

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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Last month, members of the adult choir from Church of the Holy Family in Hebron traveled to Italy with choir members from a church in Middlefield to perform at the Church of St. Ignatius, St. Peter's Basilica, and during the weekly general audience at the Vatican in Rome.

## Hebron Choir Members Sing in Rome

by Geeta Schrayter

Although they were sitting in the Douglas Library in Hebron Tuesday morning, the thoughts of three members of the adult choir from Church of the Holy Family were far away – in Italy.

Jeanne Bowlay, Judy Newton and Florence O'Sullivan were three of 13 choir members from Hebron who joined members from the St. Colman Church choir out of Middlefield for a trip to Italy June 20-27.

The trip, which was planned by Matthew Campisi, the music director at St. Colman, and organized through Peter's Way Tours ([petersway.com](http://petersway.com)), provided participants the opportunity to perform at the Church of St. Ignatius, during Mass at St. Peter's Basilica and the Papal Blessing in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican.

It was a journey that evoked words such as "incredible," "wonderful" and "awesome" from the women, who recalled the performances and all they'd seen.

The first performance took place Saturday, June 22. After spending the day visiting the Vatican Museums, the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Crypt, the group held a free, public concert at St. Ignatius. With the doors to the church wide open, the group performed a number of songs as people from the plaza came in to listen.

"There were no mics," said Newton, "but the sounds reverberated" throughout the church.

"It was incredible," Bowlay furthered.

"People gave a standing ovation," Newton said, and added with a laugh, "They were taking pictures – and these weren't our relatives!"

The next day the group headed back to St. Peter's Basilica where they performed during Mass at the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter.

"That was an experience," said Newton, who said when she wasn't singing she was admiring the architecture, like the large, swirling col-

umns and the sculpture created to enclose the wooden throne of St. Peter.

For O'Sullivan, a more intimate setting was the perk of singing during Mass.

"I enjoyed going back to sing at Mass because there were fewer people," she said. "We sang one very well-known Italian song ["La Nostra Offerta"] and surprised the director of music at the Vatican."

The choir was coached in that particular song "over and over and over" by Campisi, O'Sullivan explained, in order to ensure they pronounced the Italian vowel sounds just right – and that coaching apparently worked.

"We 'wowed' them," she stated, adding the maestro there asked for a copy of the arrangement, which had been done by Campisi. "They were very surprised and pleased."

"It's something the people of Rome know," furthered Bowlay. "People were singing along," including their tour guide and bus driver, Massimo.

But with the change in pope that took place in March, Newton explained the choir's performance during the Papal Blessing didn't go entirely as planned. When the choir first learned of the opportunity to attend, the current pope was Benedict XVI. But after he retired and Pope Francis stepped in, Newton said rumors spread that Francis didn't listen to performances during the Papal Audience as Benedict had done.

The rumors proved true, but that didn't keep the group from performing. While they were in the audience waiting for the pope's arrival, Newton said the group stood up and began to sing.

"People clapped and took pictures," she stated. "We sang for the people."

Newton said the amount of photos people took made her think they thought the group was a flash mob.

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## Colchester Resident Turns Professional Fighter

by Melissa Roberto

Colchester resident Rob Brown knows what it takes to achieve a goal – no matter what type of goal it is.

"Just work hard and commit yourself," he explained. "Don't listen to anyone else and do what makes you happy whether that's a sport, a career or anything else you want to do in life."

And that's exactly what the former Bacon Academy wrestler did to become a professional MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) fighter – an achievement he reached just last month.

MMA is a full contact sport that involves a variety of fighting styles and skills including grappling, striking, jiu jitsu, boxing, muay thai and more – skills that Brown often displays on the mat.

"It's surreal," he said when asked about his future professional debut. "It's something I've always wanted."

As a five-foot, 82-pound freshman, Brown joined the wrestling team at Bacon Academy – his first exposure to the sport. As a freshman who was smaller than most of his opponents in the lowest weight class there was, Brown recalled wrestling kids "more than 10 pounds" heavier than he was.

Then, Brown endured what he coined "the little kid syndrome," as he was often picked on for his small stature, he explained. However, his small frame didn't match up to the fight he had within him – both literally and figuratively.

"No matter what my size was, no matter what my weight was, or what people thought of me then, I just wanted to prove everybody wrong and prove something to myself."

Brown ended up becoming "one of the team's leaders," at Bacon Academy, his former coach and current head wrestling coach for Bacon,

Michael Voiland, said.

"Robbie has always been an intense competitor," he said. "He worked hard every day and he competed every match like it was his last match."

Brown served as captain of the school's wrestling team during his junior and senior year. He also racked up awards while wrestling for the school, like becoming a two-time Farmington Invitational champion and coming in third place in the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) tournament for the Class S and overall. He also broke the high school's record for the most wins of a wrestler in Bacon history – at 39 wins – during his junior year, though he said the record was shortly lived after his successors came along.

After graduating high school, Brown went on to pursue becoming an automotive techni-

cian at Universal Technical Institute (UTI) in Norwood, Mass. After one year, he transferred to the same school in Orlando, Fla., for a change of scenery. Brown spent five years in Orlando, where his passion for fighting, and other hobbies, blossomed. At UTI, he suddenly had a change of heart.

"The more I did it the more I realized that's not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life," he said of becoming an automotive technician.

Instead, a friend of his who happened to be a professional fighter invited him to train with the American Top Team, an MMA team. While in Orlando, Brown said his friends often joked that he was a "reckless kid," which in turn led to his current fighting name, "Reckless Rob Brown."

Additionally, Brown unexpectedly developed

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"It was very moving even though we didn't sing for the pope," she said, and added while they didn't sing for Francis, they did get a good look at him.

And seeing him in person was one of the things O'Sullivan said she enjoyed the most.

"[I enjoyed] seeing the pope live instead of on a TV," she said. "He just kissed so many young and older people."

"I loved [singing in the square]" stated Bowlay. "It was beautiful."

In addition to the performances, the women said they enjoyed some of the sights they got to see.

Newton and O'Sullivan mentioned a day trip they took to Assisi, while Bowlay commented on a tour she took of the Scavi, the tombs beneath St. Peter's.

Assisi allowed participants to see the countryside – a change from Rome, which O'Sullivan described as a typical city; "busy, crowded, hot, and uncomfortable" – along with some medieval towns that had features like a keep, arches and cobbled streets and Assisi, which is built on a mountaintop.

"It was nice to escape the crowds. Rome is teeming," said O'Sullivan, adding the trip to Assisi took on particular meaning, considering the current pope's namesake.

Visiting Assisi "was even more special because of the pope being Francis" – after St.

Francis of Assisi, she said.

For Bowlay, a good guide helped make her tour of the Scavi enjoyable.

"Our tour guide was an archeologist and truly loved her work," she said, explaining it was interesting to learn how different eras believed in death and their burial rituals as a result.

As far as what the three said they gained from the trip, O'Sullivan said she gained an appreciation of Christian history, while Newton said she gained an appreciation of a different culture and way of life.

For Bowlay, working with the choir from St. Colman's gave her an appreciation for how different choirs are organized and run.

"And we all grew [from the experience]," said Newton.

"I think it made us all improve as a choir," Bowlay added.

"We all changed in positive ways," said O'Sullivan.

The trip, she furthered, left her with the overall feeling of "wow – we're here, where there's so much history. People we hear about in church walked this way."

"It was the chance of a lifetime" said Newton, as they looked over the photographs they'd taken with a smile, and thought about the memories they made before uttering "arrivederci, Roma!" and returning to Hebron.



**Colchester resident Rob Brown, also known as "Reckless Rob Brown," has recently become a professional Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter. Brown learned his first skills in town while wrestling at Bacon Academy.**

**Fighter cont. from Front Page**

another interest while down south: cutting hair. After giving one of his friend's a hair cut for fun, he realized it was something he actually enjoyed doing. He began cutting hair for friends and acquaintances, which helped fill his pockets with some extra cash.

Three years ago, however, Brown moved back home to be with his family. Bringing his MMA training and hair-cutting skills back home with him, Brown has since pursued both interests. On Sept. 17, 2012, he passed the state of Connecticut cosmetology exam to become a professionally licensed barber. Just five days later, he won his first amateur MMA fight at Mohegan Sun Arena through the fighting organization, Reality Fighting. Then, he beat his opponent by a TKO, or technical knock out, in just 42 seconds of the first round.

"It was a really good week for me," he recalled of achieving the two milestones.

But things got even better for the young fighter after he won his second amateur fight at Mohegan Sun on June 8. Again, in the first round by a TKO, Reckless Rob Brown defeated his opponent in two minutes and six seconds. Following his win, his trainer and president of Reality Fighting and NAGA, the North American Grappling Association, Kipp Kollar, asked if he was ready for a professional MMA debut fight, which of course, Brown said, he excitedly accepted.

On Nov. 2, Brown will head to Mohegan Sun for his professional debut and while his dream has become a reality, he recalls all the hard work that helped him get there.

"It's one of those sports that depends upon what you put into it," he explained. "I'm committed to it and I work hard."

Though Brown said fighters are often associated with violent attitudes, the Bacon Academy 2005 class clown said he's far from it outside of the arena.

"I'm a nice guy," Brown said. "I'm actually pretty sensitive, too and I'm very caring."

Though Brown admitted he does a "mean mug" when in the arena, unlike what most people think, he doesn't get too hyped up before a match. While he does put in headphones in the locker room, ironically, there's no music playing.

"I block out other things and mentally prepare," he explained. "And I always visualize

myself winning no matter who my opponent is."

While the 25-year-old added that he knows extra pressure will come along with the professional title, he's "excited" and prepared for the increase in competition.

"I know I have the heart and I know I have the work ethic to fight some tough, tough kids but I need to prove that to other people in the area."

His trainer, Kollar, however, doesn't think he'll have too much difficulty facing the professional competition.

"When he first came into my gym I knew he was going to turn pro faster than a normal person who just wanted to fight," said Kollar. "He's got everything you need – the attitude, perseverance and discipline – to be successful, not just in this sport but in anything."

The trainer stressed that Brown's accomplishment is quite rare in the MMA world.

"The norm is at least five fights and he's only done two," he said. "But that's a compliment to him to go that early. I think he's going to do as great as a pro as he was as an amateur."

In addition to his fighting success, Brown has also been successful in his pursuit of becoming a barber. Four months ago, Brown was hired as a barber at Roosters Men's Grooming Center in Glastonbury, where he said he enjoys the "great clients and co-workers" in addition to its "awesome location."

"I just love cutting hair," he explained, adding that he hopes to open up his own barber shop one day.

When Brown's not cutting hair five days a week, however, he can be found training – now even harder.

And along with his new accomplishment, the hard worker is already hoping to pursue a new one: "to one day fight for a professional title in a popular fighting organization."

Brown added that while he's certainly put in the dedication, he's grateful for his friends, family, and supporters who have supported him throughout his journey.

Come Nov. 2, the fighter said Reckless Rob Brown will enter the arena "calm" and level headed" with something in mind:

"Win or lose, my career is not over," he said. "It's just beginning."

*From the Editor's Desk***Observations & Ruminations**

by Mike Thompson

A guilty pleasure of mine, when I fly, is to buy *Us Weekly* or a similar frothy, celebrity news-packed magazine. They're sort of like airplane comfort food for me. They're easy to flip through, contain sometimes-interesting, sometimes-stupid photos, and can be a nice little distraction.

That being said, I realize they tend to be empty calories (and they also contain a borderline-unhealthy obsession with all things Kardashian). I don't take them all that seriously – and had to laugh when I saw the covers of two competing magazines while at the Orlando airport recently (which, by the way, is absolutely huge).

*Us Weekly* plugged a story on its cover with the words "James Gandolfini – His Happy Final Days." Right next to it was an *In Touch* magazine, which also plugged on its cover a story about the late actor's unexpected recent passing. Only it used the words "James Gandolfini – His Tragic Final Days."

So were they happy or tragic?

I opted for *Us*. I was a big *Sopranos* fan, and was very sad to hear about Gandolfini's death at age 51. I'd like to think his final days were happy.

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The Mets played 16 innings Monday night, and won. It was a welcome change from when they played 15 innings and lost – which was just last Thursday.

Already this season, the Mets have played in a pair of 15-inning games, a 16-inning game and a 20-inning game. That ties a franchise record for most 15-or-more-inning games in a season – a record set way back in 1968. The season's only half over, so there's still plenty of time for them to get a few more marathons under their belt.

By the way, as someone who's more than once sat in the stands at Shea Sta-

dium or Citi Field for a marathon extra-inning game, I can tell you there's fun to be had at these things. The longer the game goes, the more absurd things to get, and you can't help but laugh.

If you're a fan of the Seventh-Inning Stretch, you're in particular luck. I don't know about other teams, but the Mets, in between the top and the bottom of the 14th inning, sends out Mr. Met and, just as was done in the seventh inning, America's best mascot then leads the crowd in a second rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." It's pretty fun – like I said, you just have to laugh at the ridiculousness of it all.

However, if you like to drink while you watch the game.....well, you might want to sip that Bud Light slowly. Citi Field, like most stadiums I've been to, has a strict policy of no alcohol served after the seventh inning. It's a sound policy, and I think it makes a lot of sense. (That, combined with the fact that beers cost at a minimum \$8.25 there, probably prevents a lot people from being completely plastered by the end of the game.) But once the 15th or 16th inning rolls around, you may be looking for another cold one....

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I saw a great bumper sticker in the supermarket parking lot the other day. Not exactly motivational – especially if, like me, you're not exactly a morning person – but it made me laugh:

"Don't forget, the early worm gets eaten."

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Lastly, here's a quick exchange from a very old episode of *Cheers* that, like so much of *Cheers*, not only still holds up but shows why its writing is far and away some of the best ever seen on a sitcom:

Frasier: "Diane, are you ready? It's time for *The Sorrow and the Pity*."

Sam: "Oh, so you two are going straight home to bed, huh?"

# Portland Fireworks Postponed Due to Fairground Flooding

by Elizabeth Bowling

Portland's 21st annual fireworks show, originally scheduled for Saturday, July 13, has been postponed indefinitely, after the rain-soaked Exchange Club Fairgrounds were ruled not suitable for the event earlier this week.

According to Sharon Hoy, a member of the Portland Fireworks Committee, the entire committee and town officials visited the Exchange Club Fairgrounds Monday afternoon, and deemed the land "just too wet."

The rain date hasn't been decided yet, but will most likely be on a Saturday in late August, Hoy said.

In 2011, after two separate rainouts, the town opted to just cancel that year's fireworks display altogether. But First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield is optimistic that this year's show will go on.

She said, "We believe we'll be able to hold it at a later date and we look forward to announcing that date very soon."

The new date will be announced within the next two weeks, Hoy said. But before that can happen, the committee and the town will need to coordinate with various other parties to ensure both safety and a good show. Those other parties include the town police, the fire department, the fire marshal, the field maintenance crew, Ocean State Pyrotechnics (the company that puts on the display) and Elm City Sanitation (the company that supplies the portable toilets).

"We are definitely going to reschedule as soon as we have the necessary people," Bransfield assured.

"We don't want to have to turn anybody away

from a great show," Hoy said.

But, according to Hoy, without adequate parking, the committee and the town had no choice but to postpone – one parking lot is actually under water, she said. The main concern is safety.

"We want to keep the public safe," she said. "We don't want any cars stuck in the water or ankles stuck in ruts."

But even though the show has been postponed, the raffle will be held as planned. Raffle winners will be drawn at 9 p.m. Saturday and need not be present to win because the committee will notify them.

The raffle features 12 prizes: first prize, Chartered Fishing Service; second prize, Sharp 42" LED TV; third prize, \$250 gift certificate at Angela's Fine Jewelry; fourth prize, green fees

for four at Quarry Ridge Golf Course; fifth prize, 50 gallons of fuel oil from Daniels Energy; sixth prize, four tickets to Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park; seventh prize, lobster dinner for four from Tri-Town Foods; eighth prize, \$50 gift certificate redeemable at The White Dog Cafe; ninth prize, gift basket from Bordonaro's Pharmacy; 10th prize, four tickets to 2013 Portland Agricultural Fair; 11th prize, \$30 gift certificate at Portland Restaurant; and 12th prize - T-Shirt from Main Street Cycle.

Tickets are \$5 each, and will be sold at Bordonaro's Pharmacy, Farrell's Restaurant, Bud's Cafe, TopDog and Tri-Town Foods only through today. If you're interested in purchasing last-minute tickets tomorrow, you can call Sharon Hoy at 860-342-3474 up until noon.

## Grocery Store in Marlborough's Future?

by Melissa Roberto

At its July 1 meeting, the Marlborough Conservation Commission was given a presentation from an applicant who wishes to construct a grocery store in town.

A representative from the applicant, Elliot Enterprises LLC & GSD LLC, who owns the property of the proposed location, stood before the commission to present the vision of constructing a grocery store – which has not specifically been named – within the plaza of the old Marlborough Tavern and current gift shop, The Taylor'd Touch, on East Hampton Road across from Dunkin' Donuts.

According to First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski who was present at the meeting, the applicant's idea is to construct "up to a 40,000-square-foot building" within the plaza.

Gaudinski said the applicant is pursuing approval for construction behind Taylor'd Touch, which is owned by Mark and Beverly Taylor.

Currently, Gaudinski said Elliot Enterprises is in the "initial stages" of pursuing the endeavor which first involves communication with the Conservation Commission to determine how

the store would impact the wetlands of the area.

Gaudinski said she feels the town is in need of a grocery store.

"I think it's a positive step," she explained. "The town certainly needs a grocery store and it would be very helpful in terms of economic growth in the town center."

The town used to have a grocery store located near Exit 13 in Marlborough in the mid-'80s but it burnt down and was never rebuilt, Gaudinski recalled. Since, Pat's Market, which was located in the same plaza as the proposal, was opened but closed down over a year ago, Gaudinski added.

To further discuss the proposal, a site walk of the property within the East Hampton Road plaza is scheduled for Saturday, July 13, at 9 a.m. for the Conservation Commission and Elliot representatives to discuss the impact of the wetlands. The site walk is also open to the public.

The commission has also scheduled a special meeting to further discuss the application for Thursday, July 18, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

## East Hampton Police News

6/23: Police observed a Honda Accord traveling west on Route 66 swerving back and forth over the white fog lines then accelerate to a speed over 80 miles per hour by the time he was able to catch up with vehicle. Police initiated a motor vehicle stop using their overhead lights and conducted standard field sobriety tests. Scott W. Harwood, 29, of 29 Bridge St., Haddam, was charged with DUI, failure to drive right and speeding.

## Colchester Police News

6/30: State Police said John Derosa, 23, of 119 Noah Ln., Tolland, was charged with evading, DUI, cell phone use while operating a motor vehicle and distracted driving.

7/1: Colchester Police said Kristopher Paul Kahle, 29, of 37 Davidson Rd., was charged with making an improper turn and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

7/3: Colchester Police said Robert Goldberg, 66, of 300 Lebanon Ave., Apt. 15, was charged with fourth-degree sexual assault, breach of peace and third-degree stalking.

7/3: State Police said Michael Manifold, 38, of 83 Madley Rd., Lebanon, was charged with violation of a protective order.

7/4: Colchester Police said Jennifer Heilweil,

## Marlborough Police News

7/1: State Police said Herminio Vasquez, 40, of 344 Park Ave., East Hartford, was charged with violation of a protective order.

7/6: State Police said Kevin M. Comeau, 25, of 89 Roberts Rd., was charged with DUI and stop sign violation.

# East Hampton Residents Weigh in on Agriculture Debate

by Elizabeth Bowling

Members of the public spoke out regarding the town's agricultural debate during Tuesday's Town Council meeting.

East Hampton resident Janice Meisterling said, "Roosters that crow all day long are horrible." She compared a crowing rooster to a barking dog and called the issue a "raging controversy."

"It should be considered the equivalent of a public nuisance," she said.

Resident Peter Bergan, the owner of East Hampton's Peaceful Hill Tree Farm, said, "My concern is with agri-tourism and people."

Bergan said he'd like to see the town provide more security. His interest in security arose after a different farm in town was robbed a couple of years ago.

"I don't know where this agriculture thing is supposed to go, but there's more to it than loud chickens," he said.

According to Town Council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub, nearly 45 percent of East Hampton's property is farmland and forestry.

"That's a lot to preserve and protect," she said.

That's why the Town Council voted unanimously in favor of creating a task force that will come up with ways to better communicate with both the general community and the agricultural community.

And with so many people buying and growing locally, Weintraub said, "farming is on the forefront right now."

Also on the forefront in East Hampton is the town's education system.

East Hampton's new Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas made her first appearance

at a Town Council meeting Tuesday.

"I'm looking forward to working...in the best interest of our children and our community," Dugas said.

After expressing her excitement in taking on the new position, she turned to Board of Education members Bill Marshall and Carol Lane to explain specific budget cuts for next year.

"The impact of the cuts was the elimination of three positions," Marshall said. Those three positions are an all-day kindergarten teacher, a full-time music teacher at the high school and a high school English teacher. Cutting those positions saved \$222,000.

Marshall said public response to the eliminated all-day kindergarten teacher position was "loud and strong" in support of all-day kindergarten for all children. Unfortunately, for next year, the Board of Education couldn't afford four all-day kindergarten teachers, so the board had to downsize to three. So children entering kindergarten had to enter a lottery. Those that were selected will attend all-day classes in the fall and those that were not selected will attend half-day classes.

Dugas reassured the council that she will put together a feasibility committee to come up with a plan to reintroduce all-day kindergarten for every child.

"It's clear...from the community reaction that this is required," Lane added.

"If we're eventually going to get to all-day kindergarten for everybody we have to start somewhere," Marshall said.

An additional \$50,000 was cut in the form of technology because the board found a loophole.

"We are using this year's surplus to buy technology for next year," Marshall said. "The technology is a high priority."

There were additional savings of about \$193,000 from teachers opting out of health insurance and other teachers retiring or resigning, which saved about \$56,500 because it allowed the board to hire new teachers at lower salaries. Restructuring the buildings and grounds staff created a \$41,000 savings and increased pension costs saved about \$3,000.

Lane quoted former-interim superintendent Mark Winzler, "The budget is a program, not numbers."

"Although we can't do all that we wish," she said, "the budget moves the school system forward."

The Sears Park concession stand is moving forward, too. Despite its cost of about \$2,000-\$4,000 to the town each year, it is open during the week from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the month of July, Maniscalco said. It will also be open during the week from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. from Aug. 1 to 16 depending on sales, according to a representative from the Parks and Recreation Department.

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Also at Tuesday's meeting, the council addressed a letter it received from former fire commissioner Richard Brown marked April 23, 2013, that requested that an independent third party be appointed to investigate a possible scandal involving the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department that culminated in the resignation of four commissioners.

In his letter, Brown addressed the possibility that three commissioners from the Volunteer

Fire Department illegally changed the department's software that calculates the department's awards program and considered to conceal those changes in February 2011. He accused Richard Dufour – one of the three commissioners in question – of insisting that former Commission Chairman David Simko was present at the meeting when the software changes took place, but Simko was actually in Florida at the time, the letter read.

In August 2012, three commissioners and the chairman resigned without explanation and Dufour has since taken over as chairman.

Brown has requested that the council investigate the tampered-with software and determine whether Simko was wrongly accused of inappropriate or illegal actions.

Maniscalco conducted an investigation following the suspicious resignations in 2012, but it was inconclusive.

Council member Kyle Dostaler said, "I think the town just needs to move on from this." He supported writing a letter on behalf of the town to address that the issue will be put to rest.

But council member George Pfaffenbach rejected that idea, and said the town shouldn't just "drop it" and should further investigate.

Council member Derek Johnson agreed and moved that Maniscalco retain a third-party professional to investigate the allegations that were set forth in the letter from Brown. The board voted unanimously in favor of Johnson's motion.

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The next regularly scheduled Town Council meeting will be Tuesday, July 23, at 6:30 p.m., at the East Hampton High School library.

# East Hampton Teacher-Turned-Principal Sees a Bright Future

by Elizabeth Bowling

An East Hampton resident with a hands-on style has taken over the role of principal at Memorial Elementary School – a place that is familiar to her not only because her own children attended school there, but because she was once a teacher there.

“I feel comfortable because I’ve been here before,” Mindy Wilkie said about her first week on the job. “I have a very strong connection to the town and to this particular school. It feels like a coming-home and I feel really...blessed, in a way, that I get to return here as the principal.”

Wilkie served as the reading and language arts team leader at Memorial from 1997-2002, and when she re-entered the building on Smith Street July 1, she said she felt right at home.

“This school has always had...a milk and cookies feel,” she said. “It’s just a very special place.”

Wilkie said teachers and administrators might go through a similar routine year after year, but she is focused on making the journey from pre-school to third grade “as dynamic and special” for the students as possible.

“I love being a part of the learning so you will see me joining in on the songs, reading with kids [and] encouraging writing,” she said.

Wilkie has lived in East Hampton for 23 years and has 24 years of experience in the field of education. It’s not surprising that she thinks longevity is a good sign. Indeed, she thinks the longevity of a principal’s reign is a sign of a good school system.

As principal, Wilkie will be in charge of about 100 staff. She said she’s also looking forward to working with the Parent Teacher Organization and connecting with the rest of the community, too.

“In a time when there’s really heightened awareness on security and education is changing, it’s still important for the school to be the home away from home for kids, and for fami-

lies to feel welcome here,” she said about plans to enhance the school’s level of comfort.

“It’s a wonderful time for the...whole administrative team,” she said regarding new hires including Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas and a new assistant superintendent who has not yet been chosen.

Wilkie said professional learning communities are very important to Dugas, and she intends to enhance former schools superintendent Judith Golden’s work that established a good foundation for teachers to collaborate and plan curricula.

“I’m really excited to get into the curriculum piece of it,” Wilkie said. “It’s a wonderful time in education with the Common Core, [the national curriculum standards that Connecticut adopted in 2010 and will fully-implement for the first time this coming school year], so teaching and learning is really alive.”

One aspect of the curriculum she’s really excited about is technology.

“Technology is a not a standalone part of the curriculum. Technology needs to be embedded into all curriculum,” she said regarding integrating technology at the elementary school level, rather than waiting until middle school and high school to include it.

Prior to entering the field of education, Wilkie earned a degree in recreational therapy. She worked as a child life specialist at New Britain Hospital for three years. When children were hospitalized, she offered fun ways for them to stay active and work toward recovery. After that, she dabbled in psychology and then went back to school to earn her teaching degree. She said she feels like she was meant to work with children.

Wilkie started her teaching career in 1989 in Norwich where she was a reading and first grade teacher for six years. After that, she came to Memorial Elementary School for her first bout, where she was a reading and language



**Mindy Wilkie, pictured above, officially became the principal of Memorial Elementary School July 1. She hopes to hold the title for years to come and help her school improve over time.**

arts consultant for four years.

After teaching at Memorial, she worked as an educational consultant at the state Department of Education. She consulted on a grant that reached out to 15 urban towns, but was “drawn back to working in a school with kids” so she went to Charles Wright Elementary School in Wethersfield where she worked as a reading and language arts consultant in the kindergarten center. She then became the district’s literacy supervisor. But when that position was eliminated due to budget cuts, she became principal of the K–6 school. She stayed at the school for 10 years and left to take her current

position as principal of Memorial, a pre-K-3 school.

Now with her first two weeks under her belt, Wilkie has moved into her office, gone through some files, met with the assistant principal and secretary, and updated the school’s website.

But Wilkie and the rest of the summer’s “skeleton crew” have more work to do before students return to school Aug. 29. Wilkie said she’ll be finding a balance between working with the administrative staff and getting to know the students and teachers.

Wilkie said she’ll use her leadership role “to really bring the school to the next level.”

# New Superintendent ‘Hits the Ground Running’ in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton’s new superintendent of schools, Diane Dugas, had a “fabulous” first week, which consisted of touring the town and meeting the townspeople and town representatives.

“It was really wonderful to start to get to know the community,” Dugas said. “Parents and community members value the importance of education.”

The Suffield resident left her position as Director of Curriculum in Granby – where she worked for three years – to take on her new role in East Hampton.

Dugas started her career as a special education teacher, servicing socially and emotionally disturbed children in Suffield and West Hartford for eight years. Since then she served as elementary school principal in both Manchester and New Britain for a total of 10 years.

Dugas said when she first started her career she “never dreamed” she would become a superintendent. But she continued to work her way up the school administration ladder and served in a central office position in curriculum in East Windsor and was also assistant superintendent for one year in Regional School District Four, which consists of Chester, Deep River and Essex.

“My goal has always been to make a difference in the lives of children,” she said, and now that she’s superintendent she will have her greatest opportunity yet to make an impact.

“I’ve always been drawn to leadership posi-

tions and...finding ways to guide the betterment of children,” she said. “Through that, it’s really taken me to the next level of work, to where I am today where I think I can impact the system.”

Despite Dugas’ current three-year contract – at \$162,000 a year – she hopes to hold her new position longer because “longevity creates sustainable change,” she said.

She said the East Hampton school system was the “perfect match” for her, and visa versa, because she has the same vision, mission and values for East Hampton public schools.

“I think that East Hampton is a wonderful place to be,” Dugas said. “I think together we can continue to grow East Hampton into an excellent, world-class system.”

Dugas is eager to listen to and work with teachers, administrators and the community.

“In this time of change in education, there are many initiatives in education,” she said. “But I think the one constant is...developing relationships and guiding change through significant feedback so I’m most excited about working and collaborating with the community, the administrators and the teachers.”

Dugas said she plans to use that “significant feedback” to learn about what’s working so that she can try to enhance those things and move the district forward.

In addition to enhancing what is already going right, Dugas thinks changes, like the high school building project and advancements in technology, will also move the district into the 21st century.

“I feel very fortunate to be able to build a team to move...the district forward,” Dugas said. One of the first steps to building that team is finding an assistant superintendent.

“We’re in the process of interviewing for the assistant superintendent position,” Dugas affirmed.

The interviews were scheduled to begin this past week and hopefully the position will be filled by mid-August, she said.

Despite the fact that Dugas has only held the position of superintendent officially for two weeks, she ran the search committee for Memorial Elementary School’s new principal, Mindy Wilkie, prior to taking on the role.

“I’m ready and have hit the ground running,” Dugas said.

She said interim superintendent Mark Winzler did a “wonderful job” of keeping the system moving and not skipping a beat in former superintendent Judith Golden’s retirement. She said Winzler was successful in advancing communication and transparency to ensure that the budget and building project passed.

With changes underway, Dugas said, “I’m really looking forward to being a part of the community and being involved in East Hampton.”

One way she’s getting involved is by marching in this weekend’s Old Home Days parade. Dugas said she is excited to take part in the town’s favorite tradition and to kick off her role as superintendent.



**Diane Dugas took over the role of East Hampton’s superintendent of schools July 1. She says she’s excited to make a difference in the lives of children and work with the community for years to come.**

## Still No ID on Possible Human Remains in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton Police found what they believed to be human remains on the banks of the Connecticut River near the East Hampton portion of the St. Clements Castle property in East Hampton last Tuesday, July 2.

They have since turned the case over to the State Police Eastern District Major Crime Squad, according to Captain Tom Garbedian.

The suspected human remains were transported to the Chief Medical Examiner’s Office last Tuesday but the DNA has not yet been identified, Garbedian said yesterday.

“It is an ongoing case,” he said.

In the meantime, state police are looking at missing person cases from Connecticut and Massachusetts, Garbedian said.

# Clean Energy Task Force Looks to Bring Change to East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton has established its first formal clean energy task force, comprised of five ambitious members with administrative, engineering and contracting backgrounds.

The town had a clean energy task force that met sporadically since 2008, but it hadn't met since 2011. A new, more formal force was put together in June – and is hoping to become a force to be reckoned with.

According to Town Manager Mike Maniscalco, the previous and informal task force simply stopped meeting. But a recent interest in clean energy drove the town to create a new task force that is chaired by John Greeno and consists of members Adam Dawidowicz, Bob Ferris, Peter Daddario and Javette Allen.

Greeno, an East Hampton resident for 23 years, said he wanted to help bring clean energy to his town. He's the owner of New England Conservation Services so he works in the field of energy conservation and has worked with other towns. "It kind of made sense that I work with my own town," he said.

Dawidowicz, a construction inspector and construction consultant, said, "The clean energy task force seemed to be a natural fit for me."

He said he was a wide web of knowledge from both a construction and administrative standpoint and in both the commercial and residential market thanks to his job.

"East Hampton can be a model community for a lot of surrounding communities," he said.

For Ferris, the facilities maintenance manager at St. Francis Hospital, saving energy is "the name of the game." He's lived in East Hampton for over 20 years and joined to task force to better the town and help it save money

on energy.

Daddario has been involved in clean energy for years, too. For the past 13 years he's worked as a Building Automation Engineer, a job that requires conserving energy in a building by automating its main energy wasters like heat, air conditioning, lighting, water, etc.

Daddario has two children and one just graduated from East Hampton High School, a building that will soon undergo serious renovation. Daddario said that building, as well as other educational incentives will be his top priorities as a task force member.

He hopes to implement change in East Hampton in the form of clean energy, and he hopes to have it "for our children's children."

Allen is the assistant principal at Vinal Technical High School in Middletown, so she also has a vested interest in educational incentives.

Thanks to everyone's varying priorities and experiences, the task force plans to tackle a lot of issues, starting with a clean energy installation program called C-PACE.

The group held its second meeting last Tuesday, July 2. Greeno called the meeting to order and the group got right to business discussing C-PACE, a state-funded program that is "a way to finance clean energy," Dawidowicz explained, "and instead of having to provide money up front... it's like a property tax. It's collected by the town."

According to its website, C-PACE, which stands for Commercial and Industrial Property Assessed Clean Energy, is administered by the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority, or CEFIA, as part of the state's Energize Connecticut initiative, which helps ratepayers lower costs and use clean energy.

A representative from C-PACE, Genevieve Sherman, said almost 50 towns in Connecticut have already adopted the program, including Middletown and East Haddam.

"This is really a program for commercial buildings," she said, emphasizing that it's not only beneficial in terms of clean energy, but also financially.

"The idea of this program is to completely make buildings as energy efficient as possible," Maniscalco said.

Maniscalco further explained the C-PACE process this week. He said when a project is implemented on a building, the building's property owner is given a special assessment on the property tax bill and can then pay for the improvements over time through a property tax.

"The idea is that people more readily pay their taxes than other finances," he said.

The town is not responsible for paying for a building's energy improvements through C-PACE. Rather, the building that is receiving the improvements is required to pay for the improvements over time. And if the property is sold before the repayments are completed, the repayment obligation becomes that of the next property owner.

Some of C-PACE's typical improvements, according to its website, include high efficiency lighting, heating ventilation air conditioning upgrades, high efficiency chillers, boilers, furnaces, water heating systems and renewable energy systems like solar and fuel cells.

According to Maniscalco, there are 20 buildings in East Hampton that are eligible for C-PACE and one undisclosed business building is already looking into the program.

"I'm certainly very interested in this," Greeno

said before suggesting that the town benchmark the buildings that would be the best candidates for the program.

Dawidowicz matched Greeno's enthusiasm. "I can't find any reason that we shouldn't adopt it," he said. He suggested it might be a program that Bevin Bells would like to consider as they continue to rebuild.

East Hampton would automatically receive \$500 for adopting C-PACE for its administrative task in the C-PACE process, Maniscalco said. To be sure that the "administrative task," which would be designated to the tax collector's office, wouldn't be too demanding, Maniscalco got the opinion of the town attorney who "didn't feel it was a huge liability to the town."

The task force decided to recommend that the Town Council move forward with the adoption of C-PACE.

Also at last Tuesday's meeting, the task force, still getting its feet wet, set up a list of goals that included applying clean energy to street lights, promoting clean energy around town, setting up educational incentives and planning to work with the high school building committee.

The task force is also planning on hosting clean energy presentations at upcoming meetings. The public is welcome to attend and learn about organizations like Energize Connecticut and the Connecticut Clean Energy Communities program. Greeno said there will also be a workshop on geothermal heating and cooling.

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The next regularly scheduled clean energy task force meeting is Tuesday, Aug. 6, at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall meeting room.

## Festival Planned for Hebron Musician's Family

by Geeta Schrayter

When the community lost Hebron resident Grayson Minney May 11 in a fatal car accident, they lost a son, brother, uncle, fiancé, friend, musician and someone described among other things as passionate, kind and humble.

He was also hard-working.

This week John O'Leary, who manages area bands and had known Minney for about five years, explained Minney had been working extra hours at the Wood-N-Tap restaurant in Vernon in an attempt to help his family.

"His mother was in a pretty serious accident a couple of years ago," said O'Leary.

As a result of her accident, Minney's father took time off work to care for her. The medical bills piled up and the family became delinquent on their mortgage. Minney was attempting to help the situation, determined his family not lose the house he had grown up in.

"The house is currently in foreclosure," said O'Leary. "So then, of course, this [Minney's death] happened, and it all comes out."

And now, those who knew Minney and his efforts to help his parents are stepping in to continue his mission with a music festival Saturday, July 20.

O'Leary said the idea for the festival came not long after Minney passed away. Minney was the lead singer in the band Columbia Fields, and the idea was the brainchild of one of the band's former managers, Joe Lee.

"It all came about because obviously Grayson was big into music," Lee said Thursday. "And he was known all over the state because of his band and he loved festivals, so I said 'why not do a festival to raise money for his family?'"

Lee contacted O'Leary, Columbia Fields' keyboardist Eric Heath; fellow band manager Laura Cretella; and Alan Veniscofsky, the director of operations at the microphone manufacturer Telefunken Elektroakustik to talk about the possibility of planning the festival – the Hug More Love More festival to be exact – and the idea stuck.

"All of us stepped in to say let's put on this event sort of in memory of him and to help the Minney family," said O'Leary. "Grayson was

always a fan of festivals. He always talked about putting on a festival in Connecticut so it seemed like a good fit."

The idea took off, and with the help of other friends and supporters – including Minney's friend and local musician Brian Jarvis and Jon Aidukonis, manager at the Wood-N-Tap where Minney worked – a full-fledged, all-day music festival has been planned and pulled together.

The Hug More Love More festival, which was named after a phrase Minney and his father frequently exchanged – "That was something they did every day: 'hug more love more dad,' 'hug more love more son,'" said Lee – will take place at the Four Town Fairgrounds on Egypt Road in Somers.

Starting at 11 a.m., the festival will include musical entertainment on two separate stages by over a dozen bands and musicians. Included in the line-up is the nationally-known band Secondhand Serenade whose song "Fall for You" reached No. 8 on the *Billboard* Pop 100 chart in 2008. Also performing will be Veronica Ballestrini, who has over 85,000 "likes" on her Facebook page; Kenny Mehler, the Brian Jarvis Band, Jim Wolf, Addison Station, Gone by Daylight, RANE and more.

And, although they're missing their lead singer, Columbia Fields will also perform, with the help of some guest vocalists.

Heath said Thursday that while some feel it's too soon to be playing Columbia Fields' songs without Minney, it was understood the festival needed to happen prior to August, when the family's home is set to be auctioned off.

"I hope [Minney] looks down from heaven smiling in awe of how everyone, from all over, came together in this crucial moment to help his family and fiancée when he no longer could," Heath said. "We all love and miss him so much, and we will be playing our hearts out to honor him."

Drummer Chris Bowes will be making the trip from Georgia, where he currently resides, to participate in the event. He said this week the festival was bound to be emotional and added while it's been two months since Minney's passing, he still misses him and to

some degree, is still in shock that he's gone.

"With how close we were and how much we shared, and especially given that we spent our time doing something we were both passionate about – I just don't think life will ever seem 'back to normal.' Life won't be the same without him here," he said.

But Bowes said he hopes the event will help Minney's family while also serving as a celebration of Minney and his music.

"I hope the event will not only accomplish its primary objective of raising the funds necessary to save the Minneys' home, but also serves to celebrate Grayson and pay homage to him and his music," said Bowes. "He deserves that and so does the music and legacy he left behind."

The sounds of the July 20 festival will be broadcast live on Radio 104.1. Lee explained many of the performers at the festival participate in the station's Sunday night show Home Brew.

"So it was basically a perfect fit and they jumped on board and wanted to help us promote it," he said.

In addition to the music, the event will feature beer, wine and food from Corey's Catsup & Mustard, The Whey Station, NoRA's Cupcake, The Dog House in Hartford and Wood-N-Tap.

Both Lee and O'Leary said they hope the event brings out a large crowd to enjoy the music and help the family.

"I'm hoping just for people to come out and have a great time in memory of Grayson and hopefully raise a lot of money," Lee said, while O'Leary stated he hopes "for a bigger than expected turnout just so we can make as much money as possible for the Minney family."

Tickets for the festival can be purchased and printed in advance for \$20 from the website or purchased at the gate for \$25; a monetary donation is asked for kids 17 and under. Guests can bring chairs, blankets and Frisbees but coolers are not allowed.

Those who want to do more than listen to the music can also volunteer. Volunteers are



**On July 20, a music festival for the family of Grayson Minney, a Hebron resident who passed away May 11, will be held in Somers. The event will feature over a dozen bands and musicians. Photo courtesy of Rich Cianci Photography.**

currently needed for the festival, and those interested should get in contact via the event's Facebook page or website.

If this year's festival is successful, O'Leary said those involved would like to see it continue.

"If this is successful – if we see a glimmer of hope in it – we'd like to do it next year, maybe for a music scholarship for somebody in Grayson's name," thus ensuring not only that Minney's family is aided, but that Minney's story and passion for music live on.

For more information on the Hug More Love More festival or to purchase tickets visit [hugmorelovemore.com](http://hugmorelovemore.com).

# Hoop into Happiness at Hoola Hoopa Fest in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

On Saturday, July 20, the Colchester Town Green will evolve from its often quiet atmosphere to a space that will be filled with color, energy, positive vibes and good music because of a hula hoop festival coming to town called Hoola Hoopa Fest.

Planned by Colchester resident Laura Wickham, the all-day hoop festival is open to the public free of charge. No matter if a person is a hardcore hooper or has never hula hooped before, Wickham stressed that “everyone” is welcome to attend.

Wickham can often be seen in town carrying a big red boom box, a bundle of hoops in hand and hooping in the town green once a week. In addition to that, she has also been running a hooping program once a month at the Cragin Memorial Library since January.

And now, through Hoola Hoopa Fest, the almost 24-year-old said she hopes to bring the community together to participate in an activity that she feels has the ability to bring smiles to people’s faces because they can “be a kid again.”

Wickham’s approach to planning the event was to include “as much local businesses as possible.” Wickham has worked with locals in the area who have assisted her in the planning of the event, down to the very last detail like creating its logo, which was designed by Colchester resident Rich Dykas.

In order for attendees to let loose and get creative on the green, a face-painter from Painted You will be on site from 11 a.m.-7 p.m., a balloon twister from Twisty Bros will be on site from noon-4 p.m., local stilt walkers will attend, as well as Wickham’s friend Judi Jones who owns Creative Games Parties, will run “hoop group play,” or various hooping activities. Also, a group of local hoopers from Middletown will offer hula hoop instruction in a designated tent on the green.

And the music that will radiate throughout the town green is just as varied as the activities. Wickham has specifically created a playlist of songs that will be played –songs she says “anyone can relate to.”

The songs will vary from rap to bluegrass and while some come from mainstream artists, several music of local artists will also be played. For example, songs by one of Wickham’s “best” friends and local musician originally from Lebanon, Gerald Constantine Chaviaras, are on the playlist.

Wickham, who aspires to one day become a children’s author, describes herself as having a “childlike” personality who “loves” toys like the hula hoop – though she says she enjoys kite-flying more – and she explained individuals don’t necessarily have to be young to enjoy the activity. In fact, a simple Google search will prove that people of all ages and interests enjoy hula-hooping.

In addition to a hobby, hooping has also be-

come popularly known around the country as a beneficial core exercise. According to [beatcityhoops.com](http://beatcityhoops.com), the American Council on Exercise published a study that confirmed hula hooping can burn from 420 to 600 calories an hour. To others, hula-hooping has also become a profession, as individuals have become professional hoop dancers or fire hoopers.

Among the many ways hula-hooping can be enjoyed, Wickham said the people she’s met through her hooping endeavors in Colchester have made it even more enjoyable.

Two women, Cindy Lukaszewicz and Judi Jones, who Wickham coincidentally met through hooping, said they are “definitely” planning to come to the event.

For Lukaszewicz, “a smile” is the first description she gives of Wickham. “She treats everybody the same and it doesn’t matter if you can hoop or you can’t hoop,” she explained. “She gives you the confidence to try and is happy doing it.”

Jones, a professional hoop dancer, says when she thinks of Hoola Hoopa Fest one word comes to mind: “just ‘wow!’”

“It will offer play, inspiration, fun and just a sense of belonging and togetherness,” Jones furthered.

Asked why she decided to create her own hoop festival, Wickham said she’s decided to use the hula hoop as a “vehicle to spread good positive messages and for bringing the community together.”

Additionally, Wickham explained that hula hooping in particular is an activity she believes can “assist people in positive life changes – in turning a negative into a positive.”

And that’s just what hooping has done for the young woman.

At age 8, Wickham picked up a hula hoop for the first time when she traded in a radio she received for her birthday for a bright purple and white hoop instead, which she still has today. At the time, Wickham lived in Tennessee and enjoyed to hoop but in 2010, after her family moved to Colchester, she became reacquainted with it. Then, Wickham set a goal for herself to hoop one hour each day. However, a series of unexpected turns made it difficult for her to hoop at all.

“I haven’t even lived half my life yet and I’m already a story and a half,” she said.

In December 2010, Wickham contracted an autoimmune disease called Acute Disseminated Encephalomyelitis or ADEM, which affected the left side of her brain, causing paralysis to most of her right side.

As a result, Wickham was unable to speak, eat or walk. She received food via a feeding tube, and to communicate, she used her left hand to spell out words using a letter chart.

After learning she had contracted the autoimmune disease, Wickham underwent several medical procedures including a tracheotomy and a blood transfusion.



**Colchester resident Laura Wickham hula hoops on the town green, like she has each week since last September. Wickham has created her own hula hooping festival to take place in the Colchester Town Green next Saturday, July 20, for individuals of all ages and skill levels to attend.**

From December 2010 to February 2011, Wickham was bed-ridden for over a month – in ICU units of two Connecticut hospitals – and spent over another month in a rehabilitation hospital. In February 2011, she regained movement and began to walk again using a cane. Over two years later, Wickham can now walk without a cane, eat, speak, drive, and of course, hoop again, too.

Today, Wickham says she’s still working toward a complete recovery; however, planning the festival has been “like therapy,” too.

“I’ve already succeeded,” she said of planning the event, adding that it’s required “so much interaction with people.”

“It’s not about the destination,” she said. “It’s the journey and I know that more than ever now.”

The young hooper added that she does not want people to come to the event because of her story.

“This is not the Laura Wickham fest,” she stated. “I don’t want people to come to this event because of me. The people who are ready for this will be there. If that’s five or 500 people – it will be right.”

While it’s an event she’s been planning for several months, Wickham said her vision for

Hoola Hoopa Fest is something that felt natural.

“Following my intuition has become my job,” she explained. “I’m just allowing myself to be a vehicle for what people need.”

Hoola Hoopa Fest is a rain/shine event. It will be held on Saturday, July 20, from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. in the Colchester Town Green located at 98 Hayward Ave. in Colchester. People of all ages and skill levels are welcome to attend. For any inquiries, Wickham asks people to call her at 860-705-1800 or email her at [hoolahoopafest@gmail.com](mailto:hoolahoopafest@gmail.com).

A limited supply of water will be available; food will not be provided. Attendees are asked to bring their own food and additional non-alcoholic beverages or to take advantage of the businesses in town. Photo stands will also be set up on the green so Wickham asks people bring their cameras to “capture the memories.”

Wickham’s family is completely covering the festival costs. Anyone wishing to make a donation can send cash or a check made out to Hoola Hoopa Fest with Laura Wickham in the memo section to 12 Woodbine Road, Colchester, CT 06415. A donation box will also be set up the day of the event.

# Dam Break Floods Colchester and Hebron Roads

by **Melissa Roberto**

A beaver dam in Hebron collapsed early Monday morning, flooding two Hebron and Colchester roads.

At about 6 a.m., the Hebron dam broke, flushing approximately seven million gallons of water through the woods and onto the intersecting roads of Jones Street in Hebron and Old Hartford Road in Colchester, Colchester Public Works Director Jim Paggioli said.

However, once the flow hit the Jeremy River and Salmon River beyond Route 2, Paggioli said it was no longer an issue as the two bodies of water could handle the heavy flow. As a result, however, Paggioli said Salmon River raised about "a half of a foot instantaneously."

The dam appeared to be located in a swampy area west of Jones Street, Paggioli said, "well off" the road and into the woods. The Public Works Director said beavers in the area had built the dam between six and seven feet high across a "four or five" acre pond that was about six feet deep.

Officials from both towns confirmed that no residences or buildings appeared to have been damaged and no injuries were reported as a result.

Paggioli added that he doesn't believe anything recently occurred that would have caused the dam to break.

"All dams fail sooner or later," he furthered. In Colchester, Paggioli described the dam-

age as a "roadside washout," adding that culverts in the road overflowed and the road was "undermined," meaning the soil on the side of the road was washed away and there was "fine rutting."

From around 6-10 a.m., Paggioli said the 500 yards of Old Hartford Road that was impacted was closed. By 10 a.m., repair work was already started and part of the road was repaved on Tuesday.

Paggioli added that "everyone" on the road still had access to their homes.

Jones Street in Hebron was also temporarily closed Monday morning for three hours, Hebron Public Works Road Foreman William Standish said. Standish explained that approximately 300 yards of dirt and rock on the road was washed out from the flooding. That same day, the Public Works Department hauled in gravel, which allowed one lane of traffic to open up later that morning before both lanes were restored later that day.

"I'm thankful a car wasn't going down there or someone wasn't walking or jogging," Standish added. "It was unbelievable. I've been here 20 years and I've never seen anything like that happen."

Standish added that he's often seen brooks fill up and run over to roads, "but not like this."

Both Jones Street and Old Hartford Road are currently open to two lanes of traffic.



The aftermath of the dam break in Hebron left Jones Street with approximately 300 yards of dirt and rock flushed from the road. The road was closed early Monday morning and reopened later that day after additional gravel was replaced.

## East Hampton

### Al Albon L. Cook Jr.

Al Albon L. Cook Jr., 80, of East Hampton passed away peacefully at Middlesex Hospice Saturday, July 6. He was born in Wilmington, N.Y., the eldest son of the late Bernice (Lawrence) Cook and Albon L. Cook Sr.

They lived on Grandpa Lawrence's farm where he loved fishing and hunting in the Adirondack's with his dad and brother Anthony and when he was older with his special friend Scott. He loved spending time with Scott's family especially his mother Reta. After Al's mother passed away, he spent time with the late Aunt Mary and Uncle Herb, and then moved to Schenectady, N.Y., to live with Aunt Vicky and the late Uncle Aldor Cook.

Al graduated from Mt. Pleasant High School, went into the Navy at NAS Jacksonville, Fla., for electrical training (ET) from May 1952 until March 1954. He contemplated a career as a baseball pitcher as he had a great arm and worked out with catcher Buck Ewing. Instead he went to Union College and graduated in 1958 with a Civil Engineering Degree. Al spent his career working for the Federal Government. While attending Union College he worked summers for the National Forest Service in 1956 and 1958. He spent six years with the Federal Aviation Agency doing survey design and construction of air navigation facilities including long range radar sites.

He worked with Federal Highway (FHWA) in several states for 28 years. He was the field operations engineer in the Connecticut office, working to meet federal government requirements in planning, design, construction/reconstruction of federal aid projects, retiring in 1994 after a total of 38 years of government service. Al received several awards for his service to the government and received the Administrator's Award for Superior Achievement at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in 1991.

Al was an excellent fly fisherman and with his wife Daryl spent five vacations in Montana where he loved to fly fish the Madison River in Ennis. In Connecticut, he enjoyed fly fishing the Farmington River and later loved the thrill to catch salt water Albies (False Albacore) in Waterford and Rhode Iskand. He loved skiing in his favorite area Alta, Utah, along with ski resorts in Colorado and New England. He took up golf later in life and with "Peter-Boy" enjoyed Indian Hills, TPC and Tallwood. He taught Daryl to play and they spent many fun outings with friends Paulette and Kerry Cook. He enjoyed the outdoors and being active until health issues prevented him from doing so.

He is survived by his loving wife Daryl, special aunt Vicky of New York, brother Anthony and wife Marylou of Florida, sons Glen of New York, Alan and wife Holly and their son Andrei of Virginia, and Matthew of New York, a nephew and several nieces. He was predeceased by his mother and father, uncle Aldor, several aunts and uncles.

The family wishes to thank Middlesex Hospital and Middlesex Hospice for the kind and compassionate care he received.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Monday, July 15, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. with a service to begin at 6:30 p.m. Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in his name may be made to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424, or to the Rocky Hill Ambulance Association.

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

## East Hampton

### Barbara W. Surrell

Barbara W. Surrell, 69, of East Hampton and formerly of Dayville, passed away peacefully Monday, July 8, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice. Born Nov. 3, 1943, in East Hampton, she was the daughter of the late Frederick and Violet (Ellis) Walton.

Besides her parents she was predeceased by her husband Robert E. Surrell Sr., son Scott D. True, and her sister Christine Fish.

She is survived by her children, Bert E Surrell II, Joellen Dick, Tina Grenier, April L. Higbie, brother Frederick Walton, several grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Barbara was one of the founding members of Red Ravens Motor Cycle Club in 1972. She loved camping and motorcycle riding with her husband Bob. She and her husband owned and operated several Restaurants including Route 12 Restaurant and Landmark Restaurant in Belchertown, Mass. She was the inspiration for Surrell's Pizza and Pub in Jewett City. She will be remembered by many.

Funeral arrangements are private. The Spencer Funeral Home is assisting the family.

## East Hampton

### Jeffrey B. Schmidt

Jeffrey B. Schmidt, 51, of Glastonbury, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, July 4, at home. Jeff was born Aug. 7, 1961, in Hartford, son of Richard W. and Nancy (Brielo) Schmidt of East Hartford, formerly of East Hampton and Glastonbury.

Jeff was raised in East Hampton, and resided in Glastonbury for the past 20 years. He was a graduate of East Hampton High School, Class of 1979, and he was a graduate of Greater Hartford Community College with a degree in computer programming. He was an IT specialist for the Hoffman Auto Group. He was previously employed as an information systems manager for Aetna Insurance Co. for 15 years.

Jeff leaves his wife, Rita of 27 years. He was a proud and loving father to his two daughters, Alexa Schmidt and Lauren Schmidt both of Glastonbury. He leaves his two brothers, Daniel Schmidt of East Hampton, and Todd Schmidt and his wife Patti of East Hampton, and several aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

He was predeceased by his baby brother, Timothy W. Schmidt.

Jeff was an avid golfer, Red Sox fan and slot car collector.

The funeral service will be held Saturday, July 13, at 10 a.m., in the Congregational Church of South Glastonbury, (corner of Main and High streets). Burial will be at the discretion of the family. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations are welcome to an Educational Fund that has been established for his daughters, Lauren and Alexa, in care of Nancy Schmidt, 8 Mohegan Dr., East Hartford.

For online condolences, visit [mulryanfh.com](http://mulryanfh.com).

## East Hampton

### Adam Salowitz

Adam Salowitz, 32, of East Hampton, beloved son of Lynn Salowitz and the late Mark Salowitz, left this Earth Saturday, July 6. Adam was born May 5, 1981, in Hartford.

Adam grew up in East Hampton and graduated from East Hampton High School in 2000. Like the free spirit that he was, he did a lot of traveling and roaming the open road with his best friend and companion, Jake. He lived for a time in San Francisco, and eventually came back to his hometown of East Hampton. Adam worked as a patient care assistant on the cardiac unit at Hartford Hospital, where there was a mutual admiration between him and the nurses with whom he worked. He took great pride in his role as a caretaker and his ability to touch the lives of those around him.

Adam was a giving, kind soul, filled with ideas, enthusiasm and passion. His days were filled with hiking, crabbing, working in his yard and tinkering with one of his many projects. He could frequently be found with his Uncle Dave and Aunt Barbara, doing yard work and hassling the old man. He was an avid photographer with a vast collection of unique and vintage cameras.

He is survived by his mother, Lynn, of East Hampton, his sister Erica Tardiff and her husband Marc of Twin Mountain, New Hampshire, his grandmother, Shirley Salowitz of Farmington, his loving aunts and uncles, Susan and Randi Salowitz of Farmington, Jim and Beth Greig of East Hampton, Diane Niles and Paul Renzoni of Ivoryton, Jim and Diane Roos of Branford, Ken and Tammy Roos of Lake Crystal, Minn., his animal companions, Nico, Sparky Jr. and Benny. He also leaves several loving bosom buddies, his cousins Alyssa, Dawn, Tania, Heather, David, Christopher, Jonathan, Caitlin and Mikayla.

Adam was predeceased by his father, Mark S. Salowitz; his grandfather, Sidney Salowitz; his maternal grandparents, Fran and Connie Roos; his uncle, Everett Niles; devoted friend, Mike Lapierre; and four-legged friend, Jake.

A celebration of his life was held Thursday, July 11, followed by services that morning, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, donations are requested in Adam's memory to: Nursing Quality Education Fund, Fund Development Office, Hartford Hospital, 80 Seymour St., Hartford, CT 06102 (please indicate Bliss 10 East).

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

## Obituaries

### East Hampton

#### Helen May Wells

Helen May (Knotek) Wells, 92, of East Hampton, widow of the late Leonard Wells died peacefully Tuesday, July 2, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Dec. 22, 1920, in East Hampton, she was the daughter of the late Albert and Anna (Hajek) Knotek.

Helen was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was a member of the Garden Club and a member of the East Hampton Congregational Church. Helen enjoyed being a mother and grandmother to her children.

She is survived by her two sons, Thomas Wells and Richard Wells of East Hampton, her daughter Laura Strong and her husband David of Portland, and her two grandsons Todd Strong and wife Beth and Hugh Strong.

She was predeceased by her brothers, Stanley and William Knotek, and her sister Marie Krieger.

Funeral services will be private at the convenience of the family. Burial will be in the family plot in Lake View Cemetery.

The Spencer Funeral Home has care of arrangements. To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### Hebron

#### Carolyn Schaefer

Carolyn (Spellman) Schaefer, 87, of Hebron, passed away Tuesday, July 2. Born Oct. 27, 1925, in Hartford, she was the last surviving of 12 children of the late Fredrick and Jennie (Preston) Spellman.

Ms. Schaefer studied at Pierce College (UCLA) and had worked in medical administration for the federal government in California for 33 years before her retirement.

She was a member of the Westchester Congregational Church, Past Matron of the OES and Past P.Q. of the Daughters of the Nile. Carolyn was also a lover of music, especially opera.

She leaves numerous nieces, nephews and extended family members and friends.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, July 10, at the Westchester Congregational Church, 95 Cemetery Rd., Colchester, CT 06415. Those who wish may make donations to the Church.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Adam Salowitz

Adam Salowitz, 32, of East Hampton, beloved son of Lynn Salowitz and the late Mark Salowitz, left this Earth Saturday, July 6. Adam was born May 5, 1981, in Hartford.

Adam grew up in East Hampton and graduated from East Hampton High School in 2000. Like the free spirit that he was, he did a lot of traveling and roaming the open road with his best friend and companion, Jake. He lived for a time in San Francisco, and eventually came back to his hometown of East Hampton. Adam worked as a patient care assistant on the cardiac unit at Hartford Hospital, where there was a mutual admiration between him and the nurses with whom he worked. He took great pride in his role as a caretaker and his ability to touch the lives of those around him.

Adam was a giving, kind soul, filled with ideas, enthusiasm and passion. His days were filled with hiking, crabbing, working in his yard and tinkering with one of his many projects. He could frequently be found with his Uncle Dave and Aunt Barbara, doing yard work and hassling the old man. He was an avid photographer with a vast collection of unique and vintage cameras.

He is survived by his mother, Lynn, of East Hampton, his sister Erica Tardiff and her husband Marc of Twin Mountain, New Hampshire, his grandmother, Shirley Salowitz of Farmington, his loving aunts and uncles, Susan and Randi Salowitz of Farmington, Jim and Beth Greig of East Hampton, Diane Niles and Paul Renzoni of Ivoryton, Jim and Diane Roos of Branford, Ken and Tammy Roos of Lake Crystal, Minn., his animal companions, Nico, Sparky Jr. and Benny. He also leaves several loving bosom buddies, his cousins Alyssa, Dawn, Tania, Heather, David, Christopher, Jonathan, Caitlin and Mikayla.

Adam was predeceased by his father, Mark S. Salowitz; his grandfather, Sidney Salowitz; his maternal grandparents, Fran and Connie Roos; his uncle, Everett Niles; devoted friend, Mike Lapiere; and four-legged friend, Jake.

A celebration of his life was held Thursday, July 11, followed by services that morning, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, donations are requested in Adam's memory to: Nursing Quality Education Fund, Fund Development Office, Hartford Hospital, 80 Seymour St., Hartford, CT 06102 (please indicate Bliss 10 East).

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

### Portland

#### Constance S. Berggren

Constance S. Berggren, 87, formerly of Portland, wife of the late Frederick A. Berggren, passed away Monday, July 8, at Cobalt Lodge Health Care. She was the daughter of the late Leslie and Bertha (Stemmler) Sanborn.

Born Aug. 3, 1925, in Middletown, she was a lifelong Portland resident and was a member of the Church of St. Mary in Portland, the Ladies Guild and the Portland Grange.

She leaves her sons, Frederick A. Berggren Jr. and his wife, Barbara of Portland and Richard P. Berggren and his wife, Linda of Oak Harbor, Wash.; daughter, Kathryn Robinson and her husband, Bruce of Williamstown, N.J.; brothers, Frank and William Sanborn both of Portland; sister, Lorraine Rizzo of Niantic; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her sisters, Rosemary Wilson, Elizabeth Cunningham and Barbara Chapman.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 13, at 10 a.m., from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial will be in the Swedish Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends may call today, July 12, from 5-7 p.m., at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Alzheimer's Association CT Chapter 2075 Silas Deane Hwy, Suite 100 Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

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

### East Hampton

#### Paul A. Cella

Paul A. Cella of East Hampton, formerly of Wallingford, Truckee, Calif., and Winter Haven, Fla., died suddenly and peacefully Wednesday, July 3, at Hartford Hospital. Born Sept. 9, 1922, he was the son of Paul J. and Louise Forline Cella.

He was predeceased by his sweetheart of 47 years, Eleanor Gavette Cella.

His steady, loving presence will be missed by his daughters, Terry Danaher and husband Patrick, Dorene Nablo and husband George; grandchildren Meghan Gagne, Molly Bickford, Addy Danaher, Gil Danaher, Brennan Danaher, Dustin Nablo and Brooks Nablo, and nine great grandchildren, brothers Richard Cella and wife Annette, David Cella and extended family.

He graduated from Wentworth Institute with a degree in aeronautical design in 1942. He served in World War II from 1942-45 as a lieutenant, U.S. Army Air Corps, B-24 pilot, 15th Air Force, 465th Bomber Group, 783rd Squadron, stationed in Italy. Returning, he began his career at Hill and Harrigan in 1946, married in 1949, earned an Associate in Electrical Engineering degree from New Haven College in 1951 and was employed by C.N. Flagg Co. (later CNF Industries) in Meriden from 1951-2001 first as an Engineering Draftsman/Project Manager then as vice president, president and chief operating officer and vice chairman and, from 1986-2001 as senior consultant to new owner, U.S. Windpower. In 1992 he was awarded an honorary Bachelor of Technology by Wentworth Institute. He, along with Eleanor, designed and built four homes, in which they lived at various times.

Paul approached work, play and family with earnestness and integrity, shared an honest life and loved us all unconditionally. He was passionate about embracing an active and healthy lifestyle; his hobbies-snow skiing, water skiing and building/flying remote controlled airplanes; his love for and involvement with his family, and his love of freedom, liberty and his country.

His life will be celebrated Monday, July 15, at 10 a.m., with a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Bridget of Kildare Church, Moodus Leesville Road, Moodus, followed by burial at Lakeview Cemetery, East Hampton.

Memorial donation suggestions are The Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002 or the Bay Point Club, c/o Marcie Loffredo, 76 Spellman Pt. Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424.

### Portland

#### Gerald W. Belcher

Gerald W. Belcher, 59, of Middletown and formerly of Portland, beloved husband to Rose (Johnson) Belcher, died Saturday, July 6, after an almost two-decade battle. He was born in Stafford Springs, son of the late Earl and Alice (Kihl) Belcher.

Affectionately known to all as Jerry, he was a long time auto body mechanic. During the late '70s and '80s he was the auto body manager for both Wiltsie Chevrolet in East Hampton and then Wiltsie Chrysler Plymouth in Portland. During the 1990s, he was the owner and operator of the Portland Carriage Shop, a popular auto body repair shop in Portland that during its peak had a three month waiting list. His talent was undeniable until he could no longer work due to his health.

He was a very kind and loving man always helping the community in any way he could. He would purchase turkey dinners at Thanksgiving for those families less fortunate. He also worked with Portland High School with their Experience Based Career Education program helping many kids find a purpose and direction.

Besides his wife, Jerry is survived by his son Jeremy Belcher of Middletown; his daughter Sarah Ruel of East Hampton; sister Sharon McNamara and her husband, Rich of East Dorset, Vt.; brother Chuck Belcher and his wife, Susan of Bennington, VT; two beloved grandchildren, Alexandra and Logan Ruel; from his second marriage step-daughter, Dawn (Merrill) Chaney and her family; stepson, Rick Merrill and his family; and step-daughter, Maggie Merrill; he is also survived by several nieces and nephews.

Services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

Those who wish may send contributions to the American Stroke Association c/o American Heart Association, P.O. Box 417005 Boston, MA. 02241-7005.

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

### Colchester

#### Hugh James Campbell Jr.

Hugh James Campbell Jr., 83, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, July 7, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital in Middletown. Born Aug. 1, 1929, in Hartford, he was a son of the late Hugh and Helen (O'Brien) Campbell.

He was a proud veteran, having served with the US Air Force.

Hugh was married to the late Virginia (Hagearty) Campbell Nov. 11, 1953, at St. Mark Church in West Hartford. The couple shared 55 years of marriage before she predeceased him Jan 14, 2009.

Along with his wife, he was the co-owner of the former Campbell Petroleum Corp. in Colchester for many years. While serving the community as a local businessman, he participated with the Colchester Business Association and was an active member of the Rotary Club of Colchester. Hugh enjoyed gardening, model railroads, civil war history and investing in the stock market. He will be remembered as a gentle and generous man and will be sadly missed by friends, neighbors, family and his community.

Friends attended calling hours Wednesday, July 10, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral assembled Thursday, July 11, at the funeral home before the celebration of the funeral liturgy later that morning at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Interment followed in New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Rotary Club of Colchester, P.O. Box 775, Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

### Marlborough

#### Marguerite D. Stebbins

Marguerite D. Stebbins of North Haven, formerly of Marlborough, passed away Sunday, June 30. She was given the birth name Annie Marguerite Dilworth Sept. 11, 1920, at the homestead of John and Marguerite (Russ) Eichelberg, her maternal grandparents on Mechanics Street, in Jewett City, town of Griswold. She was the oldest daughter of Albert Homer Dilworth and Catherine Ann (Eichelberg) Dilworth. Albert and his wife were living on lower Smith Avenue, Norwich, at the time, in the section called Long Society.

The Dilworths' second child, Arlene Elizabeth was born Feb. 23, 1922, at the Eichelberg homestead also. For a time, Albert, with a partner Art Andersen, operated a garage repairing and servicing motor vehicles on Mechanics Street, Jewett City, adjacent to the Eichelberg homestead. Shortly afterwards the Dilworths with their two children relocated to upper Smith Avenue, later, down the street to 46 Smith Ave., Norwich. Albert, or Al as he was known, accepted employment at the U. S. Finishing Company in Greenville, nearby.

Marguerite received her primary education at the local Smith Avenue Public School. She was an active member of the local Girl Scout troop which held meetings on Bishop Street, in downtown Norwich. After completing public school, Marguerite was enrolled at the Norwich Free Academy, where she completed the general course of study and was graduated with the Class of 1938. After graduation, Marguerite was employed by three merchants, Puritan and Trachtenberg's Clothing stores and Woolworth's, all in downtown Norwich. There she learned her sales talents and the trade of seamstress, altering clothing at the clothing stores.

In 1942 she left Woolworth's and accepted employment at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, East Hartford, Connecticut. She rented a one-room walk up on Collins St., Hartford and traveled by bus to work.

On May 15, 1942, Marguerite was united in marriage with Howard Albert Stebbins. The marriage took place at the Greenville Congregational Church. Maid of Honor was her cousin Lucy Dean from Central Village. Best Man was Everett Morton of Taftville, cousin of the groom.

After Howard went into the service in 1943, Marguerite went to live with a fellow employee, Adelle Gozdek and her mother in Hartford. Adelle and Marguerite traveled together by bus to Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. After boarding in her friend's household for a time she relocated to a rental apartment in Hartford. Here she remained until Howard returned from World War II. Marguerite continued to work at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, eight years in total.

Their only child, a son, Gary Robert Stebbins, was born Dec. 6, 1951. After Gary entered elementary school, Marguerite revisited her entrepreneurial skills, first as a Welcome Wagon Hostess in Marlborough, where she and Howard bought a house on Lafayette Road in 1948. In the 1960s, she became a Vanda Beauty counselor and they moved to North Haven to their new home on 6 Coach Dr. in 1971, where she started Vistar Sales. Starting in the early 1970s, Marguerite expanded her sales efforts as a Tri-Chem Liquid Embroidery instructor and eventually became the New England regional director, a position she held well into the 1990s.

When her husband, Howard retired from Pratt & Whitney in 1977, they bought a motor home and traveled extensively for the next 10 years.

Howard preceded her in death March 30, 2013.

She is survived by her son Gary and his wife Maria of Fort Wayne, Ind. Marguerite is also survived by four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Relatives and friends attended a graveside service Saturday, July 6, in the Maplewood Cemetery, Norwich. The visiting hours were Friday, July 5, in the North Haven Funeral Home, 36 Washington Ave.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Heart Foundation, 31822 Village Center Rd., Suite 208, Westlake Village, CA 91361.

To view the full obituary and leave a condolence for the family, visit [northhavenfuneral.com](http://northhavenfuneral.com).

