

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Last Saturday, holiday wreaths were placed on the Hebron Memorial Green as part of the town's fourth Wreaths Across America ceremony. The event was one of many that took place across the country Dec. 13 as a way to remember fallen veterans, honor those who serve, and teach children about the sacrifices made by veterans and their families.

Placing Wreaths To Remember

by Geeta Schrayter

It is the time of year when wreaths adorn the doors of many homes, to offer up some holiday cheer. But last weekend, wreaths were placed on the Hebron Memorial Green for a different purpose: to remember, honor and teach.

On Saturday, Dec. 13, individuals gathered on the green for the Hebron's fourth Wreaths Across America event.

The ceremony was one of many that occur across the country each December, according to the website wreathscrossamerica.org. The website said the organization carries out its mission to "remember, honor and teach" by holding wreath-laying ceremonies each year at Arlington National Cemetery and veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states.

The events take place thanks to volunteers who organize the local ceremonies and raise funds to sponsor wreaths. In Hebron, the volunteer who brought the ceremony to town is Matt Kelly, who read about the program when he was a junior at RHAM High School and told his father Martin that he wanted to put one together.

And so, Martin Kelly put his son in touch with the American Legion and Veterans of For-

eign Wars and together, they made the ceremony happen in Hebron. Although Matt is now away at college and couldn't make the last two years, his father has continued to lead in organizing the event, which he said has "taken off."

"I think we're one of the few programs with all active duty people [participating] and a firing team," Kelly said this week. "I enjoy it and I have some ideas to make it bigger."

Although it was cold and breezy Saturday, the sky was clear, and the sun was shining as servicemen and women, family members and other individuals gathered at the Memorial Green for the ceremony, which began with a performance of the National Anthem by Amanda Jordon, and a prayer by Father Michael Smith from Church of the Holy Family.

As the wreath-layers – active servicemen – stood at attention holding their wreaths adorned with big red bows and flags for each branch of the military, Kelly addressed the crowd.

"We are gathered here today at this memorial site and memorial sites all across America to remember that we are one nation with one flag," he stated. "We are all proud to be Ameri-

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Waiting for the Man with the Bag

In just under a week, Santa Claus will be making his annual trek to homes of all good little boys and girls. He's got a good idea what a bunch of kids in the *Rivereast* towns want – thanks to Marlborough Girl Scout Troop 65220.

Every year, the scouts collect letters to Santa from area children. But before the letters make their way to Santa's house, the scouts bring them by the *Rivereast's* house. They're typically so adorable we can't help but publish them; so we typed them up (and yes, we left in the charming little-kid misspellings on purpose) and then sent them on their merry way up north – way up north – so that Santa and his elves can give them a gander.

And don't worry, kids; our sources at the North Pole tell us the letters have indeed arrived on St. Nick's doorstep – and the big man has offered assurances he'll try to fill as many Christmas dreams as possible.

Merry Christmas from all of us at the *Rivereast*.

Dear Santa,

I was wondering if I was on the good list or bad list. Also, what are the steps you go through to make the toys? See you on Christmas. Don't leave your hat. Cookies and milk will be out. Also, carrots for the raindeers.

Love, Brooklynn

Please write back!
Brooklyn's X-mas List:

- 1) Frozen Sing Along
- 2) Little Live Pets
- 3) Radio
- 4) Clothes
- 5) Dress
- 6) The Ugly Dogs
- 7) Wabble Bubble
- 8) My Waking Pup
- 9) Lego friends
- 10) My Code Diary
- 11) Mostache smash

Am I on the good list or bad list? Yes or no: circle one.

Dear Santa

I would like for Christmas an ipad mini with a case that is blue with cheetah prints on the back.

from, Izabella

Dear Santa,

How are you doing? Snowflake doing great. May you please surprise me? Christmas is my favorit holiday. Don't work too hard Santa. What do the other children want? Our house is all decored for Snowflake. Our tree is buttiful. Was Christmas ever canaled? I hope Snowflake brings my note in his stoking. Please write back.

Love, Stella

Santa,

Will you bring me a singing Rudolph, please? That doesn't cost a lot.

Love, Elle

Dear Santa,

If Jackie is good can you put her on the good list? And Maddie to? I'm so happy you gave me a letter. I will keep it forever. I will never be on the bad list ever. Am I one of the first people to get a picture of you?

Love, Samantha

I am good forefr Santa.

To Santa Claus

Xbox 360
Batman 3 in justis gods umung us
for xbox
New sled
Boom bolon
Powerrangers morfor
Gitare pik
Kotin Candy Maker
Dog – a chowawa
Thank you for the presents every year.

Love, Aaron



See Santa Letters Page 26

Santa Letters cont. from Front Page

Dear: Santa claus what I would like for Crismas is.
 #1. Video game's
 #2. dirt bike
 #3. Minecraft stuf
 and that is what I want for crismas.
 To: The Noth Pole

from: Alexis

- List for Santa
 Niting Netls
 Hair kit
 Snow Babes (3 girls)
 Stuft animal making kit
 Brbe dolls
 Fishing kit
 Ned bas
 Clay air dry
 Poku books
 Postrse
 Rengs
 Poms
 A log eisu jes
 A woch
 Pet U cer kit
 A paswrđ jrnł
 Not book

Love, Sam

- Christmas
 1. J Animal
 2. Zoomer
 3. Zoomer dino
 4. Brit eye's monkey book
 5. minion stufft animal
 6. monkey stuff animal
 7. elf and the shelf stuff
 8. book animal about a panther
- From Sydney**

Dear Santa,
 Hi! How are you? I have been a super good girl and was wondering if you could make me Hans from Frozen. I hope you are well and I will make sure to bake you cookies!
 Merry Christmas!

Grace

Dear Santa,
 Its almost december and december mean christmas. I wont leave you alot of cookies because you might get to ful and you wont eat any body cookies. I try my best to keep myself under control. I think thats all I halft to say.

**Sincrlly,
 Jasmine**

PS Please write back

Dear Santa Claus:
 Santa this is alot to ask for but for christmas I would like a 1 year old baby sibling. I know it sounds silly but it is something that I have wanted since I was 6 so please get the baby for me!! If this is not possible then I would like a hamster and hamster cage!!!!

From Carolyn

Dear Santa,
 Marry Chirstmas! I hope Im on the nice list this year! I hope Mrs. Clause is doing well and making you yummy cookies.

- Chistmas List
 1. Payless Boots
 2. cute clothes
 3. new ipod case
 4. make up
 5. nail polish pens
 6. hair stuff
 7. room stuff (blue)

Love, Haley

P.S. Say Hi to your reindeer for me!

Dear Santa
 I would like a kidzoom for Christams.

From Aubree

I have been a good girl this year. I hope Jingles said that to.

Placing Wreaths cont. from Front Page

cans that live in a free society made up of many people, many races, from many walks of life.”
 He continued, “The United States of America was founded on the ideals of freedom, justice and equality. Our nation stands as a shining beacon of liberty and freedom to the world. We thank those who gave their lives to keep us free and we shall not forget you. We shall remember.”

Kelly went on to say to the active military members present that everyone else in attendance was there to say “thank you.”

“Many of you here today have answered the call and served your country well. We are here to say ‘thank you’ and we are honored to know you,” he stated, adding the members of the United States military make sacrifices each day “to keep our country safe from terrorism, hatred and injustice that plague the world community.”

As his speech came to an end, Kelly quoted the late former president Ronald Reagan, who said, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

After Kelly spoke, he introduced guest speaker Major Manuel Zepeda, who enlisted in the Marines in 1998. Since that time, Zepeda has held a variety of roles in the Marine Corps and has earned a number of decorations including the Bronze Star Medal with gold star, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with combat “V” distinguishing service and gold star, and the Combat Action Ribbon with gold star.

As Zepeda took to the podium, he, like Kelly, referred to America as a “beacon” to the rest of the world and acknowledged that freedom isn’t free.

“We have come to represent something very essential – something very special within our society: freedom, which is as essential to our way of life as breathing,” he stated. “We could no longer exist as an American society without this freedom we have come to savor and delight of in every walk of life in America. We are privileged and honored to live in such a country; the price has not been achieved easily, but certainly as fellow Americans we can all appreciate its fruit and sweetness.”

Zepeda added, “Like our society says, ‘E Pluribus Unum’ – out of many, we’ve become one – one beacon of hope; one beacon to stand up in the face of oppression,” he stated. “In the face of dictatorship we have come and unified ourselves to stand for what is true and right and to forever prevent the hand of oppression we

have come to see in many other corners of the earth.”

Zepeda furthered there was “so much to be thankful for of all service members.”

“The strength of America is characterized by this very fabric that binds us all together; that we can go forth and we can elect our representatives of government, that we can have service members that volunteer and are not forced into ranks to go and defend our freedom, our privileges,” he explained. “This strength of America has come to represent a hope that echoes around the world. So many people around the world see America as that light in the darkness – a beacon of hope. And we inspire other people of different walks of life to try to assimilate the liberties we have here.”

He continued, “And we see and hear about many governments that don’t consent to that, but it’s different here in America because of our fellow service members in the armed forces. That is the strength we have here; that we can stand up in the face of tyranny, in the face of oppression, and say, ‘We will be a free people, because it is essential to our way of life.’”

After Zepeda concluded, different service members placed a wreath for each branch of the military: 1st Lt. Stephen Blanda placed a holiday wreath for those in the Army; Sgt. Julius Howard placed a wreath for those in the Marines; LCDR Aaron Asimakopolous placed a wreath for those in the Navy; Major Thomas Olander placed a wreath for the Air Force; Private Eric Saunders placed a wreath for those in the United States Coast Guard; Chief Jeffrey Segar placed a wreath for those in the Merchant Marines; and Sgt. Roger Krasusky placed a wreath in honor of the 93,129 servicemen from all branches of the military whose last known status was either Prisoner of War or Missing in Action.

“The wreaths before you represent our commitment as a United States of America to remember the fallen,” Kelly concluded. “We also want these holiday wreaths to symbolize our honor to those who have served and are serving in the armed forces of our great nation, and to their families who endure sacrifices every day on our behalf.”

He added, “To our children, we want you to understand the freedoms you would enjoy today have not been free but have come with a cost that someday, you may have to pay yourself. As a nation standing together, we can defeat terrorism, hatred and injustice. Thanks to our veterans, we have the freedom to do just that.”

“May you have the happiest of holidays,” Kelly ended the ceremony. “And God bless America.”

Marlborough Selectmen Appoint New RHAM Member

by **Kaitlyn Schroyer**

Marlborough Board of Education member Carole Shea was tapped by the Board of Selectmen Tuesday to move over to the RHAM school board.

Shea will replace resident Dieter Zimmer, who resigned from the board last month, after serving on it for more than 25 years.

With her new appointment, Shea will resign from her position on the Marlborough Board of Education this month; her final meeting with the local board was last night.

“I served for the past five years on the Marlborough Board of Education,” Shea said. “I have attended numerous RHAM Board of Education meetings over the last five years and I’m familiar with their procedures and current issues.”

Shea holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Connecticut along with a master’s degree in education from the University of Hartford. She taught at Ellington High School for eight years before being an adjunct professor at the North Carolina Wesleyan University. Shea then began her career in design which she has

been doing for 20 years now for many commercial and institutional facilities along with schools, universities and colleges.

Shea was first elected to the Marlborough school board in 2009. During her time on For the Marlborough Board of Education, Shea chaired the Policy Committee and the Community Outreach Committee. She also served as a Board of Education representative on the Operations, Health and Safety Committee.

Selectman Denis Soucy made the motion Tuesday night to appoint Shea to the RHAM board. Shea got in with a 2-0 vote; selectman Dick Shea – Carole’s husband – abstained.

“She sounds very well-suited,” Soucy said. Shea will fill out the remainder of Zimmer’s term on the board, which runs through Dec. 1, 2015.

Gaudinski said the selectmen are hoping to appoint a new Marlborough Board of Education member during their next meeting in January. She said she has not yet received any letters of interest. The seat is a Republican seat.

The Board of Selectmen also filled positions on the Commission on Aging at Tuesday’s meeting. The board appointed Marlborough resident Laura Gutt to a full member on the commission and appointed resident Linda Havunen as an alternate member.

Regarding the Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission, the board accepted the resignation of alternate member Betty O’Brien, who had been with the commission since its start. In her letter of resignation, O’Brien said “Out with the old and in with the new is progress in my case.” She went on to say that it’s been a “pleasure to serve with all the members of this commission of very dedicated people.”

The board also received an update regarding the construction of the new water system. The project has crossed Route 66 and the contractors have been lucky with good weather, Gaudinski said.

“Things have moved along well,” Gaudinski said.

However, Ken Hjulstrom, a member of the

Board of Finance but speaking as a resident, stated some of his concerns about the dumping of materials from the construction.

“They are depositing on private property [where they were given permission to dump],” Hjulstrom said. “Do the materials have contaminants from the old gas station?”

Hjulstrom said he wasn’t sure if it was possible; however, he was concerned that the construction crew was getting close to where the gas station’s old tanks had been.

The gas station, which is located near the 7Eleven on North Main Street, had an issue around 10 to 15 years ago, Hjulstrom said, when it had to replace its tanks after a potential leak issue.

Hjulstrom said the soil being dumped next door to his property is probably fine; however, he said, he just worries in case it does have any contaminants.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 6, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.



Left, Kali Trapp wearing her signature pink helmet and racing her car, number 14 (courtesy of Davel Nale of Hammerhead Productions); right, Kali Trapp with her 24 trophies earned over one season of quarter midget racing. Kali said she loves getting fast times, and wants to keep racing for the foreseeable future.

East Hampton Racer Completes First Year

by John Tyczkowski

Kali Trapp likes swimming, gymnastics and soccer, and enjoys reading and making crafts. Her favorite food is macaroni and cheese.

However, she also enjoys whipping around a racetrack in quarter midget cars in a signature pink helmet, in excess of 30 miles per hour.

Kali, 8, is a regular competitive racer for the Silver City Quarter Midget Club and Custom Midget Club in Meriden every Saturday and Sunday during the season. She started when she was 7.

Quarter midget racing is a scaled-down version of midget car racing, so named because the cars are built on a one-quarter scale. Both clubs Kali races for are sanctioned by the non-profit Quarter Midgets of America.

She's only raced one season, from April to October this year, and has accumulated quite the mountain of awards in that short time in the Junior Novice class and, after August, in the Junior Honda class.

"I have 24 of them," Kali said, while walking around in a roomful of trophies and explaining the various races. "I'm very proud of them."

She also explained, smiling, that's how she moved up to a new class.

"If they think that you win a lot, because I did, they move you up because you're faster than the others and the races need to be harder

for you," Kali said.

She said she was inspired to beginning racing courtesy of her mother, Mary, who used to race quarter midgets herself when she was younger.

Kali had her first taste of the sport last October, at a ride-and-drive event at the track in Meriden, designed to showcase quarter midget racing to kids.

"I went so fast that first time; I loved it," she said.

Mary said Kali usually races with the kids of people she used to race with when she was a child.

"She'll race with their kids, or their nephews," she said. "It's kind of a family thing, it's pretty cool."

However, Kali has raced around more tracks than just Silver City. She also raced at the Eastern Grand Nationals in Ohio, where she came in second in the Junior Novice class, and in the Tri-State Series.

The latter series featured a race at Silver City and also Trumbauersville, Pa., where she placed second and in Wall, N.J., where she placed eighth in her first race in the Junior Honda class.

"For the Tri-State Series, whichever club's racers earn the most points get the cup," Mary said. "Our club lost the cup last year, but we

got it back this year. Kali helped!"

Some other accolades of Kali's include a win at the Earl Wilcox Memorial Race, a super feature; placing second at the Lou Sherman Memorial Eastern States Race; and a win at one of the Glen Reilly Memorial Tri-State Series races.

"That's also where she set a new track record in Junior Novice," Ron Trapp, her father, said of the Lou Sherman race. "She's accomplished a lot."

He and Mary also confirmed, reading from another trophy, that Kali, in addition to winning in the Junior Novice class there, also got 'fastest time' at the Earl Wilcox race.

Kali said that those three races were some of her favorites.

"I love getting fast times," she said.

Kali, Mary and Ron would frequently run and check all the trophies to make sure they were describing the right wins and records at the right races.

"There's too many of them!" Kali laughed as she searched.

Kali was also just named Rookie of the Year at the 2014 Silver City Quarter Midget Club Annual Awards Banquet last month. She was also voted Girl Driver of the Year by her fellow racers there.

"That was really neat to see, because those

votes came from her competitors," Mary said. "Also, because they said the last time a novice got Girl Driver of the Year was seven years ago."

Next season, Kali plans to race in two classes simultaneously: Senior Honda, and either Senior Animal or Light 160.

"I'm hopeful," she said.

Mary said it's normal for racers to participate in more than one class, to make the most of their days at the racetrack.

"When Kali moved to Junior Honda, she was the fourth or fifth race of the day, but in Junior Novice she was the very first race," she said. "And then we had to wait all day for the trophy. We'd get there at 8 or 9 in the morning and wouldn't leave with trophies until 8 or 9 at night."

Also, she said Kali will need to move up to the faster Senior Honda after she turns 9 in May, since that class is for racers ages 9-16.

"That's a little stressful for me," Mary said.

However, Kali said she's ready for the challenge.

Kali also said she plans to continue racing quarter midgets until she "can't race anymore," and then would like to move on to bandolero cars, which are bigger, faster and more powerful than quarter midget cars.

"I really like racing," she said.

Andover Food Pantry Wins \$20K

by Geeta Schrayter

The holiday season just got a whole lot sweeter for individuals involved with the Andover Food Pantry – and all those serviced by it. The pantry was one of 75 from across the country that won \$20,000 as part the Wal-Mart Food Pantry Holiday Makeover.

During the contest, which ran through Dec. 12, individuals could cast a vote for their pantry of choice each day through their Facebook accounts; at the end of it all, the 75 pantries with the most votes would receive \$20,000 each – \$1.5 million total from Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart's goal for the contest, according to their website, is to "strengthen communities by helping food pantries across the country refresh their facilities to make it easier for them to help families who may struggle with hunger."

Last week, Food Pantry Director Joan Soucy explained the money, if won, would be used to create a more permanent space for their operations; the pantry currently runs out of the basement of the Andover Congregational Church.

However, according to Soucy there's a building behind the church that pantry organizers were told they could use – if it found the money to renovate it.

And now, they've done just that.

During the competition, the Andover Food Pantry received 1,540 votes. It's a far cry from the highest-grossing pantry – Chesapeake Cares Food Pantry in Huntington, Md. garnered 8,731 votes – but it was enough to make the pantry number 70 on the list and that, in turn, was enough to earn Andover the cash.

On Tuesday, Soucy said she was "very, very pleased" with the outcome.

"I'm just so overwhelmed" she stated, sharing she had been monitoring the website leading up to the end of the voting period, and when the clock switched from 11:59 p.m. Dec. 12 to midnight, she was surprised when confetti filled her screen and the words "Congratulations! Your pantry won!" appeared.

Soucy said it was "really, really very impressive to be a small town – a little community like ours – and be on the list."

"I had prepared myself, thinking we really didn't have a chance, not too much of one anyway, to compete against the whole country," Soucy said. She added that while she was "very happy" the pantry won, even if it hadn't, she'd still be pleased because of all the support that was received.

Soucy explained word of the contest spread, and votes came in from the local community as well as beyond – from places such as the south, California, Puerto Rico and even Bermuda.

"It was that holiday spirit – everyone was rooting for you and wanted to wish you good will and that type of thing," Soucy said. "I felt if that's the only thing we got, people just passing around good spirit, that we were already a winner."

"Of course," she added, "it was a wonderful bonus to win the money, so we're thrilled."

And it's a bonus that, Soucy added, feels surreal.

"You have to kind of pinch me to let me know that it's really real," she laughed.

Soucy added many people had been waiting up late last Friday night to see if the Andover Food Pantry would be one of the winners – and once the contest ended, the pantry's Facebook page erupted with messages of congratulations.

"All these little messages were popping up with people congratulating us," she said. "We had some messages from some people as far away as Puerto Rico. Of course, they were in Spanish and I didn't understand – the only thing I could make out was 'Feliz Navidad.' So I knew

they were wishing us a Merry Christmas. It was really nice. You don't even know who to thank. Where do you begin?"

But in an email Soucy sent out shortly after the contest ended, she attempted to thank some of those responsible for voting each day and making the win possible.

"I am overwhelmed at the response that our food pantry in Andover received from the community," she wrote. "The holiday spirit is surely alive and well. Thanks to everyone for helping out and making it count. We will start looking into revamping the conference house behind the main church to permanently house our pantry. It will take lots of work from contractors who will donate their time and expertise, but now that we will have the makeover money to help with materials, we soon will be on our way!"

Soucy said she had been talking with a couple of people about forming a small committee to look over the building and see what work needs to be done. At this time, she added she assumed work would begin in the spring.

"But we, of course, are anxious to do what we can as soon as we can," she stated – and added, "It's just wonderful that so many people from all around pulled together."



Left photo, Sam Laraia as George Bailey, Carolyn Jedziniak as Violet Bick and Matthew Cote as Uncle Billy, and right photo, Jaimie Farren as Mary Hatch and Sam Laraia as George Bailey. The East Hampton High School Drama Club put on a live radio play adoption of *It's a Wonderful Life*, staged with minimal sets but maximal talent.

It's a Wonderful Play in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

I'm a big fan of *It's a Wonderful Life*. I was raised on the 1946 Frank Capra film starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed. So, when I heard there was a stage adoption afoot at East Hampton High School, I made sure I went last Saturday night. So did over 50 others.

At once, I knew I loved the staging when I stepped inside the auditorium. The stage was arrayed much like I'd imagine a radio studio would be, albeit somewhat larger, with the studio's call letters emblazoned on a large sign, several microphones at center and two sound effects tables, and a sound effect door, at stage right.

Also, what struck me immediately was the presence of two light-up signs: one saying 'on-air' and the other saying 'applause.' In true live broadcast fashion, the 'applause' sign flashed on and off as a cue to the audience throughout the performance.

Staging, while minimalist, was perfect.

The play's ambitious play-within-a-play structure was immediately apparent. Without warning, WBFR's stage manager (played by Claire Pawlewitz – who, in an example of meta-irony, also served as the production's actual assistant director) walked across the stage announcing five minutes to airtime.

From there, after the house lights dimmed and the audience quieted, each of the 'famous' radio actors introduced themselves, and, after singing the station's call letters, the show began.

Casting was completely on-point. Sam Laraia channeled the joys and frustrations of George Bailey in a near-perfect way. While he incorporated small nods to Jimmy Stewart's 1946 performance, such as certain inflections, Laraia managed to create a character all his own.

For example, during George's famous tirade against Henry Potter after George's father's death, Laraia conveyed a genuine rage and frustration, palpable to the audience, which explored a different facet than Jimmy Stewart's more subdued performance.

Jaimie Farren and Hunter Brazal, in their respective roles as Mary Hatch and Potter, were also able to successfully reinterpret their classic characters.

Farren added a bit more oomph to her character than Donna Reed had displayed in the iconic film, with some undercurrents of sass in early scenes with Laraia, before their characters marry. She also was very effective in conveying the simultaneous combination of shock, anger, worry and caring during George's outburst when he snaps at the end of Act II.

Brazal had the perfect amount of swagger and confidence when delivering Potter's classic lines, such as the oft-quoted "I'm an old man and most people hate me, but I don't like them either so that makes it all even." The rapport between him and Laraia made their characters' rivalries very convincing.

Also notable was the strength of some of the less featured but still important roles in the play, such as Matthew Cote as Uncle Billy, Carolyn Jedziniak as Violet Bick and Mason Cordeiro as Clarence the guardian angel.

* * *

The play was still able to convey all of the important and touching moments of the film despite its more limited format. While some classic scenes, such as Harry Bailey's graduation night dance and subsequent impromptu swim, or George arriving home in the rain to the 'Waldorf Hotel' at 320 Sycamore, had to go, the production presented a coherent story for those unfamiliar with the movie, and satisfac-

fied long-term viewers.

Sound operators Allis Frost and Becca White were constantly on cue, but some of the sound effects, namely the punches and slaps, were underwhelming. That was the only thing that brought me out of the moment at times. However, tricky-to-time sounds such as glass breaking and phones ringing were spot-on, and overall sound direction was executed very well.

Also, the live soundtrack, courtesy of Jenna Pethybridge and Signe Lee, fit the mood of the production perfectly, further enhanced by the old timey, slightly-out-of-tune upright piano in front of the stage.

I had a soft spot for the fact that, in another moment of fourth-wall bashing, the play-within-a-play was broken up into three acts, and, even better, there were commercial jingles in between the acts. You wouldn't normally expect to hear singing in a drama production, but it helped, to paraphrase Nick the bartender in Act III, "give the joint atmosphere."

Another nice touch was that the drama club sold Bevin Bell ornaments at the ticket table outside the auditorium. In addition to referencing Zuzu's famous "Every time a bell rings, and angel gets his wings" quote, the sale also speaks to the bigger connection between East Hampton and *It's a Wonderful Life*. In the film, the bell ornament that rings as Zuzu says that line is a Bevin bell made in town.

Director Rachel Mansfield and the EHHS Drama Club deserve full credit for their successful live adaptation, featuring the entire drama club, of a classic movie about a man who learns that he's not a failure as long as he has friends.

* * *

Cast: Stage Manager (for WBFR) Claire Pawlewitz, Announcer (for WBFR) Jacob Gagliastri, George Bailey (a typical American dreamer) Sam Laraia, Mary Hatch (George's girl) Jaimie Farren, Rose Bailey (George's mother) Kaitlyn Morris, Harry Bailey (George's kid brother) Adam Eurbin, Peter Bailey (George's father) Bailey Evans, Billy Bailey (George's uncle) Matthew Cote, Old Lady Gower (the druggist) Joanna Dabkowski, Bert (a cop) Alex Devin, Ellie (a cab driver) Jess Abbotts, Violet Bick (a small town siren) Carolyn Jedziniak, Henry F. Potter (richest man in the county) Hunter Brazal, Pete (George's son) Matt Sherer, Zuzu (George's daughter) Lisa Clair Cowan, Clarence (George's guardian angel) Mason Cordeiro, Joseph (the superintendent of angels) Lucas Gerolami, Sam Wainwright (an entrepreneur) Alex Curylo, Old Lady Collins (an eavesdropper) Ana Cloutier, Dr. Campbell (on the Bailey Bros. board) Emily Rovillo, Matilda (a secretary) Caroline Crean;

Ruth Dakin Bailey (Harry's wife) Lailah Bergin, Mrs. Hatch (Mary's mother) Abby Conklin, Edwina (a bank customer) Gabby Crean, Charlie (a bank customer) Emilee Karalus, Woman (a bank customer) Erin Wilson, Mrs. Thompson (a bank customer) Ally Giza, Mrs. Schultz (at the Martini house dedication) Kaitlynne Michnowicz, Martini (an Italian bar/restaurant owner) Matt Sherer, Helen the Teller (at the bank) Lauren Peltier, Sadie Vance (the state bank examiner) Hannah Daddario, Janie (George's daughter) Emily Worman, Tina (George's daughter) Elizabeth Jones, Mr. Welch (a school-teacher's husband) Adam Eurbin, Woman (at Martini's) Angela Buonocore, Nick (a bartender) Riley Pawlewitz, Bridge Keeper Lindsay de Brito, Binky (a bouncer) Alyssa Sweet.

Sound operators: Becca White, Ailis Frost.

Accompanists: Jenna Pethybridge, Signe Lee.

Production Staff: Director Rachel Mansfield, Assistant Director Claire Pawlewitz, Lighting: Alex Balletto, Tristan Winkvist, Stage Crew Nicole Burns, Costumes Marilyn Myers, Scenic Design Barbli Pawlewitz, Set Construction Mark Laraia, Props Kim Cordeir, Mark Laraia, Laura Laraia, Program Laura Laraia, Poster Design Todd Brandt.

RHAM Board to Explore Hiring Police Officer

by Geeta Schrayter

The RHAM Board of Education Monday authorized Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski to work on an agreement with the Town of Hebron to place a police officer at the schools.

Prior to the vote, various members expressed concern over the information Siminski provided, which shared information such as the cost of an school resource officer (SRO) and the number of days they'd work each year.

Based on the information provided, the SRO would work for 261 days at a cost of around \$62,000, or about \$237 per day. The officer would also receive a \$4,800 stipend for their vehicle and gas.

During the meeting, different board members wondered about the number of days, since a school year only has around 180. However, Siminski explained the figure included vacation time, overtime, professional development and the summer. He added the number wasn't exact yet, since the exact working conditions hadn't been determined.

"It's difficult to work with these numbers," said school board member Manny Catarino, "because there's 180 physical days but 261 virtual days."

Among the documents Siminski provided the board to look was a sample agreement prepared by the board's attorneys. Board member Amy D'Amaddio wondered whether information garnered from a school security forum held last month had been included, since the sample agreement didn't seem to have some of the suggestions. But Siminski explained the agreement was just a starting point, and had been provided by the board's attorneys as a draft document.

"What I did is I tried to fill in the blanks to try to give you an idea of what the attorneys would want to see in the document," he explained, "and how we could modify this is a process of negotiations and policy decision."

D'Amaddio furthered she thought Siminski should have inserted some of the items discussed at the forum, since the board would be voting on the document, but board chair Danny Holtsclaw clarified the motion wasn't to approve any specific document; rather, it was to authorize Siminski to begin negotiating an agreement for an SRO.

Even so, board members continued to express some concern. Mike Turner noted the agreement stated the Hebron town manager, as the town's police chief, would select the SRO, but he felt the board should have the final approval. Rich Jacobson felt similarly, saying, "I definitely think either the board or Siminski should have some say into who we allow into the school for that position."

Jacobson also said he felt the sample agreement was "law enforcement-centric" and he thought the board had wanted the position to be "more about education and getting to know the students."

Like Jacobson and D'Amaddio, Kevin Williams felt the document was missing some of the board's desired objectives; but member Judy Benson-Clarke said the document already included some of those aspects.

She stated, "I thought all those things actually were considered."

After some more discussion, Holtsclaw again stated the motion wasn't to approve any document, but to authorize Siminski to move forward with the process: in essence determining whether the board was in favor of the idea of hiring an SRO for the school.

Siminski furthered, "I'm not recommending this document. I'm just giving you an idea in terms of what the attorneys are suggesting. It's going to take some time and I need to do some research as to the best practices, and speak to some folks as to what's working and what's not working in schools."

Sharing his own thoughts on the possibility

of having an SRO, board member Tom Tremont said he was in favor of having an armed officer at the school, commenting on the recent hostage situation in Australia.

When the hostages came out, he said, "they're running, and they're scared to death. What did they run to? They ran to a man. A good man. With a gun."

To this, D'Amaddio interjected, "Oh please stop."

But he continued, "No, I won't stop. That's how you stop it; a good man with a gun stopped a bad man with a gun. Alright? There's proof right there. They came running out the door, and they ran into the arms of a police [officer] who carries a gun, not some guy with a sign that's saying 'peace please.'"

And on that note, shortly after, the motion was called to a vote and passed 7-3 with D'Amaddio, Jacobson and Williams against.

* * *

Also at Monday's meeting, the RHAM board unanimously voted to approve a teacher's contract for 2015-2018.

During the first year of the contract, from 2015-16, teachers will receive a 2.8 percent general wage increase with no step movement ("steps" determine the salary of each teacher and are based upon the degrees a teacher possesses and the length of time they're in the district: the longer someone teaches without interruption, the higher up on the pay scale they go).

During the second year of the contract, from 2016-17 year, teachers will receive a .75 percent increase plus a step movement; and during the final year of the contract, from 2017-18, they'll receive a one percent increase and a step movement.

This week, Siminski said regarding the increases, "I think it aligns with what's happening statewide."

Also under the new contract, teacher stipends

increase by five percent in 2015-16; by .75 percent in 2016-17 and by another one percent in 2017-18.

In addition, the amount of money a teacher makes for homebound instruction increases from \$20 to \$25 per hour the first year, \$26 the second year and \$27 per hour the third and final year;

There is also an increase in tuition reimbursement. Under the new contract, the reimbursement amount increases from \$200 to \$300 per credit; the total amount a teacher can receive in any school year will be \$1,800 instead of \$1,200; and the total amount the board can pay annually will be \$10,000 instead of \$6,000.

A change that Siminski called "significant" is in regards to insurance. Under the new contract, all teachers will move to a high-deductible health plan. High-deductible insurance plans typically have lower premiums but higher deductibles; as a result of this switch, the insurance premium will remain 19.5 percent each year of the contract and the district will realize \$113,000 in savings.

Siminski explained that with the high-deductible plans, "the whole philosophy is to make people more responsible for their own medical care."

He furthered, "I think that [the approved contract] is significant. The board negotiated a contract and all of the members of the teachers' bargaining unit – emphasis on *all* the members of the teachers' bargaining unit – will participate in the High Deductible Health Plan and I think that realizes a great deal of savings and I think that's quite important going forward."

He added, "I think we're one of the few districts in the area where all teachers are in it."

* * *

The next regular RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 12, at 6:30 p.m., at the high school.

Still No Decision on WJJMS

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After increasing debate surrounding enrollment numbers, the members of the William J. Johnston Middle School Building Committee last week chose to delay their decision on choosing one of the three options.

Instead, the committee invited NESDEC (New England School Development Council) to come to its Jan. 8 meeting to discuss how enrollment projections are determined.

The committee is eyeing three options for WJJMS. Option one, which has the front façade of the current building remaining with a new addition being added in the back of the school, has a cost of \$50.41 million (with an impact to the town of \$24.44 million); option two is a renovation, part-new construction with a cost of \$49.37 million (with a cost to Colchester of \$24.41 million); and option three, which is completely new construction, has a price tag of \$51.87 million, with a cost to Colchester of \$26.59 million.

At the Dec. 11 meeting, the building committee discussed a summary of comments from the joint meeting the night before of the boards of selectmen, finance and education. In general, enrollment was a "hot topic" at that meeting, committee chairman Tom Tyler said, along with the idea of decreasing costs wherever possible.

One of the ways to trim the cost of the project, the Board of Finance had commented, could be the renovations for gym A and the area for Pupil Services – a feature of all three options the committee is looking at. It suggested to just paint the space.

However, committee member Joe Ruiz said the finance board misunderstood the issue. It's not a simple matter of painting it, he argued; the plans call to "gut [the space] out and build from scratch."

Currently the space earmarked on the architect's design for Pupil Services includes the current band room and other rooms. However, making the space useable for Pupil Services would include changing walls around and building space for the secure record storage.

Committee member Steven Wells asked if there was space in any of the other schools for Pupil Services since they provide services for the entire district. Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu said there is not any space in the other schools.

"We can't do nothing to the gym," Tyler said. "There's code and HVAC to keep to. There's no 'zero cost' [option] on the gym."

Under all three options the committee is looking at, the current cost for the gym and pupil services area renovation was marked at \$3,640,625. Director of Facilities Ken Jackson said there will be some reimbursement especially for the Pupil Services area which counts as central office space according to the state standards.

Tyler then proposed inviting NESDEC to the committee's next meeting.

"It drives the square footage and cost," Tyler said of enrollment. "I'm quite concerned that the enrollment numbers are a contentious issue. I'm leery to take an option and say that's it. I don't have a high level of comfort with the numbers."

Tyler said with NESDEC and the enrollment numbers being a "foundation of this project," that it would be a potential to "trip up the project."

"It's a disservice to the project if we just throw an option out," Tyler said. "If we build too big, we'll pay for it later. We need to be able to explain enrollment well."

Current WJJMS Principal Chris Bennett stood up to explain to the committee that it's not just enrollment that drives the square footage.

"We have a team system," Bennett explained. "We don't just fill a classroom and then fill the next one. There's a teacher-to-student ratio."

Bennett explained that the teacher-to-student ratio drives how many students can be in a team. Since none of the predictions say one grade will drop below 120 students, this requires each grade to have two teams. This team format drives the number of classrooms needed in the new school.

"If that's the story, we need to tell that to people and get the information out there," Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said. "That dialogue hasn't taken place."

"That was enlightening," Wells said of Bennett's explanation.

Bennett went on to explain when he and the architects first looked at designing the new building, they included many bells and whistles.

"Those bells and whistles were what were reduced," Bennett said of the square footage. "The current plan is one room for the current program. Even if the student population shrank, we would use the rooms for good, educational purposes."

"The team system is less understood by the public," Committee member Irene Malsbenden said. "The average person not involved in education does not understand this. It's very critical to find a way to get the public to understand."

Committee member Paul Picard said he was done pushing things off and not discussing the options.

"I'm on my fourth dog while on this building committee," Picard said. Picard fosters service dogs before they go for their formal training and assignment. "I don't want to see us push off again."

Tecton architect Barbara Joslin assured the committee it wasn't losing much time. They would just need an extra meeting or two in January to catch up.

"I like all-new; it's cleaner," Tyler said. "But I don't want to say 'all-new' then find out the size."

Goldstein pointed out that option one cannot shrink and Tarlov said new construction is better for a smaller school.

However, committee member Tony Tarnowski said he was leaning toward option two at the moment because of the \$2 million difference in price tag.

"That's \$100,000 a year plus interest over 20 years," Tarnowski said.

"All-new is a hard sell," Wells said of option three.

Tarnowski added that all-new is an even tougher sell with the enrollment decline.

"There are perception issues of we have something useable and we are going to throw it away," Wells said. "I haven't made up my mind yet."

Joslin explained that she really needs to get the state to sit down with her and discuss the reimbursement after they have been continually dodging her inquiries.

The committee members then agreed to invite NESDEC to their Jan. 8 meeting at 7 p.m. at WJJMS to discuss enrollment, then decide on a few extra meetings to discuss what they have learned and the options.



There are Christmas trees galore to be found on the 30 acres that make up Scott's Tree Farm in Andover, where customers can find not only the perfect tree, tended by Carol Kukucka (left), but a smile, a story and some Christmas cheer from owners Evie and Bob Russell – and a greeting from their white German Shepard Bella.



It's That Christmasy Time of Year in Andover

by Geeta Schrayter

The days until Christmas are quickly dwindling, and an evening drive – or stroll - will undoubtedly mean the sight of twinkling lights all around, and glimpses of glistening Christmas trees in any number of windows.

In the Andover area, chances are some of those trees came from Scott's Tree Farm on Bunker Hill Road – and for anyone who still needs to find the perfect Tannenbaum for their home, Scott's may be just the place.

The farm is owned by Bob and Evie Russell, who have lived in Andover since 1962. On any given day, they can be found at the farm with their white German Shepard Bella, ready to offer up a smile, a story, some holiday cheer – even a bit of advice – to those who stop by.

“No matter how long you've been married: two weeks. Always look at it as [if you've been married] two weeks,” Bob said as he sat in their office this week. “And the thing is, you work on the marriage every day. If you're married 50 years – you keep working on it, and you'll never go wrong.”

As he said this, his wife approached him and gave him a kiss then laughed, “I'm buttering him up. Christmas is coming.”

But Bob wouldn't be deterred from imparting his advice.

“Today,” he continued, “The world is so fast. Why don't people stop and appreciate what they've got?”

While the answer to that question may not be the easiest to come by, the couple has a hope people will stop by the farm and appreciate what *they've* got: thousands of Christmas trees waiting to light up a home for the holidays.

The couple has been growing trees since the 1980s, on land that was previously used to grow corn for dairy farmers.

“We used to lease all this land out to dairy farmers, and the dairy farmers retired so we had to do something to continue with the agricultural theme” Bob explained. “So we planted Christmas trees.”

The trees – over 22,000 of them – are located on two lots on approximately 30 acres of land in town. Bob explained people can come and tag a tree at any time of the year and the farm sells trees at wholesale organizations such as fire departments, scouts and churches starting in the beginning of November. Then, the day after Thanksgiving, they start selling to the public.

But running a tree farm is a year-round job, and one they have help with from Carol Kukucka, who has lived in town all her life and said of the Russells “I adopted them.”

Kukucka has been working at Scott's for the past 10 years, and said the process of maintaining the farm starts while people are selecting their trees.

“We're out there with clippers taking boughs to clear the fields and use for wreathes,” she said. “So we're continually processing the tree one way or another.”

Then, when the farm shuts down, Kukucka explained, “In March we try to make sure the fields are clear, then each gets fertilized and we do weed control and then we do the seedling planting.”

She continued, “That's important because each tree that gets cut – a new one is planted in

place so we're able to keep the cycle of growth each year.”

After three years, the seedlings grow about a foot per year, so within six years, they're ready for harvesting.

Along with the above, working at a tree farm also involves shearing during the summer months. This is when Kukucka and other help go out and shape the trees so they've got the perfect form.

Speaking about Kukucka, Bob said she “runs the farm and is in charge of all the help – she's also responsible for the ribbons.”

The ribbons he's referring to are those earned by two white spruce trees that were entered into competitions at the Hebron Harvest Fair and the Big E.

Kukucka said of her work at the farm, “It's a job I enjoy doing. It's a lot of outside work; it's work where you can see the outcome of what you put into it – the trees are the product, and that's why this year I said [to the Russells] we have some trees we can take to the fair.”

And so, she did just that, and came home with ribbons: the tree at the Hebron Harvest Fair earned best in show and first place, while the tree at the Big E received the blue ribbon for Connecticut State Champion as well as third place in the New England spruce category.

The trees earned points in categories such as color, shape and coverage.

“The pride and satisfaction behind [winning] – you start to gleam with it,” Kukucka said.

Although the prize-winning trees have long since died, there are plenty like them where they came from, and each, Bob said, gets individual

attention.

Shortly after, Evie, who never stops moving around the office doing work, said to a customer “some days I think I know the trees by name.”

Kukucka added she liked knowing “that each tree that's selected by a family is going into their home and is going to be decorated by them in their own way but celebrated the day of Christmas with their family members - and knowing that we have touched each and every one of these trees that go off into a home.”

She furthered, “It's a very quiet type of farming: it's the trees and I and the team of workers when we do have them in. At this time of sales, it's overwhelming to hear the customers say the trees are absolutely gorgeous. To me, it makes me want to grin ear to ear. You get a warm feeling from it.”

And the trees, in turn, will provide a warm feeling when they're lit up and decorated in peoples' homes, helping ensure, as Evie sang at one point while she worked around the office, that “It's Beginning to Look a Lot like Christmas.”

* * *

Scott's tree farm offers customers the opportunity to choose and cut their own tree or select a pre-cut tree; for those who don't care about the perfect tree, there is also a discount lot, known as Charlie Brown's Corral. Wreaths and boughs are also available for sale.

The farm is open seven days a week until Christmas Eve, from 9:30 a.m. to dark, and is located at 11 Bunker Hill Rd. (off of Route 6) in Andover. For more information, call 860-742-9965.

Green Celebration Marks Start of Hanukkah in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

On Thursday, the Colchester community came together in good cheer for the town's annual celebration to mark the start of Hanukkah.

Hosted by Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky and the Chabad Jewish Center in Glastonbury, this was the seventh year of the event being on the Colchester green. While this year's celebration occurred last night, after press time, Wolvovsky this week discussed the event, and the story of Hanukkah, with the *Rivereast*.

"We take the message of the candles and add in spirit and warmth and light," Wolvovsky explained of the holiday's meaning. "We take that message and add goodness to our lives."

The celebration of Hanukkah commemorates two major events of the Jewish. In 165 BCE, a small group called the Maccabees were outnumbered by the Greeks but were able to challenge their oppressors and overcome the Greek tyrannical rule. The second is the celebration of the Hanukkah miracle. After the Temple of Jerusalem was defiled, the Maccabees discovered a small jug of oil that was meant to fuel the menorah for only one day, but instead it burned for eight days.

Each day of the Hanukkah holiday, a candle on the menorah is lit to symbolize the eight days the oil of the menorah lasted. Each candle symbolizes this adding of spirit and goodness.

In addition to "the general idea of the candles and adding a candle every night, the menorah and the story of Hanukkah is about religious freedom," Wolvovsky said. "The Jewish people in Israel were victorious in practicing their own religion and serving God in their own terms. It's a symbol of religious freedom throughout the whole world."

This universal message of Hanukkah,

Wolvovsky said, is the concept that every individual in the world has a right to serve God in the way he or she sees it.

"The few were victorious over the many," Wolvovsky said. "Each person might think we are small and insignificant, but our positive acts have a ripple effect. It's a concept that some can make a big difference."

Wolvovsky said this is a lot like the group that comes out to the Hanukkah celebration on the Colchester green every year. Each year, the number seems to grow by 25 to 60 people, he said.

"We might be a small group, but we are a strong, growing group that can make a big difference," Wolvovsky said.

Although the Chabad Jewish Center is based in Glastonbury, Wolvovsky said they noticed more and more people coming from Colchester, Marlborough, East Hampton and Salem to their services and programs. That was when they extended the celebration to a night on the Colchester green.

Last night's festivities were to begin with music, followed by the lighting of a nine-foot-tall menorah candelabra. Hot latkes (potato pancakes), hot cider and free raffles were also included in the evening. The group also honored Colchester teen Jordan Balaban who began a youth group at his school.

"People of all backgrounds enjoy the menorah lighting," Colchester resident Ron Silberman said.

The event was open to people of all faiths and was free of charge. The Chabad Jewish Center in Glastonbury hosts events all year round. For more information about the center and its events, visit chabader.com or call 860-659-2422.



Rabbi Josef Wolvovsky lights the giant nine-foot-tall menorah in Colchester at a previous Hanukkah celebration. This year's celebration was held last night, after press time.

Colchester Resident Leaving Church to Plant Her Own in Montville

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After serving as associate pastor at Abundant Life of Assemblies of God for more than a decade, the Rev. Shirley Ellis is leaving the church to guide her own flock.

Ellis will be "planting my own church," as she described it, in Montville. Part of the Assemblies of God denomination, the new Transformation Assemblies of God church will become official Sept. 21, 2015.

Ellis, 60, began attending Abundant Life when she was 25, and has been the associate pastor at the congregation for the past 11 years.

"I came to this church when I was 25 and was first introduced to the Lord," Ellis, a Colchester resident, said. "The pastor at the time took me under his wing."

At the time, Ellis said, she was working at Pratt and Whitney and had no desire to become a pastor. However, she said, she felt after a calling from God that being a pastor was her intended purpose.

Ellis credits Abundant Life's current senior pastor, Dr. Charles Brown, with helping her become an ordained pastor.

"He's a wonderful man of God," Ellis said of Brown. "I give him a lot of credit for where I am today."

After being ordained five years ago, Ellis said she felt a "stirring in my heart to step into deeper

water."

"I approached Dr. Brown and told him God is calling us to start a church someplace," Ellis said. Currently her husband, Rick, and their son, Philip, are also part of Abundant Life. The three of them have led the worship music for the past several years. "In prayer, we decided to start a church in Montville. It was the call of God."

Ellis explained that the way the Assemblies of God denomination works is that they don't try and "grow mega churches," but "plant" little churches. Although Ellis said they don't yet have a building in Montville, many times churches will begin by renting out the high school auditorium or finding a storefront facility somewhere.

"My husband Rick and our son Philip are very excited about this new ministry and will continue to be a vital part of the worship team as they are very gifted musicians," Ellis said.

Ellis said after being a hospice counselor at Harrington Court and a substitute teacher for the Colchester school district, she hopes to make Transformation a family focused church.

"Families are struggling," Ellis said. "We need to strengthen families. Our motto is to transform hearts, transform lives."

At 60 years of age, Ellis said it's been especially scary to be embarking on this type of journey.

"It's His vision, not mine," Ellis said of God. "My fears aren't so much to fail, but to be disobedient to my God. As Christians, there's no greater joy than to know your purpose and to have purpose."

Although Ellis said her joy is overcoming her fear.

When Ellis takes the podium at Transformation, she will become one out of five churches in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut to have a female senior pastor. Overall, there are approximately 160 Assemblies of God churches in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. According to Ellis, many women are associate pastors and also are the majority in membership; however, women do not typically rise to the occasion of senior pastor.

"I'm trying to encourage more women to step out in this role," Ellis said. "Women are leaders in raising kids in the faith of God."

Ellis also said the Assemblies of God denomination has a goal of planting 100 new churches in New England in the next four to five years. Transformation will count as one of those.

"Services will be in the spring and our official launch is Sept. 21," Ellis said.

"It's going to be a big hole to fill, but we don't panic because there will be a calling," Brown said of Ellis leaving the church. "We're



Rev. Shirley Ellis

very proud of her and are going to really miss her and her family."

Ellis' last day at Abundant Life will be Dec. 31, and she will give her farewell sermon Sunday, Dec. 28.

Hebron Schools Chief Proposes \$12.16 Million Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Newton presented his proposed budget for the 2015-16 school year to the Board of Education last week; the initial number clocks in at \$12,175,093 for an increase of 1.54 percent or \$184,639.

It's an increase, Newton stressed at the Dec. 11, that's driven almost entirely by health insurance costs.

During his presentation last week, Newton explained "everything we did in the development of the budget all ties back into our mission statement – especially the seven components."

Those components are: that the district maintains high academic standards; values the importance of technology; celebrates participation in the unified arts; actively recruits, trains and supports educational professionals; fosters social and emotional well being; establishes meaningful relationships through collaboration with staff, students, families and the community; and adapts to changes in a fiscally responsible manner.

"Those were always in the forefront of our mind when creating the 2015-16 budget – as well as the Board of Education goals," he explained.

He furthered transparency efforts continue, and mentioned all of the budget material is available on the district website, and a number of budget events are planned including two budget orientations and a visit to the senior center.

Newton went on to talk about the per pupil expenditure in the district, sharing the district was ranked 146 out of the 169 towns in the state – spending \$13,248.42 per student – yet was one of the highest-achieving.

"We're doing very well," he stated. "We're proud of that fact and it's an important fact as we move forward."

When preparing the budget, Newton added one of the focus areas was enrollment.

"We looked very hard at declining enrollment," he said. "We know it's going down and we're making sure our fiscally responsible budget is aligned with that."

Enrollment at the two schools is projected to decrease 75 students next year, from 785 stu-

dents down to 710.

Newton added class sizes were important, and said, "I would not recommend seeing those go any higher."

However, due to the decrease in students, a shift in the number of classes in certain grades is proposed: first grade is reduced from five classes to four, with 18 students in a class; third grade decreases from six to five; fifth grade decreases to five classes; and sixth grade decreases to six classes.

Fourth grade, however, increases from five to six classes.

"That number was sitting at 24 [students per class] with five. We felt that was too high," Newton explained. "So 19 is a much more reasonable number."

Newton furthered, "Those class sizes are pretty much dead-on with where we're at currently this year, and again, we wouldn't recommend going any higher than that with work that's going on in the classrooms."

However, board member Carol Connolly interrupted to say she thought even the present class sizes were "pushing it."

"I'm okay with where we are now with our limited resources but anything pushing this is really hard for me to support," she said.

Along with the reduction in classroom sections, there will be a reduction of one reading specialist – bringing the number from eight to seven between the two schools. Newton mentioned two teacher retirements had been received, which leaves a staff reduction of two teachers if the proposed classroom structure is approved.

"So just for transparency, [this means] there will be an elimination of two teachers in this budget?" Connolly asked.

"As currently proposed there's no space for two teachers," Newton confirmed, adding factors "could change but what we're proposing now that's where it falls."

Newton furthered the reduction in students – and ensuring staff was aligned with that reduction – was a "biggie." The other large factor, he continued, is insurance.

"Anthem came in with their highest number:

they can't go any higher but they're recommending a 10 percent increase in insurance for [the 2015-16 year]," he shared. "Last year was four percent. We hope that 10 percent goes down some. We don't know [that it will] but it can't go any higher."

The current increase would translate to around \$200,000.

Newton added if insurance stayed flat, the proposed budget for 2015-16 would actually be below zero: the change from the current year would be a \$6,785 decrease or -.57 percent.

It's only when insurance is factored in, he said, that number jumps to the 1.54 percent increase.

* * *

After presenting his budget overview, Newton went into detail on a few different items. He mentioned teachers would be in the first year of their new contract and the administrators start their new contract next year – both of which reflect around a three percent increase. However there's actually a \$115,980 reduction in the salary account due to the classroom reductions.

Newton also brought it to the board's attention that non-certified staff negotiations would take place starting in February, and the range across the state for salary increases was sitting around 2.5 percent.

Newton also said a 3 percent salary increase was being recommended for staff, which includes Newton's administrative assistant, the bookkeeper, the building and grounds foreman, two school nurses and three technology staff.

Other increases Newton mentioned include electricity and sewer, which is listed as increasing \$13,569 to \$152,226 due to an expected 17 percent rate increase from Connecticut Light & Power.

There is also a \$12,030 transportation increase resulting from the first year of the district's new five-year bus contract that increases 3 percent each year.

An increase in the number of special education students in outplacements also equates to a \$54,394 increase in special education tuition, bringing the number to \$138,750; and a pro-

jected 16 Hebron children are expected to attend magnet schools next year (up from 13) which the district has to pay for. The increase adds \$2,600 to the magnet school tuition account, bringing the number to \$65,600.

Textbooks are also increasing by \$30,839 for a new mathematics book that has been adopted which Newton called "an important initiative."

Some additional funds have also been included for instructional equipment purchases: \$2,100 is included for Gilead Hill School for three tables and 12 chairs; \$7,000 is included for Hebron Elementary School for bookcases to house class sets of trade books and furniture for the staff lounge/resource area; and another \$2,000 has been included for the replacement of a snowblower at Gilead Hill School.

"Without that, we're in trouble in the mornings when we have snow," Newton said of the snowblower.

Decreases in the budget Newton highlighted include \$19,826 from pupil services "resulting from a change of student needs and shifts in IDEA grant funds;" a \$5,800 decrease in special education transportation; a \$4,200 reduction in instructional equipment; and a \$15,160 reduction in heating oil/gasoline and diesel costs.

However Newton said the reduction makes the electricity/sewer increase and the gas and fuel account reduction "kind of a wash."

In addition, a \$7,800 reduction in money for substitutes is also included as a result of four early release days that were added to the calendar.

"I think that's helped with the number of substitutes because teachers are not pulled out as much for professional development [during the school day]." Newton explained.

Once the superintendent concluded his presentation, board members were urged to send any questions they might have to the board chair or the superintendent to be answered at the January board meeting, where budget discussion will continue.

* * *

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 8, at 7 p.m.

Water, Sewer Issues Swamp Board in Portland

by John Tyczkowski

On Wednesday evening, selectmen continued their discussion on sewer rates, complementing their discussion about the beginning of the month on water rates.

Portland's water and sewer department faces a \$600,000 deficit, Water and Sewer Commission Chairman Dick Cote said at a Nov. 5 meeting. Of that amount, the town sewer operations, serving about 1,500 customers, face an approximate \$340,000 deficit.

The initial goal would be the same as with the water operations, selectman Carl Chudzick said: first, stop the deficit from rising, and then, cut it.

Selectmen went over a draft of a legal notice on the water and sewer rate increases for a public hearing on Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. in the Portland Public Library's Mary Flood Room.

Proposed sewer fee changes included flat \$15 per quarter rates increasing to flat \$35 per quarter rates, per customer; septic waste receiving fees increasing from \$60 to \$85 and application fees to connect to the sewer system increased from \$25 to \$50.

In addition, residential customers during the September reading/October billing period would be billed the average consumption of the previous three quarters or actual meter usage, whichever is less, and commercial, industrial and municipal customers would be billed quarterly, based on metered usage.

Finally, the overall sewer usage rate would be increased 17 percent from \$4.96 per cubic foot of water to \$5.80 per cubic foot of water.

The final legal notice of public hearing with

a full breakdown of all proposed sewer and water rate changes will be available for the public in the coming weeks in accordance with the town charter.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield gave an overview of the past 15 years of water and sewer rates in town, noting that "rates were increased tremendously" when the town interconnected with Metropolitan District Commission in 2000, in order to pay for the new infrastructure required.

Water and sewer rates were then adjusted again in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, but only for the water user rate per 100 cubic feet of water, and at three percent each year, she said.

Bransfield also reminded selectmen that the town uses fee money to not only pay for water from MDC, but also for its own water and sewer debt service, infrastructure and employees.

On that note, Public Works Director Rick Kelsey spoke about the town's aging water and sewer infrastructure, saying that a larger amount of money than would be provided under the proposed increase would be needed for continued water and sewer operations.

"We're down to bare bones," he said. "For example, the sewage treatment plant. This particular increase basically shows \$100,000 in capital. I'm going to propose significantly more than that for the capital budget, which we're going to need to spend to stay in compliance."

Kelsey said the town has "no choice" but to route more money to water and sewers.

"We're about as lean and mean as you can get. There's no cutting of costs I can see on the

expense side without really and truly jeopardizing your permits through the state," he said. "You're really on thin ice and it's a matter of time."

As a result, selectmen discussed changing the way Portland runs its water and sewer operations. Ideas floated included regionalizing water and sewer services or joining forces with another town to save on water and sewer services costs.

Bransfield mentioned how Middletown has sought greater cooperation with Mattabasset District for its water and sewer needs, how the town has sought additional grant money as well as how it's supplemented water and sewer revenues with general fund money from all town residents.

She also discussed how Marlborough has cooperated with East Hampton for use of East Hampton's sewer facilities, and how Marlborough is also using grants and general taxation to fund its water and sewer needs.

"There's a lot of different ways you could fund water and sewer infrastructure," she said. "Fifteen hundred sewer customers have to bear the entire sewer cost, as do 2,300 customers for water. We need to really think about that."

Bransfield echoed Kelsey and stressed the proposed rate increases would not fix the problem.

"There's a point where you just can't raise rates high enough unless you make some type of a change, such as major expansion, sharing with another town or a regional effort," Bransfield said. "It's very difficult to make ends

meet."

Kelsey also suggested that the town look into every available option, including exploring groundwater options below the town, despite its steep cost, renegotiating the town's contract with MDC, which it still has 14 years left on, or looking into expanding connections with Connecticut Water Service, based in Clinton, which services many towns throughout the state, including several in Middlesex County.

Selectmen talked about the need to expand infrastructure in town to bring in additional water and sewer customers, especially industrial and commercial users, but all balked at the cost.

They turned to talking about expanding cooperation with MDC, regarding their current efforts to expand into East Hampton, and hiring a consultant to assess all of their water and sewer options.

At the same time, Bransfield reminded the board that seeking public input would be crucial to any decision.

"People are calling up and saying, 'What is going on here, why do we have to pay this?'" she said. "We need to listen to our customers' - to our residents' - concerns."

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will take place Wednesday, Jan. 7, at 7:30 p.m., in the Portland Public Library's Mary Flood room.

The public hearing on water and sewer rates is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 7 p.m. in the Portland Public Library's Mary Flood room, in place of the regular selectmen's meeting.

Sidewalks Stir Up Portland Selectmen

by John Tyczkowski

Wednesday evening, the Board of Selectmen created a subcommittee to address the issue of aging sidewalks throughout the town.

This action came from the board's months-long discussion on what to do about dangerously damaged sidewalks in town. Specifically, the main question has been who is responsible for repairing commonly-used sidewalks.

The town charter contains an ordinance that provides specific instructions for sidewalk maintenance.

Article III, Division 1, Section 17-82 of the Portland Code states property owners are responsible for repairs to sidewalks that abut their property. It is the responsibility of the first selectman to enforce this law.

However, selectman Brian Flood has consistently stated his view that the town should not have owners pay for and conduct the work to repair the sidewalks in front of their property. Instead, the town should maintain the sidewalks, he said.

Selectman Fred Knous urged for a "clear policy" regarding sidewalk maintenance to be developed. That would include enforcing the existing ordinance, or replacing it, and developing a clear uniform program for sidewalk repairs and improvements.

In addition, Knous focused on repairing sidewalks that are on walking routes students take to school each day, costs which could be covered by a state Safe Routes to School grant.

"This would all cost a little money, but maintaining our sidewalk infrastructure is certainly essential to the town in a variety of ways," he said. "And if we continue along this path, the status quo, nothing changes except that every-

thing gets worse."

According to a document Knous provided, the "majority of the town's sidewalks are in fair or poor condition because of settling, cracking and unevenness."

Also, he said that many sidewalks downtown have been damaged by roots from town-planted trees, and in his opinion, those sidewalks should be repaired by the town, not the abutting property owners.

Knous suggested a "modest" increase to capital improvement funding for sidewalks, as well as seeking out additional grants. He also listed as his sidewalk priorities repairing school routes, then sidewalks downtown.

Currently, the town reserves \$25,000 of its annual capital improvements budget for sidewalk repairs.

However, as Public Works Director Rick Kelsey said, that is not enough for any significant maintenance. He used the example of when the town used an Urban Act grant to replace 700 feet of sidewalks in front of Brownstone Intermediate and the tennis courts.

"That cost was \$47,000," he said. "For \$25,000, you could replace about 350 feet. You're looking at some large numbers. You're looking at hundreds of thousands of dollars just to start, and millions of dollars to get into a full-blown program. You're looking into bonding."

Also, he said the town has worked regularly to replace sidewalks around town hall, the police station and Valley View and Gildersleeve schools.

"We've certainly tried with the monies available to make sure sidewalks that are directly

related to a town facility are in relatively good order," he said.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield also reminded the board that the STEAP grant the town applied for to fix the water main on Spring Street also contains money for building sidewalks there, if the full requested amount is approved.

"Many youngsters can and do walk up Spring Street to go to school," she said. "There's only a line and blacktop there now, it's technically not a sidewalk, so it's a definite priority."

"We should proceed, and develop a definite policy and have it in place for when the dollars become available," she said.

Bransfield agreed with Knous on the policy overhaul.

"We currently have an ordinance that isn't enforceable, because it isn't really correct," she said. "We need to rescind it, and we need to rewrite it. And we need to establish priorities for repairs, installation and figure out how to fund them."

"The law must be changed first," she said.

Selectman Carl Chudzick also agreed.

"There's a set of logical steps we need to follow to accomplish a task as big as this," he said. "We need to go in order from one to the next to the next."

Selectman Brian Flood urged the board to develop a policy that not only makes sidewalks safer, but also equally spreads around town assistance for repairs.

"We have to make sure we don't selectively put in sidewalks in one place and not another place, for some land owners and not others," he said. "That's somewhat problematic."

Kelsey responded by saying that traditionally, the town has only replaced sidewalks when they're combined with another economic improvement project, not by themselves.

"The town hasn't gone and replaced sidewalks in front of private properties on a willy-nilly basis," he said. "It's usually been associated with bigger projects. I'm not saying it's right or wrong, it's how we've done it."

The board also discussed the problem of the town's sections of brownstone sidewalks, such as those in front of the Methodist church, and whether they should be repaired, or replaced.

"Those brownstone sidewalks present a uniformity issue, going from concrete to brownstone and back," selectman Ryan Curley said. "There's also their historical value as well."

Kelsey said he could develop plans to preserve the brownstone sections while keeping the walking surface uniform with concrete sidewalks, if the board specified that in its new policy, which he said should be developed quickly and broadly.

"We have historical issues with the brownstone, we have logistical issues, we have state roads," he said. "There's a lot to this that we need to think out very thoroughly."

Curley, Chudzick and Knous volunteered for the sidewalks subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4, before the Board of Selectmen meeting at 7:30 p.m.

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 7, at 7 p.m. in the Portland Public Library's Mary Flood room.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

The letters to the editor pages of the *Rivereast* are almost always a very entertaining set of pages to edit. Being a fairly liberal Democrat, I don't always agree with every sentiment shared – but they sure are fun to read. And, as any regular readers of the section know, they spark lively debate more often than not.

In short, like I said, it's a delightfully entertaining section. And – I admit I may be a little biased here – one of the best letters to the editor sections out there.

But last Sunday, the letters section in the *Portland Press Herald* in Portland, Maine, delivered perhaps one of awesomely strange letters I've ever seen. A friend of mine was spending the weekend up there, and passed along a letter he saw in the Sunday edition. The letter was entitled "Nothing comic or funny about 'Fred Basset' strip," and it read:

Enough is enough! Why do you keep running that inane strip 'Fred Basset'? These strips are supposed to be funny. It says so right at the top of the page: 'Comics/Amusements.'

'Mark Trail' barely qualifies as he gets himself into so many ridiculous situations it's laughable!

The letter was signed by an Irv Senne of Scarborough, Maine – although I must confess when I read the letter I pictured crotchety old Grandpa Simpson from *The Simpsons*.

Now, I am not familiar with the *Mark Trail* comic strip – Wikipedia tells me it dates back to the 1940s, and focuses on "a photojournalist and outdoor magazine writer whose assignments lead him into danger and adventure" – but I have read *Fred Basset*, several times. The *Journal Inquirer* in Manchester has run it for years. And Irv's right; it isn't funny. And while most of the strips on the comics pages I no longer found as amusing as I did when I was a kid – looking at you, *Garfield* – I'm pretty sure I never thought Fred Basset was very funny.

But it's never occurred to me to send a letter to the editor about it. I'm glad, though, that Irv did.

* * *

It hasn't been a great year for Connecticut when it comes to those lists of national rankings. In February, Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven made the FBI's list of the 10 most crime-ridden cities in the United States. In studies released over the summer, the news continued to be bad: Moneywatch.com listed us as the fifth-worst state to make a living in, CNBC called us the fifth-worst to do business in, and a Gallup poll labeled us the second-worst state to live in, period.

But hey – at least we've got our health.

A just-released survey from The United Health Foundation lists Connecticut as the fourth-healthiest state in the country. That's an uptick from last year's report, which ranked Connecticut as the seventh-healthiest state.

The annual survey, entitled "America's Health Rankings," lists as strengths Connecticut's low rates of smoking and occupational fatalities, and high immunization coverage among children. Challenges the report identified include high rates of binge

drinking, preventable hospitalizations and large disparities in health status by education level.

The report focuses on four categories of health determinants: behaviors; community and environment; public and health policies; and clinical care.

Connecticut already ranked pretty highly in the report – scoring seventh in last year's survey. Now they're even better.

"Connecticut's rise from seventh- to fourth-healthiest state is excellent news," Gov. Malloy said in a statement. "While we still have more work to do to ensure that all people in Connecticut have the opportunity to attain their highest level of health, the Department of Public Health's focus on collaborative initiatives on health equity, strengthening public health at the local level, and reducing chronic disease are moving us in the right direction."

After a year full of worst-this and worst-that polls, it's nice to see Connecticut end 2014 on a positive note.

* * *

Congratulations are in order to one of Portland's most famous alumni – Erin Brady. Erin, who served as Miss USA from mid-2013 until earlier this year, got married last Saturday, Dec. 13. She and entrepreneur Tony Capasso wed at St. Augustine Church in Hartford, then had their reception at Aria in Prospect.

Erin was originally due to get married last fall, but postponed it since the wedding date fell on the same day as the Miss Universe pageant (in which she represented the U.S.). So she and Tony moved it to last Saturday – which had the awesome number combination of 12-13-14.

Erin told the wedding planning website TheKnot.com earlier this month that it was "an all-around fantastic wedding date." Indeed, it's the last number-sequential date we're going to have until Jan. 2, 2034 – 1-2-34. David's Bridal reported earlier this year some 20,000 couples had booked weddings for last Saturday – up from 7,200 who got married on that same weekend last year.

The wedding was, Erin tweeted on Sunday, "an absolutely magical night" – and I'm happy to see that it was. From everything I've read about her – both from the stories in the *Rivereast* as well as stories I've read elsewhere – she seems like a great person, and has really done her hometown proud.

* * *

In closing, this is my last column for the year. The *Rivereast* won't publish next week – we're off for Christmas – and our next issue will be the Jan. 2, 2015, one.

For that issue, we'll have an early deadline, as the office will be closed Thursday, Jan. 1. All news copy (such as press releases, event listings and letters to the editor) for that week's issue must be submitted by noon Monday, Dec. 29.

All of us at the *Rivereast* hope all of you have a very happy and peaceful holiday.

* * *

See you in 2015.

East Hampton Police News

12/3: Ellen Brunsgaard, 24, of 24 Tarragon Dr., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, East Hampton Police said.

12/7: Darren Hurley, 42, of 21 Day Point Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, second-degree threatening and interfering with police, police said.

12/10: Christopher A. Scaplen, 30, of 24 Flanders Rd., was arrested and charged with violating a protective order, criminal attempt to commit first-degree assault, second-degree threatening and disorderly conduct, police said.

Andover Police News

12/15: State Police said Justin Scales, 18, of 184 Center St., Manchester, was arrested and charged with operating without a license, improper parking and improper use of a marker.

Colchester Police News

12/9: State Police said Shaun Loree, 36, of 96 South Ridge Dr., Windham, was arrested and charged with credit card theft, fourth-degree larceny, sixth-degree larceny and fifth-degree larceny.

12/9: State Police said Israel Alvarez, 39, of 60 Oakwood Knoll, Norwich, was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order.

12/10: State Police said Christopher Smith, 32, of 34 Beechwood Blvd., Norwich, was arrested and charged with fifth-degree larceny.

12/12: State Police said Christopher Lewis, 37, of 355 Main St., Old Saybrook, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault, second-

Marlborough Police News

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

12/12: State Police said Robert Trahan, 68, of 165 Babcock St., Hartford, was transported to Marlborough Clinic for possible injuries after his car went off the road on Route 2 west-bound near Exit 13 and hit a tree, rolling over.

12/13: State Police said Thomas Foss, 41, of 43 Nassau Lane, East Hartford, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear, reckless driving and driving under suspension.

12/15: State Police said Nancy Derda-LaFlamme, 54, of 17 Boulder Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with operating under suspension, operating under the influence, and failure to drive in the proper lane.

degree unlawful restraint and disorderly conduct.

12/12: State Police said Robin Provo, 31, of 195 West Main St., Hebron, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence, failure to drive in the proper lane and failure to carry insurance.

12/12: State Police said Stephanie Szostek, 27, of 3 Tavern Lane, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence.

12/15: State Police said Allison DuPont, 23, of 175 Love Lane, Manchester, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny and 20 counts of second-degree forgery.

Obituaries

Portland

Eleanor M. Humphreys

Eleanor M. Humphreys, 90, of Middletown, widow of Thomas E. Humphreys, passed away surrounded by her loving family and friends Wednesday, Dec. 10, at Portland Care & Rehab.

Born Dec. 3, 1924, in Brockton, Mass., she was the daughter of the late William L. and Agnes (Murray) Lightfoot. Eleanor was valedictorian of her high school class and later trained as an RN at Faulkner Nursing School in Boston. She moved to Middletown in June 1953. After the death of her husband in November of that year, she devoted her life to raising her family and later worked as a secretary at St. Pius X Church in Middletown until her retirement.

She was a member of St. Pius X Church and the Rosary Altar Society. She enjoyed crossword and jigsaw puzzles, and walks on the beach. She was an avid fan of her grandchildren's sporting events and also maintained lifelong friendships from her neighborhood.

She leaves her children, Mary Shea and her husband, Frank of Portland, Margi Humphreys and her husband, Michael Piscopiello of Higganum, and Thomas Humphreys and his wife, Lori Lapin of Portland; her grandchildren, Thomas, Brian and Daniel Shea, Sean and Megan Piscopiello and Benjamin and Michael Humphreys, and her great-grandchildren, Julian and Sophia Shea.

She was predeceased by her sisters, Agnes McClure and Barbara Lightfoot, and her long-time companion and Skippo opponent, Gino Rinaldi.

The family wishes to thank all the staff at Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center for their kindness and caregiving.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Dec. 13, with a Mass at St. Pius X Church, 310 Westfield St., Middletown. Burial was private. Relatives and friends called Saturday morning, before the services, at at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

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

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

Hebron

Alan Sargent Hunniford

Alan Sargent Hunniford, 74, of DeLand, Fla., formerly of Hebron, passed away peacefully Friday morning, Dec. 12, at home, surrounded by loved ones, after a brief illness. Born Oct. 18, 1940 in Hartford, he was a son of the late William and Ethel (Smith) Hunniford.

Mr. Hunniford had worked as a landscaper in the area for many years and later for the Town of Hebron Parks and Recreation Dept.

He was a longtime member of the Hebron Vol. Fire Dept., having served as Captain of Company 3 for 20-plus years before retiring to Florida.

In addition to his loving wife of 15 years, Kathlien (Webb) Hunniford, he leaves four sons, Glenn (wife, Jackie) of Lebanon, Dean (and girlfriend, Hayley Wagner) of Colchester, Sean (wife, Kristine) of Springhill, Fla., and Jason (wife, Laurie) of Columbia; eight grandchildren, Jeremy, Dylan, Krystal, Austin, Eva, Sean, Richard and Mackenzie; two great-grandchildren, Rose and Pierce; a brother, William (wife, Marilyn) of Bonita Springs, Fla.; and numerous extended family members and friends.

The family received guests Thursday, Dec. 18, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, with rendering of fire department honors that evening. Burial will be private.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Hebron Vol. Fire Dept., P.O. Box 911, Hebron, CT 06248.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Hebron

Terry L. Morgan

Terry L. Morgan, 75, formerly of Hebron, passed away on Monday, Dec. 8, in Sebring, Fla., after a lingering illness. He was born Jan. 19, 1939, in Wheeling, W.Va., to the late Eldon and Mildred (Wright) Morgan.

He graduated from Bethesda High School in Ohio in 1957. He served honorably in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1957-63. Terry had been a resident of Avon Park, Fla., since 2003, a summer resident of Hebron, and earlier from Vermont. Terry was employed by Pratt & Whitney and foundries in Connecticut and Vermont.

His greatest enjoyment was traveling with Kathryn and their RV before settling down in Florida. He loved playing horseshoes, golf, football, working on and showing antique cars, and most of all, spending time with his family.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 49 years, Kathryn Morgan; son, Michael Morgan and his wife, Deborah, of Colchester; and daughter, Karen Blakely of Barre, Vt. He is also survived by five special grandchildren whom he loved spending time with, and was so proud of: Ashley and Brett Morgan, Cortney, Justin and Jared Blakely, also numerous extended family, including nieces and nephews in Michigan and many friends.

He was predeceased by a brother, Ronald Morgan.

A memorial service was held Tuesday, Dec. 16, with a calling hour and a chapel service at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be in Randolph, Vt., in the spring of 2015.

Donations in his memory may be made to the American Lung Association, 3920 Bee Ridge Rd., Sarasota, FL 34233.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Cheryl R. Stolze

Cheryl R. Stolze, CDR, United States Navy, Retired, 48, of Peoria, Ariz., passed away peacefully in the loving arms of her family Wednesday, Dec. 10, after a brief illness. Cheryl was born in Middletown, the daughter of Laurel D. Reed and Marjorie A. Kilpatrick.

She attended East Hampton High School, Old Dominion University, and received her Masters from the University of Missouri. Cheryl thoroughly enjoyed participating in soccer, softball, basketball and music.

She enlisted in the United States Navy as a data systems technician in 1985 and received her commission as a Naval officer in 1992. Cheryl completed 27 years of active service with duty stations in Vallejo, Calif.; Norfolk, Va.; Keflavik, Iceland; Honolulu, Hawaii; Phoenix, Ariz.; Biloxi, Miss.; and San Diego, Calif. During her distinguished career, she served as Officer-in-Charge of Personnel Support Detachment, Keflavik, Iceland; Commanding Officer of the Military Entrance Processing Station, San Diego; and the Commanding Officer of Navy Mobilization Processing Site, San Diego. Cheryl retired from the Navy in 2011.

Over the last 10 years, Cheryl and her husband have been very involved in Shriners International and supporting the Children of Shriners Hospitals for Children. The children and the Shrine Hospitals became her passion. Cheryl served as the First Lady of El Zaribah Shrine, Phoenix, Ariz., in 2013.

She is survived by her loving husband Ed Stolze, son Joshua, and daughter Lindsey, all of Peoria, Ariz.; her mother, Marjorie Kilpatrick of Canon, Ga.; sister, Cynthia Varricchio (Dan) of Portland Robbin Gautieri (Peter) of Voluntown, CT, Karen Kloof (Lennart) of East Hampton and Pamela Braun (Clarence) of East Haddam. Cheryl is also survived by eight nephews, five nieces, four great nephews, and eight great nieces, numerous cousins, aunts and uncles.

Cheryl was preceded in death by her father, Laurel Reed.

A visitation was held Sunday, Dec. 14, at Whitney & Murphy Funeral Home, 4800 E. Indian School Rd., in Phoenix, Ariz. The funeral service took place Monday, Dec. 15, at El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium, 552 N. 40th St., in Phoenix. A graveside service was held Monday, Dec. 15, at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, 23029 N. Cave Creek Rd. in Phoenix.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the Shriner's Hospital For Children, Mexico City at goo.gl/9KP3pH in memoriam to Lady Cheryl Stolze.

Portland

John Riordan Sheil

John Riordan Sheil, 91 of Portland, loving husband, beloved dad, grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle and friend passed away Friday, Dec. 12. Born in Waterbury Feb. 7, 1923, John was the eldest son of the late Mary (May) Riordan Sheil and the late James Aloysius Sheil. He was the devoted husband of the late Beverly Moreland Sheil, whom he lovingly cared for throughout her illness with ALS.

John retired in 1993 from the State of Connecticut where he was a budget analyst with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). He owned and operated, with his two sons, Jed's Auto Parts and Fine Tunes Car Stereo and Complete Auto Repair in Middletown.

He is survived by his five children, Deirdre Bray and husband Mel, Keavy Peterson and husband Ralph, Maura Sheil-Hughes, Michael Sheil and wife Natalie, and John Patrick (Jay) Sheil and his wife Wendy Jessen Sheil, as well as an adopted daughter Sheila Burke. He also leaves nine grandchildren, Christina Sheil-Kryzanski, Keith Bray and wife Lyra, Evan Peterson and wife Bobbye, Kurt Peterson and wife Ann Marie, Neal Hughes, Ian Hughes, Ryan Sheil, Tyler Sheil and adopted grandson, Joseph White of California, as well as nine great-grandchildren: Keegan Kryzanski, Cecelia Peterson, Evan Knoll, Hayden Brainerd, Noah Riordan Peterson, Areia Bray, Savanna and Alexia Luciuk and adopted great-granddaughter, Gabby Forrest. He is also survived by Janet Vogel Sheil, sister-in-law, and many treasured nieces and nephews.

John was the brother of the late James A. Sheil and the late Mary Sheil-Tierney, and brother-in-law of the late Ray Tierney.

John was a devoted, loyal and generous person in so many ways. Because he was a child of the Great Depression who lost his father at an early age, he was keenly aware of the struggles of those who lived in poverty. He was a frequent donor to local food banks. His family, and those in need, mattered to him above all else, with his much-loved alma mater, Providence College, running a close second. His greatest joy came from his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and the Providence Friars basketball games. He cherished his yearly trips to Madison Square Garden with his brother Jim, for the Big East Tournament.

His family and friends will always remember him as an extraordinary man, full of Irish wit and grit, who gave all that he could especially his love and kindness to those around him. He leaves a legacy of good will for his family to carry on. We are blessed to have had him as the family patriarch and we will miss him greatly.

The family would like to extend their warmest appreciation to the Middlesex Hospital Visiting Nurses, especially Colleen Hetrick, his home health aide, Jenny, Dr. Stein, Dr. Bortan and the staff at Middlesex Hospital Emergency Department for their exceptional care. We would like to thank his special friends, Janet Cyr, Carol Kryzanski and Sue and Edd Eldridge, who spoiled and fussed over him in his later years and his good Irish buddy and neighbor, Cathy Larke, who was always there for him.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Dec. 17, from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a Mass at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial was in Indian Hill Cemetery, Middletown. Relatives and friends called Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to Providence College, 1 Cunningham Square, Providence RI 02918, Amazing Grace Food Pantry, 617 Main Street, P.O. Box 398, Middletown, CT 06457 or NAMI Connecticut, 576 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT 06105.

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



Colchester

Pamela Pierson Malley

Pamela Pierson Malley, 63, of Colchester, unexpectedly passed away Tuesday, Nov. 4. She was the daughter of the late Edward and Sophia Malley of Greenwich.

She is survived by her sister, Constance Malley of Colchester; her brother, Edward Jr. of Darien; her brother, Arthur of New Milford; a nephew, Edward III and a niece, Lee.

Her great-grandfather, Edward Malley, founded the Edward Malley Co. Department Store, which operated in New Haven from 1852 to 1982.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Joseph's Church Monday, Nov. 17; burial was at the family plot at St. Bernard's Cemetery, followed by a reception at the Graduate's Club, all in New Haven.

Pamela was born in Stamford. She moved to Greenwich where she attended The Convent of the Sacred Heart and The Greenwich Academy. She graduated with a BA from Manhattanville College in Purchase, N.Y.

She was a librarian for the *Stamford Advocate* for many years. One of her avocations was singing and was a member of the Greenwich Chorale Society. She also loved world travel. She took a photo safari to Botswana and Zimbabwe where she visited Victoria Falls, Chobe National Park, The Okavango Delta, and Lake Kariba. Also, she took an adventurous trip to the Pribilof Islands off Alaska to view many exotic sea birds.

Pamela was known for her gracious elegance and adventurous spirit, traits treasured by friends and family. Pamela had a very kind heart and was known to be extremely generous to both people and animals. She taught us how to live with joy and kindness. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Over the years, Pamela made numerous donations and contributions to organizations protecting various animals. Memorial contributions may be made to any of these groups.

Portland

Marion Krivanec

Marion (Rode) Krivanec, 83, was called home Monday, Dec. 15, to be with the Lord. She will be reunited with her late beloved husband, Richard, whom she married in 1961 and resided with in Portland.

She was born Dec. 24, 1930, in New Britain, to the late John and Wanda Rode.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Daryl and Sue Krivanec, of Pine Brook, N.J., and her loving daughter and son-in-law, Cheryl and Bill Zalewski, of Portland. She was also blessed with four grandchildren, Nicole (14) and Dillon (8) Zalewski and Saige (3) and Dane (1) Krivanec. Marion enjoyed spending time with her family. She leaves behind her brother and sister-in-law, Allen and Thelma Rode of Summerfield, Fla.

She was predeceased by three brothers, Arthur, Elmer and Howard Rode.

Her infectious smile lit up any room. She was a kind, caring, loving and a devoted wife, mother, sister, grandmother, coworker and friend. She will be greatly missed by all.

Marion graduated from New Britain High School. She owned and operated Bell Town Beauty Salon in East Hampton, until she had her children and then stayed home to become a dedicated and loving mother. She worked for Valley Oil in Portland once her children were in school. She enjoyed her retirement with her husband, children and grandchildren. Marion had 82 years of healthy living but suffered this past year, and is now resting in peace.

The family would like to thank all the wonderful staff from Greystone Retirement Home and Middlesex Healthcare Center for their care and compassion.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Dec. 20, at 10:30 a.m., at Grace Lutheran Church, 1055 Randolph Rd., Middletown. Friends may call at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, prior to the service, from 9 to 10 a.m. Burial will be in Swedish Cemetery, Portland.

Memorial contributions may be made to Alzheimer's Association CT Chapter 2075 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 100, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

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



Andover

John Hugh McMeekin

John Hugh “Jack” McMeekin, 87, of Andover, loving husband of Barbara (Zonghetti) Fazzino, and widower of the late Theresa (Pecka) McMeekin, died Sunday, Dec. 7, at Manchester Memorial Hospital, after a long illness.

Jack was born in Mount Kisco, N.Y., March 14, 1927, son of the late Thomas and Edith (Frost) McMeekin. He was raised in Hartford and Manchester, and has been a resident of Andover since 2000. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the U.S. Navy. He graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1950, and retired in 1986 from United Technologies Corporation after 30 years of service.

Jack was an avid golfer. He was a member of Ellington Ridge Country Club and a past member of the former Willimantic Country Club. He was very proud of having a golfing heritage, as his father and grandfather designed and built golf courses in the United States and Scotland.

With his wife, he is survived by his daughter, Andrea Ozment, of New Haven; and two granddaughters, Amanda Ozment and Emma Ozment. He is also survived by his wife’s family, Angelo Fazzino his wife, Mary, and their children, Dominique Mead and her husband, Justin, and Anthony Fazzino and his wife, Stephanie; Kim Fazzino, her husband, Robert Verraneault, and their children, Joseph Fazzino and Jason Fazzino; and five great-grandchildren.

Besides his wife Theresa, he was predeceased by his sister, Joyce Prentice.

Visiting hours were Sunday, Dec. 14, at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester, with a prayer service that afternoon. Burial was private in East Cemetery, Manchester.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Arthritis Foundation Inc., Connecticut Chapter, 35 Cold Spring Road, Suite 411, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To leave a message for his family, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Colchester

Donald E. Doubleday

Donald E. Doubleday, 83, died on Sunday, Dec. 14, at Harrington Court in Colchester.

Services are private at the convenience of the family. Labenski Funeral Home is assisting with these arrangements.

Colchester

Judith Washburn

Judith “Judy” Washburn, 73, of Port St Lucie, Fla., and formerly of Colchester, died Wednesday, Dec. 10, at home in Florida. Born Feb. 5, 1941, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Stella (Bukowski) Johanson and Ragner George Johanson.

Judy enjoyed the outdoors, gardening, softball, bowling and tennis. Judy and her beloved husband, Bob retired to Port St Lucie in 2006.

Judy was widowed by Bob in August of 2008, and, like Bob, passed peacefully with loved ones by her side.

Judy is survived by two children, Cory of Jensen Beach, Fla., and Kim of Floyd, Va.; her sister, Sandra Middleton of South Windsor and brother, Bobby Johanson of Danielson; nieces, Jacqueline Middleton of Tolland and Laura Ballenger of Westminster, Colo.; and her lifetime caring friends and neighbors.

Friends may call from 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Harford Rd., Colchester. A memorial service will be observed at 3:30 p.m. at the funeral home. Following the service, friends are invited to visit the Colchester Farmers’ Club, 112 Halls Hill Rd., Colchester, from 4-6 p.m. to reflect and share memories with the family.

Donations in her memory may be made to Treasure Coast Hospice, 1201 SE Indian St., Stuart, FL 34997.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

George P. Bycholski

George P. Bycholski, 68, of Hobe Sound, Fla., formerly of Manchester and Hebron, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 25. He was the son of Angeline (Valenti) Bycholski and the late Walter Bycholski Sr.

He was predeceased by his brother, Walter Bycholski Jr. and his wife, Lorraine (Belliveau) Bycholski.

He is also survived by his son and wife, Keith and Isabel Bycholski of Hobe Sound, Fla., and several grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his honor to the Salvation Army.

Colchester

Dorothy Badger

Dorothy Badger, 93, of Colchester, passed away Friday, Dec. 12.

Burial at Arlington National Cemetery will be held at a later date.

Belmont-Sabrowski Funeral Home has been entrusted with her care.