

RIVEREAST

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Thanks for All You Do... Katherine Kosiba, left, president of Colchester Garden Club, accepts the Lillian M. Rathbun Award from Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut President Jacqueline Connell at the 2013 FGCCT Annual Awards ceremony at the AquaTurf in Southington. The award was presented to Kosiba for her extensive work through the Colchester Garden Club. See a related story on page 24.

Water Talk Returns to East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton's on-again, off-again discussion of a municipal water system ramped back up last Thursday, Jan. 9, when about 45 members of the public attended a special "water workshop" held by the Town Council.

Of those 45, many spoke, with some expressing strong opinions and even outrage about the water situation in town.

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore told those in attendance that the council is "wide open for ideas." She added, "We're here to learn."

Vincent Susco, the public utilities administrator of East Hampton's Water Pollution Control Authority, kicked off the workshop. He took to East Hampton High School's library podium and explained that the town established task forces in the past in attempts to bring about a town water system.

Susco said the first task force, the Public Water System Task Force, was formed in 1996. After years of work, the town in 2007 held a referendum on a \$28 million proposal to bring water to the Village Center, but the proposal failed.

A second task force, called the Water Development Task Force, was established in 2007. While the 2007 task force still exists, there has been very little activity regarding the municipal water system since 2010, Susco said.

After Susco's brief explanation of the town's water history, East Hampton residents

took the floor.

Resident Jim Gooch, also a member of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), addressed the town's "unique opportunity" to decide "how we want our community to look, for the next 50 to 150 years, by deciding exactly how and where we want to supply water."

He explained that the town is in a position now to determine whether to develop either within the Village Center or to "sprawl" development at the outskirts of the town, such as on routes 16 or 66. But, he furthered, according to the EDC's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), the commission doesn't want the town to sprawl. Rather, the POCD states that East Hampton should "maintain its small-town character" but have a "vibrant center," Gooch said. He added that whatever the town decides now will determine if East Hampton remains rural or becomes suburban.

He prompted his fellow residents to "imagine where the next 5,000 houses will be built in town."

He said if more water isn't supplied to the Village Center, then development there would cap. Thus, "the decision to do nothing is just as much a decision as to do something," he said.

Gooch added that doing nothing is free for the town now, but will be very expensive later.

Resident Larry Lawrence expressed a similar concern regarding current or future devel-

See Water Talk Page 2

Hebron School Board Delves Into Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

At their meeting last Thursday, Jan. 9, Hebron Board of Education members spent some time digging deeper into the proposed \$12.01 million budget for 2014-15.

Last month, after Superintendent of Schools Jeff Newton presented the proposed budget for the first time, board members were asked to submit to him any questions they had about the spending proposal. At last week's meeting, Newton provided a written list of these questions and their answers, as well as some PowerPoint slides to supplement the information already provided.

The PowerPoint slides, Newton said, offered some "additional breakdown" of the information he provided at December's meeting when the budget was first presented. These breakdowns included the various unfunded mandates the district was saddled with and their cost, which totals \$251,000.

Another slide depicted the number of classroom sections at the schools over time, and showed the number has been continuously decreasing since the 2007-08 year (from 60 sections in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade down to 43 proposed for 2014-15) as well as a staff analysis that showed a decrease in staff from 68.3 in 2012-13 to 60.5 estimated in 2014-15.

The slides also stressed that the proposed budget, which is an increase of \$64,805 or .49 percent over current year spending, is the smallest increase since 2010-11 when there was a 0 percent increase (in the five years prior to that, the increases were all over 1 percent).

As far as the questions Newton received, they ranged from why certain accounts increased or decreased to what the meaning was of particular line items.

For example, one board member had asked what "Teacher Specials" was. Newton's answer explained it's a term used in special education "to budget for speech, social work and psychological services."

Another member had wondered why there was a decrease in money set aside for curriculum development (from \$19,320 in the current budget to \$12,500 proposed for next year) when that seemed to be a "key need" with the Common Core changes. This was explained as due to a change in the way curriculum development is handled; last year's budget supported three days of curriculum development after the school year ended for approximately 25 teachers, as well as some ongoing work by a few teachers during the school year.

However, changes were made after that setup didn't work as effectively as planned. Instead,

the decision was made to complete curriculum work through substitute release time for teachers (when a substitute comes in, thereby allowing the teacher to work on curriculum development instead of classroom instruction) and additional half-days so the work could be done without funds or substitutes – the amount proposed for next year represents these changes.

Another question inquired as to why there was a large increase in the office supply line for the two schools (from \$8,490 in the current year's budget for Hebron Elementary School to \$18,532.64 proposed for 2014-15; and from \$8,490 in the current year's budget for Gilead Hill School to \$14,050 proposed).

"With principal input, this budget better reflects building needs," Newton wrote.

At the meeting, board member Ramon Bieri asked for details as to what was included in the supply line amount for each school.

Hebron Elementary School Principal Amy Campbell explained the increase there was for the replacement of three large office items she called "quite dated or broke." Money was included to replace a large paper cutter, a laminator and a die-cutting machine – all of which she said are used by the teachers.

These items, she said, have "passed their time."

"So at least at our school that's a big portion of the increase this year – I wouldn't anticipate it continuing in the future," she said.

Another reason for the increase was for the return of agenda books for the students, Campbell explained, which had been cut the last two years but were included again in response to feedback about how much they were missed.

Over at Gilead Hill School, Principal Eric Brody said he also needed a new lamination machine. In addition, he explained money for paper, which had previously been included in central office monies, had been pulled out, and was now being budgeted with each school's office supplies.

"Some other things shifted," he said. "I don't think it's so much that anything has changed, it's just how the accounting works."

"You're going to see a lot of those percentages look very skewed because [some things are] allocated differently this year," Newton explained at the meeting.

(However, during public comment, Board of Finance liaison Malcolm Leichter said the board should focus on dollar amounts more than the percentages, because that's what taxpayers are concerned with.)

See School Board Page 2

Water Talk cont. from Front Page

opments in town without additional water.

Lawrence said, “I’m just questioning whether there should be some sort of more detailed approvals of further development, whether it’s individual houses or larger developments in town, until this problem is finally solved. I’m not saying an all-out moratorium, but at least an intelligent consideration of the water demands before things are approved.”

Mark Barmasse, the chairman of the Water and Sewer Commission and a member of the Water Development Task Force, also echoed Gooch’s concern for the town’s future.

“This town, in order to basically address the water issue, first needs to decide what it wants to be when it grows up,” Barmasse said. “Once we decide what we should do, then we can figure out how to do it. And much of the engineering work that was done previously as part of the water system development can be used as a basis of information to then ... do an initial assessment of what alternatives would be and what costs might be.”

Barmasse said it would be necessary for the town’s water goals to be reflected in the POCD as well as zoning regulations “because one doesn’t work without the other.”

He added that having a water system in the Village Center is the “minimum goal” in order to further develop there.

But regarding the possibility of putting a water system in at the Village Center, resident Larry Lowe said, “Who’s going to pay for this? Since it’s only benefiting a small portion of the community are they paying the bill, or are we going to have to pay for it city-wide?”

Lowe said he was also concerned about the longevity of whatever the town decides to do, urging the Town Council not to come up with a “short-term repair for a long-term problem.”

* * *

Ed Jackowitz, a member of both the 1996 water task force in East Hampton and the CEO of American Distilling, Inc. – a witch hazel distilling plant located in town, also spoke out at last Thursday’s workshop.

He said, “There is no question that the water quality in the town of East Hampton is not good,” specifically noting that the water has “iron all over the place.”

He said that the wells at his plant are good, but his company would be happy to hook on to a town water system.

Jackowitz furthered that over the years, the problem with developing a town water system has been the cost.

“It’s always been: kick the ball down the road from time to time. And that’s where we sit today,” he said. “Every time we kick this ball down the road, it’s increased the cost more and more and more and more.”

He said the town’s wells should eventually be located at Oakum Dock Road, “because it is the only place that can ensure a long-term water supply for this town.”

“Rock wells do not work,” he furthered, noting that East Hampton currently has a sewer system but “you are constantly adding water to that sewer system, which is going down the Connecticut River.”

Jackowitz said if the town turned the project over to a private company such as Connecticut Water, it might wind up costing more than if the town handled the work itself.

“In addressing the water system here, this is about the health, safety and welfare of the town. The problem is not going to go away; it’s going to get worse,” he said, adding that if the town suffers from a bad drought, there would surely be people with no water.

Jackowitz also mentioned that if the town had a good municipal water system, then the town’s classification would change regarding fire protection, leaving every resident to benefit on their home insurance.

“When are you going to pick up the tab?” he asked. “I hope that this Town Council will try to take the bull by the horns. I hope that the whole town will unite behind this once and for all.”

East Hampton resident John Hines challenged Jackowitz to invest in a water system for the town.

Jackowitz responded, “I will. I’ll be one of the biggest payers.”

Hines continued, “If this thing was going to move forward, somebody would have stepped up and said – Connecticut Water or one of these other major companies would have come in and said, ‘We’ll develop the system for you, and here’s the cost.’ The town doesn’t know how to build a water system.”

He also said he wouldn’t want to pay for a

water system that he wouldn’t directly benefit from.

“The cost of it is the stumbling block – that’s the ball that we’re kicking down the road,” Hines said. “If you can’t put it in and give it to the whole town, why should the whole town have to pay for this? You can say that, ‘Oh the businesses with benefit and the tax rate might come down and this and that and the other thing,’ but only a few people are going to benefit by a water system in the town here.

“It is needed,” he continued. “I’m not going to dispute the need for a water system in the town – and it will happen at some point but you have to come up with a way that those that are going to use it and are going to benefit by it are going to bear the cost of it.”

* * *

One resident who said she would directly benefit from a town water system is Lori Wilcox, who lives on Hawthorne Road – on the east side of the lake – and does not have drinkable water.

“I have to buy my water,” she said last Thursday. “Secondly, I happen to have a shallow well so in the summer I literally can do one load of laundry for a day. I have to plan very carefully.”

Wilcox echoed Hines, however, in saying even people who wouldn’t benefit directly from a water system in the Village Center would benefit indirectly, as hopefully more businesses would come in and taxes would go down for individuals.

Resident Dean Markham, meanwhile, offered an idea to cut costs.

He suggested a public/private partnership that would develop a water bottling company. The company could then market some of the water.

“Bottled water is one of the biggest commodities in the marketplace. It isn’t going away,” he said, furthering that the town could use the money it makes from the bottled water to “jumpstart” building a plant.

Other residents said they’d like to be very informed about any water-related progress.

For example, John Tuttle, a former vice chairman of the Town Council, said it would be important this time around – if the town moves forward with plans for a water system – to present the public with a lot of information.

“Information is paramount,” he said.

Tuttle, like others, also talked about the cost of such a project.

“The only viable way to make this work is that everyone in town is going to have to support this,” he said. “Clearly the users would pay hook up-fees and usage fees” but, he added, the system would benefit the entire community in terms of jobs and retail opportunities.

“It’d be naive to think the system could be paid for solely by those on the system,” Tuttle said.

Resident Barbara Suprono, in addition to echoing the remarks of many who spoke before her, said one of her concerns is regarding any chemicals that would be put in her water.

“I don’t want to drink river water that’s got a ton of chlorine in it,” she said. “I’d rather deal with a little iron in my water than be drinking all these chemicals.”

* * *

Members of the council expressed their thoughts to the members of the audience to conclude the workshop.

Moore said, “I don’t think that putting in a water system generally means that we’re going to develop the town.”

She furthered, “It’s not for more development; that’s not the point. The point is that we are a community and we need to help each other and we’re a small community.”

Council member Ted Hintz echoed Moore. He said, “To say that a water system of any size is just there to develop the town, I think, is a misstatement.”

Hintz also expressed that it would be a “great thing” to get members of the former water task forces back together to get new plans in action.

Vice Chairman of the council Kevin Reich sang a similar tune.

“We have been over and over this topic for years,” he said. “I’m hopeful that those folks who were on that last committee would be willing to give us a little more of their time so that we can resurrect that committee, look at the information that they spent countless hours preparing and then use that as our first and natural step to move forward because we need to move forward.

“I’m not thinking of water to support more businesses other than the downtown area,” Reich added. “I would like a water system that will assist the people who are my neighbors.”

School Board cont. from Front Page

The allocation changes are due to the first-time use of the Phoenix Financial Management System to present the budget.

The system is being used “in an effort to improve transparency in budget development,” Newton wrote. “While this provides a great deal of information, the format is dictated by the software and meets accounting protocol. As we move forward we will look into what modifications can be made to more clearly present the information.”

Also in a transparency effort, budget information presented at last week’s meeting (including the question and answer sheet that was distributed and the PowerPoint slides) as well as the December meeting has been made available on the district website hebron.k12.ct.us by clicking “Budget Information.”

Discussion on the budget was scheduled to continue at the next Board of Education meeting, which was held last night after press time.

Colchester Police Investigate Rash of Credit Card Fraud

by Geeta Schrayter

A criminal investigation is currently underway in Colchester after the discovery of nearly three dozen credit card fraud and identity theft cases in town, dating back to late last year.

In a release sent out by the Connecticut State Police, it was explained the Colchester resident trooper supervisor, Sgt. Joe Mercer, and town officials have been working cooperatively with other local, state and federal authorities on the investigation, which is related to approximately 35 cases of identity theft that occurred beginning in late November.

After observing a “marked increase” in the number of identity theft complaints, the release stated a pattern was found that pinpointed the Ichiban Asian Bistro restaurant as the location where the credit card infor-

mation was compromised.

As a result of the investigation, a search warrant was served at a Norwich residence where evidence in the case was discovered, and an arrest was made of a female connected to identity theft in Rhode Island, the release explained.

The investigation is considered “active” and additional arrests are anticipated, but Police said thefts have stopped since the investigation progressed and no new complaints have been received.

According to the release, management at Ichiban has been “very cooperative” and steps have been taken to protect patrons moving forward. Anyone with information related to the investigation is asked to contact the Colchester resident trooper’s office at 860-537-7270.

Colchester Police News

1/6: State Police said Scudder Evans, 20, of 17 Fairview Run, Marlborough, turned himself into Troop K on an outstanding warrant and was charged with first-degree failure to appear and disorderly conduct.

1/7: State Police said Kecia M. Goodwin, 47, of 6 Cove Rd., Moodus, was arrested on an outstanding warrant and charged with second-degree failure to appear and failure to pay or plead.

1/9: State Police said Corinne M. Ciochini,

26, of 156 Halls Hill Rd, Apt. 5, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny.

1/9: State Police said Robert T. Abbott, 48, of 191 Robin Rd., Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with speeding, operating under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to have lights lit and devices illuminated.

1/12: State Police said Brittany A. Rondeau, 25, of 18 High Meadow Rd., Marlborough, turned herself in on an active arrest warrant and was charged with second-degree forgery.

Hebron Police News

1/7: State Police said Richard Burger, 50, of 159 Blue St., Winchester, was charged with DUI and possession of firearms while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

1/8: State Police said Lisa Karvoski-Grasso, 47, of 98 Hunt Rd., Columbia, was arrested and charged with DUI following an accident.

1/13: State Police said Alexander Philbrook, 43, of 461 Wall St., was arrested on a PRAWN warrant for second-degree failure to appear.

East Hampton Police News

1/2: Anne M. Heselton, 49, of 64 Main St., was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

New Andover Senior Van Coming?

by Geeta Schrayter

When the Andover town budget for 2014-15 is approved in May, Cathy Palazzi hopes the spending package will include \$50,000 to allow an additional senior van to roll into town.

Currently two larger vans, which can seat around 12 and 20 people, are utilized to help make the world a bit more accessible to Andover's seniors. These vans take seniors on different recreational trips, to the senior luncheons, FoodShare, for groceries and shopping at other stores. The vans also are used to transport people to medical appointments – and Palazzi, Andover's senior transportation coordinator, feels that, for this purpose, a smaller van would be more appropriate.

Palazzi explained this week a smaller van would be more convenient and economical. She said sometimes there may be a single senior with an appointment on a given day and using the bigger vans is "such a waste of gas."

"We pay for fuel, then we're taking one person there, waiting [for them to finish] and then

taking them back," she said. "We decided it would be much more economical to have a minivan."

Along with saving on gas money, a new van could help with expenditures. Palazzi said there have been "enormous expenditures" for repairs on the other vans, since they're now 10-12 years old and have seen increased use lately.

In addition, a smaller van would make it easier to park and turnaround at locations where parking can sometimes be an issue, such as the hospitals.

Selectwoman Elaine Buchardt, who is also a member of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) committee and the selectmen's liaison to the Senior Transportation Committee, furthered those thoughts. She reiterated the two current vans "have been breaking down a lot" and added, "They're very difficult to use, to just take one passenger to the doctor's office and find a parking spot.

"We have always needed a small van, for just one or two people with a wheelchair," she continued. "It will certainly save on gas. I found out we get eight to 12 miles per gallon for the larger ones which is ridiculous."

Buchardt said a van was needed that was "more efficient" and newer.

With a new van, she summarized, "we figured we'd save on maintenance and gas and have the convenience of being able to find a normal parking space at the hospital or doctor's office we bring [seniors] to," she stated and concluded "we always needed it."

The van, which would be retrofitted to make it handicapped-accessible, would be paid for out of the CIP account – and Buchardt said this would be a good year for the purchase, since the only other CIP request was for \$16,000 for 16 communication devices for the fire department. These devices would attach to their air packs and allow firefighters to communicate

without taking out their mouthpiece or using walky-talkies.

"This will make [the packs] state-of-the-art and safer," Buchardt said.

The cost of the communication devices and the van will be included in the CIP budget for the coming year along with \$33,000 as part of an annual lease-to-purchase amount approved for a town dump truck last year.

In total, the CIP request for the upcoming year is "a little over \$99,000," Buchardt said. That amount, which she called "reasonable," has been approved by the CIP Committee and the Board of Selectmen and is now headed for the Board of Finance.

"It's up to them to let it pass," Buchardt said, "and then, of course, it's ultimately up to the town."

And, if Palazzi gets her wish, that ultimate decision will be one that brings a new van to Andover for the town's seniors.

Car-Charging Station Grant Approved in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

This week Hebron received news sooner than they expected, but the news was not unwelcome: the town was approved to receive a \$5,000 state grant for the installation of an electric car charging station at the Town Hall.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney applied for the grant last month, and told the *RiverEast* last week he expected to find out if the money were approved "within a couple of months." Instead, he found out Wednesday.

"I'm very happy of course," he said. "I'm glad for the quick turnaround. This is a project I think is going to be somewhat easy to implement."

The total cost of the project is \$11,000, which includes installation of the ChargePoint Dual Charging Station and the portion not covered by the grant will come from the Town's Capital Non-Recurring fund. The station will be available for use by residents, commuters and employees and will show up on a charging station application drivers can use to find nearby stations.

In a letter sent to Tierney, Daniel Esty, commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, applauded Hebron for having "foresight" by recognizing the opportunities available through the introduction of electric vehicles (EVs) in the state, and said the town's charging station would bring Connecticut "one step closer towards our goal of ensuring that everyone interested in owning an EV knows that they will always have access

to EV-charging stations when needed."

Now that the grant has been approved, Tierney said the next step would be to solicit prices for the project.

"I'm going to contact some vendors we know, at least four of them, and pick the most qualified vendor and move forward with the installation," he said.

Tierney explained Town Hall was chosen as the location for the station because it already had an electrical panel that could be used for the station that was put in place when a new generator was recently installed.

"That was the reason it was easier to make the decision to put the charging station here versus the library, which is more central," he said. "The electrical system there would have needed substantial upgrades, so that wouldn't have been fiscally responsible."

Tierney furthered he anticipated the station would be installed sometime in April, "as soon as there's some good weather after the winter."

Around the same time as that installation the town will also be able to apply for an additional grant through the Department of Transportation for the purchase of an EV for the town – something Tierney called the "biggest plus."

"March or April is when the DOT comes out with grants for electric cars, and now we can apply for that," he said, adding that the cars and charging stations have been "well-

received" in towns such as Mansfield and Coventry, which have already made grant-aided purchases of the items.

In Coventry, an electric charging station was installed in November and a hybrid car is currently being used by Town Manager John Elsesser. Elsesser said this week that, so far, the town was "very happy" with both.

He explained the car, a Ford C-MAX, which is also referred to as a plug-in hybrid, has the ability to run on full battery power, a mix of battery and gas or full gas. Between the three, the car has a 600-mile range. Running on all electric, it can go about 15 miles, "which is fine for around-town use," Elsesser said.

In hybrid mode, he furthered, the car got about 45 miles to the gallon. Since October, when the town received the car, the gas tank has only been filled three times, Elsesser said, and the car has had about 2,200 miles put on it.

"So far it lives up to our expectations" he said, adding "the only thing to get used to is how quiet it is."

In addition, an electric car meant a slight change in routine, since Elsesser said he had to get in the habit of plugging the car in when he gets to the Town Hall.

"It's just a new routine" he said, adding it only takes a few seconds and requires nothing more, unlike pumping gas where, he laughed, "you have to hold the handle in the rain."

Elsesser said he "absolutely" recommended other towns follow suit and get a charging station and electric car.

"For our property taxes it's a winner," he said.

The car Elsesser used previously, which was also a hybrid they received through the DOT grant program about three years ago, replaced a 15-year-old SUV the town had been using that got about 10 miles to the gallon.

"So there's multiple savings on our operational cost," he said.

In Hebron, Tierney said he had no plans to use the EV like Elsesser, but it would instead replace some of the police cruisers the town turns over to be used by different employees.

The DOT grant would cover \$15,000 out of approximately \$30,000 for the EV, and Tierney said the gas savings from the vehicle would end up covering the cost of the electricity at the charging station, which has an approximate annual cost of \$1,180.

The addition of the charging station and an EV in town would create a situation Tierney said made him "very ecstatic," and Esty added would help Connecticut "meet our state's energy and environmental goals while spurring economic development."

"I thank you for helping us send the message that EVs are a key part of Connecticut's cheaper, cleaner, more reliable energy future," Esty concluded.

East Hampton | Portland | East Hampton | Portland

Erratic Driver Causes Police Pursuit

by Elizabeth Bowling

A Middletown man was arrested last Thursday, Jan. 9, after he allegedly evaded multiple crashes in Portland and East Hampton, ultimately leading police on a high-speed chase through East Hampton, according to a press release from the state Department of Public Safety/Division of State Police.

James Millett, 50, of Middletown, was driving a 1997 Mitsubishi Talon with a New York license plate through the two towns at around 2:30 p.m., when he evaded four collisions before finally losing control and coming to a "final rest" on Route 16 near Flatbrook Road in East Hampton, the press release stated.

Theresa Goss, 57, of East Hampton, was in the Mitsubishi's front passenger seat.

According to Sgt. Scott Cunningham of the Portland Police Department, the first two crashes occurred within a minute of one another in Portland.

Cunningham said the first occurred at 2:22 p.m. when Millett "struck from behind" a Town of Portland vehicle that was stopped in the left lane going southbound on Main Street, attempting to make a left turn onto Route 66.

The driver of the town vehicle, a Ford E1 50 van, was town employee Karen Perruccio. Perruccio was the sole occupant of the van and did not sustain any injuries. The van obtained

"minor damage" Cunningham said.

Within a minute of the first crash, the second one occurred, Cunningham said. Millett took a left turn off of Main Street onto Route 66 and was traveling eastbound. He traveled about one mile – he got to the Tri Town Foods intersection at 316 Marlborough St. – before he rear-ended a second vehicle. The second vehicle was a 2002 Jeep Liberty, driven by Bernice Schaller, 31, of East Hampton.

Millett evaded the scene once again, Cunningham said, and continued traveling eastbound on Route 66. Schaller followed Millett eastbound on Route 66 for about a mile and then pulled over, Cunningham said. Millett, on the other hand, continued eastbound on Route 66 toward East Hampton.

Schaller sustained minor injuries from the accident and was transported to Middlesex Hospital via ambulance. Her Jeep had "minor right rear damage," Cunningham affirmed.

Once in East Hampton, Millett then drove from Route 66 to Route 16, according to East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox, and was involved in a third rear end collision near Chestnut Hill Road in East Hampton. Millett struck a state vehicle, which sustained "minor rear end damage," Cox said. The state employee operating the vehicle was the sole occupant.

Again, Millett evaded the scene and continued to operate the vehicle "erratically" heading eastbound on Route 16, according to the press release.

But at that time, Cox said, East Hampton Police had already received reports and were waiting in strategic locations in an effort to "intercept" Millett, who Cox affirmed had traveled from Route 66 up Route 16 toward Colchester "at a very high rate of speed." Additionally, police observed Millett "weaving all over the road," Cox said.

"We observed the collision at Chestnut Hill Road. Then we attempted to stop him," Cox said. "He was clearly demonstrating a lack of concern for human life at that point."

Millett then crossed over into the travel portion of Route 16 and side swiped another vehicle near Route 196, Cox said.

The vehicle that got side swiped, a 1995 Toyota Corolla driven by Thomas Simmons, 32, of Colchester, was heading westbound.

Cox said the Toyota sustained "moderate damage," for example, "chunks of the car were missing." However, with the exception of a cut in his hand due to a piece of glass, Simmons sustained no injuries, Cox affirmed.

Millett evaded this crash scene as well, but

East Hampton Police continued their pursuit until finally Millett "lost control and crossed over into the westbound lane and struck the guardrail and came to final rest in the eastbound lane," the press release stated.

Cox explained further that Millett "drove off to the right shoulder," then sideswiped a guardrail on the opposite side of the road, and spun back to the side of the road he had started on.

Once the car came to a final rest, police officers "immediately" transitioned from their vehicle pursuit into employing "life-saving efforts" for the two inside, Cox affirmed. Cox also acknowledged the assistance of off-duty state troopers in aiding in these efforts.

Millett and Goss both sustained serious injuries, according to the police press release. Millett was transported via Lifestar to Hartford Hospital and Goss was flown via Lifestar to St. Francis Hospital.

Goss was discharged Wednesday but information on Millett's condition was not available as of press time.

* * *

An investigation by the State Police Collision Analysis Reconstruction Squad is ongoing, state police said.

EHHS Renovation Project to Be Scaled Down

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Board of Education reviewed an enrollment projection report at its meeting Monday that showed a decline in student enrollment for upcoming years – thus requiring a smaller renovate-as-new high school building project.

The initial eight-year enrollment projection from the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) was incorrect; it was off by about 51 students, or 10 percent, according to Vice Chairperson of the High School Building Committee Michele Barber. (Barber presented the progress of the committee at Tuesday night's Town Council meeting. She was not present at Monday night's Board of Education meeting.)

Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas said the NESDEC numbers last year were "inaccurately reported and included the special education numbers twice."

The corrected projection, which was released last week, according to Barber, reported that East Hampton's enrollment numbers for the next eight years are currently at their highest – 527 students – and will decline in upcoming years.

In calculating its projections, NESDEC looks at the number of homes built in a town, the number of births in a town and additional factors that could impact long-range projection in a town.

Dugas listed the approval of the high school building project and the possibility of full-day kindergarten as factors that could impact enrollment.

According to Barber, the town can use the highest enrollment number within NESDEC's eight-year projection when applying for state grant reimbursement rates, which is what the committee did for the high school renovation project.

Barber said that because of the incorrect enrollment projection, the EHHS building's schematic design now needs to be scaled down slightly from its original design, as the amount of square footage necessary was based on those incorrect numbers.

Dugas affirmed, "We don't need to build a space as large as what we had anticipated given the numbers are going to be declining."

Barber explained that now the architects are working to cut out 5,000 sq. ft. from the 125,600-sq. ft. project, but "the differences are small," she affirmed. For example, one proposal

includes eliminating a science lab, shrinking the cafeteria, and turning some athletics space into storage space.

Board of Education member Bill Marshall said Monday that this downsizing would lower the project's overall cost – it currently stands at \$51.69 million – but cautioned this in turn would lead to the state's projected reimbursement also dropping, thus not necessarily decreasing the project's cost to the town.

However, Dugas affirmed the redesign would not cost the town any more money than originally anticipated.

Marshall then recalled when the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) reviewed East Hampton High School during the 2006-07 school year.

"The NEASC report recommended a modernization of the facility," he said. "Enrollment was not what drove this project."

Town Council member Ted Hintz expressed concern during Barber's presentation Tuesday night regarding eliminating a science lab, as one of the NEASC requirements for accreditation was in regards to the school's science labs.

Barber affirmed that even with the potential elimination of a science lab, the project would still be up to NEASC's standards.

"There will be the new lab. The new lab will be up to date," she said. "It may mean that one lab has to be shared."

For example, a science teacher could teach a lecture in a classroom, and only use the science lab for lab periods, Barber explained.

"The end result of it is it's going to be less square footage. And less square footage means that the overall price of the project will be decreased," she said.

But, like Marshall said, Barber stressed that doesn't necessarily mean the town's portion of the bill is going to decrease because the state's reimbursement may also decrease; however the actual amount of state reimbursement will remain unknown until the project is completed, Barber said.

Hintz noted that East Hampton's state reimbursement rate for this year could be as high as 52.5 percent of the project cost, but next year the maximum is increasing to 58.21 percent. He suggested that if the reimbursement isn't "great" this year, then maybe the town could hold off and resubmit for the state grant next year.

However, Barber said Thursday there'd be no point in holding off for another year; the town is bound by the 52.5 percent reimbursement rate that existed when the project was approved at referendum last June.

Barber told the council Tuesday the project should get out to bid as soon as possible in order to be the most cost-effective.

"Every day that we don't get this moving forward and get those bids out is a day that the bids can go up," she said.

So far, Barber said, "Our contingencies went up, not down. In other words, we have not used as much money as we thought we were going to use and it gets put back into the contingencies."

Once the state approves the town's grant – which the committee anticipates will happen in the summer – the process of going out to bid will begin.

"The ultimate goal, of course, is to be shovel-ready" as soon as the state approves the grant, Barber said.

The groundbreaking of the new high school is scheduled for November of this year and the project is due to be completed by the summer of 2018.

Barber informed the Town Council Tuesday that the project's grant application to the state of Connecticut received a "priority level B," which Barber called a "quite high priority level."

* * *

Also regarding enrollment, Dugas said the number of students from East Hampton who opt to attend magnet schools has increased from 21 to 111 in the past four years.

But according to the NESDEC report, the impact of the new high school building should bring back about 30 percent of those magnet school students, or 33 students.

The district is also trying to retain students by marketing some of its impressive accolades. For example, East Hampton High School has appeared on the Advanced Placement Honor, received sports recognition in the form of Michael's Cup, and received positive School Performance Index rankings, Dugas said.

* * *

Dugas also discussed the budget calendar this year. She explained that the budget should reflect the board's goals, which are: to "engage all students in integrated curriculum that fos-

ters essential life skills of critical thinking and reasoning, collaboration and communication, problem solving and innovation;" to "prepare all students for college, career and life by advancing digital literacy;" and to "ensure that all students are taught and led by highly qualified professionals through the continuous improvement of feedback and reflection provided through the advancement of professional learning communities."

Dugas said the school board's budget goals "really support those three goals" and take small steps each year over a three- to five-year process to bring East Hampton students to where they should be academically.

The superintendent will present her proposed 2014-15 budget to the Board of Education at a special meeting Monday, Feb. 3, and budget workshops will be held throughout February. The board will vote on the spending proposal Monday, Feb. 24, and is required to submit it to the Board of Finance by March 1.

Minnick asked how much money the board needed to spend to meet the technology needs of the state mandated Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Testing. He noted that the cost to the board would be offset by East Hampton's grant money from the state of Connecticut for technology improvements, with which the board decided to purchase Chromebooks.

School Board Chairman Ken Barber assured Minnick that the information would come forward during the budget presentation and workshop process.

* * *

Also at Monday's meeting, the board voted for Dugas to gather information on brain injuries related to secondary school football and present that information to the policy and curriculum sub-committee.

* * *

The all-day kindergarten feasibility committee will make a presentation at the next regularly scheduled East Hampton Board of Education meeting, Monday, Jan. 27, at 7 p.m. at the East Hampton High School library.

Parents are welcomed to attend a superintendent's forum Thursday, Jan. 30, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton Middle School media center. The forum will address the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Proposed Cul-De-Sac Draws Mixed Reviews in Portland

by Elizabeth Bowling

Residents of the Strickland Street neighborhood attended Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting to express their thoughts on the possibility of turning Strickland Street into a cul-de-sac as a result of the Route 17 park complex proposal.

The conceptual design for the park complex includes two soccer fields, two Little League fields, a basketball court, a cross country running trail, a playground, a picnic area, a walking trail, a concession stand, a restroom building and a splash pad that could be user activated.

Portland purchased the 37 acres of land on Route 17 back in 2006 for \$500,000, which the town has been paying off at \$50,000 per year for a 10-year span, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said.

Because Portland doesn't own a lot of the recreational fields it uses, it planned to turn this area into a place for soccer and baseball fields and passive recreation, Bransfield explained.

A \$238,000 grant from the state of Connecticut is funding the town's planning for the land. But the funding of the actual park is currently undetermined. She affirmed that the cul-de-sac could be completed prior to the implementation of the park.

Bransfield went on to explain the purpose of the cul-de-sac, which would deter traffic from the quiet neighborhood, and also push the entrance and exit to the park to Route 17.

"The specific proposal hasn't been made yet, but what essentially is on the table is that Strickland Street would become a cul-de-sac," Bransfield said. "I think that having the cul-de-sac would benefit Strickland Street and could benefit the entire neighborhood."

Several nearby residents supported the cul-de-sac idea, as well.

Leslie and Joseph Lawler, of Dolores Road,

sent the board an email that was read aloud at the meeting Wednesday night. They wrote that they are in favor of the cul-de-sac idea if the entrance to the park is on Route 17 rather than Strickland Street because that would "keep the traffic on Route 17."

The Lawlers also expressed interest in being able to "break down the barrier in case of fire or emergency issues."

Al Rosenthal, of Michael Drive, said in an email it would be "logical" to turn Strickland Street into a cul-de-sac, as it would eliminate a lot of traffic going down Strickland Street, though he would miss the neighborhood's short cut.

Rosenthal suggested a traffic light at the four corners intersection to offset an increase in traffic on Bartlett Street and Route 17.

He added, "The nicest thing about the neighborhood is how quiet it is. I'm sure that will all change with the park, especially if the lights are installed [for the soccer field]."

Another resident of Michael Drive submitted an email in support of the conversion of Strickland Street into a cul-de-sac, as it would be "essential to preserving safety and security of our neighborhood."

He requested that a "tall, chain-linked fence" be provided to separate the park from the homes in the neighborhood.

However, some residents weren't so keen on the idea.

An email to Bransfield from Bill Hodge called the idea of developing a park in town "commendable, as it would provide some great recreation space for the town, but I feel it's a much too ambitious plan for a town such as Portland and that it won't be maintained as it needs to be and will eventually become an unattractive place."

Hodge cautioned the town on making Strickland Street a cul-de-sac because of safety

concerns involved with traffic passing through Gospel Lane to Bartlett Street.

Another letter from a resident was read into the minutes, stating that the resident was "greatly concerned" about a "big city idea being forced onto our peaceful Gospel Lane community by a group of people who don't appreciate what small town charm is all about."

The resident said the proposed park complex is a "terrible idea" because the location is "far too small and far too close to the surrounding community."

She said a park complex would replace the "peace and quiet" of the neighborhood and cause property values to plummet.

An email from another Portland resident called the proposal for a recreation complex a "frivolous project" and "non-essential."

One resident who is new to Michael Drive said she was concerned that if Strickland Street was turned into a cul-de-sac then the volume of cars in the neighborhood would increase because people would park there to cut through to the park.

Olivia Handy, of Dolores Road, who attends school in town, said her bus currently gets her to school just on time, and if Strickland Street is turned into a cul-de-sac, she'd likely be late for school.

Additionally, she said people who like to go to bed early would be kept awake by night games at the future park. For those reasons, she said she doesn't support the cul-de-sac or the park itself.

Once all the residents in attendance got a chance to voice their opinions, Parks and Recreations Director Sean Dwyer invited the public to attend upcoming meetings of the park's planning committee.

* * *

Wednesday's meeting of the selectmen also

included an informative presentation regarding Portland's newest clean energy initiative.

According to Andy Bauer, chairman of the Clean Energy Task Force, Portland was named a "pilot community" for Sagewell's Energy Efficiency Thermal Imaging Program.

Tim D'Souza, a representative from Sagewell, presented an overview of the program.

According to D'Souza, Sagewell will take thermal images – which measure a home's heat loss – of each house in town. Then, if and only if a homeowner requests a thermal image report, Sagewell will provide the online report based on the thermal image taken.

The online report includes a collection of images and relative ratings. For walls, windows and doors.

"Everyone has energy leaks in their home and they don't see anything so they don't do anything about it," he said. "What these [thermal] images really do is just act as a catalyst for action."

But he said the images do not replace having an in home energy assessment.

"The idea is to get people involved in energy assessments," he said.

* * *

The board also heard from Lincoln White, the town's building official, at its meeting Wednesday night.

White informed the board that 20 blight issues in town have "been resolved," and 14 remain.

He said, "So far I think we've been quite successful in applying the blight to many properties in town. There is still some ways to go."

* * *

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 7:30 p.m. at Portland Library.



The Cumberland Farms at the corner of Route 66 and High Street has been razed, and work is underway on a new and improved version of the gas station and convenience store. The revamped store should be completed by June.

New and Improved Cumberland Farms Coming to Portland

by Elizabeth Bowling

Portland residents may have noticed a change at the corner of Route 66 and High Street – the Cumberland Farms that used to stand there was demolished last month to make room for a new and improved version, which will take its place this summer.

According to Lincoln White, Portland’s building official, the demolition permit was issued Nov. 27, 2013. The original building was demolished in December and the new Cumberland Farms should be completed by June of this year.

Portland Land Use Administrator Deanna Rhodes said the new gas station will differ from the original because it will be located further back on the same lot and will be parallel with the road.

White added that Cumberland Farms’ “new look” is already on display in Glastonbury and Cromwell. He called the company’s new branding “apparent.”

Rhodes affirmed that the Cumberland Farms in Portland will be “very similar” to the one in

Glastonbury, but will have a pitched roof on the gas tank canopies.

“It’s a really significant project,” Rhodes said Tuesday, noting that the cost comes to \$1,161,000.

But, since it’s a business, the rebuild won’t cost the town anything, White said.

“Cumberland Farms is fully funding this as their private property,” he said. “The town has no financial interest in it except for the hope of a continued successful enterprise.”

White explained that the renovation process begins when the town accepts applications through the land use office; then the town’s development group meets informally as early as possible during the planning stages of projects to support and assist with the regulatory and permitting process.

Rhodes affirmed that the Cumberland Farms project at 204 Marlborough St. was then approved by Planning and Zoning and thus is moving right along.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

To say 2014 is off to a less-than-swell start for New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie would be an understatement, obviously.

To put it briefly, since I’m sure, if you’ve been anywhere near a news outlet in the past week you’ve heard all about it: Last September, several lanes on the George Washington Bridge were closed, causing huge traffic jams. The move was ordered by Christie’s deputy chief of staff, Bridget Anne Kelley, in apparent retaliation for the mayor of Fort Lee, N.J. (the town most impacted by the traffic tie-ups) not supporting Christie’s re-election campaign. The deputy chief of staff has since been fired, and Christie’s been adamant that he knew nothing about this. Still, many have written his presidential ambitions are just about finished – and I can’t help but agree this definitely dents any White House dreams.

Which is sort of a shame, because he’s the one Republican I could actually see myself voting for in 2016. He seems like a nice guy, but beyond that, he’s tough when he needs to be, hasn’t enacted any policies I grossly disapprove of, and he also seems truly capable of putting politics aside and people first. We all saw that with Hurricane Sandy, when Christie embraced President Obama when the latter came to tour the damage and destruction left by the vicious storm. (By the way, I’m still annoyed with the Republicans who chastised Christie for being so friendly with Obama. Really? It was such a human moment. Can’t politics be shoved aside for a moment? I found the criticism quite disgusting, and saddening.)

Now, I realize the Christie of today and the Christie what would have emerged after the Republican National Committee machine turned him into another GOP-bot may have been two very different animals. But as of now, I like Christie. And perhaps I’m being a little naïve, but I – for the moment, anyway – am choosing to believe Christie himself really *didn’t* know about the bridge scandal.

Still, there’s no arguing it makes him look bad, in that he A) appoints people to his cabinet who may not be on the up-and-up, and B) isn’t doing a great job of minding the store (assuming, again, that he didn’t know what Kelley was up to).

It’ll be interesting to see how this all shakes out. I hope I’m proven right, that Christie never knew about the lane closures. But even if I am, I think his presidential aspirations are in trouble.

Moving on to sunnier topics – did you all watch the Golden Globes Sunday? I watched the whole show, despite not seeing any of the movies that were nominated. (I did a little better on the TV end, though – and was quite glad to see *Breaking Bad* win big and *Parks and Recreation*’s Amy Poehler take home her first Globe). It was an entertaining three hours. Poehler and Tina Fey hosted, as they did last year, and most of their jokes landed. My favorite (and, it seemed, the audience’s as well) referenced a movie I haven’t seen, but knew enough about: *Gravity*, starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney. In the film – and this is a pretty big **SPOILER ALERT** – Clooney dies after he untethers himself from Bullock in outer space and simply drifts away.

Or, as Fey described it, *Gravity* is “the story of how George Clooney would rather float away and die than spend another minute with a woman his own age.”

(Clooney’s something of a man-about-town, and often dates women who tend to be a good deal younger than he is; for example, the 52-year-old recently had a two-year relationship with 34-year-old Stacy Kiebler.)

In addition to Fey and Poehler, there was entertainment to be had in the acceptance speeches themselves, as the award-winners had sometimes perhaps had a bit too much to drink before jumping up on stage. Matthew McConaughey, winning the Best Ac-

tor award for the *Dallas Buyers Club*, seemed to be channeling his inner David Wooderson from *Dazed and Confused*, complete with an “Alright, alright, alright.” Emma Thompson presented an award with a drink in one hand and her heels in the other – as she’d taken them off since they’d proven uncomfortable.

And then there was Jacqueline Bissett, who won the first award of the night. After taking a full minute to get up on stage, she gave a rambling speech, full of pauses and not full of a whole lot that made sense. Everybody assumed she was quite in the bag already. Maybe she was. But in her defense, she said after the show she thought her award was to be presented much later in the evening, so she was totally unprepared. Plus, it was so early in the night (I don’t even think it was 8:30 yet, which means it wasn’t quite 5:30 out in LA, where the awards were presented), she hadn’t even eaten dinner yet. She was, as she later said, “completely out of it.”

It was a memorable moment from the show, to say the least – and it’s not a shock the show produced such a moment. The Golden Globes basically sells itself as a big dinner party where people get awards at – and also plenty of alcohol. The awards will probably never have the prestige that the Emmys and the Oscars do for their respective industries (for starters, the categories are a little weird; for example, for TV the supporting actor and actress categories aren’t broken into any kind of genre, resulting in stars of sitcoms, dramas and TV movies all competing against each other – how do you differentiate?), so selling itself as “Hollywood’s party night” probably isn’t a bad gambit.

The show’s a lot of fun, and I plan to watch again next year – especially if Fey and Poehler are back.

Lastly, I know it seems like January just started, but it’s never too early to think about April 15 – the day taxes are due. And I got a helpful notice sent to the paper this week, letting me know that people can turn to the folks at AARP to help cope with tax-time stress. From Feb. 1-April 15, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, a free tax assistance and preparation program, helps taxpayers with basic federal and state income tax returns.

The program is available to middle- and low-income taxpayers, though AARP said “special attention” is given to those 60 and older. It provides face-to-face tax assistance services at 96 sites across Connecticut, including libraries, and senior and community centers. Volunteers are trained and IRS-certified every year, AARP said.

Last year, volunteers with the program helped 30,000 Connecticut residents file their taxes. If you’re interested in being among that number this year – and it sounds like a heck of a deal, to be honest – call 1-888-AARP-NOW (1-888-227-7669) or visit aarp.org/taxaide.

And as a reminder to those interested, AARP said it needs to see: proof of identity (picture or other documentation); all income statements that apply to you; Social Security number (Social Security card or Benefit Statement-Form SSA-1099) for you and all dependents; a copy of last year’s federal and state tax returns; and, if directly depositing your tax refund, your bank checking account and routing numbers.

Remember, April will be here before you know it. In a lot of ways, that’s a good thing. It brings warmer weather. It brings the baseball season. It also happens to bring the birthday of your favorite community weekly newspaper editor.

But with all of April’s joys come Tax Day. Don’t forget – and don’t forget to give AARP a call.

See you next week.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Stephen John Hudak

Stephen John Hudak, 89, formerly of Rocky Hill, East Hampton and Stamford, passed away after a brief but courageous battle with bladder cancer. Steve was born in Stamford to the late Stephen Hudak and Anna Lipko Hudak.



As a child, Steve was initially encouraged to become a dancer of tap, toe and ballet by his parents. He became quite accomplished at it but after a severe foot swelling related to a bout with rheumatic fever which caused permanent damage to his foot, dance was no longer an option.

He found his calling in music. A friend offered him a saxophone which he could play easily by ear. After seeing a natural talent, he began taking music lessons both in Connecticut and New York and started playing in non-union trios. He played alto and tenor sax and clarinet as well. Give him a piece of sheet music and he could read it like a book.

In 1943, he had an audition with The Frank Dailey Band and got the job! This was the catalyst that began his career of traveling with the big bands of Vinnie Wilson, Jack Adams, Kenny Sargeant and finally Louie Prima. He played his alto sax to celebrities such as Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis and Margaret Hamilton. He even had the chance to meet Frank Sinatra.

Even though he had a passion for bebop, jazz and swing, life on the road was not an easy one, but he had the chance to see many cities throughout the U.S. He actually turned down an offer from Tommy Dorsey to join his band for a tour in South America. He returned to playing in small group venues after being on the road for a number of years.

Steve also worked at Sorenson, a division of Raytheon, of Norwalk, and Data Products in Stamford as an electronics inspector, retiring in 1989. He was a life member of the Knights of Columbus, a member of the First Catholic Slovak Union for 50 years and a member of the American Federation of Musicians, Norwalk local 52.

He was predeceased by his loving wife Anna Umile Hudak of 46 years in 2002 and by a niece, Laurie Sheaffer.

He is survived by a daughter Cynthia Dravis and her husband Dan of East Hampton; a sister, Helen Sheaffer and her husband John of Shippensburg, Pa.; two nephews, Steven Sheaffer and his wife Celeste of Florida and Johnny Sheaffer of Shippensburg, Pa.; and by other close family members, Lawrence Nemchek of Stamford, Susan and Kevin O'Kane of Stamford, Theresa and Jess Szczesiul of Shelton and Tommy Nemchek, his wife Cathy and daughter Rachel of Vermont.

His family would like to express their deepest appreciation to his special friend Joan, her supporting family and his extended family at The Lodge at Coldspring in Rocky Hill, where even there, he was in their choir; music was just a part of him.

"Smile, what's the use of crying; you'll find that life is still worthwhile if you just smile" - Charlie Chaplin.

The family also wishes to extend a special thanks to Kathy Lundell of Caregiving by Kathy and to the nursing staff at the Chestelm Health and Rehab Center in Moodus, as well as the nurses of the Middlesex Hospice program.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to: Hungry for Music at hungryformusic.org.

At the request of the family, all services will be held privately.

Mr. Hudak's family has entrusted his final care to Bosak Funeral Home, 453 Shippan Ave., in Stamford. If you care to leave an expression of sympathy for the family online, sign the guestbook on bosakfuneralhome.com or visit the funeral home on Facebook at facebook.com/bosakfuneralhome.

East Hampton

Rose B. Hastings

Rose B. (Borin) Hastings, 93, of East Hampton, widow of Warren Needham Hastings, died Monday, Jan. 13, in Marlborough. Born Dec. 14, 1920, in Hartford, to Swedish immigrants Erik and Agnes (Nelson) Borin.



Rose was retired from Pratt & Whitney where she had worked as a stockroom manager for precious metals used in the manufacturing process. She had lived in East Hampton since 1951 and was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton, a member of the East Hampton Senior Center and had served as secretary of the Belltown Seniors for 15 years. As a young girl she had been a member of the Luther League.

She is survived by her two daughters, Janet Hastings of East Hampton, Carol Benson and her husband Rick of Portland; her sister-in-law, Mary Borin of East Hampton; five grandchildren, Scott Minnick, Susan Minnick, Neal Benson, David Benson, Laura LaJeune; and three great-grandchildren, Julien and Charlotte Minnick, and Caroline Benson.

She was predeceased by her parents and husband and her two brothers, Walter and Roy Borin.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Friday, Jan. 17, from 5-8 p.m. Funeral services will be held Saturday, Jan. 18, at 11 a.m., in Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1 East High St., East Hampton. Burial will follow in the family plot in Lake View Cemetery.

The family would like to thank the staff of Marlborough Health Care Center for their kind and loving care.

Memorial donations may be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 31, East Hampton, CT 06424 or to East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Andover

Ronald C. Giggie

Ronald C. Giggie, 71, of Andover, passed away suddenly at Manchester Memorial Hospital Friday, Jan. 10, with his devoted family by his side. The only child of the late Cedric and Ruth (Holmes) Giggie, Ron was born in Fort Fairfield, Maine, on Nov. 16, 1942.

Moving to Manchester in sixth grade, he attended local schools, graduated from Manchester High School in 1960 and furthered his education at Post University. On Sept. 21, 1963, he married Barbara Chapman and they celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2013 with an extended trip to Alaska.

Ron worked for SNETCo (Southern New England Telephone Company) for 37 years, taking an early retirement to establish Romar Investments, a real estate business, with his sons. He was active in Troop 47 as a Boy Scout leader during his sons' involvement with scouting.

Ron loved the Allagash Wilderness in Maine, camping, harness horses, photography, books and his gift of magic for entertaining his young nieces and nephews. His greatest moments were his extensive travels with his wife, family and friends. He was a seven-year cancer survivor and never allowed it to affect his life or pleasures.

Ron is survived by his beloved Barbara, son Bruce Ronald and his wife, Amy of Andover and son Mark Allen and his companion, Tina Caisse of Chaplin; his aunts, Bertha Calabrese and Maxine Manfreda; and many cousins. He leaves two sisters-in-law, Jeanne Eagleson and her companion Neal Illing, and Laurie Brookes and her husband Duffy, as well as many special nephews and a niece, great-nephews and a great-niece. He also leaves his dear friends, Doug and Janet MacGillvary, Gene and Lois Gale, Lee and Lou Mae Albert and Rev. Paul Doyle.

Calling hours were held at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester, on Wednesday, Jan. 15, followed by a service that evening.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Covenant Soup Kitchen (where he served on the Board of Directors) 220 Valley St., Willimantic, CT 06226 or to The DeQuattro Cancer Center, 100 Haynes St., Manchester, CT 06040.

To sign the online register book, go to holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Marlborough

Roberta Boucher

Ms. Roberta "Robyn" Boucher, 65, of Scottsdale, Ga., formerly of Marlborough, passed away Wednesday, January 8, 2014.

She was born March 3, 1948, in New London, and resided in central Connecticut the majority of her life, including Marlborough for 20 years. After 23 years of service as a supervisor with the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health, she retired and later moved to Georgia.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Robert and Louise Morris; and brother, William Morris.

She is survived by her daughter, Sherri A. (Lori Sinnen) Boucher of Scottsdale, Ga.; son, Steven A. (Lisa) Boucher of North Franklin; grandchildren, Letisha, Jasmine, Megan and Taylor Boucher; brother, Robert Morris; and brother, Curtis Morris.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 18, at the Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., Marlborough. Pastor Ted Dole will officiate. Family will receive guests following the service in the reception lounge behind the Sanctuary. A private family interment service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to: American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, PO Box 840692 Dallas, TX 75284-0692

Colchester

Joachim Walter Plecan

Joachim Walter Plecan, "Walt," 85, of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 14, surrounded by his loving family, after a long, courageous battle with cancer. Born at home in Colchester, he was a son of the late Joseph and Mary (Dzuma) Plecan.



Walt was a 1946 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester, and went on to study at the Hartt School of Music in Hartford.

Mr. Plecan was a 50+ year member of the Colchester Federated Church, and, while a member shared his musical talent and beautiful tenor voice with the choir as well as deacon emeritus.

For nearly 40 years, Walt was a tool and die maker for Pratt & Whitney before retiring as Master Mechanic Foreman in 1986.

An avid tractor enthusiast and collector, he was involved with the activities at the Colchester Historical Society Zagray Farm Museum.

His zest for life included the outdoors; gardening, fishing and camping, as well as spending time at the family summer home in the Catskills; to taking to the open road as a motorcyclist or to the clear blue skies as a pilot; and reading, woodworking and following the UConn Huskies.

He served proudly with the U.S. Army Artillery during the Korean War and went on to be a longtime member of both the Donald A. Bigelow American Legion Post 54 and the Adler-Boluck VFW Post 6990.

His greatest joy, however, was found in his family, to whom he was ever devoted.

He leaves his loving wife of 24 years, Carol (Coer) Nelson-Plecan; five children, John Plecan and wife Evelyn of Colchester, June Plecan and husband Peter Govert of East Haddam, James Plecan and wife Cheryl of Lisbon, Walter Plecan of Griswold and Julie Benoit and husband Ronald of Colchester; four stepchildren, James Nelson and partner Tom Lucia of Stamford, Betty Nelson and Phillip Nelson, both of Southbury and Stephen Nelson and wife Beneta of Manhattan, N.Y.; 17 grandchildren; one great-grandson; his sister, Olga Krukowski of West Hartford; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his first wife and mother of his children, Beatrice (Becker) Plecan, who passed away in 1987; and his brother, Michael Plecan.

The family will receive guests from 4-7 p.m. today, Jan. 17, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

Funeral services will be observed at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 18, directly at the Colchester Federated Church, located at 60 Main St. (on the green). Burial with full military honors will follow in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Memorial Fund at the Colchester Federated Church, 60 Main St., Colchester, CT 06415.

For online expressions of sympathy, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Cobalt

Howard J. Ziegler Jr.

Howard J. "Ziggy" Ziegler Jr., 69, of Middletown, beloved husband of Sharon Ziegler, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Jan. 7, at Cobalt Health and Rehabilitation Center. Born in New Britain, he was the son of the late Howard Ziegler Sr. and Adeline (Semrow) Ziegler.

He was a U.S. Army veteran and was a New Britain resident until moving to Middletown in 1978. Howard was employed at Precision Plastics in Deep River and was formerly employed as a carpenter for over 40 years. He was an avid fisherman.

Surviving are his wife, Sharon (Saunders) Ziegler; two cousins, Ruth Lewis and Jean Haman; an uncle, Robert Ziegler; a brother-in-law, Dale Saunders; his Godmother, Madeline Brandt; a godchild, Diane Cabral and her daughter Victoria; three aunts, Eleanora Busch, Dorothea Fuller and Gertrude Semrow; many cousins; many close friends, including Elaine Mathewson, Daniel Mathewson and Jack Burchard; his special caregivers, Lynn at Middlesex Hospital and Cindy at Cobalt Health and Rehabilitation Center; and his loving cat, Binky.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Jan. 18, at 12:30 p.m., at Erickson-Hansen Funeral Home, 411 South Main St., New Britain. Calling hours are Saturday morning, Jan. 19, from 11 a.m. until the time of the service at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to Protectors of Animals, 144 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06118 or to the Leukemia Society, 321 Research Pkwy., Suite 212, Meriden, CT 06450.

Share a memory of Howard with the family in the online guest book at ericksonhansen.com.

Andover

Frank W. Wroniak

Frank W. Wroniak, 22, of Windham, formerly of Andover, passed away Friday, Jan. 10. Frank was born in Hartford on May 13, 1991, the son of Gina Aszklar Wroniak of Ellington and Thomas Wroniak.

He is the maternal grandson of Frank and Regina Kovalick Aszklar Jr. of Windham, with whom he resided, and paternal grandson of the late Walter and Marie Wroniak. Frank also leaves many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

He loved animals, especially his dog Jade, his dirt bikes and his hockey. He played hockey since he was 3 years old, recently with the Boston Junior Blackhawks. Frank was currently employed by the Birch Mountain Earthworks of South Windsor.

Friends visited with his family Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester and may attend his Mass of Christian Burial on Thursday, Jan. 16, in St. Christopher Church, 538 Brewer St., East Hartford. Interment followed in St. Mary's Cemetery, East Hartford.

To send a condolence, see beecherandbennett.com.

Marlborough

Edoardo D'Alessandro

Edoardo D'Alessandro, 86, of Marlborough, formerly of Cromwell, beloved husband for 56 years of the late Pasqualina (Iacobucci) D'Alessandro, passed away peacefully Friday, Jan. 10, with his family by his side. Born Oct. 3, 1927, in Pratola Peligna, province of Aquila, Italy, he was the son of the late Gaetano and Maria-Rosaria (DiNunno) D'Alessandro.

Edoardo was a skilled mason and worked for Elm-Cap Industries for 24 years. He enjoyed gardening and making his own wine, but his greatest joy in life was spending time with his family.

A loving father and grandfather, he will be dearly missed by his children, John D'Alessandro and his wife Susan of Berlin and Annamaria Moran and her husband Steven of Glastonbury and adored grandchildren, Dino, Lindsey and Gabriel Cassarino and Christian Edward D'Alessandro. In addition to his wife and parents, Edoardo was predeceased by a son, Dino and three infant sons, Osvaldo, Rodrigo and Luciano.

Funeral services left Tuesday, Jan. 14, from the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield, for a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, 626 Willard Ave., Newington. Burial followed in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford. The family received relatives and friends Monday, Jan. 13, at the funeral chapel.

For online expressions of sympathy, visit desopo.com.

Andover

Victoria L. Wallace

Victoria L. (Kolokoski) Wallace, 66, of Andover, passed away peacefully Sunday, Dec. 29.

Those left to treasure her memory include her former husband, Michael F. Wallace of Andover; two children, Jessica (Wallace) and her husband, James Tremblay, of Bedford, N.H., and Bryce Wallace and his wife, Christa (Jobs), of Easthampton, Mass.; and two grandchildren, Alexa Wallace Tremblay and Jackson Saunders Tremblay, of Bedford, N.H. Vicki is also survived by her three siblings, Susan Briggs, and Edward Collins both of Michigan, and Rick Kolmin of Ohio. She was preceded in death by her parents, Edward and Ethel Kolokoski of Michigan.

Born July 18, 1947 in Detroit, Mich., Vicki attended high school in Royal Oak and graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in elementary education. Moving to Connecticut in 1970, she pursued her passion for working with young people and taught elementary and preschool for a combined 26 years in Columbia, Andover and Coventry. Vicki's students often referred to her as "Mrs. Green," because she loved the color green and wore it head to toe every day (except for Saint Patrick's Day).

Vicki always believed that actions speak louder than words and she was not happy unless she was doing her part to make the world a better place. Over the years she poured her heart and soul into programs such as the Andover Library Board, Andover Economic Development Commission, Community Organized and Operated Latchkey Program (COOL), Brownies, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Playgroup, Andover Library Story Hour, Andover Playschool, and the Andover Beautification Committee to name a few.

Andover residents may recall running into Vicki at the town transfer station where she collected recyclables for CART (Collecting Andover's Returnable Treasures) or at the Andover Historical Society's museum at the Old Town Hall where she served as a docent (dressed in colonial wear) and helped to paint a sixty foot mural depicting the history of Andover.

Her most ardent work included her many contributions to Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough (AHM) Youth and Family Services. She served on the Executive Committee for ten years and on several subcommittees, including the Juvenile Review Board and Project Graduation, of which she was the general chairperson for three consecutive years. She was particularly fond of her work with the Family Resource Center that brought activities to parents of newborns throughout Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough. In 1997, Vicki received AHM's Friend of Youth Award, an honor bestowed upon one of the region's most outstanding citizens.

Vicki was a truly unique and passionate woman, a loving and caring friend, and someone who always brought out the best in others. She greatly cherished time with her children and grandchildren, all of whom she nurtured with unconditional love and support.

A memorial to celebrate her life was held Friday, Jan. 10, at the First Congregational Church of Andover, 359 Route 6, Andover.

Memorial donations may be made in lieu of flowers to AHM Youth Services, 25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, CT 06248.



Colchester

Richard J. Hynds

Richard J. Hynds, 87, of Norwich, died Thursday, Jan. 9, at Harrington Court Convalescent Home in Colchester. He was born April 5, 1926, in Norwich, the son of the late James and Margaret Hynds.

Richard grew up in Norwich and attended the Norwich schools. Richard spent many of his years living on McKinley Avenue, later moving to the AHEPA apartments. He was the first male graduate of the Huntington Institute, with a certificate for office accounting. Richard was employed by the State of Connecticut as a member of the maintenance department of Norwich Technical School and the Hartford and Norwich armories for the National Guard.

Richard was a member of the Elks of Norwich, the Knights of Columbus both the White Cross Council and the 4th degree Daniel Mullen Assembly, holding many positions in these organizations. He was a lifetime member of the Knights of Columbus. Richard was an avid sports fan especially for the Boston Red Sox, New England Patriots and the teams for UConn. Any sport brought enjoyment to Richard during his life.

He is survived by his daughters, Jackie Hynds of Hoboken, N.J., Gisele Dunn and her husband Chris from St. Petersburg, Fla.; and two granddaughters, Abigail Dunn Hobbs and her husband Steve of New York, N.Y., and Katherine Dunn from St. Petersburg, Fla.; and a sister, Judy Jordan of St. Augustine, Fla. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Richard was predeceased by two brothers, James Hynds Jr. and John H. Hynds, and a sister, Peg LeBoeuf.

A graveside service will be held Friday, Jan. 24, at 10 a.m., at St. Joseph Cemetery in Norwich. The Cummings-Gagne Funeral Home is assisting the family will arrangements.

To share a condolence, a story of Richard or to light a candle, visit cummings-gagnefh.com.

Marlborough

Vincent F. Casella

Vincent F. Casella, 92, of Newington, formerly of Marlborough, passed away Friday, Jan. 10. He was the beloved husband of Vita (Angelo) Casella for 71 years.

Born in Marlborough, the ninth child of the late Louis and Mary (Calamari) Casella, he attended Marlborough grammar school, where he played baseball, and graduated from East Hampton High School, and was then employed by Colt Manufacturing Co.

Vincent honorably served his country in the U.S. Army during World War II for three years as a technical sergeant in the 98th infantry in Hawaii and Japan. He was also employed by various propane gas companies and retired after 40 years of service.

He was an avid Red Sox fan, enjoyed card games and extensively traveled around the country with his wife. He also looked forward to his annual Army reunions. He was a member of St. Mary's Church, Newington and of various clubs and associations including the VFW, and loved all types of animals and wildlife.

Along with his wife, he leaves a brother, Raymond Chester Casella of Pinellas Park, Fla., and several nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

He was predeceased by his six brothers and two sisters.

Relatives and friends called Tuesday, Jan. 14, at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington, followed by a funeral service that day. Burial with military honors followed in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford.

Memorial donations may be made to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or the CT Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

To share a memory with his family, visit newingtonmemorial.com.

East Hampton

Erik T. Robinson

Erik T. Robinson, 49, of Newington, formerly of East Hampton, passed away unexpectedly Monday, Jan. 13. He was the loving husband of Jennifer (Cook) Robinson for over 18 years.

Born Nov. 24, 1964, he grew up in East Hampton, where he spent many afternoons skating at the cranberry bog and was an active Boy Scout member throughout his childhood. Erik graduated from Xavier High School in Middletown as well as The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry. An alumni 'Lifer,' Erik's Holy Cross days were among his most treasured times and he loved to relive those days through stories.

Shortly thereafter, Erik was accepted into one of the country's top chemistry Ph.D. programs at Purdue University. After a year, he decided to move back east to work in the family business and then eventually move on to McPhee Electric in Farmington where he remained. Throughout his life, Erik enjoyed learning about the finer things such as wine, cigars and scotch. He loved cooking, bowling, movies, college football and being at home with his family and three cats.

In addition to his wife, Jennifer, who will miss him dearly, he leaves behind his "proudest accomplishments," his children, Emily (14) and Kevin (13), his beloved mother Louise (Sciutti) Robinson of East Hampton; father, Gary Robinson and his wife Dolores of New Britain; his sister, Kris Robinson of East Hampton; mother-in-law, Sandra Charland and her husband Henry, father-in-law Henry Cook Jr., all of Newington; and sister-in-law, Jacqueline Cook of Wethersfield.

His funeral service will begin Saturday, Jan. 18, at 10:30 a.m., at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, Newington. He will be laid to rest privately in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford. Relatives and friends are invited to call today, Jan. 17, from 4-8 p.m., at Newington Memorial.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Erik T. Robinson Scholarship Fund c/o 35 Stuart St., Newington, CT 06111.

To share a note of sympathy, visit newingtonmemorial.com.

Portland

Lucia Fazzino Sardo

Lucia (Lucy) Fazzino Sardo, formerly of Portland, passed away at Wellington Regional Medical Center, Wellington, Fla., on Friday, Jan. 10. Lucy was the beloved wife of the late Guy Sardo. Lucy, the daughter of the late Rosa (Amato) and Sebastaino Fazzino, was born on June 10, 1930, in Melilli, Sicily.

Lucy resided in Middletown and Portland for many years, and was a resident of Royal Palm Beach, Fla., where she lived with her daughter, Mary Ann Loftis.

She is survived by her daughters, Mary Ann Loftis and Rose Lyn Staron, and her son-in-law, Charles E. (Chuck) Staron of Illinois. She also leaves her five grandchildren, Stephanie (Matt) Van Olst. Stacey Loftis, James Austin Loftis, Lisa Staron and Robert Staron, and her great-grandson, Caiden Tyler. Lucy is survived by her siblings, brother and sister-in-law Salvatore C. and Rose Marie Fazzino, sister Carmelina Fiorilla and sister-in-law, Rosalia Sardo.

She was predeceased by her siblings Vincenzina (Jennie) Marino Daniele, Giuseppe (Joseph) Fazzino, Candita DiMauro and Sebastiana (Anna) Vinci.

She is survived by many nieces and nephews. Viewing was Thursday, Jan. 16, at D'Angelo Funeral Home, 22 South Main St., Middletown. A Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10 a.m. today, Jan. 17, at St. Sebastian Church, Washington Street, Middletown. Lucy will be laid to rest at St. Sebastian Cemetery, Middlefield.

Donations can be sent to St. Sebastian Church Renovation Fund, 155 Washington St., Middletown, CT 06457.