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News Bulletin

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

Volume 39, Number 34

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

December 12, 2014



O Christmas Tree... Marlborough's green will have a reminder of the holidays year round with the newly planted permanent Christmas tree. The tree was lit up during the Gathering on the Green this past Sunday. See story on page 29.

Song, Dance Get Kids in Holiday Spirit

by Geeta Schrayter

Last Thursday, students at Gilead Hill School in Hebron participated in what Principal Eric Brody called "an exciting treat" to help them get ready for the upcoming holidays.

After gathering in the school gym Dec. 4, the kids "oohed and ahed" when the stage curtain opened, revealing a festive setup with stockings, candy canes, bright red bows and a twinkling garland. The fun then began when Don Monopoli from The Learning Station stepped into view "to celebrate the holidays in December," he said, before getting the students up and dancing.

Their voices rang out along with Monopoli's as they sang songs like "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," "Up on the Rooftop" and "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" at the top of their lungs – clearly familiar with the tunes.

They alternately sang while sitting and standing, dancing and going on pretend adventures to find baby sharks and take a picture with a bear. They joined in on popular children's songs like "Ram Sam Sam" and a holiday take on "She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain."

"He'll be coming down the chimney when he comes," Monopoli sang, adding, "He'll be flying with his reindeer when he comes," to smiles and laughs from those present.

Monopoli also led the students in a song about Kwanzaa and talked about the Jewish spinning top, the dreidel.

This week, Monopoli said he's always been into music and explained him and his wife, who has a degree in early childhood education, decided to combine their talents in 1985 and start the Learning Station.

According to the website learningstationmusic.com, the Learning Station "shares music that brings out the childhood compassion of joy that's in all of our hearts."

Monopoli further explained, "If you want to get down to basics, singing is a way for children to express themselves. When they sing, it's actually making them use a lot of their brain as far as connecting their thoughts with words, melodies and timing.

"And dancing gets them up and moving," he added, which he said provides "great brain breaks."

The group, which also includes friend Jan Hrkach, "has achieved international stature as leaders in the children's educational music industry," the website continues. "They presently have a collection of 29 award-winning audio and video releases and they have published over 250 children's songs that are part of educational curriculums world-wide.

Monopoli shared this was his second time coming to Gilead, and he was "really impressed" with the school and the area.

"It was beautiful," he said of Hebron, adding "the school seems like it's got all its stuff together and was very organized."

Speaking on the principal, Monopoli added, "What a ball of fire he is!"

"He must be a fantastic principal," he furthered. "He was there with the children through the whole thing, moving and grooving. He's a very, very nice guy and knows what it's like to be on stage and fooling around – he tore the house down during 'The 12 Days of Christmas'."

See **Holiday Spirit Page 2**

Colchester Teen Stars on 'Project Runway' Spinoff

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Colchester resident Zoe Grinfeld, 16, began designing jewelry and fashion at the age of 5 – but never imagined her efforts would put her in front of a national television audience.

Next week, though, that's exactly where she'll be, as she will be featured on an episode of *Project Runway: Threads*, a spin-off of *Project Runway* that focuses on younger contestants. Grinfeld's installment will air Thursday, Dec. 18, on the Lifetime cable channel.

"I started designing jewelry at 5 years old," Grinfeld said. "I started selling the jewelry at eight and changed to fashion in the sixth grade."

Even without knowing how to sew beside for a simple straight stitch, Grinfeld held her first fashion show at the age of 11, specializing in recycled materials and clothes made out of unconventional materials and textures including umbrellas, board game pieces and more.

Between her first and second fashion show, Grinfeld learned to sew and the possibilities for

her talents took off.

This past January, Grinfeld's costume design teacher at Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts notified her producers were looking for people to participate in a planned spinoff of the popular *Project Runway* series.

"I sent in pictures of my work and 10 minutes later, I got the call," Grinfeld said.

After a casting call via Skype that month, Grinfeld was selected for the show, and filmed her installment in May, at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) in Los Angeles, Calif. Her father, Louie Grinfeld, went with her as her adult assistant.

According to the show's website, skilled teen and tween fashion designers will showcase their gift of style. The show includes as judges former *Project Runway* winner Christian Siriano, *Seventeen's* fashion director Gina Kelly and accessories editor Jasmine Snow, and YouTube style guru Ingrid Nilsen. The show's host is

Vanessa Simmons, from the MTV reality series *Run's House*. The series also includes guest judges, such as actress Kelly Osbourne, actress and model Jaime King, and actress and singer Zendaya.

Project Runway: Threads premiered after the finale of *Project Runway* on Oct. 23. It runs for eight weeks, ending with Grinfeld's episode on Dec. 18.

Each episode has three new teen contestants, each of whom has brought a look from home and will make two designs, one with a twist, on the show. Each winner receives \$10,000 to use at any Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts store or its website, Joann.com, along with a scholarship to the summer program at FIDM along with travel expenses and a sewing and embroidery studio by Brother International Corporation.

"It seemed like a cool opportunity," Grinfeld said of when she learned of the show. "On the plane, it didn't feel real."

Upon arriving in Los Angeles at FIDM, Grinfeld said it moved fast and before she knew it, she was in the workroom for the show, working on her designs for her challenges.

"I met kids that do the same thing I do," Grinfeld said. "I got to sit there and sew."

Of her partnership with her father, Grinfeld said she "couldn't have done it without him."

"He kept me sane," Grinfeld said. "Even though he doesn't look like it, he has style."

"We came back with greater mutual respect," Louie Grinfeld said. "Her desire to be in fashion is even more real. She's driven."

Of the competition itself, both Louie and Zoe agreed that the "stress is real."

"She was cooler than I was," Louie Grinfeld said. "She kind of works alone."

Before going into the competition, Louie Grinfeld said he used to make dog collars and tool belts, but never a garment.

See **Colchester Teen Page 2**

Holiday Shopping Guide Inside



During last Thursday's holiday assembly, presenter Don Monopoli (left) was joined on stage by preschool teacher Chris Lapsis, Principal Eric Brody, and second-grade teacher David LeFevre for a lively performance of "The 12 Days of Christmas."

Holiday Spirit cont. from Front Page

Christmas."

When it came time to sing about those 12 days, Monopoli had asked the men who were present to come on stage. At first, some of the male students stood up to join, but Monopoli laughed and said, "Uh-uh – you're a boy! I like how you think though!"

The men who *did* come up were Brody, second grade teacher David LeFevre and preschool teacher Chris Lapsis, who Brody said was one of the teachers who arranged for Monopoli to come to the school after seeing him at a conference last year.

Lapsis, Brody said, had spoken to Monopoli because some of the Learning Station's music had been used in the preschool classes. After learning he'd be in Connecticut around the holidays last year, and had a holiday presentation, he came to the school.

"The [first] assembly was well-received by parents and kids and teachers," Brody stated. "They said it was one of the best assemblies they ever had. The kids got excited, it got everyone moving and in the holiday spirit" and so, it was brought back again.

Speaking on his time on the stage, Brody shared "it was exciting. The students here know I'm not afraid to get up there and be part of the performance. ... I enjoy doing it, but I know the kids enjoy it too so that was great, and I also had my skills put to the test for sure, trying to keep up with the song and order."

And overall, Brody said this year's assembly was "absolutely fabulous."

"There's a nice mix of holiday songs and different holidays – that was one of the things we really liked," he stated. "We try to promote a little bit more diversity with students. The performance touched on Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and brought in some other songs students know; it was a great performance that just got the kids in the holiday spirit."

And that was precisely the point, as Monopoli shared when the assembly came to an end.

"We're going to get in the holiday spirit and have a great year!" he said, before the students joined in enthusiastically for the final song, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."



Zoe Grinfeld, 16, of Colchester (right) will appear on the Dec. 18 episode of *Project Runway: Threads*. She's shown here explaining a design with one of the show's models.

Colchester Teen cont. from Front Page

With the show in the books – and the competition complete – Grinfeld looked back this week with pride at what she accomplished in Los Angeles.

"I'm proud of what I produced in the amount of time given," Grinfeld said. "It felt good to create. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

After the series ends – Grinfeld's is the last episode of the season – the public will be able to bid on the looks from the show. Grinfeld said the one she really wants back is her own design, which she brought from home and had to leave there; she said she hopes to win the bid after the episode airs.

A junior at GHAA currently majoring in theater design and production, Grinfeld said she hopes to one day have her own label and be a well-known fashion figure such as the late Alexander McQueen.

"I look at clothing as wearable sculpture," Grinfeld said. "I encourage stories into pieces. What you wear reflects your life. My work is a true representation of who I am."

Grinfeld hopes to attend design school for college and continue her road in fashion.

Her episode of *Project Runway: Threads* airs at 10 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, on Lifetime.

New Special Ed. Director Debuts at RHAM

by Geeta Schrayter

There's a new special education director at RHAM High School. Pamela Potemri of North Stonington started last Monday, and she said this week she can already tell she's become part of a district with "a lot of really good things happening."

Potemri comes to RHAM from Westerly Public Schools in Westerly, R.I., where she had been Director of Pupil Services since 2009.

Potemri received a Bachelor of Science degree in political science and a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from Rhode Island College; she earned her masters in special education from Simmons College in Boston. In addition, Potemri received her administrative certificate from Providence College and is currently a doctoral candidate at Johnson and Wales University.

Potemri shared she went into special education because she has an uncle with disabilities and through work she did in a group home near where he lived, she became frustrated because "we provide a lot to students in the system and for adults, it's not the same."

She said that "definitely changed the track I was on and I knew then I wanted to go into special education and change the system and opportunities for people."

Potemri furthered, "I believe we should be doing more; there should be more opportunities. And so I kind of followed that path."

In one of her previous positions, Potemri added she worked on the creation of a Community Inclusion Program, the purpose of which was to "provide opportunities and inte-

grate everyone into the community and workplace."

She said she applies that same philosophy to her work as a director.

"I think as a director it's all about, what is the most natural environment for students to learn in and what makes the most sense?" she said. "And not so much to think about special education as far as a placement but really opportunities and how can we best support the student regardless of what environment they're in."

Potemri added, "A lot of it is about remembering it's about the student and individualizing and knowing what's good for one is not necessarily good for another and being mindful it's not about the adults it's about the kids we serve everyday."

She furthered, "I think I approach things with a lot of humility and understanding of where our kids are going, and we need to provide the most opportunities for them to be as independent as possible when they leave us."

Along with her background and experiences with her uncle, Potemri shared she is also the mother of children with special needs.

"I think that's something important to mention because I think I do come with a very different perspective and understanding of why parents are asking for what they're asking for and what they're looking for in our system," she stated.

* * *

As for why she came to RHAM, Potemri explained she hadn't been actively looking for

a job, but when she was notified about the position through an employment agency, the description caught her attention.

"I looked on the web to see about the school and the community and it sounded like a great opportunity," she stated, adding she had recently moved to the state and was curious to work in Connecticut and see how the education system was different from Rhode Island.

"Already after a week, I can see there are some significant differences so I think it's going to be a good match. It's exciting," Potemri shared, adding, "I'm very happy I made the decision" to apply.

One of the differences Potemri said she's already noticed is the paperwork, but "it follows a logical sequence so it does make a lot of sense."

In addition, she said, one of the biggest differences is "the burden of proof" – the idea that when there's a difference of opinion on the supports and services outlined for a student, it is up to the district to prove that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the supports and services in place or being recommended are appropriate.

"Everywhere else I have been it hasn't been that way," Potemri shared. "So it's just a very different way of thinking."

As she gets settled at RHAM, Potemri said her biggest challenge will be "just understanding and appreciating the history [of the district] and getting to know people."

She furthered, "I always feel bad I don't know everybody's name right away. I don't like that

because I always want to be approachable and have a frame of reference and know who I'm talking to, and that just takes some time."

Regarding what she's looking forward to, Potemri said she was excited to be part of a district where she feels "embedded."

"I'm coming from a district where it was just me and it was double the size and had six buildings and obviously double the staff so I felt like I couldn't get to everyone and everything," she explained. "So I'm really, really excited to be in one place and be available and visible and involved."

Potemri continued, "I feel like if you're going to have change and expect change to sustain you need to be visible and available and kind of deal with the day to day."

And that's exactly what she'll be able to do at RHAM; however, she added, "I'm not looking to disrupt everything."

"I can say that from what I've seen – and again I've only been here a week – there's a lot of really good things happening and I would hope that I could support and enhance what people are already doing," she stated. "This is a really good place to be, so I feel very fortunate to be here."

Potemri concluded, "There's always going to be things that need to be looked at and evaluated and developed – that comes with a new position because there's a new set of eyes – but there's a lot of good things happening so I'm hopeful I will just be integrated and helpful and continue to build on the great systems already here."

EHHS Drama Club to Give ‘Wonderful’ Performance

by John Tyczkowski

This year’s East Hampton High School fall drama production will have more in common with *A Prairie Home Companion* than with *A Christmas Carol*.

The drama club will stage a live radio play version of Frank Capra’s 1946 film *It’s A Wonderful Life* tonight and Saturday at 7 p.m. at EHHS in the auditorium, and on Sunday at 2 p.m.

The story is a familiar one, and details the lifelong plight of everyman George Bailey as he faces constant frustrations in his efforts to leave his small upstate New York hometown of Bedford Falls.

However, the staging is something many younger viewers may be unfamiliar with – the play is done in the manner of a 1940s radio show.

“It’s very different because everyone is on stage at the same time, there’s no entering and exiting on- and off-stage,” Hunter Brazal, who plays Henry Potter, said. “And we have live sound effects and music, and we carry scripts. It really is like we’re reading it in a radio studio.”

Rachel Mansfield, the production’s director and the director of the local Young People’s Center for Creative Arts, said staging this year’s production as a radio play allowed the club to put on a traditionally set-heavy play very simply.

“As a radio play, it’s more about the dialogue and the sound effects, and the audience’s imagination coming into play,” she said. “We’ve never done anything like this before.”

Also, because the drama club plans to stage *The Sound of Music* in the spring, this allows them to conserve their resources for that effort, Mansfield said.

“We wanted to keep this production low-key,

in anticipation of the spring musical,” she said.

Mansfield said the original staging of this version was written for five actors. However, the play was easily expandable for the whole drama club, around 40 people.

“There are lots of characters in this story,” she said. “There was a great opportunity for a lot of students to have roles throughout the entire story.”

She also said that for fans of the film, the radio play stays very close to the original script.

“But there’s still plenty of room for the actors’ own interpretations of their characters,” she said.

Sam Laraia, who plays George Bailey, said he’s seen the film many times, but he’s not letting Jimmy Stewart’s George color his performance.

“I’m trying to create my own interpretation for this performance,” he said. “I’m familiar with Jimmy Stewart’s mannerisms but I’m adding my own take to George Bailey.”

Laraia also said that a radio play was a very new and different experience for him, because of the emphasis on speaking and vocal emotion over physical performance.

“If you came into the auditorium and closed your eyes, it would be the same for you as if you listened to it on your radio at home,” he said.

Jaimie Farren, who plays Mary Hatch, said she had an especially fun time with the literal radio format of the show.

“We have a narrator, and we take commercial breaks with actual commercial jingles in between each act,” she said. “I like them, because we get to do some dancing and singing with them.”

However, at the same time, she said the format change had its challenges.

“At the beginning, we would move around



Matthew Cote as Uncle Billy, left, and Sam Laraia as George Bailey, right, rehearse a scene from the East Hampton High School Drama Club’s production of *It’s A Wonderful Life*. The play is an adoption of Frank Capra’s 1946 film starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed.

and leave the mic area and interact physically with the other actors, because that’s what we’re used to,” she said. “But we got more used to just standing there and putting a lot of emotion in our faces as we rehearsed more.”

Brazal agreed, saying that though it was a challenge for him to get used to being on stage for literally the entire play, he liked the change of pace this production brought to the drama club’s lineup.

Farren said she thinks the radio play staging

of *It’s A Wonderful Life* is ultimately a treat for the audience.

“I feel this is a great way to stage a play – you make more of a connection with the audience this way,” she said. “The actors and the sound operators are the guides. We give the audience the foundation, and they imagine the details themselves.”

Tickets are available at the door, and are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors.

EHHS Students Honored for Achievements

by John Tyczkowski

At Monday night’s meeting, the Board of Education recognized two high school students’ scholastic and community achievement.

Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas said the Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents (CAPSS) honored East Hampton High School seniors Danny Lee and Allyson Bolton last week. The two received CAPSS’ Student Recognition Awards, awarded annually.

Dugas said the award, given at a Dec. 1 ceremony at the Saybrook Point Inn, was for “students who have served their schools and communities while maintaining good scholastic progress.”

“We had a nice opportunity to talk about their goals and aspirations, and the great work that they’ve done, not just within the school system but also within the greater community,” Dugas said. “They’re two outstanding students.”

Lee is a consistent honor roll student, Dugas said, and is this year’s president of the Interact Club, an outreach organization at EHHS. He was also recognized for his leadership in East Hampton and was selected to be a board member of Interact District 7980.

In addition, Lee is an active participant with the town’s Rotary Club – most recently helping to organize the club’s Breakfast with Santa event – and has participated in Relay for Life for three years, serving as a team captain this year. He also led a “Paint the Town Purple” fundraising event earlier this year to raise money to fund Alzheimer’s disease research.

Bolton also maintains high academic standards while interacting highly with the community, Dugas said. She is also a member of the Interact Club and is the top female in the senior class for service hours, with over 120 hours recorded.

At the same time as taking three advanced placement (AP) courses to prepare for and earn credits for college, Bolton also serves as one of the founding members of EHHS’s new Anime Club.

“Both students exemplify the characteristics of world-class citizens who will continue to

make a difference throughout their lives,” Dugas said. “Congratulations to both of you.”

Lee and Bolton said they plan to head to college after graduating. Bolton said she is currently undecided on a major, and Lee said he plans to pursue a psychology degree.

East Hampton Middle School brought in some community-minded students of its own, in the form of a newly-formed organization styled We the Students.

Principal Nancy Briere introduced student founders Olivia Marsh, Katelyn Potter, Alexandra Dombrowski and Adriana Plourde.

“For a long time I’ve really wanted to get more student involvement in some of the decision-making in our school and some of the activity-planning,” she said. “These students exemplify all of the ideas of compassion and respect, and they came up with some great ideas.”

“I’m very proud of them, they’ve shown great leadership and great capacity for really stretching what they do themselves and for spreading good will in our school,” she said.

Meghan Loura, an intern with the guidance department, advises We the Students along with Briere.

“I’m very honored to be able to work with these four young ladies. They are the core members of We the Students,” she said.

Marsh said she brought up the idea of We the Students to Briere during bus duty at the beginning of the school year.

“We got to talking, and we soon made a group,” she said.

Since then, Marsh said, the group has grown to around 30 people.

We the Students focuses on reducing bullying activities, getting students invested in their school community and spreading positive energy throughout the school, Marsh said.

Potter said the group also aims to create a positive environment for students and staff at the school, and to help everyone feel accepted through its outreach within the school community.

Dombrowski gave a summary of some of the



East Hampton High School seniors Danny Lee and Allyson Bolton each received the CAPSS Student Recognition Award last week. From left are EHHS Principal John Fidler, Lee, Bolton and Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas.

events We the Students has conducted over the past few months, including Unity Day, where students and staff wore orange to show solidarity, an “Act of Kindness” poster contest, a cyberbullying pledge and kind notes on students’ lockers to create a kind atmosphere.

Plourde updated the board on an upcoming event, called Mix it Up Lunch Day, which would encourage students to sit with and meet students they don’t normally talk to. She said the group also plans to orient new students to the middle school and make them feel welcome.

In addition, Plourde said the four of them plus the president and vice president of the student council will be attending the Middle Level Student Leadership Conference at Trinity Col-

lege to attend workshops on leadership.

Dugas complimented Briere and We the Students for their work at the middle school.

“Here we see the importance of taking a moment to listen to student voices, including Mrs. Briere’s leadership of empowering our students,” she said. “This certainly lays a great foundation as they prepare to move to the high school.”

“Congratulations, and thank you very much for what you’re doing,” she said

The next Board of Education meeting will take place Monday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m., in the East Hampton High School library.

Longtime Official Honored, Meeting Decorum Discussed in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

Tuesday evening, the Town Council thanked long-time town government member Don Coolican who recently announced his resignation from the Board of Finance, marking an end to over 30 years of service to the town.

Council chair Barbara Moore read off a long list of Coolican's positions in town over the past 34 years. Coolican started on the Planning and Zoning Commission in 1980, was a member of the Town Council from 1995-97, and was on the Board of Finance from 2013 until this year. But he was on the Board of Education the longest, with two separate stints – one from 1989-95 and one from 1997-2013.

"He's devoted so many years to the town, and done such good work," she said. "That's an amazing record, and we thank you so much for all that you've done, we can't thank you enough."

Moore said that when she served as chair of the Board of Finance, Coolican would often reach out to the board and offer input. She said he was always there to "give her more ideas to think about" when she served as the chair of the Board of Finance.

"I could always count on you to hear something level-headed, and something that really made sense," she said.

Moore said Coolican asked for no proclamations, but still presented him with a card at the meeting.

"I guess I'm not going to get out of here without a few words," Coolican said as he stood up for an impromptu speech.

"I've lived here for 40 years, and East Hamp-

ton has changed, but it's changed for the better," he told the council. "It's a great town and it's seen many improvements. There's a lot on your plate now, but we've been through a lot in the past and I'm sure you'll figure out a way to do it in the future."

Coolican said that the town's volunteer tradition has been something most meaningful to him since he's lived here.

"There's a lot of organized volunteers – the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, our vibrant soccer and football programs, CYO basketball, and the food bank, which has been going on for years and years only by volunteers," he said. "They all have."

He also praised the all-volunteer fire department and ambulance association for their work by relating a personal story.

"About 30 years ago, I cut down a large tree and managed to have it fall on me," he said. "And, in no time at all, the fire department was there, and the ambulance department was there."

"Without those two groups, I probably would've been in a wheelchair for the rest of my life," he said.

Coolican also had much to say about what he called "ad-hoc" volunteer groups in town. He related another story about what happened in the wake of the unexpected death of his and his wife Maggie's 6-year old daughter, Katie.

"A group of people came together and in no time raised a bunch of money and with volunteer labor, they built a playground at Memorial School which is still there," he said. "And Katie's nieces and nephews still play on that

playground."

Coolican then thanked the town proper.

"Whenever I think of East Hampton, I think of people like that," he said. "It's been a pleasure to serve, but believe me, you guys have served me more than I deserve."

* * *

The council also discussed rules and decorum for town meetings, in the wake of the Nov. 25 Town Council meeting. At that meeting, there were several outbursts from the audience that were technically in violation of the council's meeting rules.

According to the council's policy on meeting rules and decorum, all residents are allowed three minutes to speak during public comment sections. Residents must state their name and address for the record, and their comments will be recorded, with a microphone, if provided.

Also, all communications must be directed toward the chair, according to the policy, no profanity or obscene gestures are allowed and neither is applause, booing, hissing or heckling.

Councilor Patience Anderson brought up the question of why applause was considered objectionable, according to council guidelines.

Councilor Mark Philhower explained the council members can't say expressions of approval are allowed and at the same time, say expressions of disapproval are prohibited.

"You can't have people taking up time at the meeting either way. Also, you're saying people only have the right to show their approval. That's wrong," he said. "Also, a meeting is not about emotions; a meeting is about getting

things done. Once you start letting emotions into the meeting, you will have problems controlling the audience."

Moore agreed, saying that the council cannot let peoples' emotion interfere with conducting the meeting's business.

Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. questioned the enforceability of the decorum rules during public comment, which is expressly wide open according to state law.

"If they applaud or hiss or anything within that three-minute timeframe, I don't see how you can stop it," he said. "I just think we're going to have a hard time enforcing this during that specific time."

Philhower acknowledged that these rules wouldn't stop applause or other expression during public comment, but would help with outbursts during regular meeting discussion.

"It's going to stop the 45 minutes of applause that happens after someone says something," he said.

The council discussed but did not decide on including a copy of the rules and decorum to the agenda packet for the upcoming Jan. 6 public meeting to make residents aware of expected decorum and conduct.

However, they decided Moore would at least verbally inform the residents at the upcoming meeting of the decorum and rules.

* * *

The town will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 6, in the EHHS auditorium for residents to offer their input on the facilities committee report.

Awards Ceremony Honors Police, Civilians for Service in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

Last Thursday evening, the police department held a ceremony at the East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance building to honor five police officers and two civilians for their exemplary service over the past year.

In addition to the honorees' family, in attendance were five of the seven town councilors, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco and state Rep. Melissa Ziobron.

Police Chief Sean Cox also thanked civilian employees Beth Shepard and Jen Magro for their efforts in making the department's ceremony possible, since it had been in the planning stages for over a year.

"This couldn't have happened without them, and I really appreciate their time and work," he said.

Cox said he was asked several times why he wanted to do an awards ceremony.

"I want people to know what really happens in East Hampton. Unfortunately, tragedy does strike in our town," Cox said. "And I want people to know we have a cadre of men who are brave enough, and compassionate enough, to answer their calls for service."

Also, Cox said, it was very important to recognize the heroic actions of the two Good Samaritan civilians in addition to the officers.

Cox also said he wanted the officers' families to have a better understanding what it is they do every day.

"When their spouse asks them what happened at work, they don't tell them they conducted CPR three times in a week, or that they pulled someone from a burning car," Cox said, speaking to the officers' wives. "They just say 'Ah, it was another day in East Hampton.'"

Cox also commended the officers for providing "top-notch service" despite the department being short-staffed.

First honored at the ceremony with a Meritorious Service Award medal was Sergeant Jared Boynton, for his actions on May 2, 2013, which happened as the chief was being sworn in.

Boynton was the first officer to respond to a report of a distraught, intoxicated man brandishing a machete and threatening his neighbor shortly after 8 that morning.

Cox said Boynton, "immediately and with-

out regard for his own life," approached the man, drew his service weapon and ordered him to drop the weapon and lie on the ground.

Cox said Boynton's strong command presence was the factor that compelled the suspect to do so. After a brief struggle, officers took the man into custody.

"This incident had a significant potential to end in tragedy," Cox said. "However, due to the quick and decisive actions of Sergeant Boynton, the machete-wielding, non-compliant suspect was taken into custody without delay or the use of lethal force."

Cox also addressed Boynton's actions within the context of the current national turmoil over police actions; in recent weeks, grand juries in Missouri and New York opted not to indict police officers who used deadly force against allegedly unarmed suspects.

"Recently in the past few weeks, a lot of people are focusing on the use of force by police," he said. "I just wish that in circumstances where police used such good restraint, they would get the same recognition."

"I think here, this definitely deserves recognition. Boynton chose to put himself in harm's way and he chose to save this gentleman's life instead of extinguishing it," Cox said.

Next, Cox honored civilian Matthew Way, as well as patrolmen Hardie Burgin and Matt Hanlon with Meritorious Service Award medals for their actions on April 3 of this year.

The two police officers were dispatched to a motor vehicle collision on Young Street near Old Chestnut Hill Road. When they arrived, they saw the car was on fire, and also saw a person, later identified as 17-year-old Matthew Way, working to pull the driver from the car.

The three were able to extract the driver successfully, and after moving back over the guardrail, the car exploded and flames engulfed the entire car, Cox said.

"Due to the quick, decisive and selfless actions of Mr. Way, a horrific tragedy was avoided," Cox said. "I know a lot of times people think young people don't care, but clearly this young man took the time to risk his own life in order to save another, and we definitely need to recognize that."

Also honored were civilian Corri Noble-Cummings and officers Adam Brault and Ja-



Officer Adam Brault, Sergeant Jared Boynton, Officer Jason Wishart and Partolman Hardie Burgin (pictured from left) were among the police that Chief Sean Cox (right) honored last Thursday. In addition, two civilians, Matthew Way and Corri Noble-Cummings were also honored for their exemplary actions within the community.

son Wishart; the three received Life Saving Award medals for their actions on Nov. 3, 2013.

In that incident, Cox said, police responded to a report of a young woman lying unconscious, with no visible injuries, on the side of Sillimanville Road. When police arrived, they found Noble-Cummings – who had called in the report – already performing CPR on the woman.

Noble-Cummings said she had discovered the woman when driving, called 911 and performed CPR according to the dispatcher's instructions. The officers then took over medical treatment until the ambulance arrived.

Afterwards, the officers contacted the woman's husband with her cell phone, and upon learning he was home alone caring for their two children, helped care for the children. Brault and Wishart also transported the family to the Marlborough Clinic and stayed with them until family from out of town arrived, Cox said.

Ultimately, the woman died five days later.

However, Cox said the woman's husband, a doctor, talked to him after, and told him "a lot

of people don't get the chance to say goodbye" in both the medical and police professions, and he was grateful to have five days to say goodbye as he, his children and their extended family did.

"I can tell you the efforts that these people demonstrated that day to give that family that opportunity [to say goodbye], a lot of people would give a lot of money for," Cox said. "I can tell you that was precious time to share."

Cox noted that EHPD's strong suit is the interpersonal service its officers give to the community.

"I don't know how many towns would offer the service that a cop is not only going to notify you, but stay with you, drive you to the clinic and watch your two children until your other family members arrive," he said. "That's the level of service you get with a small police department, and my guys do it very well."

All honorees received medals, as well as congressional certificates of appreciation signed by Congressman Joe Courtney.

Escape to Blackledge in Hebron for Golf and Beyond

by Geeta Schrayter

Country Club. The term likely brings to mind the warmer months, with bright blue skies and rolling hills of perfectly manicured grass that beckons golfers. But at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron, there's enjoyment to be found even when the temperature drops – and not only for those who know a Birdie, an Eagle and a Turkey aren't just animals.

The club, which opened in 1963, is family owned and boasts a friendly environment – something Director of Operations Kevin Higgins, who has worked at the club in one form or another since high school, said he's proud of.

“What I take pride in is the feeling; it's very friendly and not stuffy,” Higgins shared Wednesday. “We try to make everyone feel welcome and want them to have fun while they're here.”

And the hope is that “everyone” will grow to include more golfers in the winter, along with people who have other interests as well, like hanging out and watching football, playing pool, enjoying a meal – even cross country skiing; all activities that can be found at Blackledge.

“It's crazy how many people live nearby and have never been here, especially if they're not golfers – sometimes they feel a little unsure if they're supposed to come in here,” Higgins stated.

But, he stressed, they can – and should! “We're trying to get the word out there for people that have been here to play golf but also people that haven't been here to play or aren't familiar with our facility – making them aware that we're open to the public and we have a nice facility here,” he said.

Higgins explained this will be the second year Blackledge stays open through the winter – it's a change that took place after the club purchased two high definition golf simulators featuring 16 courses from around the country; these simulators can be rented by anyone for \$35 an hour on weekdays and \$40 an hour on weekends by simply calling the club.

On Wednesday, Rob DiClemente and Erich Stoneman were able to leave the cold, rainy day

behind and use the simulators at Blackledge to golf at the famous Pebble Beach golf course in California.

Both men said they enjoyed the courses offered at Blackledge during the summer, and the simulators kept them coming back now that it's winter. And along with being able to practice their swing, the setup meant the two could simultaneously enjoy some food and a few drinks.

“Everyone is friendly,” DiClemente stated of the club, “and there's good food.”

Speaking on that food, Higgins shared a new restaurant manager, Brian Folkes, who had 20 years experience in the restaurant industry had come on board a couple of weeks ago. Along with the club's chef James Dyson, the two had concocted a new menu that goes beyond the traditional pub food the club had already been offering.

“So in addition to the kind of ‘pubby’ food that we do during the golf season we've added on a dinner side of things too,” Higgins explained.

The new entrees that are available include turkey pot pie with potatoes, green beans, carrots and a house gravy topped with puff pastry; blackened chicken alfredo served over a bed of linguini; a stuffed cheese calzone with various stuffing options and a house-made herb cheese filling; and veggie flatbreads with zucchini, squash, roasted red peppers, sautéed onions and gorgonzola cheese topped with a balsamic reduction – among others.

The menu also includes a variety of burgers, which Higgins said is “probably what we're most known for,” as well as different appetizers, salads, soups, sandwiches and weekend specials throughout the winter; this weekend, the special's prime rib.

The food can be enjoyed in the main dining area, which features a full bar, fireside seating and a feeling reminiscent of a ski-lodge; or in the adjoining room where the golf simulators can be found along with a new pool table and a seating section around a giant flat-screen TV.

“We have the two simulators in there and really, it's a nice room,” Higgins furthered. “There's a pool table in there too, so on cold wintry afternoons when people are feeling a



Golfers and non-golfers alike are encouraged to check out Blackledge Country Club this winter for a few rounds on their golf simulators, a game of pool, to watch some football or enjoy a bite to eat from the newly expanded winter menu; Blackledge is hoping to become a destination spot for the community through the winter and beyond.

little cooped up, it kind of gets them out of the house and gives them a chance to get their golf swings in, have something to drink and eat or watch football.”

Along with the above, Higgins shared there are also plans to bring in some live music and offer cross country skiing once it snows.

“We've got grooming equipment so we're going to do free cross country skiing on groomed trails which is a nice service we're going to provide” he stated, adding people cross country ski over at Gay City State Park “but are kind of blazing their own trails.”

“So we're going to open that up and hopefully people come in, get something to eat afterwards or before – or for a drink,” he stated. “We're kind of trying to make [the club] a destination kind of thing.”

Higgins added Hebron doesn't have too many choices when it comes to dining, and residents

from town – as well as those in Marlborough – tend to migrate to Glastonbury, where there are more bar and restaurant options.

“There are very limited choices around here so we're hoping to get the community aware that we're open and we're here and we have some nice things to offer,” Higgins stated, concluding, “Our hope is for the local Hebron and Marlborough community to maybe give us a try. ... We're not looking for just golfers. We're looking to expand; we want to be a place locals can come to relax, and not have to travel too far on a winter's day or night.”

Blackledge Country Club is located at 30 West St., Hebron, and can be reached at 860-228-0250. For more information or to join the email club to be sent the latest news and specials go to blackledgecc.com.

Andover School Board Receives Insurance Updates

by Geeta Schrayter

Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia talked insurance with the Board of Education at its meeting Wednesday.

Maneggia explained to those present how the selectmen in the three towns in Region 8 – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – had formed an Insurance Advisory Committee in the late 1990s. The committee, he said, consists of a representative from each town's Board of Selectmen, the superintendent of schools from each town, as well as a representative from AHM Youth and Family Services and the RHAM superintendent of schools.

The purpose of the committee is to meet on a monthly basis “to determine insurance prices,” Maneggia said.

He added, “We negotiate with different insurance companies and so forth and so on. I don't have to tell you that insurance – medical insurance especially – is the second most costly budget item in our budget here in Andover and all the school districts. And as we get into this time of the year, we press Anthem for an estimate for insurance.”

And currently, that estimate is a 9.7 percent increase for the coming school year.

“That's the initial estimate based on the numbers and claims we have at this particular time. Each month that goes by they take a look at claims and how much they pay out and adjust accordingly,” Maneggia explained.

He went on to share the estimate is traditionally negotiated down, “but we know the maximum is 9.7 percent; we're hoping to get that down considerably.”

Also related to insurance, Maneggia shared the insurance claims that had been brought to the board's attention at its previous meeting had

been settled. At that meeting, Maneggia informed the board a light pole at the school had been knocked down last winter.

“The good news is, as far as the light pole, the claim was filed by the town for us. The initial bid we got was like \$3,800 and that's the amount that was submitted,” Maneggia explained. “What happened was the first contractor couldn't deliver on the job so we told him to forget it and went elsewhere and got a better price. The town normally has to pay a \$1,000 deductible, but because the new bill came in at \$2,552 and the insurance company paid the town \$2,800 based on the original estimate of \$3,800, it worked out well.”

Related to a needed boiler control replacement Maneggia informed the board about last month, \$4,220 was received from the insurance company for the costs and the board had to pay the \$1,000 deductible, “which is a lot of money,” Maneggia said, “but when you think of the total amount of the bill we lucked out there also.”

He added, “I hope I don't have to deal with light poles or boiler controls in the future.”

Maneggia also provided an update Wednesday on the status of the generator at the school. At last month's meeting he had shared the school and the town made an agreement that the school would be used as an emergency shelter if necessary, and a generator was installed to supply power to parts of the building.

However, repairs amounting to around \$9,500 were needed. During November's meeting the board unanimously voted to allow Maneggia to move forward with the repairs for an amount up to \$10,000, but Maneggia shared those repairs had been delayed.

“I thought this was going to be very simple; I pick up the phone and say to the company ‘come out and fix it,’” he shared. “Well, they had to order parts. The generator is not fixed at this particular point in time. They promised they'd come in this week to repair it, but Mother Nature has not been very kind to outdoor work. I'm not sure whether they'll be able to come in this week or not; I'm not sure whether the last piece has come in or not.”

Maneggia added he's hoping “there is not a need for the school to be used as a shelter until this thing gets fixed.” He told board members he is keeping them apprised of the situation “because there's always that ‘what if?’ situation and heaven forbid we do have an occasion where the school needs to be used for a shelter and the generator isn't working and we have a power outage. This town is in a dilemma and someone can point a finger and say ‘How come you didn't get this taken care of?’ or whatever, but that's the farthest thing from the truth.”

Also at the meeting, Maneggia shared his intention to maintain the number of fifth-grade classes next year.

“This year we had a situation where we had one grade with 42 students and another with 41 and one grade level had three classes, the other had two; the reason for that was we lost some students during the summertime,” Maneggia explained. “Otherwise, we would have had a higher enrollment.”

Maneggia went on to say while the board said a few years ago it felt “very good” about a maximum class size of 25 students, the aim is typical for class sizes much lower than that – with around 17 or 18 kids.

“Here in Andover we've been accustomed to small class sizes,” he said, “and I am building into the budget three teachers for grade five next year.”

He said he brought this to board members' attention so they could voice any concerns they might have before he prepares the budget, but the board expressed no concern over having three classes. On the contrary, board member Whitney Covell said she'd be concerned if there were only two.

“I would prefer to keep the higher grades at three [classes] only because of knowing my son's grade was very active in fifth and sixth grade,” she said. “I would prefer to see smaller classes versus bigger because I also know there's a grade level coming up that's probably [more active] than his was and smaller classes are easier to control and keep on top of.”

Maneggia replied, “I will not disagree with that.”

Board of Education Chairman Jay Lindy also mentioned decreasing the number of classes and laying off a teacher also came with a price tag due to the unemployment that the school would need to pay.

“It makes no sense when you're looking at one class, one faculty member, because we're literally paying for that faculty member anyhow,” he stated.

In the end, the board unanimously approved the tentative class schedule for the 2015-16 school year.

The next regularly scheduled Andover Board of Education meeting is Wednesday, Jan. 14, at 7 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School library.

New Christmas Tree Focus of Marlborough Green Gathering

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

As they've done for the past five years, Marlborough families hit the Town Green last weekend for the annual Gathering on the Green – and this year, there was a new center of attention for the festive event.

The gathering was held Sunday, Dec. 7; it had been planned for the day before, but was scrapped due to heavy rain. And while holiday cheer once again was on display, this year brought something new to the event: the planting of a new, permanent tree.

"This was the first year the town planted a tree," organizer Karen DeCorleto said, noting the town also paid for the tree. In past years, a cut tree was placed on the town green before each gathering, and then at the end of every Christmas season, it would be removed. This year however, DeCorleto said, the town decided that, instead of depositing, and then discarding, a new tree each year, it would just go ahead and plant a permanent one.

Though smaller in scope from past years, DeCorleto was still pleased with how the gathering went.

"The committee of volunteers was formed late, so it was a smaller event than years past," she said. "It was [also] a shorter event due to the weather cancellation on Saturday, but seemed to be the perfect amount of time with the cold weather."

The event ran from 5 to 6 p.m. – instead of the 4-6 p.m. timeslot planned for Saturday – and DeCorleto said it was a "perfect gathering of the community."

"There was lots of community involvement," DeCorleto said. "Everything, with the exception of the DJ, was volunteer. The fire department really came through and Santa arrived on the fire truck."

Jenny Bergeron, who moved to Marlborough in 2007, was participating in the Gathering on

the Green for the first year as the host of the Letters to Santa table.

"I've always loved Christmas," Bergeron said. "The organizers thought it was a good idea and they needed someone. It was a great opportunity."

Bergeron and many others braved the cold and the wind as the green was lit up with cheer. To Bergeron, her favorite thing about the holidays is the spirit and the decorations.

At other tables, the Marlborough Education Foundation made jingle bell sticks and necklaces while the Boy Scouts hosted Letters for Soldiers.

"It's a whole community effort," Chari Norton, one of the event's planners, said. "It's all moms that organize it."

Danielle Neary, another organizer, said although it will take time for the tree to grow, it will be a "permanent reminder of the holidays all year long."

Resident Dan Jordan attended the event with his daughters Aburee and Grace.

"It's our first time," Jordan said. "We're glad we came out."

Jordan said the day marked a full day of Christmas-themed events for the family, as they had just gotten their Christmas tree earlier in the day. Both Jordan girls wrote letters to Santa at Bergeron's table, and Aburee said she had asked for a Hans doll from the movie *Frozen*.

Everyone that attended the Gathering on the Green were definitely frozen, however as Santa rode in on a Marlborough fire truck, the eyes of the children lit up as they followed the truck around the green to where it parked.

Santa then walked up to the tree and an area set up by organizers while Marlborough Elementary School's vice principal, Kim Kelley, read a Christmas book to the children.

The whole community came together to sing "Jingle Bells" as Santa lit the tree up



Grace Jordan, 3, and her sister Aburee, 6, hang out with Charlie Brown and the Peanuts gang at the Gathering on the Green last Sunday.

bright, celebrating the beginning of the holiday season.

DeCorleto wanted to thank a number of people that made the event possible, including: the local police for switching their schedule due to the weather change, Maria Grove, Colleen Napolitano, Chari Norton, Theresa Brysgel, Andrew Zigmund, Chris Callaway, the Economic Development Commission, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Public Works Department and the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department.

DeCorleto also thanked a number of sponsors. Sponsors included: Edward Jones, Ace Hardware, Boy Scout Troop 39, Todd Sun of ASPU Entertainment, CenterPeace Therapeutic Massage, Christmas Electric, the Chrostowsky Family, Dunkin' Donuts, Barbara Lazzari, It's So Ranunculus, the Marlborough Business Association, Kim Kelley, Marlborough Education Foundation, Marlborough Knights of Columbus, Marlborough PTO, Marlborough Women's Club, McDonald's and Melted Madness.

Marlborough Students Venture Into Gardening with New Greenhouse

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Students at Marlborough Elementary School are looking forward to the springtime after their new greenhouse was built this past month.

Last year, the Marlborough Education Foundation (MEF) and Marlborough PTO joined hands to apply for a Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation grant. The over \$2,500 grant allowed the two organizations to remodel a classroom into a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEAM) room along with \$1,000 for a gardening unit.

The STEAM room allows classes to have larger projects and make more of a mess than in a normal classroom. It is also fully stocked by the PTO and MEF with supplies for the teachers.

After lots of discussion about how they would apply the \$1,000, the PTO and MEF decided on a greenhouse, an idea spurred by fifth-grade teacher Mary Rose.

"The idea had kept coming back around," MEF and PTO member Jessica Porteous said. Porteous also helped submit the grant application to Lowe's. "Mary Rose had the knowledge and she knew how they would like to use it."

"It just evolved," Rose said. "Completely independently, three fifth-grade girls said how the memorial garden was really bad. They wanted to clean it up, put up fences, put up rules and put in flowers."

This effort by now sixth-graders Mekayla Pace, Elizabeth Peters and Shannon Visco continued into a school-wide project after they presented to the entire school and the Board of Education what they wanted to do.

"We organized a work crew last fall," Rose said of the fall of 2013's cleaning up of the memorial garden. "We made plans for spring and then applied for the greenhouse."

While the application for the grant was go-

ing through its process, the school managed to clean up the memorial garden in time for a teacher's memorial.

Rose and second-grade teacher Dave Wasserman had hosted plants in their windowsills as part of their science units and for the memorial garden. The two grades are also reading buddies to each other, with the fifth-graders helping out the second-graders.

"It was hard to have on the windows," Wasserman said of the plants. "Now we can get them started and then move them to the greenhouse."

Porteous said that after purchasing the greenhouse with the grant, the MEF picked up the rest of the funding needed to install footing in the back of the school. Although the original idea was to place the greenhouse near the STEAM room in the front of the school, there simply wasn't enough good sun.

The greenhouse was completed this month, after volunteer Aaron Dalton built the greenhouse on the installed footing in a day.

"In the spring, we want to plant a vegetable garden," Rose said. She said her and Wasserman's classes also plan on growing flowers again to use in the memorial garden and around the school.

For now, though, there are strawberry plants in the greenhouse, because, Rose said, they are hardier plants and can withstand some of the wintery cold snaps the area has been receiving.

"One of the students said, 'Isn't springtime next week?'" Wasserman laughed.

Some of the educational benefits, Wasserman said, is that the students are more focused.

"It's now a dedicated science trip," Wasserman said. "In the room, they could be playing with something on their desk. They're now more focused."

"They can really have ownership of the gar-



Mekayla Pace, Elizabeth Peters and Shannon Visco (pictured from left) stand outside of the greenhouse in the back of MES. The three girls helped spur the idea with sprucing up the school's memorial garden.

den," Rose said. "Everyone can see how things are growing and everyone can have a plant to call their own."

In the spring, the school will move a heavy duty handicapped-accessible picnic table outside of the greenhouse, so there is enough room for a full class to be working. Principal Dan White said the area also has a camera out there for security purposes and the school will

install a sign asking people to be respectful of the greenhouse. One of the school's custodians also volunteered to help care for the greenhouse during the summer months.

In short, it looks as if the new greenhouse is already a source of great pride at the school – among both students and staff.

"It's been a great experience," Wasserman said.

Portland Middle School Entrepreneurs Gear Up for Product Expo

by John Tyczkowski

Portland Middle School is hard at work training the next generation of businesspeople by encouraging some of its eighth-graders to create, market and sell their own products.

Karen Lutkus' and Corey Toussaint's eighth grade Entrepreneurship joint class is readying for the winter Portland's Own Products Expo Thursday, Dec. 18, in the middle school cafeteria from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

The program has been going on at the middle school since the late 1990s, and was originally run by now-retired teachers Steve Davis, technical education, and Rita Santostefano, family and consumer science, Lutkus, a graduate of PHS, said.

She said the teachers got the idea from shadowing a similar program at Dodd Middle School in Cheshire.

However, Lutkus said, the Cheshire program was different as it was full-year, and only involved family-consumer science.

"When they brought it back, they decided to do it with both technology education and family and consumer science so we could have a wider variety of products," she said. "Also, we do our expos bi-annually, so two classes can participate each year."

In addition, Lutkus said the class teaches even more basic skills important to being a successful employee.

"The class teaches how to work with people for a common goal, for example," she said. "Working with each other is very important; that's what it's like at a real job."

Toussaint, a PHS graduate and self-proclaimed "product" of the program, had the chance to go through the Entrepreneurship class when he was a student at the middle school. He said his experiences lend him an insider's perspective on the class.

"It's great to see this still running; I remember going through it myself. I remember being so proud of the work I did when I was a student," he said. "And now, to see the students being proud of the work they're doing, it's just very worth it."

"I came full circle and I'm back here now and helping to run it," he said.

The two classes make separate products and marketing plans, and then come together to sell them at the expo.

The technology education class will be selling x-shaped holders for various items, cutting boards and candleholders as well.

A special addition to the traditionally made wooden craft products are 3D-printed, personalized key chains and 3D-printed bathroom accessory holders. The 3D crafts were all digitally-designed by the students, Toussaint said.

On the family-consumer science side, there will be infinity scarves and pillows, as well as peppermint bark and chocolate-covered Oreos.

As part of the class, students must name their products, as well as create their own marketing materials, such as posters.

"The products themselves have product and company names attached to each of them," Toussaint said. "They make them catchy."

Because the expo is biannual, the projects in both classes are tailored to the season in which the particular class occurs. Toussaint said the spring expo in his class normally brings birdhouses and other outdoor crafts.

Meanwhile, in the technology education classroom, Jaxon Medvecky was carefully painting away on a candleholder.

"I'm not really too much of a painter, I just like to draw a lot," he said. "And painting is kind of like drawing, I can still be creative."

Dilon Belanger said he couldn't pick just one product he thought would do well next week.

"You've got the x-holders, and you can use them for firewood, or magazines, a lot of different things," he said. "There's the candleholders, which have Jaxon's cool designs on them. And then there's the key chains, which are all different and personalized."

Moving to the family and consumer science classroom, Clara Kopacz and Sabrina Rodriguez were over on the kitchen side of the room, hard at work creating peppermint bark.

Kopacz said she feels optimistic about next week's expo.

"They say the winter one does better because it's near Christmas, so you can get Christmas gifts for your family," she said. "And who doesn't like peppermint bark?"

Rodriguez said she's been excited for a while to take the Entrepreneurship class and participated in the expo.

"My brother took the class, and told me all about it, and I've been excited to take it," she



Jaxon Medvecky works to ready candleholders for sale at next week's winter season Portland's Own Products Expo. Medvecky said he decided to paint his own designs not particularly tied to Christmas, while fellow painter Dilon Belanger chose to paint candy canes on his candleholders.

said. "He always told me, 'Oh we build all this stuff for the big sale,' and it sounded great. I couldn't wait until I was in eighth grade."

The proceeds from the expo go to a charity that students in both classes select, Lutkus said.

"We try to focus on charities that work with kids with illnesses, like the Make-a-Wish Foundation or the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, or [Connecticut Children's Medical Center]," she said. "Those are our top repeat charities. Although sometimes, it's been a child in town with a serious illness as well."

The class helps prepare students for job-hunting as well, and teaches students how to fill out job applications, how to write resumes and also lets students engage in mock interviews, Toussaint said.

"I remember thinking, 'Hey, I learned this in eighth grade in Entrepreneurship,' and now I can tell my students, 'You're going to remember this when you fill out your applications, because I did,'" he said.

Lutkus said that the class is based upon authentic assessments such as filling out job applications and interviewing, and the concept of college and career readiness.

"It's as real as it can be," she said, "and it gives them an advantage, I think."

"I think it's wonderful; it connects them to the community and it lets them work as employees," she said. "We always have a variety of products to make sure we cover our target customers, from kids up to adults."

Toussaint also mentioned how remarkable it was to see his students' investment in their expo products, and how it helps measure whether the students are on track to be career and college ready.

"They want to work on this stuff; it's not even stuff they're going to take home, it's stuff they're going to sell," he said. "They're still so interested in getting it done, and getting it done right. It's their names on the line; they're treating it like a job."

Colchester Education Board Weighs in on Strategic Plan

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Education had its turn to weigh in on its wants for the strategic plan Tuesday night.

Liz Binger from LEARN Regional Education Service Center facilitated the focus group. The first question Binger asked board members was if they had a child in kindergarten, what would they want the child to have learned by the time they graduated?

Board member Michael Egan said one aspect he felt was most critical was the fact that "we give tools to them to become engaged citizens in a way where they can look at things and look at the government and how things are going and question what's going on."

Egan said this leads the students to improve on things that are then happening. He added, "They should have the ability to be inquisitive, proactive, engaged and involved."

Student board member Mitchell Hallee said board members should give students "opportunities beyond what you think they are capable of and they'll rise to the opportunities."

Board member Mitchell Koziol said it's important for students to be progressive. After the board received a presentation by Colchester Elementary School members about the recent second grade Thanksgiving parade, Koziol said the parade was an example of progressive thinking.

"You mix in learning with a real world problem and they tackled it," Koziol said of the second-graders. "They were into it and doing it themselves. We want to see that spirit continue on."

"We are progressive," board member Donald Kennedy said. "Things happen and we say we did that six years ago. We should continue that spirit."

Kennedy also stressed the practical application of things, agreeing with Koziol, and saying kids don't realize they're learning things during a fun activity like the parade, but it's packed with lots of practical applications.

"They need critical thinking skills," Kennedy said. "I've been to other countries and they may beat us on standardized tests, but not critical thinking."

Junior student board member Lauren Hickey said the idea of "fully integrating the context of school versus the real world application" was important. Hickey said there should always be a reason for why they are learning what they are learning.

"We should remove the feeling of it being trivial," Hickey said.

Board member Mary Tomasi focused on subjects for the younger levels including the importance of world languages, science and math at a young age.

Michael Voiland, a board member, stated it's important to remember the foundation of being able to read and comprehend things. He also stressed that students should feel comfortable yet challenged.

"They should be educationally and socially comfortable," Voiland said. "Some kids back off and won't try things because of a social thing. They should be comfortable in their own skin and with others."

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said they should have the "highest of expectations" for their students.

"They will achieve it," Goldstein said of Colchester students. "I'm constantly amazed at how our students achieve if we expect it."

Kennedy addressed the declining enrollment

and said they should take it as an opportunity to increase opportunities that the students have.

Egan reminded the board that they all continue to learn as adults.

"You don't do the same thing over and over again," Egan said. "We should instill not just certain things they have to learn, but how to learn. Give them the skills to learn on their own."

Goldstein worked off of that and said they should instill a willingness to take risks and try a broad range of things in the students so they find their passion.

Binger then asked the board about things they should pay attention to and plan for in the future.

"There are technologic expectations," Kennedy said. "They have to enter the workforce or college with certain skills. We can't have them leaving Bacon without those skills."

Egan said they should never lose sight of their working relationships between staff, administrators and the town and how critical those are to the school district's success.

Goldstein also brought up that students should be active participants and not bystanders. "They should be active in their own learning," Goldstein said.

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu said the strategic plan's focus groups will end by the first week in January; the groups are at the halfway point in the process, he said. The survey for the strategic plan ended this past Monday and it will take two weeks to get the data back from the survey.

The board also reported it is working to hire

a new assistant principal at William J. Johnston after Dr. Jennifer Olsen took an appointment as principal for Haddam-Killingworth Middle School.

WJMS Principal Chris Bennett said he has already received over 50 applications for the permanent position and 18 applications for the interim position. Bennett explained they chose to hire an interim assistant principal because Olsen will be leaving over winter break; for a person to give their 30-day notice at their current job, it would mean they wouldn't be able to begin at WJMS until February. The interim assistant principal would cover that gap; the goal is to have the permanent new assistant principal in by the end of February.

Regarding other staffing changes, Jack Jackter Intermediate School's third grade teacher Donald Hennigan retired. The board also approved a renewal of Mathieu's contract for a three-year term.

During celebrations, the board recognized Don Levine, who has raised over \$100,000 over the last 20 years for the American Heart Association.

"I do it in remembrance of my dad who passed from heart disease," Levine said Tuesday. "I don't do it for recognition. I do it for the kids to get out and have fun."

Levine hosts the Jump Rope for Heart event at Colchester Elementary School every year, raising money for the American Heart Association.

The next Board of Education meeting will be in the new year on Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. at WJMS.

Third Time's the Charm for Portland Highlanders

by John Tyczkowski

Portland High School's girls' soccer team captured the Class S State Championship title in November, after failing to make the Shoreline Conference tournament that season.

And nearly a month later, the team is still basking in the glow of their win.

The Highlanders had actually been seeded last, No. 29, prior to their victory, which makes them the lowest seed to make, and win, a Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) final.

"The CIAC is still doing its research and going through all the records," Coach Sandy Booth said. "But as far as we know, we're the lowest seed in any sport to win a state title."

The Nov. 15 2-1 double-overtime victory over the Housatonic Regional Mountaineers at Municipal Stadium in Waterbury marks the team's second state title championship in a row, but its first sole win.

Last year, Portland shared the Class S Championship with Old Saybrook after a scoreless tie game. (The team also made it to the championship game in 2012, but they fell to Immaculate, 5-0.)

What's more, the Mountaineers were ranked as the No. 3 seed at the time. And on top of that, come halftime, the Highlanders were down 1-0.

However, the Highlanders managed to even the score just 25 seconds later, which propelled them into double-overtime and to their win.

"Kayla Hardesty banked one in then, and the game just picked up from there," Booth said.

Booth said that the championship win was especially impressive this year because the Highlanders had problems during the regular season.

"We had issues with scoring all year; they played hard but we just couldn't finish," he said. "Also, we lost two forwards for the entire season due to injuries, and we lost another two starters as the season began."

"We were scrambling to get people in and into positions," he said. "We had issues with defense as well."

However, the team was able to bypass those problems and go for the gold in the postseason at the state tournament.

"During the week off in between the season and the tournament we made some adjustments," Booth said. "We locked players into positions, we got healthy, we got some players back from the beginning of the year and we lengthened our bench with more substitutes and started rotating players."

Booth also said he told the team that it didn't need "any heroes" and that had the players to

fill in if someone needed a break.

"At the end of regulation, I had two starters come up to me and say 'Coach, I need a break,'" Booth said. "They put the team first. It's phenomenal to have a starter come up and say that."

"But we had a deep bench, and they believed in each other. They put the team first, and they let their teammates come in and pick up the slack."

Senior captain Emilie Hernandez said she thought the regular season problems helped propel the team to their victory.

"I think the way that we treated the state tournament, as our second season, really helped us a lot," she said. "We knew it was a one-and-done thing if we lost, and that there would be nothing else we could do about it. It made us play harder, and it pushed us, knowing that could be our last game."

"We didn't even qualify for our own conference, but that's ok, because we won the state championship," Hernandez said.

Alina Pantano, another senior captain, said she felt the championship game wasn't the hardest they played.

"Our state semi-final game felt a lot harder and more difficult than the final championship game," she said. "I actually felt that when we won that game, we had won the championships, because Notre Dame of Fairfield was so good."

"When we played in the finals, they really only had one attacking player who was really good, their center-mid, it was much harder against Notre Dame," she said.

However, Pantano acknowledged the team had problems at first.

"In our regular season we struggled a lot because I don't think we were playing with as much intensity as we did in the state tournament," she said. "We were playing teams that we could have won against, but they scored first, and it was very difficult to come back from that."

Fellow captain and senior Kayla Hardesty said the team's track record with championships was another point in their favor.

"We had been there two times before, so it didn't really faze us this time," she said.

Hardesty also said being the dark horse of the tournament really worked in the girls' favor.

"Being the No. 29 seed really helped us in our positioning, and people underestimated us," she said. "We took advantage of that, and we ended up with a great way to end senior year, as sole championship winners."

Deidra Caruso, Carli Sienkiewicz and Brooke Marconi rounded out the rest of the seniors on this year's team.



The Highlanders celebrate their victory over the Housatonic Regional Mountaineers after winning the state Class S Championship. This is Portland's third trip to the tournament in as many years, and marks the girls' team's first year as sole champion. Photo by Mike Stefanski.

"They also contributed so much to the team and the win this year," Hardesty said. "They were part of our team spirit; we all had good chemistry this year. We understood that we were a team, and that we needed to work together."

Looking to next year, Hernandez will be gone – like Pantano and Hardesty, she's graduating in June – but she's confident in the squad's captains, who will be Emma Rupert, Erica DeBarge and AnnaRose Zampano, Hernandez said.

"I think they're going to do very well," she said. "They're a pretty good combo."

Booth also agreed the team is in good hands for next year with the talents of the entire junior lineup.

"We have 10 juniors who will be returning to be seniors," he said. "They played significant roles in this year's run, and they want to make their mark now. They're someone to be reckoned with."

* * *

But, returning to this year's championship, all three captains said Coach Booth was very supportive throughout the entire season and believed in them.

"Even through our rough patch during the regular season, he was still super-supportive,"

Hernandez said. "He knew we could get there."

"He would never say, 'We may not win the state championship,'" Pantano said. "He would say, 'Well, we have this next chance coming up to win.'"

All three agreed this attitude was especially important, after the team failed to make the Shoreline Conference finals this year – underlining their underdog status in the Class S tournament.

Booth also said that it was very impressive how the win came together for the team.

"For a coach it's very humbling to have a run like that, to struggle during the season and to be able to come back within a short one-week span and put it all together," he said. "It's much different than if you were winning all the games from the beginning."

Regarding the team, Booth said the seniors more than did their part.

"The championship run is really dedicated to the seniors," he said. "They really led the team, they did their part as a whole and they refused to accept the results of the first half of the season."

"They wanted to make an impression and they did. I'm very proud of them," he said.

Colchester Tri-Board Hears from School Building Architects

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The boards of education, finance and selectmen at a joint meeting Wednesday reviewed the three options for the proposed William J. Johnston Middle School building project; however, board members expressed concern about the reimbursement rates and enrollment predictions.

Tecton architects Jeffrey Wyszynski and Barbara Joslin presented the options with the most conservative costs possible, meaning the costs shown were the highest they could be.

Option one has the front façade of the current building remaining with a new addition being added in the back of the school. According to Joslin, the advantages of option one is that there's slightly less construction and new classrooms for core classes. However the disadvantages are that the applied academics are in renovated spaces, there's little or no visible change from the street, there's only one field and it's not totally state of the art.

Option one would be a total cost of \$50,410,625 with a cost to Colchester of \$24,442,314.

Option two is also a renovation, part new construction however it changes the front of the school and is a smaller footprint than option one. Joslin said the advantages are that it's the

lowest project cost, it preserves the newest part of the existing building, there's new classroom for core classes and most of the applied academics, there's a clear change from the street and has two fields. The main disadvantage, she said, is that it is not totally state of the art.

Option two's total cost was \$49,373,125 with a cost to Colchester of \$24,407,775.

Option three is a completely new construction. The advantages of completely new, Joslin said, are that it's most efficient, it's new and state of the art, there's no compromises with renovated spaces, the energy code is easier to meet, there's two fields and a smaller overall footprint. The disadvantage is that it's the highest cost and there may be a public perception of demolishing the current school.

Option three's total cost was \$51,869,375 with a cost to Colchester of \$26,589,329.

Joslin and Wyszynski explained these costs were higher than people have seen before because they disregarded the reimbursement rate surrounding the second gym and pupil services area. Joslin explained they were told by the state that until they have a more finalized design, they could not have a sit down meeting regarding reimbursement and the special circumstances about the gym. The gym and pupil services area

renovation cost by themselves is \$3,640,625.

"The costs tonight are the highest possible costs," selectwoman Rosemary Coyle said. "There's an opportunity for the numbers to go down. People need to understand this is how it stands without the lowering."

All the options were made with a projection of around 600 students. Currently the building holds 700 students; however, predictions by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) suggest a decline in enrollment.

Board of Finance members asked the architects what would happen with empty space if they built too big. Wyszynski said the design could have sections partitioned off if needed.

First Selectman Stan Soby, meanwhile, was not so convinced that enrollment would be declining forever.

"The census data shows that the 18 and under population rebounds by 2030, which is in the lifetime of this project," Soby said.

Soby and Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein also brought up the situation when the town was building Bacon Academy several years ago.

At the time, they had multiple enrollment projections for Bacon. The building ended up being built with a prediction of 800 students.

However according to Superintendent Jeff Mathieu, the building held 1,032 students at its max and still holds around 940 students today.

"Option one is a non-starter," Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said.

"There have been some strong opinions on the building committee," the committee's chair, Tom Tyler, said. "We haven't formally said an option."

Options two and three have a 24-month construction period while option one has a 30-month construction period because of the phasing and renovations.

The biggest question still on the floor by the end of the night was whether option three would make up its higher price tag with lowered operating costs over the year. The architects said they simply didn't know; they would have to inquire with the engineers.

The building committee met Thursday, after press time, to decide on an option it is favoring. The next steps for the project include incorporating community comments, finalizing the design, selecting an option, doing the financial impact analysis, producing the final report, setting a public forum up and then referendum in March.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I was having dinner with some friends this past Tuesday night and the conversation shifted to Christmas shopping. One friend had bought about half of the presents she needs to buy. Another had completely finished his.

"How far along with your shopping are you?" one of my friends asked me.

"Oh, I haven't bought a thing," was my honest reply.

It's true – I rarely, if ever, have any presents bought by Dec. 9. Oh, I may have thoughts swirling around in my head, but I have yet to head to the stores and buy anything. I typically don't start to buy anything until around the 15th. Do I get caught up in the hustle and bustle? Sure – but I enjoy getting caught up in that hustle and bustle.

Being a book reader, and having friends and family who are also book readers, my Christmas shopping adventures take me to the Barnes & Noble bookstore at the Buckland Mall in Manchester every year. I expect this year to be no different – and when I do stop by, I'll be sure to have the good folks from Andover Friends of the Library help me with my wrapping.

The Friends will be wrapping for tips at several points between now and Christmas. Among the timeslots the volunteers will be wrapping are: Wednesday, Dec. 17, from 2-4 p.m.; Thursday, Dec. 18, from 2-4 p.m.; Friday, Dec. 19, from 1-3 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 21, from 3-5 p.m.; Monday, Dec. 22, from 7:30-10 p.m.; and Wednesday, Dec. 24, from 1-3 p.m.

The gift-wrapping is a great way to get the finishing touch put on that perfect present you just bought. And while it's free, the Friends will be accepting tips. One hundred percent of any money they receive will go right toward supporting Andover Library – so it's a fine use of your funds.

So if you still have some shopping left to do – or you're like me, and haven't begun a bit of it – I urge you to swing by Barnes & Noble in Manchester at one of the above times, get some wrapping done and support a great cause.

Speaking of Andover, some of you (I say "some of you" because the story only appeared in the Andover edition of the paper) may have seen reporter Geeta Schrayter's story last week about an online contest underway to support the Andover Food Pantry.

Wal-Mart is sponsoring the "Food Pantry Holiday Makeover." The contest is pretty simple: You vote for a food pantry online and the 75 pantries with the highest number of votes will each receive \$20,000. This is a nationwide contest; Andover's food pantry is competing against 165 other food pantries, including four others right here in Connecticut (the others are in Bridgeport, East Windsor, Manchester and New Haven).

As of Tuesday night, Andover's made it to the top 75! However, it's only in 69th place, and just 28 votes separate it from the 75th-ranked pantry. So more votes are needed! We

don't want to see Andover drop off the list. Voting runs until 11:59 p.m. tonight, Dec. 12. So if you haven't voted, there's still time. And if you have voted – do it again! You can vote once per day. However, you do need a valid Facebook account in order to vote.

To help Andover Food Pantry win \$20,000, head over to walmart.com/holidaymakeover.

As John Tyczkowski reports in this week's *Rivereast*, the East Hampton High School Drama Club's fall play this year is a production of Frank Capra's fantastic Christmas classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*. The movie, which stars Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed, is terrific, truly one of my all-time favorite movies. I've seen it more times than I can count. So I was intrigued to hear that EHHS was going to be tackling it.

I was even more intrigued when I heard *how* they were going to be tackling it. The Drama Club is going to be presenting it in the style of a 1940s radio play – complete with sound effects.

I've long had an interest in old-time radio. I own several cassettes and CDs consisting of hit shows of the 1930s and '40s, such as *The Jack Benny Program*, *Burns and Allen* and *My Favorite Husband* (a Lucille Ball comedy that was a precursor to *I Love Lucy*).

But even before I began collecting old-time radio episodes, I was a fan of this quiet and charming AMC comedy-drama called *Remember WENN*, which aired in the mid-1990s. The show was set at a fictional Pittsburgh, Pa., radio station in the 1940s. You got to see characters put on, or attempt to put on (mishaps were a frequent occurrence) radio dramas, interact with sponsors, and deal with behind-the-scenes shenanigans. It was a lot of fun and, looking back, definitely helped to pique my interest in old-time radio.

I'm curious to see how the EHHS auditorium gets transformed back to the 1940s. And not 1940s Bedford Falls – rather, a 1940s radio studio. *It's a Wonderful Life* was actually made into a radio show not long after its original release; Stewart and Reed reprised their roles for a 1947 adaptation that aired on the *Lux Radio Theater*. I'd seen the movie a bunch of times before I heard the radio play, so it was interesting to hear what parts got skipped over/re-written to make the two-hour movie fit a one-hour (including commercials) timeslot.

And it should prove just as interesting to see what EHHS does with the production. If you've never seen *It's a Wonderful Life* or even if you have – or if, like me, you have an interest in old-time radio – you may want to head over to Belltown this weekend and check it out. The show runs tonight, Dec. 12, and tomorrow, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m. both nights, and Sunday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m. Tickets are available at the door and are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors.

See you next week.

Charity Event at Hebron Café Next Week

by Geeta Schrayter

Next Thursday, individuals looking to enjoy some holiday fun while helping a good cause can head to Something Simple Café on Main Street.

From 7-8:30 p.m. Dec. 18, patrons will be able to decorate gingerbread cookies, sip hot cocoa and visit with Santa Claus for a \$5 donation that will go directly to the Cherish the Children Foundation.

Café owner Jessica Dapsis explained this week Cherish the Children was a "great organization" she had personal experience with, and that's what prompted her to hold the event.

"It's an organization that actually helped me out when I was going through some things with my kids," she stated. "It's a great organization. It's a completely 100 percent volunteer, non-profit organization that helps a lot of families in need throughout Connecticut.

So we've been very involved with them."

According to the flyer for the event, Cherish the Children helps children "to achieve their greatest potential. Grants serve Connecticut families with dire financial needs brought on by medical or quality of life challenges that are not being met by insurance or other traditional funding resources."

Speaking on her hopes for the event next week, Dapsis said she hoped "for a nice turnout so people can enjoy the atmosphere" and help a good cause.

"It will definitely be a festive occasion," she concluded.

For more information on Cherish the Children visit ctchildren.org. Something Simple Café is located at 12 Main St. and can be reached at 860-228-2266.

East Hampton Police News

11/14: Timothy Evans, 28, of 64 Main St., was issued a ticket for possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, East Hampton Police said.

11/23: Thomas Heidel, 50, of 39 Haddam Neck Rd., was involved in a one-car motor vehicle accident on Middletown Avenue, police said. Heidel was arrested and charged with DUI, reckless endangerment, reckless driving, failure to drive right and failure to stop at a stop sign.

11/29: Paul R. Frazier, 44, of 6 Lakeview Dr., Ashford, was issued a summons for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, misuse of plates and operating a motor vehicle without minimum insurance, police said.

11/30: Jason Wright, 25, of 82 Main St., No. 101, was issued a summons for improper use of high beams, operating an uninsured motor vehicle and a head lamp violation, police said.

Marlborough Police News

12/5: State Police said Marcus Byrd, 25, of 6 Gaines Dr., Hartford, was arrested and charged with interfering with an officer, criminal impersonation and operating under suspension.

12/6: State Police said Adam Pollack, 29, of 20 Outlook Ave., West Hartford, was arrested and charged with speeding, operating under the influence and failure to stop on the right side of the road for an emergency vehicle.

12/7: State Police said Fili Hernandez-Dejesus, 22, of 44 Prospect St., Bristol, was

arrested and charged with speeding, operating under the influence, illegal sale of marijuana, drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana.

12/8: State Police said Christopher Hill, 29, of 222 Williams St. East, Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with reckless driving and operating under the influence.

12/9: State Police said Adrian Mitchell, 25, of 22 Griffin Rd., Bloomfield, was arrested and charged with reckless driving, possession with intent to sell and possession of marijuana.

Colchester Police News

12/2: State Police said Felix Ruiz, 40, of 33 Summer St., New London, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

12/3: State Police said Nathan Price, 26, of 84 Dooley Ave., Coventry, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

12/3: State Police said Danielle Jacobs, 25, of 33 West High St., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with failure to pass correctly, operating under the influence and operating under suspension.

12/6: State Police said James Wallington, 47, of 38 Balaban Rd., was arrested and charged with two counts of violation of probation.

12/6: State Police said Vincent Rutchick, 32, of 87 Old Hebron Rd., was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

12/7: State Police said Sebastiao Marques, 57, of 123 Raymond St., Waterbury, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence and failure to drive in the proper lane.

Obituaries

Hebron

Anne Marie Persing

Anne Marie (Smith) Persing, 86, of Rocky Hill, formerly of Hebron, passed away Monday morning, Dec. 1, at Hartford Hospital. Born Sept. 22, 1928, in Corning, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late Raymond and Genevieve (Hart) Smith.

Most of her childhood was spent in Geneva, N.Y., where she graduated from De Sales High School. She went on to Hobart and William Smith College, graduating in 1950, where she was also awarded Phi Beta Kappa for her work. Anne later earned her master's from Albany State Teacher's College. She was a true scholar who loved learning, reading and was fluent in five different languages.

She met William N. Persing in college; they married in June of 1952 and resided in several towns before settling in Hebron in 1972. The couple served St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron for over 20 years – William as the rector, Anne as a very active member. She retired in 1993 after a career as librarian, first with Albertus Magnus College and later with Douglas Library in Hebron.

Anne will be remembered fondly by her family as a scholar, devoted wife, mother, grandmother and friend.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered by a daughter, Nancy Anne Persing of Billerica, Mass.; four sons, William R. Persing of Rocky Hill, Stephen Persing of Pawcatuck, Robert D. Persing of Havertown, Pa., Richard Persing of Rocky Hill; four grandchildren; and numerous extended family and friends.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Dec. 13, beginning at 11 a.m., at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 30 Church St., Hebron. Burial will be private.

Donations in her memory may be made to St. Peter's Church or Douglas Library, 22 Main St., Hebron, CT 06248.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with services. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Steve Langley

Steve Langley, 57, of Manchester and formerly of Hebron, died suddenly in his home Friday, Dec. 5.

Steve is survived by his son, Steven R. M. Langley of Andover.

He is also survived by multiple other family members.

Steve will be remembered in a private memorial, attended by his immediate family.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with arrangements.

East Hampton

Barbara J. Abbott

Barbara J. Abbott, 44, of East Hampton, passed away at Middlesex Hospital on Friday, Dec. 5. Born in Middletown, Nov. 18, 1970, she was the daughter of Edward Abbott and Beverly Nelson Cochran.

Besides her parents, she is survived by her grandmother, Mabel Abbott; her son David Veazie of East Hampton; and her daughter, Marissa Nowsh of Marlborough. She also leaves her stepmother, Sheree Abbott; her step-father, Allen Cochran; her sisters, Lisa Abbott of New Fairfield, Laura Abbott of Moodus, Seda Traves of Brooklyn, Angela Krok of Tolland; two brothers Allen and Daniel Cochran of Pennsylvania. She is also survived by her very special aunt Kristina Buckland, "Auntie Em," and many aunts, uncles, cousins and many dear friends.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., Wednesday, Dec. 10. A memorial service will be held at noon.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Helping Hands of Middlesex Hospital, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Amston

Irving James Jensen

Irving James Jensen (Jim), 74, of Amston, went home to be with our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ Friday, Dec. 5.

He was born at Hartford Hospital and raised in Farmington with his sister Marie, by his loving parents Dr. Irving Jensen and Sarah Cole Jensen. His sister Marie Matusko resides in Avon.

He was predeceased by his wife of 44 years, Cynthia Scott Murray, who he met on a blind date as a teenager, fell in love, eloped and raised three children, Mark, Susan and Karen. Jim was also predeceased by his son, Mark, in 2008.

Jim worked 38 years as a civil engineer for the State of Connecticut DOT in Newington, where he started lifetime friendships with Frank Rich, Ernie May and Hines. Jim was blessed to meet Suzie Sayner in 2008 and they frequently traveled to Hilton Head and Vero Beach, enjoying fellowship with her dearest friends, Cindy & Steve Parade and Bonnie Harper.

Jim is survived by his daughter Susan and her husband Ken Browne of Hebron and their children Darcy, Spencer and Dale, and by his daughter Karen and her husband Mark Mickolczyk of Grafton, Wis., and their children Amber, Ashlynn and Kolton.

Noah White, Kelly Lamb and Joyce of Masonicare provided outstanding service to Jim and the family during hospice.

Funeral services will be held in the spring at Baptist Fellowship in Columbia.



Marlborough

Christopher J. Zielke

Christopher J. Zielke of Marlborough passed away unexpectedly Monday, Dec. 1.

He leaves his father and mother, Michael and Garen Zielke, his brother Michael and his fiancée, Heidi Griswold and his service dog Essayon.

All services will be for immediate family only.

Donations should be made to Michelle Cote/Hounds Healing Heroes, 39 Highland Ave., Bantam, CT 06750.



Colchester

Nicholas Horochivsky

Nicholas Horochivsky, 88, former Norwich resident for 62 years and a resident of Uncasville since 2006, died Sunday afternoon, Dec. 7, at the Backus Hospital. He was born in Hrabske, Czechoslovakia, on March 12, 1926, the son of the late Very Reverend Vasil and Maria (Krayniak) Horochivsky.

Nick was a 1943 graduate from Bacon Academy in Colchester and was a 1952 graduate from the University of Connecticut. He was a W.W.II Army veteran having served in France and Germany. Nick was employed as a Engineer at Dow Chemical Co. in Gales Ferry for over 36 years before retiring in 1988.

He was a parish member of the Orthodox Church of the Holy New Martyr and Confessor of Russia in Norwich. Nick was a life member of the Ukrainian National Home in North Windham and also a member of the Richard E. Hourigan V.F.W. Post No. 594 in Norwich.

He was married to Doris (Martin) Horochivsky, who survives him. Besides his wife, he is survived by three stepdaughters, Constance Kowalski and her husband Robert of Maryville, Ten., Sandi Cellucci and her husband Joseph and Luanne Kaseman and her husband Fred both of Summerville, S.C.; one brother, Michael Horochivsky and his wife Machi of Lompoc, Calif.; 10 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren and nine great-great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by two brothers, Vasil and Alexander Horochivsky.

An Orthodox funeral service will be held today, Dec. 12, at 10 a.m., at the Orthodox Church of the Holy New Martyr and Confessor of Russia at 364 Canterbury Tpke., Norwich. Burial will follow in Maplewood Cemetery, Norwich. Calling hours at the Guillot Funeral Home, 75 South B. St., Taftville, were Thursday, Dec. 11.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Orthodox Church of the Holy Martyr and Confessor of Russia, 364 Canterbury Tpke., Norwich, CT 06360.

Glastonbury

Marie L. Kowalsky

Marie L. (Hoar) Kowalsky, age 89 of Glastonbury, formerly of Bolton, beloved wife of 58 years to the late Charles W. Kowalsky, passed away peacefully Thursday, Dec. 4, at her home with her family at her side.

Marie was born on Aug. 23, 1925, in Waterbury, daughter of the late Harry L. and Rosine (Guerin) Hoar. She was employed for several years as a machinist at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, and later was employed by Projects Incorporated for over 39 years before retiring as a supervisor in 1999. Marie attended Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lebanon and enjoyed gardening, tending to her flowers, and spending time with her children, grandchildren, and their families.

She is survived by two daughters and sons-in-law, Ellen and Richard Viele of Hebron, and Darlene and Kris Sines of Bolton; two grandsons, Richard Viele of Portland, and Joseph Viele and his wife Lisa of Lebanon; four great-grandchildren, Ruthie, Britney, Aimee and Kimee. Marie also leaves her sister, Charlotte Swanson and her husband John of Interlaken, N.Y., her brother, Willis Hoar and his wife Pat of Tolleson, Ariz., and numerous nieces, nephews, and their families. In addition to her husband and parents Marie was predeceased by her son, Charles W. Kowalsky III, and three brothers, Harold, Clarence and Warren Hoar.

Calling hours were at the Holmes Funeral Home in Manchester. A graveside service was held on Monday, Dec. 8, in the Bolton Center Cemetery on Hebron Road in Bolton.

Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

To leave an online condolence for her family, please visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.



Portland

Lucille C. Cramer

Lucille C. Cramer died peacefully at home surrounded by family Thursday, Dec. 4. She was born in Portland, daughter of the late Bernard Corliss and Edna Mae (Bowen) Cramer. She was a lifelong member of St. Mary's church and a member of the Portland Historical Society for many years.

Lucille dedicated her life to love and care for others unselfishly, she always put others needs above her own which included care, support, wisdom, love and dedication. She will most be remembered for her beautiful sense of humor, her subtleness and giving nature. She was a wonderful care giver to her mother and a wonderful and compassionate sister and daughter.

Lucille was a quiet, personal person; however, if you were a part of her life you were a lucky and blessed individual. Lucille had an incredible work ethic as proven by her many years at Pratt and Whitney and Aetna.

Lucille is survived by her loving sister Kathleen Musshorn of Newington; her brother, Bernard F. Cramer of Bonita Springs, Fla.; her brother, Terence Cramer of Tampa, Fla.; and several nieces and nephews.

Lucille was predeceased by her mother and father, Bernard Corliss and Edna Mae (Bowen) Cramer; her sister, Joanne Struthers; her brother, Bernard C. Cramer Jr.; her uncle, Rev. Gerald Bowen, M.S.; and her niece, Cynthia Musshorn.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Wednesday, Dec. 10, at St. Mary's Church in Portland, followed by a burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Portland.

Memorial contributions may be made in Lucille's name to the Portland Historical Society or the American Diabetes Association.

Biega Home for Funerals, 3 Silver St., Middletown, is in charge of arrangements. To share memories or express condolences online, visit biegafuneralhome.com.



Marlborough

Dennis H. Duchesneau

Dennis H. Duchesneau, 62, of Marlborough, lost his courageous battle with cancer Saturday Dec. 6. He was the husband of Jacqueline (Boucher) Duchesneau for 40 years.

Born in Hartford, he was raised in East Hartford; he was the son of Dora (Chamberlain) Duchesneau of Florida and the late Oliver Duchesneau. He was a graduate of East Catholic High School, Class of 1970.

Dennis was the former owner/operator of Hartford Market Caterers, a wholesale food provision business. After his retirement he worked part-time in distribution for several publications, including *CMT Enterprises* and the *Hartford Advocate*. For many years, he enjoyed boating but more recently just fishing off his dock at Red Cedar Lake in Lebanon.

He leaves behind many who admired his strength and enjoyed his unique humor: his son Mark Burke and his wife Susan of Danbury; his brother Gary Duchesneau and his wife Susan of Delaware; his sisters-in-law Marguerite Laubacher and Lorraine Craig, both of Manchester. He had a special relationship with his uncle and aunt Henry and Mary Chamberlain of Groton, his aunt Margaret Bafaro of Manchester. He also leaves his nephew, Tim Laubacher and his wife Debbie of Coventry, Patricia Coburn and her husband Brian of Pennsylvania; his niece, Susan Hayes and her husband Gary of Manchester; his niece, Caryn Duchesneau of North Carolina; and his nephew, Dennis Duchesneau of Delaware. He leaves 10 grandnephews and grandnieces. Caleb Laubacher, Payge, Brian, Brady, Bronson and Bryce Coburn, Apryl and Alyssa St. Hilaire, Lisa Hayes and Jessica Bailey. He had many good friends, some since his teenage years, but especially Bill and Kathy Brown of Marlborough, whose love and support exceeded friendship.

Friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Wednesday, Dec. 10.

In lieu of flowers please donate in his name to: Open Hearth Shelter, 150 Charter Oak Ave., Hartford, CT 06106 or to St. Elizabeth House Shelter, 118 Main St., Hartford, CT. 06106.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.

Colchester

Olive C. Marotta

Olive C. Marotta, 88, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Monday, Nov. 17. Born Oct. 28, 1926, Olive was the daughter of Mason and Constance Gilbert Clark of Rocky Hill.

Olive leaves behind her husband, Alfred R. Marotta; five children and their spouses, Raymond, Robert, John and Darlene, Patricia Moran, and Janice and Donald Hutchins; numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren; a sister, Janice Bray; nieces, nephews and close friends.

Olive was devoted to her husband. She and Alfred recently celebrated 66 years of marriage. She loved sharing the beauty and fruits of her gardening and all her many handwork projects with her family and friends. She will be missed dearly.

Funeral arrangements were handled privately.

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