

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Singing for Sandy Hook... The band Justin Co., with the help of five local youths, performed their song "26 Angels" for the first time last Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Light the Sky With Light and Love event in Portland. The song was a tribute to the victims of the December shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown. A story about the event appears on page 21.

Chatham Party Challenges Decision

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton's Chatham Party has filed a challenge against last week's decision to keep the minor party's candidates off the Nov. 5 election ballots. The challenge was filed in Middlesex Superior Court Tuesday morning.

Last week, the secretary of state's office disqualified the Chatham Party – among other minor third parties in Connecticut that did not properly fill out their Endorsement Certifications – from appearing on election ballots Nov. 5.

This decision was based on the fact that the Chatham Party candidates mistakenly failed to sign the paperwork for state statute 9-452, which applies to all minor parties nominating candidates for any elective office.

The statute states, "A list of nominees in printed or typewritten form that includes each candidate's name as authorized by each candidate to appear on the ballot, the signature of each candidate, the full street address of each candidate and the title and district of the office for which each candidate is nominated shall be certified by the presiding officer of the committee."

Av Harris, the director of communication for the secretary of state's office, affirmed that the change in state statute 9-452 was implemented in July 2011, but any paperwork mistakes went unnoticed until this year when a Republican

from Bethel pointed out a lack of minor party signatures to the Bethel town clerk.

The Bethel town clerk then called the secretary of state's office, Harris said, and emailed other town clerks to inform them of the mistake.

Regarding a nine-page memo that East Hampton Town Clerk Sandy Wieleba and several other town clerks don't recall receiving in July 2011, Harris said the secretary of state's office "absolutely" sent the memos.

Sue Weintraub, chairman of the Town Council and Chatham Party member, added that Chatham Party Chairman Kyle Dostaler did not receive any notice of the changes either.

Dostaler, who, like Weintraub, is up for reelection, also noted that the Democrat and Republican parties were not required to include candidate signatures on their endorsement certifications.

Wieleba said Tuesday that she learned of the secretary of state's opinion through Ted Bromley, the staff attorney for the state of Connecticut elections enforcement.

According to Wieleba, the secretary of state's opinion was that the certificate needed to be signed properly.

"The law is the law," Wieleba said, "[The Chatham Party candidates] would not be on the

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Thirty Years for AHM Youth and Family Services

by Geeta Schrayter

Thirty years ago, a small board made up of parents and educators from Andover, Hebron and Marlborough and a local police officer joined together to bring a motivational speaker to the area to help with drug and alcohol awareness and prevention. The motivational speaker, David Toma, was a former police officer from the New York/New Jersey area who had done a lot of work surrounding narcotics, and had been speaking across the country about the drug epidemic during that time.

The board reached their goal and Toma came to speak – but the event proved to be a beginning, not an end. Toma's presentation served as a jolt of lighting that motivated the three towns to work together with this small board to form a Youth Services Bureau.

The collaboration was a success, and 30 years later, AHM Youth and Family Services continues to provide community support to the three initial towns as well as Columbia, and is preparing to celebrate their 30th anniversary Oct. 1.

In the years following what could be considered the "founding presentation" by Toma, AHM has expanded and now, the agency provides a myriad of services with the goal, as stated on their website ahmyouth.org, to "provide mental health and positive youth development services that assist children, young people, and their families in creating a supportive and

caring environment, for them to reach their maximum potential as members of society."

AHM Executive Director Joel Rosenberg, who has been with the agency for 29 of its 30 years, said this week reaching that milestone was "absolutely incredible."

"It's kind of hard to put into words," he said. "Over time the organization evolved, and really and truly the strength of AHM's growth was the relationship that we had first and foremost with the three towns' municipal governments, and then over time that relationship evolved to working with all the local schools, with law enforcement, and with the faith community."

Rosenberg went on to call the "backbone" of the organization the support the agency's received from all aspects of the community.

"That's really been the backbone of how this organization has been able to grow," he stated. "People have been extremely loyal, from utilizing the services and also through philanthropy."

But that loyalty and philanthropy is for a good cause – and town leaders in the communities AHM serves are well aware of that.

Andover First Selectman Bob Burbank called AHM "a tried and proven organization that has been a benefit to all the town's concerned."

"They have programs that quite frankly, some

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Summer Youth Theater is one of the many programs and activities AHM Youth and Family Services has been offering Andover, Hebron and Marlborough residents for the past three decades. Kids from the three towns are shown here in a file photo rehearsing for the 2010 production, *Guys and Dolls*.

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ballot.

“It’s not my decision,” she added.

But Harris said differently. He said that for municipal election years, a certificate of candidate endorsement goes to the town clerk, not to the secretary of state’s office.

That’s why the decision of whether the Chatham Party candidates run for office is at the discretion of Wieleba, Harris said.

However, he did point out that the lack of signatures violates state law and “public officials are duty-bound to follow the law.”

Still, “only the town clerk can make that decision,” he said.

Regarding the Chatham Party’s challenge to that decision, Dostaler said in a phone interview Tuesday, “We have to wait to see what happens with the court. But we’re going to run our candidates despite what the court says.”

He explained that the challenge is a motion to show cause. It is a court proceeding in the form of an injunction; it is not a civil matter.

“The next step,” Dostaler said, “sadly is not up to the people of East Hampton, but the courts. The one thing that is for certain is that the Chatham Party is running every one of their 16 candidates in the Nov. 5 election.”

He added that he hopes it won’t come down to running candidates as write-ins.

“Democracy is supposed to be inclusive, not exclusive,” Dostaler said. “If the minor parties filed timely certifications with the same information required of the Democratic and Republican parties, they should have their names on the ballot.”

Weintraub expressed similar disappointment

and frustration.

“This is discrimination against minor parties,” she said. “The secretary of state’s office should take responsibility for not properly communicating these new requirements to state town clerks and minor parties. In addition, our legislators must correct this inequity in the law.”

Dostaler said he hand-delivered a written request to Wieleba Monday that requested corrections to any “insufficiencies” with the certificate of endorsement by having its candidates provide the necessary signatures.

“Our filings were accepted by the town clerk,” Dostaler said in a press release. “We met all of the filing date deadlines with the same required information that we provided in 2007, 2009 and 2011. We provided the town clerk with all of our candidate’s names, signatures, addresses, party and the title of office for which they agreed to be nominated for and were endorsed for by the Chatham Party.”

He said he hadn’t heard from the town clerk formally until Monday that his party’s candidates would not appear on the ballots with the exception of the Chatham Party candidates for the Board of Assessment Appeals because they petitioned their candidacy.

“The town clerk and secretary of state have all of the information that they need to validate and ensure that our nominated candidates, in fact, want to run as Chatham Party candidates, which is the essence of the law,” added Dostaler. “This is a systemic breakdown of our electoral system aimed at excluding minor parties from running candidates.”

Rosenberg agreed.

“Where we are today is having both the youth service bureau and a family resource center,” he said, which provides families with a “service bridge,” between the schools, the police department, the faith community, counseling, intervention or prevention services.

“Basically if a family is in need of any of the range of services mentioned, which is a pretty broad spectrum, they can access that bridge,” he stated.

With 30 years under the youth service bureau’s belt, Rosenberg said the biggest accomplishments have to do with AHM’s longevity, and the organization’s ability to sustain even through tough economic times; the creation of the AHM Youth and Family Services Bureau building in Hebron which was built without any local tax dollars; and, “most important,” the number of children and families the agency has helped.

“It doesn’t matter that it’s in the thousands,” he explained. “It could have been a handful but the fact is we, through our staff, have been able to, in many instances, help change the path of [a child or family]. And those paths sometimes weren’t the most positive, and other times it was to support those on a healthy path and help them continue that.”

Meade had similar thoughts on the agency’s success, and said the results made everything worthwhile.

“The good we’ve done – the lives we’ve impacted in a positive way, that makes it all worth it,” she said, adding while she knew the agency can’t help everyone, they made a difference whenever they could.

“I know we can’t help everyone and we can’t keep our towns from experiencing the hardships, losses, and tragedies that can come with life,” Meade said, “but I feel like when we do the work we do, we are helping some of them – those we can – and it does make a difference. Otherwise, I wouldn’t be doing it.”

The community is invited to celebrate AHM’s 30th anniversary and all the work it has done at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 1, in the Performing Arts Hall at AHM Youth and Family Services, 25 Pendleton Dr., Hebron. Refreshments will be served during a social hour from 6-7 p.m. after which there will be some brief remarks from town and state officials. Guests are asked to RSVP by calling AHM at 860-228-9488.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I found myself in Marlborough last Friday, and it was a warm, gorgeous day, so I decided to take advantage of it by eating at Sadler’s, on their patio.

And I’m very glad I did.

Sadler’s has been around for years, but I’d never been there before. Also, I had heard they opened a new patio earlier this year, and I do love eating outside when the weather’s nice. So why not, I figured, check it out?

With my mother along for the trip, we stopped in Sadler’s, indicated we wanted to eat on the patio, and were quickly seated by the friendly hostess.

I ordered off Sadler’s special Oktoberfest menu, while my mom got the crab cakes. She really enjoyed the crab cakes, and let me tell you my Oktoberfest special – a Reuben sandwich, only made with grilled bratwurst instead of corned beef, and served with a side of warm potato salad – was terrific. Just writing about it makes me want to eat it again, right now.

As for the patio, it was a great place to have a meal. There were plenty of tables to sit at – each with its own patio umbrella to shade you from the sun – and service was efficient, with friendly wait staff. A sign just outside the patio advertised live music, but, being the middle of a Friday afternoon, no live music was playing. Instead, there was soft music from an iPod plugged into a boombox, playing a wide variety of pleasant tunes, including the rarely-heard-these-days Dixie Chicks. (I’m a big fan of the Chicks.)

All in all, it was a very nice visit to Sadler’s. I’m not sure how many more days the patio’s got this year – autumn, and its accompaniment of cooler weather, has arrived – but I’d encourage everyone to check it out if possible. (Don’t despair, though, if it’s too cold to eat outside; the interior of the restaurant is just beautiful.)

And don’t forget to order the bratwurst Reuben!

* * *

A few days before I found myself in Marlborough at lunchtime, I found myself in Colchester at dinnertime. I swung by the McDonald’s on South Main Street for a quick bite – and tried the new Mighty Wings. I gotta say, I was pretty impressed.

The wings, for those who don’t know, are the newest item on the McDonald’s menu. These aren’t chicken tenders either; they’re real, bone-in chicken wings, similar to what you’d get at a fast-food chicken restaurant. And while McDonald’s of course is known more for its burgers, the chicken wings were pretty good.

I got the five-piece order of wings, with a medium fries and a soda. The breading on the wings was nice and crispy; I always hate it when breading is too moist and soggy, and was happy to see that wasn’t the case here. The wings also had a nice, spicy little kick to them. Nothing too overpowering, but enough to make you notice it. It wasn’t just hot for the sake of being hot; it had some real flavor to it, which was nice.

If I had one small complaint, it’s that the chicken wasn’t all white meat. It was a mix of white and dark. I simply find white to taste better, and would love it if the wings were all white, but I certainly understand that would be more expensive. (Just take a look at a Boston Market menu to see the difference in cost between white and dark.)

Still, the Mighty Wings were tasty, and I definitely would eat them again. The crew at the Colchester McDonald’s informed me the wings are only going to be around for a limited time, so I’d advise people to give them a shot.

* * *

See you next week

Thirty Years cont. from Front Page

of the smaller towns could not do on their own,” he said. “It’s been a big benefit to the town.”

Marlborough First Selectwoman Cathy Gaudinski said she felt reaching 30 years was a “testament” to the number of families and individuals AHM has assisted over the years. And like Burbank, she said AHM was “a vital community service that all three towns receive.”

Columbia began a relationship with AHM about three years ago, and the Board of Selectmen in that town crafted a congratulatory letter for AHM and said the services provided had become a part of the community fabric in Columbia, just as they had in the other three towns.

“The town of Columbia looks forward to continuing to work with AHM in addressing the needs of Columbia youth and family and in enriching the quality of services that we offer our community,” they wrote.

Meanwhile, over in Hebron, Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt called the agency “an outlet for both families and children to be able to feel that they have a place to go to be able to turn their lives in a positive direction.”

“That’s the biggest contribution [AHM] made,” he said.

Watt added because of AHM, a lot of troubled children had been able to “find their way.”

Mary Rose Meade, who has been a part of AHM’s Summer Youth Theater program since 1992 felt similarly. She said she felt fortunate to be able to work for an agency that does “incredibly important work” beginning with involvement in the elementary schools, all the way up through high school.

“I’m just so incredibly impressed with what we do as an agency,” she said, referring to the agency as “a beacon of hope” for families in various states of need as well as an agency that focuses on helping youth and families avoid certain pitfalls.

“Prevention is part of our mission” she said, from drug and alcohol awareness to offering summer youth theater and the teen center which provides students an outlet and a place to hang out.

Meade added AHM also tries to partner with different groups in town, such as the senior center.

“We started primarily as a youth service bureau,” she said, “but we really do serve the community at large.”

Hodge Questions Colchester Selectmen Ethics

by Melissa Roberto

Linda Hodge, a resident and the Colchester Independent Party candidate for first selectman, slammed the Board of Selectmen last week over what she believed to be a “manipulation of information” by a member, or members, of the board.

Hodge was referring to a letter she sent to the full board hours before the Aug. 1 selectmen meeting, which stated concerns about the WJMS/Community/Senior Center project proposal. The candidate told the board Thursday her letter was not read aloud at that meeting as requested. But that was not her concern, she said. What concerned Hodge was the fact that a member in the audience, John Malsbenden, commented on her letter at the Aug. 1 meeting which, to her knowledge, had only been sent to the selectmen, she said.

“What disturbs me is the fact that John Malsbenden stood up from the audience during citizens’ comments to speak against my letter, which he stated clearly on the record he had been given a copy of,” Hodge told the board, reading from a letter she had prepared. “At that point, the letter had only been sent to the first selectman’s office and to each member of the Board of Selectmen.

“I know that you followed the letter of the law,” Hodge furthered. “But leadership is not only about following the letter of the law. It is about ensuring that *every* citizen of our community is treated equally and fairly whether you like them or have issues with them or not.”

Before exiting the meeting, Hodge asked the selectmen whoever “passed a copy” of her letter to Malsbenden to come forward. The full board present at the meeting did not respond.

According to Freedom of Information commission’s public information officer Thomas Hennick, if a selectman did, in fact, share the letter there would be “no” Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) violation.

“As soon as the selectmen get it, it’s public record,” said Hennick. “Once the record is in the hands of the public agency and read, used or reviewed in any form it becomes public record.”

After the meeting, each selectman stated they were not aware how Malsbenden received a copy of the letter. Each member also stated they believed any letter sent to the selectmen to be included in the meeting minutes is considered public.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster also said the selectmen do not have a common practice of reading letters aloud at meetings.

“We’ve received letters many times that have not been read aloud,” Schuster said. “The only time that I regularly read aloud a letter is when we have our Chairman Commission meetings and a chairman submits their report.”

Malsbenden said this week he’d heard that Hodge sent in a letter, but chose not to disclose how he heard about it. Malsbenden furthered he read the letter “just before” the meeting in the Town Hall meeting room. He also did not state who allowed him to look at the letter.

“It was at the meeting and it was public information just like all the information discussed,” said Malsbenden. “Whether I got it from a selectman or from staff, it’s not really relevant. It’s public information and I was entitled to have it.”

Malsbenden furthered his comments about the letter at the Aug. 1 meeting were “off the cuff.”

“If I had read it any substantive time before that I would have organized my thoughts,” he said.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle made a point after the meeting that had not yet been stressed by other members of the board.

“The town is facing issues with taxes, the

buildings, etc.,” she said. “Why are we making an issue of a letter that’s public information?”

Though Hodge said this week she understood her letter was considered public, she still felt a selectman “gave information to another citizen using their position and then allowed Malsbenden to address something that nobody else had a copy of.”

“That’s not treating all citizens fairly,” she said. “I personally think that’s unethical behavior.”

The original letter submitted by Hodge on Aug. 1 is available for viewing on the town website under the Board of Selectmen minutes for that meeting. Hodge also submitted her statement from last Thursday in writing, and it is also included in the meeting minutes online.

* * *

Also at last Thursday’s Board of Selectmen meeting, the board discussed the appearance of Colchester’s downtown area – a topic placed on the agenda following a request by selectman Jim Ford.

Ford said he felt the topic was worthy of discussion after a resident seemed concerned with the appearance of the downtown area during the August town meeting on blight issues in Colchester. Ford said he drove around town and noticed areas, including Cragin Court and Lebanon Avenue, with “significant weeds.” He also said in some areas the mulch has not been replaced and the landscaping hadn’t been redone “in years.”

Ford asked if there was something that could be done or a program that could be put in place to allow the town to maintain the downtown areas. He tossed up the idea of allowing a crew to head down to those areas once a month for clean-up purposes.

“One of the things as a board we should be caring about [is] what our downtown looks

like,” Ford said. “We should be taking pride in the downtown and I think if there’s some way we can figure out a process to do that [it would] benefit all citizens.”

Selectman Stan Soby said he had “no argument” in taking pride in the downtown area, but pointed out the town may not be responsible for certain areas Ford mentioned. Soby said he felt it was important to determine whether it is the town’s responsibility or not to maintain these areas.

Director of Public Works Jim Paggioli said this week he’s taking on that task. In the meeting, he stated some downtown roads are owned by the state, while Cragin Court is under a lease agreement. He said he is taking the town ordinances and state statutes into consideration to determine what the town is and is not responsible for and will deliver more information at a future selectmen meeting.

* * *

Also at the meeting, in his first selectman’s report, Schuster informed the public Derrik Kennedy, executive assistant to the first selectman, has taken on a new job as assistant town manager in Enfield. Schuster said Kennedy has been in office with Schuster for the last four years and has taken on a leadership role that has left a “very positive impact” on the town. He sent Kennedy off with well wishes.

“You’re going to be in that number two spot,” Schuster told Kennedy, who was present at the meeting, “and I have no doubt with your intelligence, ambition, knowledge and experience that it won’t be a few more years before another community sees fit to put you in the big chair as their town manager.”

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 3, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

Colchester School Board Reviews CAPT, AP Results

by Melissa Roberto

The Board of Education Tuesday reviewed the district’s 2013 Connecticut Academic Performance Test and Advanced Placement test scores, and Director of Teaching and Learning Barbara Gilbert who led the review said the results of both were positive.

CAPT is the standard assessment administered to students in grade 10. It tests students on four content areas: reading, math, writing and science. In comparison to the state average, Gilbert explained Colchester exceeded the percentage of students reaching goal in each content area. Scores comparing Colchester to other towns in its District Reference Group, or DRG – a group made up of towns with similar socioeconomic statuses to Colchester – were also shown. Gilbert said the district came close to the DRG’s average percentages of students at goal in each of the categories.

Additionally, Gilbert shared a comparison of percentages of students that met or exceeded the goal in each category in 2007 and 2013. She said 2007 would have been the first year students in the current generation took the test – a comparison that was initially generated by the state Department of Education. In each category, the percentage of students at or exceeding goal went up. In 2007, 48 percent of students met goal in math; in 2013, 60.6 percent met goal in math. Also, 56.5 percent met goal in science in 2007; 58.1 percent met goal in

science in 2013; 40.2 percent met goal in reading in 2007; 57.7 met goal in reading in 2013; 55 percent met goal in writing in 2007; 69.6 met goal in writing in 2013.

The CAPT test will be replaced by the Smarter Balanced assessment starting in the 2014-15 school year and will actually be administered to grade 11 students instead of grade 10. Similar to the board’s previous meeting on Sept. 10, in which the board reviewed Colchester’s CMT results, Gilbert once again provided the board with sample tests of the new Smarter Balance tests that grade 11 students will see in the future.

Bacon Academy math teacher Meaghan Kehoegreen, seated in the audience, said she had taken the sample math tests earlier that day. She commented on how the new tests differ from what students have seen in the past – mainly due to the new technology component that requires the tests to be taken online. Fortunately, however, Kehoegreen said the questions she saw do match up to what students are currently being taught.

“We teach the content,” Kehoegreen explained. “But we don’t ever use that type of question.”

Kehoegreen and another math teacher in the audience agreed problem-solving skills and test-taking skills will need to continue to be integrated into lessons so the students are bet-

ter prepared for taking the tests in the future.

In similar fashion, the school board was also given a summary of AP test results, which Gilbert said were “excellent.” AP tests can be taken by any student, Gilbert explained, but are typically taken by students already enrolled in AP classes, which prepare students for college. AP scores are based on a scale of one through five, Gilbert said. Depending on the colleges students apply to, a score of a three, four or five could grant students college credit.

In 2013, Gilbert said 287 AP exams were taken in Colchester. Of the 287 exams, 232, or 81 percent, received a score of 3, 4 or 5. Gilbert showed average scores in various AP courses, including human geography, physics, biology, art, statistics, English and calculus, ranged from 3.2 to 4.7 – average scores Gilbert said are “superb.”

Gilbert did, however, pose a question to the board concerning the future of AP tests and the costs associated with it. Gilbert explained AP tests – at \$80 each – used to be fully paid for by Project Opening Doors, a partnership the district had with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. Because they were fully paid for, this meant the district was able to require all AP students enrolled in math, English or science classes to take the tests, Gilbert said.

The 2012-13 school year was the last year POD funded the tests, Gilbert explained, so the

district no longer requires it but “highly encourages” students to take the tests. Kehoegreen said teachers stress the importance of taking the test, but said the cost associated with it sometimes turns students away from doing so.

Gilbert furthered funding for the tests may be something the board could look into in the future so more students could take them.

* * *

Also at Tuesday’s meeting, the school board celebrated the success of the district’s English Language Learners program underneath the instruction of ELL teacher Erika Studer. The board celebrated test results of Colchester’s ELL students – positive results that met grade level proficiency and dismissed eight of 27 students from the program, meaning they are no longer in need of ELL assistance to learn the English language, Gilbert explained.

Studer said she has students at each of the four public schools and they speak a total of eight different languages. Some of these students come to the country – and district – for the first time speaking no English. Studer said she uses “actions and pictures” to assist her students in learning English.

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The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m., in the Bacon Academy library media center.

WJMS Project Referendum Next Week in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

The fate of the \$57.26 million WJMS/Community/Senior Center building project will be decided by Colchester voters at a town-wide referendum next Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Voting will take place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

The building project has been gestating since 2007. Studies were first conducted to assess the needs of the middle school, the senior center that stands on Norwich Avenue, as well as the needs of the Youth Center, also on Norwich Avenue. As a result of the studies, in 2011 the Board of Selectmen formed a Building Committee and charged it with developing a project that combines a middle school, senior center and community center at the current location of WJMS.

The project includes a proposed middle school facility, which features 110,000 square feet of both school renovation and new construction. At the existing middle school, the project calls for renovations to house the sixth grade in its western wing. The existing school's gymnasium and library/media center would also be reused. The 1954 eighth-grade wing is proposed for demolition.

The plans also call for a three-story addition to house the seventh and eighth grades. The first floor would consist of administrative offices, faculty and conference rooms as well as a new kitchen and cafeteria. Support services would be adjacent to the administration area.

The new senior center is proposed at the ex-

isting school space, in the cafeteria wing, taking advantage of the existing kitchen. The senior center's offerings would include a café, lounge, counseling space, library, health room, game room, fitness room and offices.

The third piece of the project is the community center, which would house the Youth and Social Services Department in the existing school space. Social services would include a food bank distribution area and storage. The plan includes a separate entrance directly adjacent to a dedicated parking area. The space for youth services includes a galley kitchen, game room, group counseling areas, technology room, lounge and library. The existing gymnasium and locker rooms would also be available for use by service groups.

Additionally, the community center would include what the Building Committee has coined "shared spaces." The shared spaces are additional rooms that various groups in town could utilize such as veterans, Boy and Girl Scouts, visual and performing arts, tutoring/mentoring, PTO, sports groups and other similar uses.

The total price tag on the project would be \$57 million for all three components. Renovations and additions to the middle school come to \$42.4 million; the senior center comes to \$5.7 million; and the community center comes to \$8.9 million. State reimbursement for the school construction is projected at \$18.1 million. The overall price tag – stated on the bond resolu-

tion to "not exceed \$57.26 million" – includes contingency costs. Town officials have stated additional grants could be applied for if the project is approved.

Additionally, town officials confirmed at a Sept. 18 town meeting that the resolution cannot be changed. The vote on Oct. 1 will either approve or disapprove the three-part project as presented.

Town officials commented on the importance of next Tuesday's referendum vote.

"This is an important decision, which will have long-standing implications on operations and spending," said First Selectman Gregg Schuster. "I urge all citizens to be informed as they cast their vote."

Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said this vote varies from others the town has seen in the past.

"This is not the traditional referendum question: do we spend money on X or do we spend nothing?" Tarlov stated. "On this one, a 'yes' means we spend money on the project, and a 'no' vote means we reject this project and re-start the planning for the school solution, [whose] cost will not be much less when you factor in a two-year delay, demolition costs and two old buildings that still need ongoing work."

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said the local school board is both "supportive" of the project and "excited" for the town-wide vote.

"We think the combination of the community center and senior center with the school makes for a comprehensive approach to solving several of the community's needs in a cost-efficient way," he said.

Goldstein said the most important aspect of the project is getting a "good sampling" of citizens to partake in the vote – and he encourages citizens to also make sure they get the facts on the project before heading to the polls.

"There's a lot of information on town websites so we encourage folks to make their own decisions and to vote," Goldstein said.

Building Committee Chairman Tom Tyler concluded the committee has worked "very hard" for the last two years to deliver the project as charged by the board of selectmen.

"I think the building committee is definitely looking forward to the vote and getting that feedback from the community."

A full report on the WJMS/Community/Senior Center is available for viewing online at the town's website by logging onto colchesterct.gov, and on the Board of Education website at colchesterct.org. The building committee will also be present at this weekend's 57 Fest to relay information about the project to the public. The 57 Fest is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 28, from 4-8:30 p.m., at the Colchester Recreation Complex, 215 Old Hebron Rd.; the rain date for the festival is Sunday, Sept. 29.

Colchester District Names Teacher, Paraprofessional of the Year

by Melissa Roberto

Teacher Karen Groves and paraprofessional Barbara Libby have each spent over a dozen years teaching Colchester students – and they have been recognized as among the district's finest in what they do.

Groves has been named Colchester's 2013 Teacher of the Year, while Libby has been tabbed the district's 2013 Paraprofessional of the Year.

Groves has been a first-grade teacher in Colchester since she entered the district in August 2000. She graduated from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., with a dual bachelor's degree in psychology and special education, with a minor in elementary education. Groves went on to receive her master's degree from Eastern Connecticut State University in educational technology. She grew up in Vernon and currently lives in East Hampton.

Groves' first steps in the education field were taken in Houston, Texas. She worked there for a total of six years teaching first grade for five years, and then became a math curriculum specialist for another year. In 2000, Groves moved back to Connecticut and has remained teaching in the Colchester district as a first-grade teacher ever since.

Currently, Groves works in a classroom that she said is part of the "team teaching" method. This means her classroom is adjoined with another first-grade class, allowing two classes of first grade students to often "mix and mingle" throughout the week for grouping lessons. This gives Groves and another first grade teacher the opportunity to "double teach," she said, or to work with varying groups of students, sometimes up to 40 first-graders at once.

Also in Colchester, Groves has served in several capacities. She has been a "cooperating teacher," accepting student teachers in her classroom. Groves has also been a "mentor teacher" in the past, in which she was responsible for guiding brand-new teachers hired into the district for their first few years as they go through the state process of becoming tenured.

While in the Colchester district, Groves has also dabbled in three aspects of the education field she said she enjoys: math, technology and special education. Groves said she served on a technology committee in the past, where she, alongside other educators in the district, came up with ways to integrate new technology into the classroom. Additionally, Groves serves on a committee dedicated to sharpening the math

curriculum. She said this committee is made up of teachers from every school in Colchester and they discuss where the math curriculum is going, and they help guide those transitions.

Groves was also thankful that her position in the district has allowed her to be a part of "inclusion classrooms" in the past, which are classrooms with a mix of children including students with special needs who are assisted by paraprofessionals.

In regards to the grade she's taught since day one, Groves said it's been a pleasure to work with Colchester's "little ones."

"First grade is the year that awakens everything for them," she said. "It's definitely high-maintenance sometimes, but they teach me things every day because you have that element of surprise."

Though Groves said she enjoyed being recognized as the district's teacher of the year, she felt other teachers worked with are just as admirable.

"At my speech at convocation [in August] I said I feel that it's not necessarily an honor that recognizes the best teacher there is but someone who represents lots of great teachers in our building," Groves recalled.

Groves concluded it's been "amazing" working within the Colchester district, and credited that to the administrators, teachers and Colchester parents she's worked with.

"We're very supported by our administrators and the teachers collaborate and work well together," she said. "And the parent support in this town between volunteers and parents is amazing. It really makes it easier to teach."

In a Board of Education meeting on Sept. 10, Groves was introduced by CES teacher Anne Watson. She recalled Groves' "innate talent" for making learning accessible to every child.

"When you talk with her about teaching, her love of the profession is evident above all else," Watson said.

Watson also highlighted Groves as a "proficient user" of technology in the classroom, stating she often trains colleagues in using SmartBoards and instructional websites. Additionally, Watson recalled Groves' recent reformation of first grade math instruction to fit with the Common Core State Standards.

"Not only did she revamp existing curriculum documents, she modeled lessons and helped colleagues implement the Mathematical Practice Standards in ways that extended

their instruction to new heights," Watson said.

Watson concluded Groves has impacted "all" first grade children at CES. She added her "innovative, thoughtful, collaborative and effective" traits are fitting for the Teacher of the Year title.

Colchester's paraprofessional of the year, Barbara Libby, is also no stranger to the district. Libby has worked as a paraprofessional in town since 1986. She attended Wittenberg University in Ohio and graduated with a degree in health and physical education. Right out of college, Libby taught high school physical education in Rochester, New York for five years. After a brief stay in Illinois, she moved to East Hampton in 1977 and raised her two sons, Carl, now of Enfield and Erik, now of Southington, with her husband Cliff, and has lived there ever since.

In 1986, Libby decided to enter back into the education field but as a paraprofessional, which she said was due to the fact that she still wanted to designate time for her family, and specifically, be a devoted "hockey mom." Libby recalled working in multiple Colchester schools when she first entered the district, including elementary and intermediate schools, but she admitted she never envisioned working with middle-schoolers.

"It's interesting," she said. "I enjoyed teaching high school because I really related to the kids just having graduated but then I really liked working with the little kids."

But, unexpectedly, the students at WJMS – where she's spent the last 18 years – stole her heart.

"I've loved it," said Libby. "And part of it is the people that I work with. I've also learned to love seventh-graders – they're a unique breed."

Interestingly, Libby's Paraprofessional of the Year honor came at a unique time. She is retiring at the end of October after a total of 27 years in Colchester to have more time with her already-retired husband, and to travel. She also plans to volunteer at Red Cross in their spare time, and she hinted that she won't be absent from the district altogether: Libby is going to start substitute teaching at WJMS in January.

Ending her final year as paraprofessional of the year is what Libby coined "frosting on the cake." She said the time she's spent in Colchester has been rewarding mainly due to the "very caring" staff, her team at WJMS, and her seventh-graders.

Also at the Sept. 10 board meeting, WJMS Principal Chris Bennett concluded Libby is a



First-grade teacher Karen Groves was recently named Colchester's Teacher of the Year. Groves was welcomed with plaque and flowers from the district administrators, who also honored William J. Johnston Middle School's Barbara Libby as Paraprofessional of the Year. The two were feted at the district's summer convocation and at a Board of Education meeting last week.

"nurturing educator" who made personal connections with students such as bringing in X-rays when a science class was learning about the skeletal system, taking students' blood pressure when students studied the cardiovascular unit, as well as bringing in books about meteorology when one student was fascinated by the weather.

"Daily, she strives to help make the children she works with successful," Bennett said. "She has a huge heart."

Each year, every Colchester public school chooses a paraprofessional and teacher of the year. Those individuals are then in the running for the district-wide honors, which are ultimately chosen by a team of Colchester administrators and directors.

East Hampton School Board Presented With Need for Improved Technology

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Board of Education reviewed an update at its meeting Monday night that ultimately addressed the need for improved technology to promote digital literacy among students.

Technology director Thomas McMahon, who provided the board with the update, said, "The IT department follows the digital literacy goal by providing access to technology, ensuring network health and connectivity, and integrating technology into the curriculum. But we can't integrate technology into the curriculum without the infrastructure."

McMahon said technology advancement would provide better access to technology. Those advancements would come in the form of desktops, wireless Internet, fiber and network switches.

According to McMahon, the 220 desktops that were purchased over the summer would "provide greater, more efficient access which allows for increased use."

Wireless advancements would provide better access, too, he said. He explained that wireless advancements would include implementing the old high school and middle school's wireless – Xirrus wireless – to Center School and Memorial School. The high school and middle school wireless would be upgraded to Meraki wireless. The wireless access will be ready by the end of September, he affirmed.

Additionally, the fiber-installment process would provide consistency, McMahon said. The fiber-installment should be completed by mid-

January, he added.

Regarding East Hampton's network switches, McMahon called them the "network backbone." He said the older switches have passed their "end of life date" in 2006. So all switches will be replaced so that the fiber upgrade will not be "rendered useless."

McMahon said advancing the switches would provide "relief to an overtaxed backbone."

However, McMahon said, "The upgrades are only the first part of the process and will require a [five-year] budget plan that includes a replacement and maintenance cycle – which we don't currently have – so our technology stays healthy and up to date."

McMahon also informed the board that the technology department is in the process of interviewing candidates to fill the systems support specialist position.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tasle also provided a presentation to the board. He explained students' test results from last year including results from the SAT Reasoning Test, ACT College Readiness Assessment, Advanced Placement Exams, Connecticut Academic Performance Test and Connecticut Mastery Test.

Van Tasle said, "No one piece of data stands alone" to rank student assessment.

But the CAPT and CMT are of particular interest because they are set to be replaced by the Smarter Balanced Assessment for the 2014-15 school year. Van Tasle affirmed that "there has been no formal correspondence" from the

state yet regarding a change this academic year.

The Smarter Balanced Test is based on the new Common Core state standards for curriculum.

"East Hampton High School did extremely well with the CAPT this year," Van Tasle said.

Additionally, he said East Hampton has seen "consistent levels of performance since 2008" on the CMTs, which is administered for grades three through eight.

East Hampton also did well on the SATs. According to Van Tasle, East Hampton students improved on the SATs in all areas since 2006 despite downward trends in the state.

Board member Josh Piteo asked if there would be a "disconnect" between current exams, like the SATs, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment once it is implemented.

Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas responded that it is yet to be seen if students will do better on the SATs once the Smarter Balanced Assessment is implemented.

Dugas affirmed, however, that the SATs are not changing to fit the Common Core.

Also at Monday's meeting, the board approved its 2013-16 Board of Education goals 7 to 1, with board member Don Coolican voting against. He particularly objected to the goal that read, "East Hampton Public Schools will prepare all students for college, career and life by advancing digital literacy," as he doesn't necessarily feel high schools prepare students for life.

"Are we preparing kids for life?" he said. "Is that really something we're doing? For life you have to know how to raise children, how to change a tire, how to negotiate a loan. Those are things we don't touch on at all."

The goals focus on curriculum, advancing digital literacy and teacher evaluations.

* * *

According to Dugas, East Hampton Middle School was selected to participate in a three-year cohort of Connecticut state personnel development grant. The \$3,000 grant will allow the middle school to further develop its cognitive behavioral support system using the state intervention framework.

Also at Monday's meeting, Coolican mentioned to the board that a new breakfast program at Memorial Elementary School will offer students a cereal bar and milk starting Oct. 7.

"Do you think it's appropriate to offer those kids chocolate milk?" he asked the board. "I don't think chocolate milk is as healthy as white milk."

The board decided to table the milk discussion, but Dugas did say about the breakfast program, "We are hoping to increase our profits through that program."

The next regularly scheduled East Hampton Board of Education meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 15, at 7 p.m., in the East Hampton High School library.

East Hampton Council Moves Athletic Lights to Town Meeting

by Elizabeth Bowling

Tuesday night's Town Council meeting was standing-room-only, as a slew of residents came out to discuss three topics: the installation of lights to the high school soccer field, the lack of water at the Chatham Historical Society, and the agricultural commission.

After eight residents approached the podium during the public comment portion of the meeting to support the high school athletic field lighting project, the council reviewed a presentation from Musco Lighting and unanimously approved the project, moving it forward to a town meeting Monday, Oct. 21, at 7 p.m. at the high school auditorium.

Mark Lambert, the president of East Hampton Soccer Club, spoke to reinforce his support for lighting the high school soccer field. Pointing to the half-dozen young soccer players in attendance, he said lights would "reward them" for their hard work.

He also noted the potential positive economic impact it would have in East Hampton. He added that it's an affordable project that would bring the community together.

One East Hampton soccer mom, Sue Kelley, said, "Parents that...work all day don't get the opportunity all the time to see these games and it would be really nice to have some night games so I don't have to use vacation time to go watch my kids play soccer."

Andrew Dyjak, a representative from Musco Lighting, provided the council with a presentation on the soccer field lights.

Dyjak said, "It's a defined area that we're trying to light."

He noted that over 85 percent of the light coming out of the bulbs would hit the field. He said there would be a "negligible amount of light off the field," and no light would disrupt abutting properties.

The only cost to the town for the next 25 years

would be utility costs, he said. The manufacturer would cover all other costs.

East Hampton resident Glenn Gustine, who calculated the impact the soccer field lighting project would have on taxpayers, said it would cost \$15 per resident. He added that the benefit to the kids would be "fantastic."

He said that eight of the 11 shoreline schools have soccer lights but East Hampton is "one of the few that does not." Rather, the East Hampton High School Sports Boosters rent 15 generators for night games.

Also at Tuesday night's meeting, other East Hampton residents spoke out regarding the Chatham Historical Society Museum's lack of water, an issue that came up after an East Hampton resident approached the council requesting access to the village center's water system.

Haim Zahavi, approached the board a couple months ago regarding a development at 13 Summit St. that he'd been working on for about two years. The development would consist of 29 condominium units that will be sold, not rented, and an office space.

The project would use 6,600 gallons of water per day, leaving 800 gallons of water per day for a safe yield.

Sandy Doran, the president of the Chatham Historical Society, said she doesn't understand why the Town Council is considering giving Zahavi 6,600 gallons of water per day for his condominium when the historical society museum is yet to be allotted any water.

According to Town Manager Mike Maniscalco, the historical society would require 375 gallons of water per day.

Doran said that the main historical society museum building, located at 6 Bevin Blvd. was completed in 2007. When the building was completed, she recalled, "We were told we'd be getting water 'shortly.'"

"For nine years we've been asking, 'When can we get water?'" she said, adding that the answer to that question is that "there is not enough water for us."

Marty Podskoch, a volunteer at the historical society, said, "We have a great facility... yet no water."

He said that the 50th anniversary celebration of the historical society is coming up next month. He expects it to be a big event, for which they need to rent a toilet.

"Do you believe this?" he said, pleading with the council to "take this into consideration."

Town Council member Derek Johnson asked that Maniscalco meet with a representative from the historical society and Vinny Susco from the public works department within the next two weeks to figure out the options.

"There's got to be a solution," Johnson said. The council decided to hold off on voting on the 13 Summit St. project until its next meeting.

Another hot issue at Tuesday's meeting was the formation of an agricultural commission in town.

The board reviewed a presentation by Jim Gooch, the executive director of Connecticut Farmland Trust, on the agricultural commission ordinance.

According to Gooch, agriculture is a \$3.5 billion per year industry that employs about 21,000 people in Connecticut. He said today the state is home to 4,900 farms "and there are more every year."

Despite those numbers, Gooch said, every year the state loses 20 percent more farmland than it saves.

"There is hardly an enterprise in this state that is more regulated by statutes already in place than farming," he said.

He said agriculture is trying to resurge from

1950.

"There's this huge generation gap between the farmers that are going into the field today and the farmers that are there now, already," he said.

For every farmer in Connecticut under the age of 35, he said, there are six over the age of 65. So in the next 40 years, there will be more agricultural land on the market than ever before, he said.

But Gooch also looked hundreds of years into the future.

He said, "The only way we're going to have a future in agriculture is if we don't deplete the land base today."

After discussing the importance of agriculture and farmers, Gooch said, "I would endorse this council to establish an agricultural commission."

East Hampton resident Steve Strong expressed concern regarding the appointment of the seven-member agricultural commission. He said someone on the commission should be involved in agriculture.

Gooch and the council agreed, and added to the draft that "at least two" members of the commission should be from the agricultural community.

Regarding East Hampton's draft of the Right to Farm ordinance, Gooch said it matches closely with the state ordinance. Thus, he said, by establishing the ordinance, the town would provide existing protections to farmers, "send a signal" that would welcome farmers to the community, and tell the community at large that it supports farming.

The council decided to bring the commission to a public hearing for Tuesday, Oct. 8, at 6 p.m. prior to the regularly scheduled Town Council meeting at 6:30 in the East Hampton High School library.

Hebron School Board Scraps Shared Director Plan

by Geeta Schrayter

At its Sept. 12 meeting, the Board of Education decided not to move forward with the possibility of sharing a financial director with the town.

The possibility of utilizing the shared service model was brought forth by Town Manager Andrew Tierney at a June school board meeting.

At that meeting, Tierney explained the move could result in a higher caliber candidate since it would mean a better salary, and would provide more checks and balances. He added it would also speak to residents who felt the town and school board had a top-heavy administration.

The town has been looking to hire a finance director to replace Lisa Hancock who resigned in January 2012. Since that time, Elaine Griffin has been acting as the interim.

Over at the schools, the board has been looking to fill the same position since the May resignation of William Mazzara following a scandal involving former superintendent of schools Eleanor Cruz's alleged misuse of funds. Mazzara's services had been contracted out to the board two days a week by the Region Eight School District. Interim Finance Director Dave Lenihan has been in place at the schools since April, and is scheduled to remain until December.

After hearing Tierney's presentation, the school board decided its resource management subcommittee should look into the possibility, and at the Sept. 12 meeting, Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea said they'd done just that.

"We've continued to look at the shared services model some other towns have gone to," she said.

Plainville town officials came and talked about the model, which they switched over to a year ago, and Shea said so far "it has worked for them, they have said, and it's convenient because they're all housed in the same building."

In addition, Shea, Lenihan and Superintendent of Schools Jeff Newton took a trip to Colchester where a shared business model has been in use for 12 years. Like Plainville, Shea said everyone was housed in the town office building on the same floor.

If the model were adopted in Hebron, Shea went on to say the key would be having both the town and school administrative staff housed in the same place.

Newton agreed.

"Currently I can walk out of my office and if [Lenihan] and I need to talk about something we can do it," he said. "That would be very difficult obviously if he were down the road. If that person is busy or in a meeting, I can't get an answer right away."

Newton went on to mention other towns that utilized the shared business model and said one of the most important things mentioned by the individuals they spoke to was that everyone was housed together.

Lenihan furthered that point.

"I do think if it does have any chance of success you really need to be physically next to each other," he said.

Shea added the board was "under the gun," since Lenihan was hired only until December. She felt the board couldn't give the issue the time necessary to conduct a full study, and said "it's just not conceivable" to have everyone housed under one roof by December.

As a result, Shea suggested studying the is-

sue "another day" but keeping the arrangement the way it currently is.

"Time is of the essence and this just can't happen now," she said.

On Wednesday, Tierney said he had been "hoping" the board would want to go through with the merger. He explained the possibility had been talked about before he had taken over as town manager, and discussion was scheduled to occur after Mazzara's originally planned retirement in about two years.

"But seeing how things changed and the position opened, that prompted us to move forward at least with the review," he said. "I was always very clear even though I was for it that it had to work for both parties: the town and the school system. We weren't trying to force their hand."

During the Sept. 12 meeting, members had mentioned the merger wouldn't actually save the town money, but Tierney said it was never meant to be a cost saving measure.

"It was more for transparency, better book-keeping, and somewhat in response to comments by our auditors," he said.

Although Tierney said the board's decision needed to be honored, he wondered if continuing the discussion after the elections, when the new board was settled, wouldn't be appropriate.

"It might be a good idea to not make decisions that are going to affect a brand new board coming in," he said. "But that will remain to be seen."

Tierney added he understood why the school board felt it necessary to advertise the position with Lenihan's upcoming departure; however, he said the idea should be looked at again once the position had been filled and there wasn't as

much urgency.

"They're advertising that position now due to time constraints with Lenihan leaving in December and I totally understand why they're doing that" he said, but added with the charter revision that's currently going on in town, utilizing a shared business model may be something that's examined for the future.

"So I think we're going to be looking at everything," he said.

Tierney added he hadn't yet decided whether to go ahead with advertising for a new finance director for the town. He said he was still talking with Newton, but if the school board was "100 percent sure they're going to do their own thing," he would press forward.

And on Wednesday it looked as though that was the case.

Newton reiterated the issue was the timeline, and said a decision had been made "in the best interest of the board, to go ahead and hire our own person."

"If [Lenihan] was with us for the rest of this year I think [Tierney] and the town would have more time to further study," he said. "But because of the timeline, we need somebody in house."

Newton said he planned to place an ad for the position within the next two weeks.

"We're going to pursue and hire our own [person]. I think down the road, in the future, you always keep the door open and look at everything. That's transparency," he said. But "we need to move forward and do what's best."

"If the town wants to open up dialogue at a later date we'll certainly be open to that," Shea furthered at the Sept. 12 meeting. "But logistically, it's not open at this time."

Hebron School Board Make-Up to Change

by Geeta Schrayter

The make-up of the Hebron Board of Education is slated to change in November, with the departure of three Republican members once their term comes to an end, and the recent resignation of Republican Dominic Marino.

Marino, who joined the board in 2011, submitted a succinct letter of resignation Sept. 9, which offered up no explanation for his decision.

Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea acknowledged the resignation at the Sept. 12 board meeting, the same night the Board of Selectmen accepted the resignation with regret.

Shea said this week she had received a copy of his resignation letter at her house, and while she's reached out to him, the two haven't yet connected, and she wasn't sure why he resigned. Marino did not return calls for comment for this story.

Of his service on the board, Shea said, "Marino did add a lot of conversation and dialog to the board meetings and gave us plenty of different areas to think about so that was very helpful."

Marino was frequently outspoken at the meetings, and it wasn't uncommon for him to be the dissenting vote on different issues, frequently related to the budget.

More than once, Marino and board member Amy Lynch-Gracias had similar thoughts on a topic, and on Wednesday Lynch-Gracias said

she was "saddened" by his resignation.

"I'm very saddened by the decision Dominic has made," she said. Like Shea, Lynch-Gracias hadn't spoken to Marino about his resignation, but said he had been frustrated by some of the board interactions.

"I could understand him being frustrated," she said. "We both have been hurt by things being said."

Lynch-Gracias went on to say that, in addition to being saddened by Marino's departure, she was disappointed no Republicans had stepped forward to run for the board – although she added that, as a school board member herself, she understood the difficulties that came with it.

"It can be difficult to make that time commitment," she said.

Republican Town Committee Chairwoman Catherine Marx agreed.

"I believe that the Board of Education is seen by many as a challenge that can encompass a vast amount of volunteer hours," she said. "And people are very busy these days with other commitments."

Marx explained that, although the committee held a meeting Monday night to discuss nominations for the board, "there is no one willing to step-up to serve."

"With the resignation of Dominic Marino,

we still have time to try to recommend a republican to the Board of Selectmen and we will continue to reach out to find someone to serve on the board" she said, but added, "The Republicans will not be fielding a candidate for the Hebron Board of Education in November."

Shea, along with members Tina Blinn and William Moorcroft will not seek reelection, and because no Republican candidates have been nominated, the three Democratic candidates who were endorsed: Ramon Bieri, Erica Bromley, and Carol Connolly, will be uncontested.

As a result, the board will change from a Republican majority of 5-2 to a Democratic majority of 5-2. Marino's seat will need to be filled with a fellow Republican in order to fulfill state statute regarding minority representation.

Despite the change, neither Marx nor Lynch-Gracias felt it would impact the board's abilities.

"On a national level and our state level, politics can move away from the spirit of serving your community and get lost in a lot of partisan bickering," Marx explained. "The best thing about serving on local boards is it comes to the heart of being part of your community and representational government at its truest form."

Marx added although board member had dif-

ferences "there's a level of respect" that isn't always found in state and national politics.

Having a Democratic majority on the board will be "an interesting change of course," Lynch-Gracias said, but furthered, "As far as party divisions, I don't think there's that much in our town, at least in the way of anxieties or frustrations with the parties. We've always had a pretty good working understanding of each other and worked together."

As for Shea, with new people coming on board, she said it remained to be seen how the composition would work.

"There will be new people on the board, probably with new philosophies and new thoughts, so we'll just have to see how the new board emerges," she said.

And that new board will emerge as a result of Election Day, Nov. 5, and whomever the Board of Selectmen appoints to fill Marino's position.

Candidates interested in filling the position should attend a Board of Education meeting and discuss the time commitment with Shea. Letters of interest or questions can be addressed to: Andrew Tierney, Town Manager, Town of Hebron, 15 Gilead St. or by calling 860-228-5971.

Nominations will be accepted through Oct. 25.

Portland 'Lights the Sky' For Sandy Hook

By Elizabeth Bowling

After months of unexpected postponements, the "Light the Sky with Light and Love" event to honor the victims of last December's Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings finally happened last Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Portland Exchange Club Fairgrounds.

The event included a variety of entertainment and activities, from vendors, to carnival rides, to a rock climbing wall and musicians from across the northeast including New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

One musical duo, called Justin Co., performed a song they had written specially for the 26 victims of Sandy Hook. The tribute song, called "26 Angels," had gone unheard by the public until last weekend. With the help of five locals kids, Justin Co. sang, "You're still here and we all need an angel."

Newtown resident Jodi Markowsky, whose 8-year-old daughter Rebecca survived the shootings at Sandy Hook, said, "I'm glad to come support the cause.

Markowsky called the tragedy "such a widespread thing."

"People have been so generous to us, so I wanted to come and give back," she said. "It's been an emotional year. We have a lot to be grateful for. I like to focus on the good, not the bad because wondering 'what if' – you'll drive yourself crazy."

Markowsky went on to say that her family and community are doing what they can to keep moving forward. She added that she doesn't want to harbor resentment or anger because she doesn't want her daughter to feel that.

Markowsky said her daughter fully understands what happened at her school the day of the shooting, noting that the young girl saw and heard things that she won't soon forget.

But regarding the fun event Saturday, Markowsky said she wasn't sure if her daughter fully grasped its purpose. Rebecca simply knew that she was having a good time and that her favorite part of the day was the carnival swings.

Markowsky's friend, Kathleen Caiola, from South Glastonbury, also came out for a good cause.

She called the event "very relaxed" and said, "It's nice to see all these different vendors and supporters."

Markowski agreed, "It's very nice."

According to Alysia Robinson, the event organizer, Markowsky wasn't the only Sandy Hook parent at the event.

"One man is here who lost his son in the shooting," she said, though she decided to keep his identity anonymous.

In addition to the Sandy Hook residents, the total turnout of the day was about 100 – an impressive number considering the day's slow start. The total in fundraising was about \$2,500, Robinson confirmed.

All proceeds from the event were donated to My Sandy Hook Family Fund, Sandy Hook Family Healing Fund, The Lions Club of Newtown – First responders fund, The Victoria Soto Scholarship Fund, The Catherine Hubbard Animal Sanctuary, and The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation.

According to Robinson, the fundraising event was actually her son's idea.

Regarding how he came up with the idea, Robinson's 10-year-old son Jordan said, "I watch the news."

He came home from school Dec. 14, the day of the Sandy Hook shooting, knowing full well what had happened in his home state, his mom said. So she let him watch the news for about an hour that afternoon.

"He said, 'Mom, we have to do something,'" Robinson recalled. "We, of course, were at a loss for what to do."

After some brainstorming, the two came up with the idea to release sky lanterns in honor of the victims and survivors of the Sandy Hook shooting.

Jordan, whose birthday was just two days before the shooting, decided to use his birthday money to purchase the first lantern.

Robinson then went forward with the idea by posting it on her personal Facebook page. She said more and more people kept getting on-board with the idea until about 2,000 sky lanterns were set to launch.

At the time that Robinson was planning for the original Light the Sky event, there were no



Wendy Cooney of Sist-Airs Custom Airbrushing paints a shell with a heart and wings, in memory of those affected by the Sandy Hook shootings. Cooney was one of about a dozen vendors at the Light the Sky With Light and Love event. Her proceeds from the day were donated to the overall funds raised from the event.

laws in Connecticut regarding launching sky lanterns, she said. However, in February, a law was put in place that required that a pyrotechnic be present during any sky lantern launch, she explained, so she hired one from Ocean State Pyrotechnics for the event.

An environmental group from Florida then put up a fight when it learned about Robinson's plan to launch 2,000 lanterns. Following the Florida group's involvement, the Connecticut law changed again and now totally disallows sky lanterns to be launched, Robinson said.

Robinson said she still has the 2,000 donated lanterns.

"We are going to take them out of state" and release them at an undisclosed time and place, she said.

After the law change, Robinson said Light the Sky was "scrambling" to get a show together for the original date, June 9.

That was when Ocean State Pyrotechnics donated a fireworks show and CT Laser "stepped up and offered us a laser light show,"

Robinson said.

At 7:30 Saturday night, Light the Sky shut down all lights and activity at the fairgrounds to make way for the laser and fireworks shows, which Robinson described as "beautiful," "absolutely perfect" and "incredible."

Imperial Shows LLC – out of Old Saybrook – donated four carnival rides for kids including swings. Other donations came in the form of vendors, food carts, musicians, and volunteers donating time.

The event was filled with kid-friendly activities like a dunk tank, two moon bounces, a rock-climbing wall, a fried dough and ice cream stand, a photo booth, food trucks, picnic areas and musical performances.

One musician, Faith Ziegler, 18, said she decided to perform at Light the Sky because, "This is a really good cause and I want to be a part of it."

Robinson said the Light the Sky organization is considering making the event an annual one.

BubbleMania Comes to East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

In a show designed to entertain people of all ages, one man will turn East Hampton Middle School into BubbleMania tomorrow afternoon, Sept. 28.

Casey Carle, a comic bubble artist, called his one-man show "enticing," noting his use of verbal and situational comedy.

"There's plenty of soap and water, so it's not a dry presentation," he joked.

He added that his target audience is 5 years or older.

"This is not a toddler, baby show," he said. "This will engage older kids."

Regarding his comedy- and art-based show, he said, "There's an inherent science to everything I do."

He added that he offers a few opportunities for audience interaction. "I engage with my audience regularly throughout the show," he furthered.

Carle said he "started manipulating soap bubbles professionally" about 25 years ago with the Ringling Brothers. Coming from a family with 10 brothers and sisters, Carle said he always wanted to find something that no one else was doing.

"I really just needed something I could call my own," he said about finding a way to "stand out from the crowd" that was his own family.

Carle's show is known for its beauty, wonder and funniness, he said. He noted that he likes to keep the mood of the crowd changing every few minutes from, for example, awe to a full-belly laugh.

"I hardly let one thing stand alone for too

long. The whole show is a blend," he said.

But in the 4,000-plus times Carle has performed his show, he has never done a repeat performance, he said, because he makes each show specific to his audience.

"It's a great time," he said.

Carle suggested that audience members arrive early for a pre-show, which will start about 15 minutes before the actual show.

Josh Piteo, who organized the event, said, "It's a comedy show where science and comedy collide."

Piteo, who has seen Carle perform twice before, said "It's amazing what he can do with bubbles."

Piteo said there will be two interactive shows at East Hampton Middle School tomorrow, Sept. 28. The first show will start at 1 p.m. and the second at 3 p.m. Both should last a little less than one hour.

Piteo also said the 1 p.m. show will have a clown to greet people, as well as Rocky from the New Britain Rock Cats to welcome people.

Tickets will not be sold in advance, but can be purchased at the door for \$3 for kids younger than 12 and \$5 for adults. Beverages and candy will also be sold at the show.

According to Piteo, the show is sponsored by the East Hampton Rotary Club and all proceeds will go toward local charities like the food bank, fuel bank and the Rotary Club's college scholarships for high school seniors.

Piteo called the event a "fun, family-filled day" that will surely provide "a lot of laughs."

Portland Receives Grants to Improve School Security

by Elizabeth Bowling

Portland became one of the first school districts in Connecticut to receive funds through the Competitive Grant Program for school security last Wednesday, Sept. 18.

The grant is part of the Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety Act and, according to a press release from Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's office, 169 schools in 36 districts received funds in this first round. It furthered that the next round of funding will be announced soon.

A total of \$5 million in state funding will be used to reimburse municipalities for a portion of the costs associated security infrastructure improvements made in the wake of the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

Portland schools will receive a \$24,374 reimbursement from the state, leaving the town to fund the remaining \$20,818.

Board of Education Chairman Chris Phelps said that over the past year, the school board had been working to identify security needs and recently moved into the implementation of more security.

He said that grant "really helps make those improvements that we need to make to the schools affordable for the taxpayers."

His thoughts were echoed by those of First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

"We are very pleased to be one of the first school districts to receive funds from the Competitive Grant Program for School Security," Bransfield said in an email.

The awards were administered by the state Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) in consultation with the state Department of Education and the Department of Construction Services, according to the governor's press release.

The grant money was based on a school

security assessment survey conducted by each school district that applied. Each municipality will be reimbursed between 20 and 80 percent depending upon the town's wealth, the press release stated. Funds from municipalities, which totaled \$3,921,435, will be matched with nearly \$5 million in state funding for an overall \$8,911,853 investment in school security in this first round, it furthered.

Malloy noted in his press release that school security became more important than ever following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown last winter.

"After the horrific events on Dec. 14, Connecticut cities and towns moved swiftly to improve security infrastructures at schools in need," Malloy said. "We will never be able to prevent every random act, but we can take the steps necessary to make sure that our children and our teachers are as safe as possible. This funding allows districts with the most need to implement modern security measures that will make schools safer."

Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman also expressed the importance of school security at this time.

"We all wish that this program was not needed, but unfortunately we must adapt to the new reality that Sandy Hook tragically brought to our state," Wyman said. "This funding will not only make our schools more secure, but will give us the peace of mind that we are doing everything we can to live up to our obligation to provide a safe learning environment for our children."

Malloy's press release stated that DESPP received 111 applications for proposed infrastructure projects in 604 school buildings. The proposals included installing surveillance cameras, bulletproof glass, electric locks, buzzer and card-entry systems and panic alarms.

Portland Man Wins Film Festival Award

by Elizabeth Bowling

A Portland resident was awarded “Best Feature Screenplay” for this year’s Moondance International Film Festival, and will accept his award at the festival this weekend.

Jim Steffman, 58, who has lived in Portland for 21 years, won for his screenplay *For What It’s Worth*, which was adapted from his novel *Shadow of Death*, which was based on a true story.

Steffman recalled the phone call he received about a month and a half ago from Elizabeth English, the founder of the Moondance event, who told Steffman that his 192-page screenplay had won “Best Feature Screenplay.”

According to Steffman, a “feature screenplay” is a “screenplay to be told in a movie.”

“It’s pretty exciting,” he said. “When I entered the festival I was expecting to get a critique back of my work. I wasn’t expecting to win.”

That’s why when English informed him of his victory over screenplay writers from 60 countries, Steffman recalled, “My response was, ‘Okay, okay.’ I was in disbelief.”

According to a press release from Sherry Frazier, Steffman’s publicist, the screenplay is about Jim Steffman, “a highly-successful and upwardly-mobile businessman who possessed a natural talent for turning anything mundane into something extraordinary.”

When the Steffman character enters the world of big business, he becomes a millionaire while simultaneously and unknowingly entering the world of the East Coast Mafia, too, the press release furthered.

The main character goes on to meet and befriend businessman John Hurley, who is secretly a member of an Italian crime family and one of America’s most wanted. Hurley admits his status to Steffman and also warns him that his new attorney and business partner, J.R. DeChellis, is a member of the major crime family, too. Additionally, the man Steffman brought on board for “insurance,” Bruno Contri, is a soldier in the crime family as well.

Hurley informs his new friend that the mafia had been keeping an eye on Steffman and soon the federal government and its Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) would force a testimony from Steffman against the mafia.

The government’s threats and illegal activity caused the Steffman character to lose “everything but his strength of character,” the press release continued. All the while Hurley remains at large and is considered “armed and extremely dangerous,” it stated.

“To this day, Jim has never been arrested, charged with or convicted of any crime, nor has he spent one single hour in federal prison,” the press release concluded. “He and his family

have suffered well beyond anyone who actually committed the unsubstantiated crimes of which he is accused, but by telling his story now, he hopes for redemption.”

In a phone interview last week, Steffman said that his story provides a lot of information about the DEA – a government agency most people will never encounter first-hand, he said.

“They normally don’t get involved with citizens,” he furthered regarding the DEA.

However, he was an exception. The now-58-year-old recalled that he was young – in his early 30s – at the time his story took place and he owned a lot of properties. He called himself “self-made,” despite what the DEA thought about him probably because of his youth.

“They confused me into believing I was involved in this mess. They didn’t take the time to investigate me,” he recalled.

Regarding how much of the story is true and how much is fictitious, Steffman said, “I kind of want to leave that up to the audience.”

Steffman said the story had a “heavy impact” on his life. He said he started writing it 15 years ago and, over time, compiled it into a manuscript. Adopting the novel into a screenplay took the writer about three more years, he said.

“I had some people read it and a lot of the reaction was, ‘Wow, this would make a really good movie,’” he said.

His experience in composing the screenplay taught him that a lot of elements go into it, including carrying the story forward throughout the development, Steffman said.

Steffman said his favorite aspect of his screenplay will be “bringing the story out, finally, to the public. I really need to have this story told and I think telling it in film will have the greatest impact. I hope the result will be that this doesn’t happen to anyone else again.”

Steffman said his next step is to present his screenplay to somebody like film producer Harvey Weinstein, who Steffman called “the king.” The writer said his ultimate dream is to have Weinstein buy his story.

But, he said, “Breaking into entertainment is so much more difficult than getting into business.”

For now Steffman has left the business world behind and is writing on a full-time basis. He’s working on marketing his screenplay, as well as turning it into episodes for a series based on the same story. The episodes consist of stories that take place between the stories in the screenplay, he said. Some of it overlaps, he added.

But before he became a full-time writer, Steffman was a businessman – like his character. His first business purchase was a property in Portland on Route 66, which he turned into a carwash, he said. He then expanded the property by building a gas station in front of the



Jim Steffman (seen here with his dog, Diesel) of Portland was named the Moondance International Film Festival winner of “Best Feature Screenplay.” His screenplay, *For What It’s Worth*, is based on his novel, *Shadow of Death*, which is based on his real-life experiences. He will accept his award at the festival on Sunday, Sept. 29.

carwash and a mini storage unit behind it. The process took him about two years, he said, noting the lengthy acquisition of permits, engineering work, and planning and zoning approvals.

“It was a really good base to spin off other businesses,” he said, recalling that he continued to buy other gas station properties, as well.

Steffman no longer owns the property on which he built a Citgo gas station, Axelrod Tire and storage unit because, as he explained in his screenplay, he ended up losing the property to the banks, he said.

* * *

According to Frazier, the annual Moondance International Film Festival tends to attract serious filmmakers, screenwriters, music composers, producers, directors, talent agents, distributors and indie film buffs.

She added that the festival does screenings of nominated indie and foreign films, as well as professional workshops, seminars, entertainment industry celebrity appearances, three pitch-panels, private consultations with professionals, a grand awards ceremony, a reception, an opening and closing night gala, networking parties and a premier film market.

According to the festival’s website, the event honors “filmmakers, writers and composers who actively increase awareness, provide multiple viewpoints and address complex social

issues.”

Steffman’s screenplay seems to fit the bill perfectly. From now on, the writer will be a “moondancer.”

“Moondancers are part of an amazing worldwide community; a unique collaboration of multi-talented writers, film score composers and filmmakers,” the website stated. “The Moondance mission is to entertain, inform, inspire, encourage and educate.”

According to Steffman, last year’s Moondance Festival was held in New York City; before that it was held in Hollywood, and prior to that was Boulder, Colo.

“They moved the whole event to Mystic, Conn., this year for the first time,” Steffman said. “It’s kind of new for Connecticut to have a film festival here of this size.”

He said this year’s event – which started yesterday and will run through Sunday, Sept. 29 – is expected to draw a crowd of about 40,000 people. He said the festival will take over the areas of Mystic and Stonington, including the casinos.

“It’ll be a whole new environment for me,” Steffman said last week of the four-day festival. He anticipated attending each day – and of course will be at the awards ceremony on Sunday, where he will eagerly accept his first Moondance award.

Obituaries

Portland

Paul M. Landry

Paul M. Landry, 68 of Portland, husband of Patricia (Berggren) Landry passed away Thursday, Sept. 19, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late Alex and Annie (Bouthot) Landry.

Born Jan. 2, 1945, in Millinocket, Maine, he has lived in Portland for the last 35 years. He was a 1962 graduate of St. Martin of Tours and worked at Northeast Utilities for over 30 years until his retirement. He was also a U.S. Air Force veteran having served during Vietnam. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, he belonged to the fire police of the Portland Fire Dept Co. 2, he was an assistant boy scout leader, played on the J.J. Bials softball team, was an avid bowler and golfer. He was a UConn Husky Basketball fan and he enjoyed having breakfast every day at Eggs Up Grill in Portland.

Besides his wife, he leaves his sons, Jason Michael Landry of Meriden and Kevin Mathew Landry of Portland; brothers, Fr. Leroy Landry O.M.I. of Lowell, Mass., Philip Landry of West Hartford, Ray Landry of San Antonio, Texas, and Alex Landry Jr. of Houston, Texas; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brothers, Martin, Patrick, Edgar and Rudy and by a sister, Alexine Tinkham.

Funeral services were held Monday, Sept. 23, at 10:30 a.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church, 50 Court St., Cromwell. Burial will be private. Relatives and friends called Sunday, Sept. 22, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, and also on Monday before the service, at Bethany Lutheran Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to Portland Fire Department, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.

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

East Hampton

Newton J. Williams

Newton J. Williams, 71, of East Hampton, widow of Judy (Senyk) Williams, passed away Friday, September 20, 2013 peacefully with his daughters by his side. Newt, a lifelong resident of East Hampton, was born March 4, 1942 in Hartford. He was the son of the late Edward J. Williams.

Newt is survived by his mother, Phyllis (Sheehan) Williams of East Hampton and two daughters Stacy (Williams) Ray, her husband Joseph of East Hampton and Karen Williams and her partner Michael McGinley of Glastonbury. He was predeceased by his son Edward Williams. Newt also leaves behind his dear friend and companion, Nance Shumbo and her family, his two sisters: Judy Schneider, her husband Richard of Maryland and Pamela Williams of East Hampton. He also leaves three nieces: Erika, Moira, and Kyra, a nephew, Michael, two grandchildren: Jessica and Nicholas and two great-granddaughters: Jaelynn and Bryanna. Newt also leaves behind his many numerous dear and close friends and in-laws.

Early in life, Newt proved an avid fan of baseball through his participation with the Cardinals, a Little League team of East Hampton. He worked as a highly skilled welder throughout his life and retired from J.C. Barton Company of East Hampton. Newt had a passion for cooking and baking, often preparing meals and desserts for various holidays as well as East Hampton's yearly-celebrated Old Home Days. He enjoyed long car rides to various Connecticut destinations and weekend get-a-ways to Maine and Rhode Island. Newt had a keen sense for numbers. He loved to track a multitude of statistics and was especially fond of playing Sudoku.

The family would like to thank the doctors and nurses in the Intensive Care Unit on Floor 10 at Hartford Hospital for their extreme care, concern and regard of Newt, as well as his family.

Spencers Funeral Home is graciously handling arrangements. There were no calling hours. A memorial service and Mass was held Wednesday, Sept. 25, at St. Patrick's Church, East Hampton, and he will be interred in the family plot at St. Patrick's cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made by the donor's choice in Newton's name.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Joseph Patrick Kiernan

Joseph Patrick Kiernan, 46, of Colchester, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Sept. 18. Born May 3, 1967 in New Haven, he was a son of the late Thomas and Joan (Grandbois) Kiernan.

Joe had worked as a mason for many years, most recently for Manafort Brothers. A talented builder, he loved the outdoors, especially the ocean; fishing and lobstering.

He leaves his two beloved children, Jenna and Sean, and his wife of 15 years, Lana Thibodeau Kiernan, all of Colchester; six siblings, Thomas (Nancy) Kiernan of Belfast, Maine, Elizabeth Kiernan, Timothy (Robin) Kiernan and Margaret (Ernie) Marzullo, all of Wallingford, Michael Kiernan of New Haven and John Kiernan of Groton; and numerous extended family and friends.

The family received guests from noon-2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 22, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service will be observed at 2 p.m. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-1718 or to the charity of one's choice.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Eugene Robert Mudgett

Eugene Robert Mudgett, "Gene," 78, of Colchester and formerly of East Haddam, beloved husband of Joan (Sarni) Mudgett, passed away Sunday, Sept. 22, at home, surrounded by his loving family. Born June 24, 1935 in Tamworth, N.H., he was the son of the late Robert and Thelma (Watson) Mudgett.

Gene was a well-known mechanic in the Haddam/East Haddam area for many years before opening Hebron Auto Supply, which he owned and operated for nearly 25 years before his retirement in 2007.

An avid motorcyclist, he was a member of the New London Motorcycle Club and loved to spend time outdoors.

In addition to his loving wife of nearly 58 years, he is survived by two sons, Robert of Kent and Verne of East Haddam; three daughters (and their spouses), Tamera (Arthur) Santos of Rocky Hill, Tina (Alan) Fecteau of Walpole, N.H., and Nicole (Mike) Soboleski of Colchester; 11 grandchildren; nine great grandchildren; three sisters, Marilyn (and husband, Harold) Wiggins, Faye Norcross and Marjorie Goodine, all of New Hampshire; and numerous extended family members and friends.

The family received guests Tuesday, Sept. 24, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service was observed that evening. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the New London Motorcycle Club, P.O. Box 221, Quaker Hill 06375 or to Middlesex Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown 06457.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

James William Stamm

James William Stamm, 51, of East Hampton, died Friday, Sept. 20. Born in Middletown, he was the son of Jean (Desrosiers) Stamm and the late William E. Stamm. A 1979 graduate of Vinal Technical High School in Middletown. Jim was known for his generosity, caring for friends in need, and paying it forward when possible, expecting nothing in return.

His business is a cornerstone of the community and has been for many years, as when his father owned it. He put people to work, gave many second chances and helped those down on their luck. He will be missed.

James leaves his wife, Dena (Gromko) Stamm of East Hampton and their sons, Matthew and Kyle. He is also survived by his sister, Eileen Downes of Columbia, his niece, and his three nephews.

A funeral liturgy was celebrated Monday, Sept. 23, in Saint Patrick Church, 47 West High St., East Hampton. Calling hours were Sunday, Sept. 22, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut Inc., 386 Main St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Marlborough

Kenneth N. Lord

Kenneth N. Lord, 77, of Marlborough, beloved husband of Phyllis (Majeski) Lord, died Monday, Sept. 23, at Hartford Hospital. Kenneth was born in Hartford July 18, 1936, to Myron C. Lord and Marion G. (Morse) Lord, and was a lifelong resident of Marlborough.

Before his retirement in January 1994 he was employed at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford for 35 years. He then worked for Nichols Bus Service as a driver until January of 2007. He served two years in the Army and 10 years as an active member and a Lieutenant in the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department. He was an avid Boston Red Sox fan and also a UConn women's basketball fan. He was a much beloved husband, father and grandfather and will be deeply missed.

He is survived by his three sons and daughters-in-law, William and Dianne Lord and their children Jenna, Carissa and Rachel, Douglas and Sandra Lord and their children Kenneth, Kevin and Nicholas, all of Marlborough, Stephen and Janice Lord and their children Jessica, Aaron, Moses and Stephanie of San Antonio, Texas; a daughter, Cynthia Baker and her children Chandra, Zachary and Nicole Walsh and Angeline and Joshua Baker of Marlborough; two sisters and brothers-in-law, Helen and Samuel Mitchell of Rocklin, Calif., and Marion and John Hanson of Portland, Ore., six great grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Kenneth's family will receive friends at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, Sept. 27, from 5-7 p.m. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family in Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Assoc. P.O. Box 308 Marlborough, CT 06447, or to the charity of the donor's choice.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Hebron

Jamie K. Gerardi

Jamie K. (Blair) Gerardi, 52, of Hebron, beloved wife of William D. Gerardi, unexpectedly and peacefully passed in her sleep Saturday, Sept. 21, at home. At that moment, a bright and shining star left us. Our beautiful Jamie was a loving, strong, and independent woman who was devoted to her family.

Born March 28, 1961 in Hartford, daughter of Dianne (Fitzgerald) Wyant of Coventry and the late Robert D. Blair, she had lived in Hebron since 1994.

Jamie received her BS in art education and her MS in art education from CCSU, and was an inspiring and favorite art teacher at East Hartford High School. She was a member of the New Britain Art Guild and had a solo exhibition of recent work this past spring. A 1979 graduate of Coventry High School and a star soccer player, Jamie attended the University of Connecticut before attending and graduating with honors from CCSU.

Jamie helped design and build her beautiful family home and brought art, beauty and grace to everyday life. She loved landscape design and gardening and was the most talented and creative cook that most friends and family ever knew. She had a great sense of humor and a quick and ready wit and welcomed all to her home with warmth and graciousness.

Besides her husband and mother she is survived by two sons, Christian James Gerardi of Los Angeles, Calif., William MacKenzie Gerardi of Hebron; two sisters, Alison H. Blair of Coventry, Jennifer R. Blair of Manchester; a brother, Christopher B. Mainard of Buffalo, N.Y.; her much loved step-father, William Wyant; her mother-in-law, Eda Gerardi of Torrington; and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, Sept. 27, at 10 a.m., in the Church of the Holy Family, Hebron (everyone please go directly to church). Burial will follow in the New Hebron Cemetery. Friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Thursday, Sept. 26.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to begin a college scholarship in art at East Hartford High School may be made to The Savings Institute Bank & Trust, 115 Main Street Hebron, CT 06248.

For online condolences and directions, visit mulryanfh.com.

East Hampton

Charles R. Scheer

Charles R. Scheer, 66, of East Hampton, passed away Monday, Sept. 23, at the Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit. Known to all as Charlie, he was born Dec. 6, 1946 in Waterbury, son of the late George and Audrey (Birmingham) Scheer. He grew up in Portland and later resided and raised his family in East Hampton.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Christine Billian Scheer and his son Brian Scheer, both of East Hampton. Also, his daughter April and her husband Edward Lionberger of Glastonbury and their children Evan, Sierra and Marshall, who shared a special relationship with their Grampy. He leaves brothers Robert Scheer and his wife Candace of Stamford, George Scheer and his wife Babs of Portland, his sister Leslie Scheer of Centerville, Mass., and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

A proud U.S. Navy veteran, he served on the USS *Surfbird*. He was later stationed in Vietnam on an assault support patrol boat in the U.S. Navy's Riverine Force. He was a talented carpenter and jack of all trades and a long time employee of Middletown Builders Supply.

A public graveside service with military honors will be held Saturday, Sept. 28, at 10 a.m. at the State Veterans' Cemetery on Bow Lane in Middletown. There are no calling hours.

Contributions in Charlie's memory to assist homeless veterans may be made to: Dinda House, c/o Vietnam Veterans of America 120, 357 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06118.

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

Colchester

John Martin Kelly Sr.

John "Jack" Martin Kelly Sr., 90, of Colchester, joined his mother and father, Mary and Edward P. Kelly and his son, John Martin Kelly Jr., in heaven on Saturday, Sept. 21, surrounded by his children and family members.

John is survived by his loving wife of 72 years, Heidi (Evelyn Block Kelly), and their children Sharron Willis (late husband Carl), Karolee Matecki (late husband Robert), Patrick Kelly and wife Patty, Colleen Veard and husband Dan, Tara Crescentini and husband Valentine, Maureen Kelly Kevorkian and husband Peter, Erin Masciotra and husband Anthony, Brendan Kelly and wife Michelle.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his sisters Joan Kelly Coyle, Regina Thomasen, and Rita Burns. He was predeceased by his brothers Edward T. Kelly and Joseph Kelly, as well as his sisters Mary Beaudoin and Margaret Pasco.

Jack was a lieutenant flight instructor in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He loved to fly planes and was the manager of Trumbull Airport (now known as Groton/New London Airport) for many years. He had many jobs and was known as a "Jack of all trades," his last being a greeter at Wal-Mart.

Jack was the father of nine children, and grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great grandfather to 86 children. He was Uncle Jack to many nieces and nephews. His family was his pride and joy. He loved spending time with all of them, playing cards, fishing, giving out silly nicknames, and singing songs. He will be greatly missed, but always remembered.

Services were held in Colchester at Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home and St. Andrew Church, followed by full military honors, on Sept. 23.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Disabled Veterans Association.

Colchester

Michael D. Lea Jr.

Michael D. "Mickey" Lea Jr., 25, died Saturday, Sept. 21. Born in New Britain, he lived many years in Colchester.

Mickey is survived by his loving mother Rachel and her husband Richard Arsenault of Colchester; his father Michael and his wife Maria Lea of Newington; two sisters, Keri Lea and Stacy Lea of Colchester; his paternal grandparents and maternal grandmother; and several aunts and uncles.

Funeral services will be private. The family asks that you please remember Mickey in your thoughts and prayers.



Colchester

Nicholas James Dinsmoor

Nicholas James Dinsmoor, 71, of Uncasville and formerly of Salem and Colchester, passed away Monday, Sept. 23, at the Wm. W. Backus Hospital in Norwich. Born Nov. 29, 1941, he was the son of the late Claire and Lily (Reynolds) Dinsmoor, Jr.

Mr. Dinsmoor served proudly with the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War from 1960 to 1965, serving on one of the first nuclear submarines.

An avid automotive enthusiast, he worked as an engine machinist and very active with the stock car racing circuit in the area for many years. In his spare time, he also enjoyed fishing.

He leaves his wife, Patricia (Piscatelli) Dinsmoor of Uncasville; four sons, Nicholas Jr. of Oakdale, Alan of Watertown, Michael "Shane" and Kevin, both of Colchester; a daughter, Vicki Apicelli of Oakdale; a stepson, Kristopher Benoit of Maine; nine grandchildren, Spencer, Austin, Dylan, Brandon, Kyle, Nicole, Angela, Christiana and Kristopher; his sister, Betty Allen of Colchester; his second "pit crew" family; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his second wife, Beverly Dinsmoor.

The family will receive guests from 4-7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 30, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service with military honors will be observed at 6:30 p.m. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-1718.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

G. Shirley Madley

G. Shirley Madley, 100, of Lebanon, widow of the late J. Harold Madley, passed away Tuesday, Sept. 24, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester. Born July 15, 1913, she was a daughter of the late Rexford and Ruth (Pultz) Cummings.

She was a graduate of Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon, a full-time farmer's wife and had worked as a dietary aide at Windham Hospital for many years.

Shirley was a member of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon and a former member of the Commission on Aging, Republican Town Committee, Order of the Eastern State, charter member of the Lebanon Vol. Fire Co. Auxiliary and the Grange. She loved to travel, but found her greatest joy in her family, especially her granddaughters.

She leaves a daughter, Mary Lou Lynch of San Antonio, Texas; two granddaughters and their husbands, Amy and Curtis Storer of Virginia Beach, Va., and Anissa and Razvan Pavel of San Antonio, Texas; a great-grandson, Ian Tristan Pavel; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Per her wishes, no services are planned. Burial will be private in the New Lebanon Cemetery.

Donations in her memory to the First Congregational Church of Lebanon (P.O. Box 125, Lebanon, CT 06249) will be greatly appreciated.

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

East Hampton

Michael E. Gassner

Michael E. "Mickey" Gassner, of West Hartford and East Hampton, passed away Saturday, Sept. 21, at his home. Born Dec. 29, 1934, Mike grew up in West Hartford, attending the West Hartford Public Schools.

Mike was the owner of French Cleaners, Gassner Electric, General Communications, and General Tower.

Mickey leaves behind his lovely and beloved wife Roz of 55 years; his three wonderful daughters, Nancy of Northridge, Calif., Susan and Phil Cote of West Hartford, and Judy and Todd Zeidenberg of Guilford; five grandchildren, Elyse and Mark Hatch, Danielle Cote, Joshua Clayton, Toby and Blake Zeidenberg; his brother, Dr. Peter Gassner and wife Elsa of Sedona; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, Sept. 24, in the chapel of the Weinstein Mortuary, 640 Farmington Ave., Hartford, with Rabbi Michael Pincus officiating. Interment followed in Fairview Cemetery, Whitman Road, West Hartford. Relatives and friends visited Tuesday following the interment and Wednesday in West Hartford, and Thursday in East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Francis Cancer Center.

For further information, directions, or to sign the guest book for Mickey, visit online at weinsteinmortuary.com/funerals.cfm.

Portland

Helen B. McCarthy

Helen B. McCarthy, 96, of Toms River, N.J., passed away Friday, Sept. 20, at Rose Garden Nursing Home. Helen was born and raised in Deep River and lived in Portland before moving to New Jersey in 1995.

Helen loved to bake, quilt, and garden. She was a member of the Rosary Altar Society for Saint Joseph's Church in Chester and Saint Mary's Church in Portland.

Helen is predeceased by her husband, Dennis. She had three brothers, Joseph, Alvin and Ralph.

She is survived by her three daughters, Sharon Amato and her husband Ray of Toms River, N.J., Deborah Beach and her husband Bruce of Atco, N.J., and Mary Margaret Jones and her husband Bill of Harpswell, Maine. She is also survived by eight grandchildren, Peter, Jennifer, Timothy, Bart, Matthew, Daniel, Sarah and Justin; and 12 great-grandchildren.

A funeral Mass was held for Helen Wednesday, Sept. 25, at Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, 48 Middlesex Ave., Chester, followed by a burial at Saint Joseph's Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the charity of your choice in Helen's name.

Condolences can be sent to carmonabolenfh.com.

Portland

Elaine Salinsky

Elaine (Cantatore) Salinsky, 93, of Washington Street, Middletown, wife of the late Michael J. Salinsky, died Saturday, Sept. 22, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center.

She was born in Bronx, N.Y., the daughter of the late Francesco and Francesca (Basile) Cantatore. She was a member of the Fellowship of Life Church, of Cheshire, CT and did volunteer work at Apple Rehab in Middletown for many years.

Elaine is survived by a daughter, Marie Leone and her husband Paul, of Middletown; two granddaughters, Dawn Krupa and Kimberly Chadd; and three great-grandchildren, Vincent and Jacqueline, Audrey; a son-in-law, Salvatore Leone of Colchester; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a daughter, Margaret Leone.

Graveside services were held Tuesday, Sept. 24, at State Veterans Cemetery.

Those who wish may make memorial contributions to Portland Care and Rehabilitation Recreation Fund, 333 Main St., Portland.

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

Colchester

Stephanie Johnston

Stephanie Johnston, 90, of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Sept. 21, of natural causes.

Born in New York City, Stephanie lived in New York during her childhood and on the passing of her father Stephan Janosky, moved with her mother Mary (deceased) to the Colchester area where she met Charles O. Johnston (deceased), her husband of 39 years.

She was a homemaker and antique dealer, running an antique shop in Colchester for many years. She was a member of St. Mary's Church in Colchester.

Her son Charles Johnston, daughter-in-law Ellen Johnston, grandson Matthew Johnston and his wife Jackie survive Stephanie.

A graveside service will be held at Linwood Cemetery Saturday, Sept. 28, at 10 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, feel free to make a donation to Masonicare, 22 Masonic Ave., Wallingford, CT 06492 or your local hospice organization.

Portland

James Ralph McGehan

James Ralph McGehan, 66, of Manchester, formerly of Portland, loving husband of Barbara (Richters) McGehan, passed away Tuesday, Sept. 24, after a courageous battle with esophageal cancer. He was surrounded by his family and loved ones.

Born Dec. 26, 1946, in Manchester to the late Philip A. and Maude (Gordon) McGehan, Jim was a graduate of Manchester High School, Class of 1964, and has been a lifelong communicant of St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Jim worked for Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford for over 40 years, retiring in 2009. Upon retirement, Jim spent his time on the golf course and returned to school, earning his bachelor degree from Manchester Community College in 2011.

As a young man, Jim was a founding member of the Center Billiards' softball team, playing through the team's transition to Groman's then Bogner's. His love of sports continued throughout his life, having successfully coached championship baseball and football teams in both Glastonbury and Portland, from tee league through American Legion.

In addition to his wife Barbara, Jim is survived by his two sons, Todd McGehan and his partner Santo Finocchiaro of Hartford, and Marc McGehan and his wife Amory Wooden of Brooklyn, N.Y., as well as his brother, Philip A. McGehan Jr., and his sister, Elizabeth Blake and her husband Robert, all of Manchester. He also leaves his nephew, Robert Blake, Jr., and four nieces, Debra Nelis, Teri McGehan, Cheri Johnson and Kristen Gordon.

Jim will be especially remembered by family, friends and his softball/golfing partners as someone who made their lives a little funnier and their achievements a little greater.

Calling hours will be today, Sept. 27, from 4-8 p.m., at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester. Funeral services will be held Saturday, Sept. 28, at 9 a.m., at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 41 Park St., Manchester. Burial will follow in East Cemetery.

The McGehan family would like to give special thanks to the dedicated and caring staff from Masonicare. Memorial contributions may be made to Masonicare Partners Home Health and Hospice, 111 Founders Plaza, East Hartford, CT 06108.

To leave an online condolence, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Hebron Police News

9/19: State Police said an accident occurred on Route 66 50 feet west of Mill Stream Road in Hebron. Police said Robert Bacon, 52, of 66 Daleville School Road, Willington, was traveling east on Route 66 and had a mechanical failure, which required that the vehicle pull off onto the right shoulder of the roadway. Police said Gerald G. Mailloux, 81, of 46 Lions Way, North Windham, who was traveling east on Route 66, failed to see Bacon's vehicle pulled over onto the right shoulder and ran into the left rear of his vehicle. Police said Mailloux was transported to Marlborough Clinic by the Hebron Fire Department for possible injury.

9/20: State Police said Patricia Ayars, 63, of 51 Elizabeth Dr., was traveling south on North Street when her vehicle swerved to the right

and then to the left. Police said Ayars' vehicle crossed the double solid yellow line and went off the left shoulder of the roadway, went through some brush and came to rest off the road in a wooded area. Police said Ayars was wearing her seatbelt at the time of the accident. She was transported to Manchester Memorial Hospital by the Hebron Fire Department for evaluation.

9/20: State Police said a resident of Jones Street in Amston returned to her home to find her window open and house gone through. Police believe the crime occurred sometime between 5:45 a.m.-5:30 p.m. This case is currently under investigation. Anyone with information is asked to contact Hebron Resident Trooper Daniel Greenwood at 860-537-7555.

Colchester Police News

9/15: State Police said Thomas Comkowycz, 53, of 32 Sunset Dr., Ashford, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

9/16: Colchester Police said Cynthia J. Larabee, 45, of 132 Stollman Rd., was charged with first-degree larceny.

9/17: Colchester Police said Daniel K. Douton, 33, of 73 Oneco Ave., Apt. 1, New London, was charged with evading and tampering with physical evidence.

9/18: Colchester Police said a 17-year-old juvenile was charged with third-degree larceny for allegedly stealing approximately \$2,500 worth of sterling silver jewelry from a resident of Cato Corner Road.

9/18: State Police said Christopher M. Flythe, 35, of 64 Park Rd., was charged with evading and making an improper turn.

9/19: Colchester Police responded to a car vs. motorcycle accident on Loomis Road at approximately 6:30 p.m. Police said motorcycle driver Matthew Tomasi, 28, of 517 Mt. Parnassus Rd., East Haddam, was transported to Middlesex Hospital by family members for possible injuries. Police said Cheryl A. Burgess-Olaechea, 58, of 72 Shailor Hill Rd., was at fault following an investigation and was issued an infraction for failure to grant right of way to oncoming traffic.

9/20: Colchester Police said Edward E. Kerwin, 61, of 50 Lane 1, Warwick, R.I., was

charged with DUI.

9/20: Colchester Police responded to a two-car crash that occurred on Lebanon Avenue at approximately 2:35 p.m. Police said the operator of one of the vehicles, Robert Dennehy, 67, of 219 Cabin Rd., sustained minor neck injuries and was transported to the Marlborough Clinic by the Colchester Hayward Fire Department. Police said the driver of the second vehicle, Robert L. Dantzer III, 40, of 7 Baldwin Ct., Uncasville, and his passengers, Shaun Landreville, 43, of 833 route 32, North Franklin, and Franklin E. Penney, 37, of 44 Olenick Rd., Lebanon, were also taken to the Marlborough Clinic by the Colchester Hayward Fire Department for precautionary measures.

9/21: State Police said Miguel Sebastiao, 52, of 80 Mott Hill Rd., East Hampton, was charged with speeding and DWI.

9/21: State Police said Andrew Phillips, 48, of 393 Dunfey Ln., Windsor, was charged with DUI, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and failure to drive right.

9/22: State Police said William Chan Jr., 35, of 70 Jeremy Woods Dr., Southington, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

9/23: State Police said Jonathan G. Longo, 26, of 17 Carolyn Circle, Naugatuck, was charged with speeding, DUI and failure to renew registration.

Marlborough Police News

9/15: State Police said Kyle A. Potorak, 26, of 89 Jeffry Rd., Newington, was charged with DWI and speeding.

Portland Police News

9/20: Peter Turano, 57, of 10 Edgewood Rd., was charged with second-degree threatening, Portland Police said.

East Hampton Police News

9/12: Timothy Cavanaugh, 53, of 202 Hog Hill Rd., turned himself in on an outstanding warrant for second-degree threatening and second-degree breach of peace, East Hampton Police said.

9/12: Chapin M. Stickler, 31, of 15 Dziok Dr., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

9/13: Lisa L. Kowalsky, 44, of 249 West High St., was issued a summons for operating while under suspension, police said.

9/14: Police said they responded to a scrap metal theft in progress at a Skinner Street address. Upon arrival, police said they found Barbara Abbott, 43, actively removing metal from the industrial scrap dumpster. Officers also located and identified the driver of the vehicle the scrap metal was being placed into as Shirley Benjamin, 76, of 19 Main St. Both were arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny.

East Hampton Man Killed in Truck Crash

by Elizabeth Bowling

An East Hampton resident died after his truck hit a rock ledge on Route 66 last Friday, Portland Police said.

James Stamm, 51, was driving a 2009 GMC Sierra pickup truck when he struck a rock ledge shortly before 2 a.m. Friday, Sept. 20, Sgt. Scott Cunningham said. He said the accident occurred "just east of the Citgo gas station on Portland Cobalt Road."

Cunningham said the response team included "numerous fire personnel" and eight police, including the reconstruction team.

Stamm's obituary appears on page 36.

State Charges Dropped Against East Hampton Resident

by Elizabeth Bowling

The man who planted a fake bomb in front of East Hampton Middle School in January, and was sentenced in federal court last month to three years of probation, is no longer facing charges from the state, according to the Middlesex Superior Court clerk's office.

East Hampton resident Sean Doran had been facing charges of first-degree reckless endangerment, first-degree threatening and first-degree breach of peace, but they were dropped by the prosecutor, which was the state's attorney, on Sept. 12.

According to court documents, at approximately 8 a.m. on Jan. 12, East Hampton Middle School custodians found a package leaning against the front doors of the school. The box, which had a timer attached to the top, was approximately 12 inches by eight inches by four inches and was taped together with orange and red duct tape, the press release stated.

A review of EHMS's surveillance video

from Jan. 12 revealed Doran stepping out of a silver Toyota Corolla, driven by Kayla Sypek, and placing the fake bomb – which the two found at Strategy Plus Paintball on Bear Swamp Road – at the doors of the school around 1:45 a.m.

East Hampton police stopped the same motor vehicle around 12:30 that afternoon and the two in question admitted to planting the fake bomb at the school. Sypek was also arrested, on the same charges as Doran but was not charged federally.

Doran was also indicted on federal charges, and in April pled guilty to one count of intentionally conveying false or misleading information and a hoax.

Doran was sentenced Aug. 1 to perform 150 hours of community service and pay a \$1,500 fine for his illegal actions earlier this year, according to a press release from the United States Attorney's Office. Doran was sentenced by Chief U.S. District Judge Alvin W. Thompson in Hartford.

Andover Resident Charged With DUI After School Bus Crash

by Geeta Schrayter

An Andover resident was charged with driving under the influence last week after the school bus she was operating crashed into the back of a wheelchair van in Manchester, Manchester Police said.

Melissa Forrest, 36, of 25 Hendee Rd., was driving a school bus with five Bolton students onboard at the time of the crash, which occurred at 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 17.

Prior to the accident, a motorist reported to Manchester Police seeing a school bus traveling erratically on West Middle Turnpike near Exit 60, police said. However, the bus couldn't be located at that time.

Police said a short time later they responded to a motor vehicle accident involving a school bus near Bennett Academy on Main Street; Forrest had rear-ended a wheelchair van carrying three occupants at a red light at the intersection of Main Street and Forrest Street, police said.

During the investigation, police said Forrest failed the sobriety tests she was given, and was placed under arrest, charged with

DUI and following too close. She was released on a \$5,000 bond and is scheduled to appear in court Sept. 30.

None of the students, who are a part of Rockville High School's Vocational Agriculture program, or the occupants of the wheelchair van, were injured during the accident, police said.

In a press release sent out by Bolton School Superintendent Kristin Heckt, the collision was called "minor" with "very low-impact on the bus." The bus, Heckt furthered, was able to transport students home, but some parents picked their children up at the scene.

Heckt added while the superintendent's office was told about the crash the day it occurred, they weren't informed Forrest had been arrested until the following day.

"Our top priority is student safety," she wrote. "We are working closely with our transportation vendor, First Student, to ensure nothing like this happens again."

First Student did not return calls to comment for this story.