his staff on the Neuromuscular Team at the Hospital for Special Care in New Britain.

Her funeral liturgy was held Wednesday, June 12, at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 10 Elm St., Middletown. Burial is at the convenience of her family. Calling hours were Tuesday, June 11, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown.

To honor Diane’s memory, donations in her name may be made to: The Hospital for Special Care, Neuromuscular Team ALSA, 2150 Corbin Ave., New Britain, CT 06053 or Mercy High School, 1740 Randolph Rd., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Colchester

Archie W. Miraldes

Archie W. Miraldes, 83, living most of his life in Rhode Island and Connecticut, and a resident of Marlow, Ala., passed away Friday, June 7. Archie retired from United Technologies in Connecticut after 33 years as a welding inspector. He was also employed for 13 years at the Nix Center in Fairhope, Ala.

He was a Korean veteran and a member of VFW Post 6990 in Colchester and the American Legion Post 99 in Foley, Ala. He was a member of the Scottish Rite Degree team and President of Knights of Saint Andrew in Mobile, Ala. Archie is a Past Master of Wooster Lodge 10 A&FM and a member of Greeno Lodge 598 A&FM in Fairhope, Ala. Archie was a volunteer at Weeks Bay, and ran the Bingo at the Nix Center; he was a docent at the Swift Coles house in Bon Secour and spread cheer with the Special Friends Class at the First Baptist Church of Fairhope, the Escapees Camping Club and the Gulf Posse. He is preceded in death by his brother, Harrison Miraldes.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Beatrice Maxine Miraldes; a son, Ted (Fran) Miraldes; daughter, Linda (Bob) Cox; grandson, Ted (Katie) Miraldes Jr.; three granddaughters, Victoria Cox, Rebecca Cox and Sarah Miraldes; four great grandchildren, Jorja, Michael, Molly and Aiden; a niece and nephew, and several cousins.

A memorial service was held at the Rainbow Plantation Club House, Route 28 in Marlow, Ala., on Thursday, June 13.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the First Baptist Church of Fairhope in memory of Archie Miraldes.

Portland

Nancy B. Richards

Nancy B. Richards, 58 of Middletown, wife of the late Philip Richards, passed away Monday, June 10, at Wadsworth Glen. She was the daughter of the late Theodore J. and Dorothy (Mount) Bougor. Born on Feb. 1, 1955, in Middletown, she was raised in Portland and has lived in Middletown for the last 20 years. She worked at CVH for 23 years and she also enjoyed reading.

She leaves her brothers, Theodore Bougor of Mt. Juliet, Ten., and Randy Bougor and his wife, Debbie of Portland; sisters, Holly Guglielmi and her husband, Tony of Wethersfield and Shirley Bougor and her significant other, John Jurko of Portland; a grandson, Christian Richards, and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a son, Philip Walton Richards Jr.

Funeral services will be held today, June 14, at 11 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be private. Relatives and friends may call today from 10 a.m. until the service.

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

Portland

Angelo R. Scrivo

Angelo R. Scrivo, 88, of Harwich, Mass., and formerly of Middletown, died unexpectedly Wednesday, June 5, at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis. Born in Portland, he was the son of the late Domenic and Josephine (Barillari) Scrivo.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Patricia (Hutchings) and daughter, Cynthia Adra of Escondido, Calif., in addition to several nieces and nephews.

Besides, his parents, he was predeceased by a brother and sister. Angelo was a Veteran of World War II, serving overseas. Services will be private at the discretion of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the charity of one's choice.

Portland

Patricia O'Rourke

Patricia (Hussey) O'Rourke, 85, beloved wife of the late Patrick O'Rourke died peacefully at her son's home in Portland on Wednesday morning, June 12. Born March 24, 1928, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Edward S. and Della (Clancy) Hussey.

Pat grew up in West Hartford where she attended local schools. She married her husband Patrick in 1951 and the couple relocated to East Hartford and raised their family.

A longtime resident of East Hartford, Pat was a parishioner of St. Mary's Church. Upon the death of her husband in 1974, she earned her insurance license and worked as an agent for AAA for many years. In 1979, Pat faced the unexpected loss of her daughter Maureen; she was instrumental in caring for her grandchildren Sean and Shannon. Later on in her life she moved to South Windsor.

Pat's favorite pastime was shopping and gardening. She also enjoyed knitting, taking cruises around the Caribbean, weekend visits to Giants Neck Beach and vacations on Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard. A loving wife, mother and grandmother, Pat will always be remembered for her strength, courage, independence and dry sense of humor.

Pat is survived by her children: Margaret Morrell and her husband Charlie of Portland, Ann Marie O'Rourke and John Brennan III of South Glastonbury; John P. O'Rourke and his wife Patricia of Windsor, Michael D. O'Rourke and his wife Suzanne of Portland; her brother Edward Hussey and his wife Lillian of West Hartford; her sister Anita Hudak and her husband John of East Hartford; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren whom she cherished and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her beloved daughter Maureen Smith; her infant granddaughter and great-granddaughter and her special cousin Betty Hussey.

Her Mass of Christian Burial will be held Saturday, June 15, at 10 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, 15 Maplewood Ave., East Hartford. Everyone is asked to go directly to the church. Burial will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery, Burnside Ave., East Hartford.

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Stempien Funeral Home, 450 Broad St., Meriden. Family and friends are invited to pay their respects today, June 14, from 4-8 p.m., at the Stempien Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Mrs. O'Rourke may be made to the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress (CDSC), Team PRO, c/o the Stempien Funeral Home, 450 Broad St., Meriden, CT 06450.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit stempienfuneralhome.com.