

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 39, Number 1

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

April 25, 2014



Maria Skorski, 7, of Marlborough sits in her bedroom surrounded by stuffed animals and a banner full of well-wishes she received from members of the community. Skorski received a Syme's amputation of her foot in February and recently, a prosthesis.

7-Year-Old Makes Strides with Prosthesis

by Melissa Roberto

Maria Skorski just celebrated her seventh birthday, but it's safe to say the young girl has endured more in those seven years than some will in a lifetime – but despite that, and thanks to the support of the community, she's walking around proudly, wearing a smile.

Inside her home in Marlborough last week, beside her parents and younger brother Peter, Maria enthusiastically said, "I love it!" The 7-year-old was referring to her new prosthetic foot. She then recalled the events that occurred just a couple months prior.

"When I had the surgery there was this yucky, yucky, yucky, yucky two kinds of medicine," Maria said. "One was icky like rotten milk and the other was like rotten apples. The day after I got back from the hospital I was straight on to Tylenol. And then the day after the Tylenol I was on nothing."

Maria was describing the days following Feb. 4, when doctors at Shriners' Hospital in Springfield, Mass. conducted a Syme's amputation of her right foot. It was a procedure the Skorskis had been anticipating since Maria was two—a surgery that Maria's parents, Wes and Audrey, say was followed by a smooth transition thanks

to many in the community.

"Support from friends and people in town and Marlborough Elementary School have been a big part of the whole healing process," said Audrey. "If the school and community weren't so helpful it would be a different scenario."

The Skorskis first learned in-utero that Maria had limb differences. At the time, she was diagnosed with having club foot, but when Maria was born, Audrey said, "that's when we realized it was a little bit worse than that."

"It was very stiff so it didn't have a huge range of motion," Audrey said of Maria's right foot. "She got around fine but when you saw her feet you knew something was wrong."

In her first two years, Maria went through several castings and surgeries to try to release the tendon in her right foot. She wore a brace but eventually, the Skorskis said, "it was not working." When Maria was two, the couple learned Maria had been misdiagnosed. The Skorskis interviewed doctors and in the end, they chose Dr. David Drvaric at Shiner's—where the support began.

Maria was ultimately diagnosed with Fibular Hemimelia, which, according to

See Strides Page 2

Colchester Hosts Gubernatorial Debate

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Colchester Republican Town Committee hosted a gubernatorial debate between the six Republican candidates last Saturday, April 19, at Bacon Academy.

Despite it being the night before Easter, the event drew a crowd of about 100 interested residents.

In standard debate-fashion, the six governor hopefuls – Mark Boughton, John McKinney, Tom Foley, Mark Lauretti, Joe Visconti and Martha Dean – were each given the same questions and allotted 90 seconds to answer each one.

Some of the questions included the candidates' thoughts on: ways to keep small businesses in Connecticut; the new Common Core State Standards for public schools; how to prevent drug use in the state; and how they would ensure eastern Connecticut remains on the radar.

Throughout the course of the hour-and-a-half debate, Boughton, a self-proclaimed "blue collar Republican," touched upon a slew of issues he would tackle if elected governor.

These included restoring "sanity" to the state's taxation policy on businesses in an effort to keep small business alive in Connecticut and speeding up the time it takes for said businesses to be issued permits. Boughton said he would also repeal the business entity tax –

which he called "a nagging tax" – as well as the state's gas tax.

Regarding the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Boughton, a former high school teacher, said, "There is no one-size-fits-all way in which we teach kids." He furthered the teachers and school administrators should be running the classrooms, not the governor.

He had similar thoughts regarding the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which tests students on the Common Core curriculum, and said, "There is tons of learning that goes on in the classroom that cannot be measured by high stakes testing."

Carrying on with other question topics, Boughton said he'd address drug use by teenagers in the state by encouraging parents and schools to inform youngsters on the harmful effects of drugs. He also said he'd like to see drug sellers be "held accountable" for selling to youths.

Finally, Boughton affirmed he supports the death penalty.

Next up was McKinney, who said it is essential for Connecticut to become a low-tax state in order for people and businesses to move here.

He also said state government should have "one-stop shopping" so small business owners could go to one agency for permits and appli-

cations rather than many.

McKinney also addressed the recent gun legislation. He said he cast his vote for Senate Bill 11-60 because he didn't believe it was in violation of federal or state constitutions and he based it on his position as an elected representative of the town of Newtown.

"A majority of my constituents were in favor of that bill," he said, "and as their representative, I spoke out on their behalf."

But McKinney added, "I would not support, not now or ever, the government going and knocking on people's doors to find out if their guns are registered."

Speaking about drug related problems in the state, McKinney said he did not support the legalization of medical marijuana, as it "sent a negative message."

McKinney, a father of three, then said on the education front that changes in education should be made "at the local level – by parents, teachers, students and administrators."

He also commented, "We need to leave high-performing schools alone. We need to focus on fixing the failing schools."

McKinney also expressed support of the death penalty, explaining, "There are some crimes that are so cruel and heinous that it is the only justification."

Next to step up to the debate was Foley, who

called himself a "Ronald Reagan Republican," as well as a "family man."

The father of 2-year-old twins said he, like Boughton, would "get rid of the business entity tax" in order to help businesses in Connecticut.

Foley, a self-proclaimed "enthusiastic supporter of the second amendment," said that in the case of the Newtown shootings, "I believe this was a mental health issue and the state missed an opportunity to do something for families who have mental health issues."

Foley said if elected, he would represent every town "equally and fairly."

Regarding standards in public education, Foley said Connecticut has the largest achievement gap of any state in the country in terms of public education. He said the state should only get involved when school districts are underperforming. Other than that, changes in education should come at a local level, he said.

In addressing ways in which he would work to decrease drug use in the state, Foley said he would focus on the state's biggest cities.

The next candidate was Lauretti, who, when addressing how he would keep businesses in Connecticut, said before you can start eliminating taxes, "you have to control the cost of living and doing business in the state, because

See Debate Page 2

Strides cont. from Front Page

limblengtheningdoc.org, is a “birth defect where part or all of the fibular bone is missing and there are associated limb length discrepancy, foot deformities and knee ligament problems.” The website further states the condition occurs in one of 40,000 births.

The Skorskis learned there were two options to treating Maria’s condition. The first was surgery that could straighten and flatten Maria’s foot but did not guarantee it would work correctly. The second was amputation.

“To us, the surgery wouldn’t fix it,” Audrey said. “And then you’re dealing with scar tissue and joint problems and pain as you get older.”

Wes and Audrey felt amputation was the better route for Maria but agreed it wouldn’t take place until she was ready. Two years ago the parents said Maria feared the idea, but eventually, conversations with mom and dad led Maria to becoming more open to it.

The appropriate time for surgery came in February. The day of her amputation, her room at Shriner’s had colorful blankets and pillow cases.

“The room was beautiful,” said Audrey. “Hospitals—all of them—try their best. But Shriner’s is extra, over-the-top.”

“They’re perfect,” Maria said of the staff at Shriner’s. “I love that place.”

Maria returned home three days later, where the well-wishes and love multiplied. Maria entered her bedroom to find it, too, was more colorful than she had left it. She recalled “about 12 balloons” floating in the air, a heart banner hanging that was made by her dad and brother, and a big banner made by her Girl Scout troop with “a lot of letters and a lot of stickers and pictures.”

Then came special deliveries in the days that followed. Maria said she received “three big bags” of goodies, like arts and crafts, and many new furry friends from her friends and staff members at MES. And one of her favorite gifts: personal letters from each of the kids in her first grade class.

“There’s 21 people” Maria said of Ellen Eastwood’s first grade classroom. “I couldn’t wait to read them!”

And the first-grader added she’s continued to read them “again and again.” When asked how she responded to these surprises, Maria gave an astounded look with her mouth open wide.

“I was not even expecting a little heart banner in my room made by daddy and Peter!” she said.

And community support did not stop there. Maria added, “Everyone brought us stuff so mommy did not have to cook one single thing for dinner.”

“We had meals for a couple weeks at least,” Audrey said. “It was amazing.”

Maria returned to school one week following her surgery. She primarily used a wheelchair and at times a walker. The Skorskis had already sent home a letter to first and second grade parents to notify them of Maria’s surgery.

“When kids see a hush-hush thing they think that something is wrong or something is scary,” Audrey said. “To me, it was important so kids knew what was going on so nobody was wondering why she was gone or what’s wrong with her.”

When Maria got back to school, she and Wes gave her classroom a presentation on prostheses. Wes showed different samples, and it ended with a question and answer segment.

“It was just great,” said Eastwood. “It was very informative and age appropriate. And animals with prostheses were shown. The kids just loved it.”

During the days that followed, Eastwood said students jumped at the opportunity to help Maria.

“They were so anxious to help her,” she stated. “This class – as I expect most first graders would be – was very accepting and loving.”

The school nurse Alice Mecca, who helped transport Maria, also noticed this.

“Everyone in the school community has seemed to really embrace her,” Mecca said. “Her classmates were just wonderful in any kind of assistance needed. They were always on the ready to help her out.”

In addition to seeing her friends, the spunky first-grader shared which parts of the school day she anticipated the most.

“Gym and art and library!” Maria exclaimed.

Even the gym teacher, Anthony Colavecchio – “the best gym teacher ever” according to Maria – included the 7-year-old in class activities upon her return.

“We stuck pom poms in the back of my wheelchair and we tied a jump rope on the handles and then everyone was grabbing on the jump rope and we were making a train,” Maria said. “It was the Maria train. That was the best.”

The next hurdle followed on March 10, when Maria’s cast came off for the first time. “That was probably the hardest part,” Audrey said. “It was an adjustment.”

On March 19, Maria received her prosthesis, which extends just over the knee. Maria recalled what she was feeling during the transitions.

“When it was time to get the cast off I was like ‘No way am I going to look at the leg ever again.’ But I did. Now I can look at the whole entire leg!”

And just last week, Maria went to the craft store to pick out the fabric that would be placed on the final version of her prosthesis. At first she wanted a brown design with animals, but she went with a bright blue hue instead.

“I saw the blue and I was like ‘no way, I want this!’” Maria said energetically, pointing out that her leg is made of fiberglass.

“Nothing in the world is smoother than a prosthetic,” the 7-year-old let out. “It’s perfect.”

Maria received the final version of her prosthesis, created by Dr. Brock McConkey, also of Shriner’s, on Tuesday, April 15. She has since been attending physical therapy with James Fulman at Physical Family Therapy in Colchester.

Those around Maria believe it’s her positivity that helped her remain so brave. MES staff members described the first-grader as “independent,” “positive,” “a bright spirit” and “always smiling.”

“Maria is just a can-do little girl,” said Eastwood. “A true inspiration. She has that positive, happy disposition. Whatever life throws in front of her she’s going to handle it very well.”

Interim Principal Paula Schwartz added she knew – even before her surgery – that Maria was “a real trooper.”

“She was very independent and always has been,” said Schwartz. “It’s really rather miraculous to watch this young girl deal with something that was pretty monumental in her life. If you look at her today, you would say she’s a normal, first-grader anxious to be with her friends, walk down the hall and do what she needs to do.”

The Skorskis said they were told from doctors that Maria’s prosthesis will “sooner or later become the new normal.” The parents believe their brave 7-year-old has already taken to it.

“I don’t think it’s as big of a deal to her as it is for us,” said Audrey. “There’s been ups and downs but for the most part I don’t think it’s been a bad experience overall.”

Now, Wes says Maria is still able to do all of the hobbies she loves—“just more of them!” And Maria pointed out those are “art and drawing, playing Legos and riding horses.”

Her parents added she’s “getting stronger everyday,” but stressed it’s the community and school support that have made the journey less of a bumpy ride.

“With a supportive community, there’s no way you can lose,” Audrey said.

And while she was busy playing with her toys, Wes asked Maria, “Who would you want to say thank you to the most?”

Maria responded, “Everyone.”

Debate cont. from Front Page

it’s continually on the rise.”

Lauretti said the most important concern for all Connecticut residents is the cost of living and doing business within the state. “The next governor really has to maintain and try, in some respects, to reduce the cost of living,” he said.

He also said regulation and tax reform, which he said would be a “broad, comprehensive undertaking” would help keep businesses in-state.

Regarding the discussion on gun legislation, Lauretti said, “I think it would be premature to say that a governor could repeal the gun bill. You rely on the state legislature to be doing things like that.”

He added, “I am a supporter of personal rights under the constitution. The intrusion of government is very wrong.”

He echoed Foley in saying there was a “missed opportunity” last year to address mental health, and added that the video game industry got a “free pass.”

Transitioning to the topic of educational standards, Lauretti said, “We need to get government out of the classrooms.” Instead, he said, school administration and educators need to be “held accountable” for Connecticut’s public education.

He said the CCSS is going to cause time to be taken out of the classroom because teachers will be burdened with paperwork. Plus, Lauretti said many schools across the state are performing at or above standard already. So he questioned, “Why would you interfere with that?” Instead, he said, the focus should only be in the schools that need to improve.

The next Republican to hit the debate floor was Visconti.

He addressed gun legislation at a personal level, saying, “I carry a gun. I’ve carried a gun for 30 years. I have a permit to carry. I think the bill is unconstitutional on a federal level and at the state of Connecticut level.”

He furthered if elected, he would use his executive powers to “stop what is coming – that is, confiscation.”

Visconti then discussed the eastern region of Connecticut, an area with which he said he is familiar. He noted that east of the river towns are “disproportionately being affected by

foreclosures,” so that’s something else he would address as governor.

Visconti also addressed the CCSS, calling it “the Obamacare of education.” He is against the new standards because they put “a lot of stress and anxiety on the children,” he said.

Dean rounded out the lot of candidates. She said part of her platform is to make Connecticut “business-friendly.” She noted that she, as an attorney, “defends businesses against the state’s overreaching regulations and complex regulations.”

Dean claimed to be a “strong supporter of the second amendment,” but assured she would not act on the issue of gun rights via executive order.

She informed her audience that if elected, she would support farming and home-based businesses.

“We need to allow farmers to survive. We need to allow dairy farmers to survive. All of those agricultural businesses and home occupations are very important to this state,” she said.

In addressing the new education standards, Dean said, “The Common Core just astounds me – the whole idea that we have to fix this excellent educational system in Connecticut” because Connecticut has high performing schools compared to other states in the country, and other countries in the world.

She said the testing for the CCSS causes students to be “frustrated and full of anxiety.” She also noted that the CCSS is an expensive mandate, starting at the federal level and trickling down to the local level.

As governor, Dean said she would call for “a much smaller government than we have now.”

Dean concluded that her position against the death penalty wasn’t based on the will of the majority of the people; rather, it was based on her faith.

* * *

The Republican candidates left their Colchester audience with a lot to ponder last weekend. Luckily Election Day isn’t until Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Portland Food Bank Volunteer Turns 95

by Elizabeth Bowling

Turning 95 is certainly something to celebrate, and for volunteers at the Portland Food Bank, a celebration is exactly what they had in mind for Connie Masella, whose been volunteering at the bank for decades.

Although her actual birthday is tomorrow, April 26, Masella celebrated her 95th birthday with fellow volunteers yesterday. It was a day many would call a milestone, but Masella simply referred to it as “another day.”

“It’s just another day to me,” Masella said in an interview Monday. “It’s just another year older.” She added, “To me it’s just a number.”

Food Bank Director Ruth Maio said of the nearly-95-year-old, “She’s been a very dedicated person and a very dear friend.”

The Food Bank “family” took Masella out to Campagna Restaurant after they finished their volunteer work yesterday.

The long-time volunteer was surprised by the party plans, but Maio assured her that she deserved a celebration.

According to Maio, the two have “known each other for many, many years.”

Masella called Maio “the best friend I’ve had.” She added that whenever she needs help with something, or a ride somewhere, “I call her first.”

Masella has been a volunteer at the Portland Food Bank “since it started” about 40 years ago, she said. She’s the oldest Food Bank volunteer by about 10 years, with the second coming in at 84-years-old.

In those 40 years, Masella said she’s done “a little of everything,” including gathering food and putting the bags and baskets together every week, twice a week.

Masella said her favorite thing about volunteering with the Food Bank is “just being around the people. We’re all like a family here and at the end of the day you’ve helped some people out with the food they need.”

According to Maio, the Food Bank was originally located at the Visiting Nurses Association in town. It moved to its current location at the Senior Center about 25 years ago, she affirmed.

When it first started up, the Food Bank put together about 40 food baskets for those in need around Thanksgiving and Christmas time. This past year, that number was up to more than 200 baskets.

And, in addition to holiday baskets, Maio said the Food Bank now puts together between 250 and 300 baskets throughout the course of each month to be given to the individuals it services.

Masella also commented on the expansion of the program.

“The growth of it has been amazing,” she said. “When we started there were only six people” who regularly volunteered and prepared the baskets.

Now, Maio furthered, that number has doubled to about a dozen.

“We never have a lack of volunteers,” she said.

Even so, Masella noted that when one of the regular volunteers is absent, “We miss them.”

In addition to volunteering at the Food Bank on Mondays and Thursdays every week, Masella volunteers every Monday at Valley View Elementary School, where she helps students with their book reports. She said she’s been volunteering there for the past 15 years, but plans to retire after this school year because her eyesight isn’t what it used to be, making it difficult to read to the children.

But her volunteerism doesn’t stop there. She also helps Maio give the Holy Eucharist to Catholic residents at Greystone Retirement Home once a month.

* * *

The almost-95-year-old said she moved to Portland in 1964 and has seen many subtle changes in the town throughout the past 50 years.

“Different stores come in, a couple areas have changed,” she said.

But one thing that hasn’t changed is Masella’s dedication to volunteering: she’s proved to be a wonderful volunteer and friend year after year.

Maio raved about Masella, commenting on her generosity and baking skills.



Connie Masella (middle) turns 95 tomorrow, April 26. She’s been a volunteer at the Portland Food Bank for about 40 years. She is pictured here with Food Bank Director Ruth Maio (right), and Maio’s husband, Nunzi Maio.

“She bakes every Thursday. She brings in all kinds of fantastic desserts,” she said.

Maio said her favorite memories of Masella’s volunteerism include “her helping us when we do the big drives that we have.”

For example, Maio noted the annual Postal Food Drive, held in May nationwide, during which the Postal Service picks up donated food from mailboxes all over town, she explained.

Masella’s favorite memories with Maio involve the two friends attending St. Mary’s Church together along with Maio’s husband, Nunzi Maio. The trio attends so regularly that if she ever goes alone, people ask, “Where’s

Ruth?” she laughed.

Nunzi Maio said of his wife’s friend, “She’s the oldest person here [at the Food Bank] and she never sits down.”

That energy was exhibited earlier this week, when not even Masella’s case of laryngitis could keep her from coming in to volunteer.

“I feel fine,” she said, noting she was relieved she wasn’t contagious so she could still come by to help – an assertion sure to make many younger and less determined volunteers feel they should step up their game, and proving, at least in Masella’s case, age may indeed be nothing but a number.

East Hampton Town Council Adopts \$40.87 Million Budget

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Town Council adopted a \$40.87 million budget at its meeting Tuesday night. That number is the same dollar amount the finance board moved forward earlier this week, but includes some rearranging of dollars.

The budget is a 4.17 percent increase over current year spending and calls for a calculated mill rate of 27.72, which is an increase of 1.09 mills over the current year; the spending packages head to town referendum May 6.

The \$40,872,675 budget is broken down into the Board of Education budget, which comes in at \$28,492,560; and the general town budget, which makes up the remaining \$12,380,115.

The council voted the budget forward 4-3, with all Democratic councilmen – Chairwoman Barbara Moore, Kevin Reich, George Pfaffenbach and Phil Visintainer – voting for, and all Republican members – Ted Hintz, Patience Anderson and Mark Philhower – voting against.

The adopted budget was based on suggestions made by Moore at Tuesday’s meeting. The suggestions included the removal of \$200,595 from specific parts of the finance board’s budget and \$200,595 worth of additions to other parts of it, thus keeping the Board of Finance’s total number the same.

The council removed from the Board of Finance’s proposed budget: \$42,300 for floor replacement at Center School; \$68,392 for the playscape at Memorial Elementary School; \$17,770 for GIS mapping, which is an overhead view of properties and is already in place;

\$45,549 for health insurance for town employees; and \$26,584 for a benefits clerk.

The additions to the budget include: \$20,388 to go toward officer mounted cameras for the police department; \$37,800 to pay the Parks and Recreation Department for lawn mowing; and \$142,207 toward the town’s debt service payment.

The three other Democrats on the council threw their weight behind Moore’s suggestions.

Visintainer said he “endorses” it and Reich said he “wholeheartedly supports” it. Pfaffenbach said, “I’m totally in favor of it. I think it’s a budget that’s going to move the town forward.”

The three Republican members of the council, however, opposed it.

Hintz, speaking on behalf of his fellow Republican councilmen, said, “It’s our belief that the budget is just too costly and with all our future expenditures coming up [like the East Hampton High School building renovation project], we just cannot afford the budget as presented.”

The three Republicans presented a separate budget proposal that totaled \$40,156,532 and called for a calculated mill rate of 27.08 – a 0.45 mill increase from the current year. The Republicans’ \$40.16 million budget proposal called for \$28,081,480 for the school board budget, \$9,622,457 for general government, and \$1,299,680 to debt service. That proposed budget did not make it to a vote, but played a part in Tuesday’s budget discussion.

For example, Hintz compared his party’s proposal to the Democrats’ proposal. He even agreed with Moore’s proposal on one point – the removal of one of three new positions requested by various department heads. The three new positions in question are: a benefits clerk, a police captain, and a facilities and grounds foreman.

Hintz agreed with the Democrats on the elimination of the benefits clerk position, which was originally requested by Town Manager Mike Maniscalco.

Maniscalco had previously said the hire of a benefits clerk would free up some of his time that he could then dedicate to economic development – an area in which he has expertise. He affirmed at Tuesday’s meeting that a part-time Town Hall employee would have been laid off if the benefits clerk had been hired.

But the removal of the benefits clerk position was where the Republicans’ and Democrats’ agreement ended, as Hintz also wanted to see the removal of the facilities and grounds foreman and the police captain from the budget.

However at Tuesday’s meeting Moore said, “It is time to do some things for the town. Our town has been without for many years – been without a lot of things.”

She noted that there is nothing “wild” in the budget that should not be there and added if the budget doesn’t pass, “it’s not the end of the world.” She said she’d rather adopt a budget that goes to referendum and fails than not give

the townspeople the opportunity to vote it down.

Reich agreed that members of the community “deserve the opportunity” to vote on the higher budget endorsed by the Town Council Democrats.

He concluded, “In order to get what you need, you have to spend a few dollars.”

Anderson chimed in that her concern is affordability. She wondered, “Is it affordable to our residents?” Ultimately, she didn’t think it was and called Moore’s suggested budget “too rich for our blood.”

Philhower said to the Democratic council members, “On the course that you are setting, and you are driving us to, you are looking at over six mills [increase] in three years with the addition of the high school. That’ll put us [at a mill rate of] over 32 mills. I don’t believe that’s affordable. I don’t believe that’s sustainable.”

Moore countered in a news release Wednesday, “After listening to our [department] managers, we must put faith in their decisions. We cannot randomly choose reductions just to get to a mill rate that we think will pass the voters’ scrutiny.”

In the end, the \$40.87 million budget moved forward, and the townspeople will now get the final say at the May 6 referendum, which will take place from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at East Hampton High School.

* * *

The next regularly scheduled East Hampton Town Council meeting is Tuesday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

East Hampton Resident Named 2014 Citizen of the Year

by Elizabeth Bowling

For Ann McLaughlin, celebrating others is nothing new. As chairwoman of East Hampton's Yellow Ribbon Committee, McLaughlin has been celebrating the return of Belltown's servicemen and women since she started the program in 2011. But now, McLaughlin is at the receiving end of some celebration, as she was recently named the 2014 Citizen of the Year by the East Hampton Village Lions Club.

The announcement came at the end of the Welcome Home Ceremony celebrating the return of her grandson, U.S. Army Specialist Kurt Schluntz of the Army reserves based out of Middletown. The homecoming celebration was orchestrated by McLaughlin with the help of the rest of the Yellow Ribbon Committee on Sunday, March 30.

The surprise announcement for McLaughlin that took place the end of the event consisted of a short speech by Teri Schlosser, president of the East Hampton Village Lions, and a presentation of flowers to McLaughlin.

"I did not expect this to happen," McLaughlin said in an interview Tuesday. "Nobody told me," she laughed, wondering how many people were in on it.

The 78-year-old will be featured in July's Old Homes Day Parade, but will have to scurry off before the parade is over to get to the wedding of Sgt. Aaron McLaughlin of the National Guard – her other grandson.

In addition to being featured in the Old Homes Day parade, McLaughlin will be honored at a dinner for her and her family, and her name will be added to the Citizen of the Year plaque at the East Hampton Public Library.

Schlusser stated in a news release, "Mrs. McLaughlin was chosen for her decades of unselfish service to her community, most notably implementing the Yellow Ribbon Ceremony Program, honoring our men and women in active service."

Regarding the Yellow Ribbon program, Schlusser furthered, "Welcome Home Ceremonies have served as a means for the entire community to come out in full flag-waving force and give townspeople a way to show their support and appreciation for our local heroes."

And that's exactly what McLaughlin had hoped to accomplish when she established the program in 2011. McLaughlin said she came up with the idea for a Yellow Ribbon Commit-

tee with the help of her grandson, Aaron, who told his grandmother that every serviceman should be welcomed home.

The proud grandmother founded the committee to honor those servicemen, like her grandsons, who made personal sacrifices to defend the United States.

The first Yellow Ribbon Ceremony was held on Memorial Day 2011, when four families received Yellow Ribbons to tie around a tree in the East Hampton Village Center.

The original Yellow Ribbon tree was knocked down by a freak snowstorm in October 2011, McLaughlin recalled, explaining the storm "just demolished that tree." The current Yellow Ribbon tree was then donated to the committee by the local garden shop Paul's and Sandy's Too. And it's donations from supporters like Paul's and Sandy's Too that, according to McLaughlin, allow the program to continue.

Since the start of the program, McLaughlin has held ceremonies for at least 20 servicemen, Schlusser affirmed.

"I never expected it to be [like] this," McLaughlin said of the program's success. "All I ever wanted to do was wave a flag on the side of the road."

Schlusser added more praise where a modest McLaughlin would not.

"She works with families of service people, she publicizes the events, she has rallied support from many organizations and the community to join in the ceremonies, and she arranges the program including speakers and proclamations," Schlusser said of McLaughlin's dedication to the program. "She has brought pride to our community and patriotism back to our nation."

She's even helped neighboring towns – like Marlborough, East Haddam and Colchester – create their own Yellow Ribbon programs and continues to support them.

"I think it's great. I go to every program," she said of surrounding Yellow Ribbon Ceremonies. "I just think it's so important."

While many people would consider the title "Citizen of the Year" a personal success and perhaps even a confidence booster, for McLaughlin, the title is just a way to gain publicity for the Yellow Ribbon Committee, she said, adding the program was important because "not everybody can get to the airport so this is a way for the townspeople to get out and thank



Ann McLaughlin, chairwoman of East Hampton's Yellow Ribbon Committee, was named the Village Lions Club's 2014 Citizen of the Year. McLaughlin is pictured here with her grandson, Sgt. Aaron McLaughlin.

the veterans."

McLaughlin said her favorite thing about the Yellow Ribbon Committee is "the people that respond and that come out," who she said "are just fantastic."

* * *

As though McLaughlin's work with the Yellow Ribbon Committee isn't enough, Schlusser shared her participation in town extends well beyond that.

Along with being the program's chairperson, McLaughlin currently serves on the Commission on Aging, is a member of Friends of Lake Pocotopaug, and the treasurer of the Senior Housing Authority.

According to Schlusser, McLaughlin assisted in obtaining an \$800,000 federal grant in 2013 to fund roof repairs and other improvements at the Chatham Acres Senior Housing Complex.

In addition, Schlusser said McLaughlin is a Life Member in the Ladies Auxiliary to the

Veterans of Foreign Wars VFW Post 5095, as well as a member in the Ladies Auxiliary to the American Legion Post 197.

Schlusser described McLaughlin as having a "strong love and support of our community," and that "love and support" is further exhibited through some of McLaughlin's earlier years of service, which include serving as a Girl Scout leader; teaching swimming lessons at Sears Park; and serving time on the East Hampton Board of Finance, the East Hampton Police Commission, the Board of Tax Review, and as secretary/treasurer of the local Chamber of Commerce.

McLaughlin has also served as a Justice of the Peace, president of the East Hampton Democratic Ladies Organization, vice chairman of the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee for 25 years, and state president for the State Federation of Democratic Women's Clubs.

East Hampton Officials Discuss Town Road Project

by Elizabeth Bowling

The town of East Hampton held a public information meeting Monday to discuss planned improvements to the intersections of routes 66/196 and 66/Old Marlborough Road.

Representatives from the Department of Transportation (DOT) addressed the few East Hampton residents and Town Council members in attendance to provide information on the upcoming state-funded project.

According to the DOT representatives, the project will call for 1,400 feet of road construction – which should take a total of one year – on Route 66, including its intersections with Route 196 and Old Marlborough Road.

Both intersections are currently "skewed," according to the DOT, and will become more perpendicular to Route 66 as a result of the project. Additionally, a walk signal will be installed at the intersection of Routes 66 and 196.

David Harms, of the DOT, is the project manager. He explained the purpose of the project is "to make safety and intersection improvements."

Harms furthered that the project's intent is to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents in that area. He approximated there have been 10 accidents there in the last three years.

Harms affirmed that the final plans for the project are due to the DOT April 30. Then, he said, the project will be processed for advertising and bidding. Construction could start as soon as late fall, but will most likely start in spring of next year.

Harms explained that the project first surfaced in 2005 but experienced two stops since that time – one from 2006 to 2008, and another from 2009 to 2011. In 2011, the project was "handed over" to Harms, he said, and he was mandated by the DOT to "get the project done."

The \$3 million project is going to be fully funded by the state, Harms confirmed. He added that initially it was supposed to be partially funded by federal dollars, but the state ended up having to pick up the full tab because of all the delays.

"The federal government said 'no more. It's been around too long and costs too much,'" Harms said.

* * *

Civil Engineer Jeffrey Lemay, of CDR Maguire, explained the project will begin "a little west of West Point Road" and end at the bottom of Belltown Curve. He said there will be 300 feet of reconstruction on Route 196 and 200 feet of construction on Old Marlborough Road.

Regarding Old Marlborough Road as it is now, Lemay said, "You've got to look way over your shoulder" to pull out onto Route 66. He furthered it currently is a "heavy skew" and after construction, it will "T-up" to Route 66 – in other words, it will be more perpendicular to the main road.

But the intersection of Old Marlborough Road will continue to be "stop sign controlled," meaning no signal light will be installed there, he said.

Lemay also noted, "There is a sight distance issue for both cars pulling out of Old Marlborough Road and trying to look east, and for cars coming around Belltown Curve."

Because of that issue, Lemay said there will be construction that will create a line of sight for cars trying to pull off Old Marlborough Road and onto Route 66. This will be accomplished by using a method known as "benching," which will essentially level off the hill on the side of the road, he said.

The benching will also improve the line of sight for the drivers traveling west on Route 66 and passing Old Marlborough Road on their right, Lemay said.

Presently Route 66 is one lane in either direction. After construction it will have an additional lane "dedicated to left turns only," according to Lemay.

Currently the island in the intersection of Routes 66 and 196 allows traffic to turn both in and out of 196 on either side of the island. Lemay said the project calls for the removal of the island and, in its place, the installation of a 20-foot wide median, which will be landscaped. Other landscaping will come in the form of new trees planted along the cemetery on Route 66.

He also said there will be three crosswalks at the intersection of Routes 66 and –one on either side of 196 and one across it – and the "intersection will be signalized. Right now it's all stop signs."

That traffic light will stop all traffic for pedestrians on the crosswalk, Lemay affirmed. Another addition as a result of the road improvements will be a guardrail.

Based on public interest in sidewalks and safety, Lemay explained, "We're going to maintain all the sidewalks that are currently there" including the CVS sidewalks and the sidewalks that extend down Route 66 from downtown East Hampton. He said the sidewalks will remain but will undergo reconstruction "because of the change in elevation and the shifting of the road."

"We're going to provide sidewalk to the lake area from the downtown area," he furthered. And additional sidewalks will be constructed on the north side of Route 66 a "good distance toward West Point Road," he said.

According to the DOT representatives, additional sidewalks may be designed if the project could gain property rights from homeowners to allow for "easements" from the sidewalks on state property to the homeowners' front lawns. If those property rights are attained, then sidewalk construction may occur.

Sam Oliva, a homeowner on the north side of Route 66 at its intersection with Route 196, expressed concerns regarding the project, noting that his son waits for the bus at the end of his driveway, and he and his neighbors have to bring their garbage cans to the edge of the busy street. Oliva also questioned if the state would be inching in on his property in the construction of this project.

Lemay responded that his plan calls for the minimum lane widths and minimum shoulder widths to ensure that all construction remains on state property. He also noted, "We're pulling it as far south as we can." He explained the design can't go any further south because the construction would then be impeding on a cemetery.

Lemay also said there will be a sidewalk "easement" or "grading" that will be on homeowners' personal property, but the sidewalk itself will be on state property. But to give Oliva and other residents peace of mind, Lemay said that a sidewalk easement would "probably not" be more than six feet.

Harms concluded at Monday's meeting, "We're excited to get this done."

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore sang a similar tune. "We are, too. This seems like a great project," she said. "I appreciate that they [Harms and Lemay] came out because it's so much clearer now. I think it'll be nice."

Colchester Resident Seeks Congressional Seat

by Melissa Roberto

For the last two months, Colchester resident Evan Evans has made pit stops all over the state of Connecticut for the purpose of meeting with constituents of the 2nd Congressional District – a district he’s aiming to represent.

Evans, a Republican, is seeking a nomination for the seat in the Connecticut House of Representatives that Democrat Joe Courtney has held since 2007.

A loan officer for a national mortgage company and the owner of a small real-estate investment company, Evans is confident he has the skills necessary to represent the 2nd Congressional District – which is made up of 64 towns in primarily the eastern half of the state, including all of the *Rivereast* towns except Portland.

Growing up, Evans lived in Norwich, Old Lyme and then East Hampton. He is a graduate of East Hampton High School and has lived in Colchester since 2004 with his wife Elizabeth, their 12-year-old son and 8-month-old daughter.

Evans graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1994 with a bachelor’s degree and the local Republican has been serving in the U.S. Military for over 25 years. According to a press release from his campaign, he worked his way up from an enlisted man to a non-commission officer (NCO), up to the rank he currently holds, Major in the Connecticut National Guard.

The Colchester resident’s desire to represent the 2nd Congressional District came from what he said is “frustration with the lack of any progress in Washington,” and he said both “Democrats and Republicans” are to blame.

Additionally, Evans said his intent to run stemmed from military experiences he endured overseas, from Kosovo and Iraq, to Saudi Arabia. He said he witnessed the type of government he does not want to see as America’s future while expressing fear that the country is heading towards it.

In regards to Kosovo, Evans explained, “There were an awful lot of folks there who sat around because the government was going to

take care of them and care for every aspect of their lives.”

He added, “That is not a future I want for my children or a future I’d want for anybody’s children, or for the people in Kosovo.”

Those stints overseas reminded Evans of the quality of life that should be reinstalled here in America, he explained. Thus, his campaign is founded on the theme “Restoring Opportunity.”

“We as Americans have a tendency to complain about how bad we have it here and we really don’t,” Evans said. “I am someone who believes that success is earned. Success is through hard work and what I would look to do as a legislator is to give people the opportunity to succeed.”

And the main area he’d address to help achieve that is jobs and the economy.

“Number one is jobs and the economy,” he said. “If you are unemployed or underemployed, every other issue becomes exacerbated.”

The released furthered his perspective.

“Real people, with real families are struggling,” Evans states in the release. “I have yet to encounter either a business person or worker who feels confident they will be working in the next year.”

The Colchester resident says he feels that issue is noticeable not only in Connecticut’s 2nd Congressional district, but nationwide. Of his approach to put an end to the high unemployment rates and tough economy, Evans said he is in favor of a “flat tax system.”

“I think that if folks and businesses have the ability to know what the tax liability is going to be then they are better able to plan for that,” the Republican said, “and businesses specifically can utilize that knowledge to say ‘this is our plan and this is how we are going to grow to create more jobs.’”

Secondly, Evans stressed his belief in transparency – “the root of the problem” currently – and stated that is something he would bring to the seat.

“Our current congressman voted against a bill in the house that would ask the congressional budget office to evaluate any piece of legislation to see what its affect on our economy

was,” Evans explained. “He [Courtney] voted no. I would have voted yes. Why would you not want to know what type of affect a piece of legislation would have on our economy?”

Of the 64 towns the 2nd Congressional District encompasses, Evans said he has made his way to at least 35 so far. It is through those visits he is able to discuss current issues and the needs and expectations of constituents and local politicians, he said.

“If anything, it’s strengthened my belief in my number one issue,” Evans explained. “I know there are a lot of people out there who are struggling.”

Additionally, another source of debate through these visits has been “education budgets,” he explained. Evans said this is due to “unfunded mandates the government sends down to the local level” – an issue he seeks to solve.

“I’d like to reduce the size of our federal government,” Evans said. “I think the federal government has gotten into issues that town and state governments can handle.”

The military Major furthered, “One of the lessons I learned in the military is if issues or problems don’t rise to my level it’s because they don’t have to. There’s an NCO or junior officer who is there who can handle it at their level.”

He continued, “I approach government the same way. If a town can take care of an issue without the interference of unfunded mandates coming from the federal or state government then I think they should be able to.”

Evans concluded, “There’s too many regulations” beaming down on states and municipalities from the federal level.

“I think that repealing laws could be just as effective as writing new ones,” he said, adding one he would strive to appeal alongside other congressional leaders is the Affordable Health Care Act.

The Republican candidate also pointed out that if given the opportunity to serve on the U.S. Congress, he would assume responsibilities with a “multi-tier approach.”

“I think that as a federal legislator I would



Evan Evans

need to work with the state government and work with town governments in addition to businesses and individuals,” Evans said.

But before he can do so, Evans is seeking a Republican nomination at the 2014 Connecticut GOP Convention, which will be held Friday, May 16 and Saturday, May 17, at the Mohegan Sun Convention Center in Uncasville.

The Republican Town Committee of Sprague, Connecticut has publicly endorsed Evans, according to his campaign team.

In the weeks ahead, Evans said he will continue meeting and discussing current issues with constituents of the 2nd Congressional District, adding if elected, his time in office would be solely based on issues, and ways to solve them.

“I very much hope that this is a campaign based solely on issues,” Evans said, and looking to the future he added if elected, “I’m going to vote for or against legislation based on whether I think it’s best for the 2nd Congressional District.”

Three-Alarm Fire Leaves Colchester Home Uninhabitable

by Melissa Roberto

A three-alarm fire on Oconnell Road in Colchester left a residential home uninhabitable last week and two fire fighters injured, according to the Colchester Hayward Fire Department.

The fire occurred at the home at 120 Oconnell Road on Thursday, April 17. Deputy Fire Chief Don Lee said the local fire department received its first call reporting the fire at 1:37 p.m. and shortly after received multiple calls from neighbors in the area.

Residents of the home were not home at the time of the fire, Lee said. A total of eight area fire departments responded to the scene as a result of three alarms, two of which requested additional apparatus. Those departments included Yantic, Salem, Garden Lake, Bozrah, Hebron, East Haddam, East Hampton and Norwich. Additionally, the fire departments of Lebanon and Marlborough brought in engines to cover the Colchester Fire Department while it was on the scene.

Lee defined the fire as “extremely intense.” It is the third fire added to the list of major fires that have occurred in Colchester in recent weeks.

“This has been a very, very busy month for us,” Lee said.

The first large fire the Colchester department responded to in the last month occurred March 28 at Colchester Commons, which Lee said required several towns’ mutual aid to bring it under control. The second occurred the following day, March 29, at Lincoln Lake Lodge. That fire was deemed arson but is still being investigated, Lee said.

Last week’s fire on Oconnell Road took two hours to put out; it was officially declared under control at 3:57 p.m. Even with the additional departments who arrived to the scene with

extra engines and tankers, Lee said it was “a very difficult fire” to put out due to the “limited amount of man power during the day time.” Lee said that is becoming an issue in many fire departments in the area.

“All of our towns are struggling with volunteers and having additional resources during the day,” Lee said. “Man power was definitely an issue and played a part in our ability to control this [fire on Oconnell Road] early on.”

As a result of the fire two Colchester firefighters sustained injuries and Lee said a rapid intervention company from Norwich – responsible for responding on scene to rescue fire fighters if they become lost, trapped or disoriented – responded to the scene.

One firefighter had been injured when the second floor of the home collapsed. The firefighter sustained a head injury and was transported to Backus Hospital. Additionally, another firefighter sustained second-degree burns to his shoulders and neck, and was assisted on scene by Middlesex Hospital paramedics.

The firefighter who was transported to Backus has since returned to work, Lee said.

The cause of the fire is still being investigated by the state fire marshal’s office in conjunction with Colchester Fire Marshal Reed Gustafson.

Lee said the home suffered “very significant damage to the second floor and roof area, and heavy smoke and water damage to the first floor.”

Lee said the family returned to the home after about 40 minutes into the fire. The department contacted American Red Cross who responded to the scene to assist the family in lodging and necessities.

Gustafson said four people reside at the home, Hans and Denise Olsen, and two children. According to a Facebook post, a dona-



A three-alarm fire destroyed a home on Oconnell Road in Colchester last week, resulting in eight fire departments in the area responding to the scene.

tion page has been set up for the family on youcaring.com. As of Tuesday, \$1,080 had been raised; the goal is \$1,500.

The donation site states, “Please help us raise money for this amazing family who have reached out and opened their home to so many people time and time again. Anyone who knows them I am sure can think of so many fond memories they have had with this generous family.”

It continues, they “endured a devastating house fire yesterday where they lost everything. ... We know that we will not be able to replace the many sentimental things they have lost, however [we’re] hoping that this money we raise will help them start to rebuild their lives again.”

To make a donation, readers can log on to youcaring.com/help-a-neighbor/helping-the-olsen-family-/166951.

Selectmen Appoint Colchester Tax Collector

by Melissa Roberto

The Colchester Board of Selectmen last week unanimously voted to appoint resident Donald Phillips to the vacant position of Acting Tax Collector.

And it won't be Phillips' first time heading to work in the Colchester Town Hall: he previously held the position of tax collector from 1999 to 2001.

"I very much am looking forward to returning to the tax office and to the town Hall to do everything I can to serve the citizens of the town of Colchester," Phillips said.

Phillips is currently in his second legislative session as a lobbyist for Rome, Smith & Lutz, Inc. in Hartford. Prior to that, he worked as the Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations for the Connecticut Bar Association in New Britain for 11 years.

The anticipated tax collector also previously worked as an attorney at three firms in Hartford. His areas of practice included civil and commercial litigation, employment, and real estate law. Phillips graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Connecticut State University in 1982, received a juris doctorate degree from the University of Connecticut (UConn) School of Law in 1988, and in 2012, received a graduate certificate in public and nonprofit management from the UConn Department of Public Policy.

The position of tax collector has been vacant since Feb. 28, shortly after the town approved a separation agreement with Tricia Coblentz, who resigned from the position after more than six years in office. Per town charter, the Board of Selectmen was responsible for appointing an Acting Tax Collector to see out Coblentz's term, which is set to expire in November 2015.

The board interviewed Phillips and subse-

quently appointed him to the position last Thursday, April 17, in open session at a regular meeting. This week First Selectman Gregg Schuster commented positively on appointing Phillips to the seat.

"Don has obviously done this before and I'm glad to have him back on board with the town," he said. "I look forward to working with him and I'm sure he's going to do an excellent job as acting tax collector."

Phillips said his interest in applying to the position "stems from the fact that I have served as the tax collector in Colchester for almost three years." He recalled first being appointed in 1999, also as an acting tax collector, filling in the term of the previously elected tax collector Sharon Daily. Phillips then ran for the office when Daily's term was up later that year, and served in the seat until 2001.

Phillips commented on the skills he will utilize come May 12, his first day on the job.

"I'm a good listener. I appreciate the concern that the public has with respect to paying taxes," Phillips said. "I served in the position before so I'm very familiar with expectations."

In addition to serving as the tax collector in town, Phillips has also served in a number of volunteer capacities in Colchester. In the late 1990s he sat on the Zoning and Planning Commission, and from 2003-07 he was chairman of the Board of Assessment Appeals. From 2009-10 he also served on the Board of Police Commissioners.

"Perhaps the most important thing I bring is a history of public service," said Phillips.

Additionally, having served in the position before, Phillips said he knows what his responsibilities are.

"First and foremost, my responsibility is to manage the office in accordance and compli-

ance with state statutes," he said. "I have a sense of duty to the residents of the town, and to the taxpayers to the town, to provide the very best service that I possibly can."

He furthered he will "use whatever tools are available to me to reach out to the public to help them understand our function."

Aside from his duties, Phillips said he's also excited to work alongside the same people he had in the past, such as Town Clerk Nancy Bray and Tax Assessor John Chaponis.

"I've stayed in touch with a number of people," he said. "It's been fun getting to see them again in a capacity to where I'm coming back to work in Town Hall again."

He added, "The town hall employees have been very welcoming in terms of telling me how much they're looking forward to my return."

* * *

Also at last Thursday's meeting, the Board of Selectmen discussed the future of the First Selectman's seat, following Gregg Schuster's recent announcement of his intent to resign.

Schuster shared that he has accepted a township manager position in Pocono Township, Pennsylvania. He has not yet submitted his letter of intent or date of resignation to the town but told fellow selectmen members that he believes his resignation will occur in the last week of May.

The future of the First Selectman's seat was placed on the April 17 selectmen meeting agenda. Schuster said this was to "see if the board could come to consensus on who the successor would be."

Per town charter, Schuster's vacant seat would be filled by one of the remaining members of the Board of Selectmen of the same political party. In this case, that would mean

the seat could go to Republican selectmen Stan Soby or Denise Mizla. However, the charter stipulates if none of the members of the board of selectmen is able to assume the role of first selectman, the board is to select an elector in the town to assume the role.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle, however, said she had a problem with discussing the future of the seat in last week's meeting.

"We don't have a vacancy yet. We don't have a letter of intent yet," Coyle stated. "I think this is inappropriate until we have a date and we're going to have definite vacancy."

Schuster repeated his intent for placing the discussion on the agenda. "I'm not involving myself in the process. All I'm trying to do is start a transition process as quickly as possible. ... If the board wishes to take no action at this point that is certainly your right to do so. I'm just trying to do what's in the best interest of the town."

Selectman Stan Soby came forth stating he believes the board cannot take action but also feels there is "an obligation to provide information to the citizens of Colchester" about what happens moving forward. Thus, Soby communicated his interest in the position.

"I have an interest and am willing to serve as first selectman," Soby said.

The board then asked Denise Mizla if she had an interest, to which she responded she did not.

The board thanked Soby for his willingness to step forward but agreed no action would be taken until a letter of intent is submitted by Schuster, who anticipated that might be submitted to the board by its next regular Board of Selectmen meeting, scheduled for Thursday, May 1, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Marlborough Public Hearing Next Week

by Melissa Roberto

Residents interested in voicing their opinions on the town's proposed budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year will have the chance at a public hearing scheduled for next Monday, April 28.

The hearing will take place at 7 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School Cafeteria, 25 School Dr.

The budget totals \$22,230,125, which reflects an overall increase over the current fiscal year of 2.86 percent. That bottom line number is made up of five components: Marlborough's portion of the RHAM budget, which stands at \$7,793,370, an increase of 6.58 percent; the local Board of Education package at \$7,271,585, an increase of 1.25 percent; the town operations budget at \$4,612,856, an increase of 3.96 percent; contingency, which stays the same as the current year at \$20,000 to be used for emergencies; and town debt at \$2,532,314, which decreases over the current year by 4.80 percent.

The recommended spending package reflects a 2.23 percent tax increase. That results in a proposed mill rate for the coming fiscal year of 31.45, which is up .69 mills from the current rate of 30.76.

In addition to the aforementioned expenses, capital requests for the 2014-15 fiscal year are proposed at a total of \$485,750. The proposed capital expenses include \$45,000 for the future capital expenditure reserve, \$40,000

for the revaluation reserve for the 2014-15 fiscal year, \$136,500 towards the engineering of rebuilding Fawn Brook Bridge, \$35,000 for design and engineering costs for repairs to Williamsburg and South roads, \$30,000 for an above ground fuel oil tank at Fire House 2, \$4,200 for the replacement of a police car mounted radio, \$11,500 for three police portable radios, \$60,000 for a fuel master system at Public Works, \$73,550 for a Public Works backhoe/loader, and \$50,000 for road improvements.

In total, the capital requests are higher than last year's, by \$135,750.

Along with the upcoming budget vote, another vote will be cast by the public at a future town meeting for the termination of unexpended portions within the reserve for capital and capital non-recurring fund projects. Those total \$8,634, of which \$410 was intended to go toward a Public Works 4X4 and the remaining \$8,224 was intended for the library roof project.

A Board of Finance meeting will be held directly following the hearing, at which time the board could possibly take action on the budget—either to make changes to it or send it off to the annual town meeting, where the budget can then be voted on by the town's registered voters. A town meeting is already scheduled for Monday, May 12, at 7 p.m., also in the MES cafeteria.

LifeStar Responds to Colchester Accident

by Melissa Roberto

LifeStar touched down in Colchester Tuesday afternoon following a single motor vehicle accident that shut down Middletown Road (Route 16).

Colchester Police said officers responded to the scene Tuesday, April 22 at approximately 3:29 p.m.

According to a news release sent out by Colchester Police, Gary A. Newman, 53, of 1189 Washington St., Middletown, was operating a 2005 Jeep Liberty that was also towing a fishing boat on Middletown Road when his vehicle struck a drainage culvert, went air-

borne and came to a final rest on Penee Lane.

The release further states the Colchester Hayward Fire Department had to extract Newman from the vehicle. The driver was then transported by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital for precautionary measures.

Sergeant Joseph Mercer, resident trooper supervisor of the police department, said he believed Route 16 was shut down for "about an hour."

The release stated "there was a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage coming from within the vehicle" but an investigation on the accident is still being conducted.

Colchester Budgets Off to Referendum

by Melissa Roberto

At a town meeting Wednesday, Colchester voters approved sending the town operations and Board of Education budgets for the 2014-15 fiscal year off to a referendum scheduled for May 6.

Combined, the budgets total \$53,658,889, which reflects an overall increase over current year spending of \$1,432,985, or 2.74 percent. At the upcoming referendum, each budget will be voted on separately.

The town operations budget proposal equates to \$13,478,094, an increase of 2.50 percent over the current year's spending, or \$328,244. Categories within the town operations budget that primarily drive the proposed increase are the public safety and public works accounts.

The education budget totals \$40,180,795, which is up \$1,104,741, or 2.83 percent over the 2013-14 fiscal year. Major increases are featured in the tuition and capital accounts.

The budgets combined bring the proposed mill rate for the coming fiscal year to 31.17, which is an increase of .89 mills from the

year's current rate of 30.28.

Approximately 30 Colchester residents attended Wednesday's town meeting, which primarily consisted of members of the boards of selectmen, finance, and education. Wednesday's votes left room for discussion but no questions or comments were raised by attendees.

Following the town meeting, school board Chairman Ron Goldstein commented on the school budget.

"I think we've put forward a reasonable, sound budget and I look forward to the voters on May 6," Goldstein said. "And I'm comfortable that in fact there weren't questions tonight."

Board of Finance member James McNair said he felt it was "a little surprising to see how lightly attended" Wednesday's meeting was. Nonetheless, he added, "It'll be interesting for the voters to now make a choice."

The referendum vote will take place on Tuesday, May 6, from 6 a.m. - 8 p.m. at Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Whatever happened to “testing.... testing.... 1-2-3”?

The state Department of Transportation made news for all the wrong reasons last week when two of the department’s test tweets were accidentally made public. The first tweet, sent out last Thursday, read “Ferry Update: Rocky Hill Ferry sank to the bottom of the river after being struck by the Chester Ferry.”

A second tweet shortly followed, saying, “Ferry Update: Chester Ferry ran out of fuel and went out to sea.”

State DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick told the *New Haven Register* the tweets are part of the department’s attempts to develop a separate notification system for the state’s ferries, so ferry riders wouldn’t have to sift through the DOT’s many tweets regarding highway traffic to find the information they want. The tweets were meant to be kept in-house, but were mistakenly posted on the DOT’s public Twitter feed.

Obviously, whoever wrote the test tweets was joking around – but Nursick isn’t laughing, particularly since this is apparently the second time this month test DOT tweets were made public.

“We are utterly and completely embarrassed here and certainly had no intent to mislead the public in any way,” Nursick told the *Register*.

Nursick didn’t have to address the obvious – that, after the South Korean ferry disaster on April 16, joking about the Rocky Hill ferry sinking wasn’t just not funny, it’s downright distasteful.

Again: “testing....testing....1-2-3.” Seems so simple. And it’s even under 140 characters.

* * *

Not to toot my own horn, but I’ve never burglarized a home. But I’d think that, if I were going to do so, I’d make sure my getaway car had gas in it.

The *Hartford Courant* reports that Nakia Wright, 27, was arrested last Saturday after she allegedly broke into the home of acquaintances and stole their television and a credit card, according to police.

Police said Wright entered the home through the front door, which had been left open. The residents heard noises and called police. When officers arrived, Wright was pulling away from the home in a small red

car – with the TV partially hanging out of the trunk.

The *Courant* reports officers attempted to stop Wright, but she sped away. A car chase then followed on New London Turnpike – but it ended quickly, when Wright’s vehicle ran out of gas.

Wright was arrested on a host of charges: first-degree burglary, second-degree criminal trespass, third-degree larceny, credit card theft, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, engaging police in pursuit, reckless driving, speeding, failure to have headlights lit, failure to drive right and a stop sign violation.

* * *

I attended Easter Sunday Mass last weekend, and at the end of the service, the priest told an amusing story:

There were three guys who, while Catholic, never went to church on Sunday. They always skipped it to play golf. Such was the case on Easter Sunday, and the three were driving back home when they got into a car accident and died.

The men met St. Peter at the pearly gates, who said to them, “I’ve been looking over your files, and you three haven’t done much bad, but you haven’t done much good either. But tell ya what I’ll do. If just one of you can tell me what this day – Easter – is all about, I’ll let all three of you into heaven.”

The first guy said, “Easter’s the day when we have turkey and stuffing, and there’s football on TV, and a parade, and...”

“No, no,” St. Peter said. “You’re thinking of Thanksgiving.”

So he turned to the second guy, who said, “Easter’s the day with the big guy in the red suit comes flying down the chimney and brings us all presents.”

“No, that’s Christmas,” St. Peter replied.

So it came down to the third guy. He looked at St. Peter and said, “You see what I have to put up with from these guys? Here, let me tell you what Easter’s really about. It’s the day when this guy comes out of the ground...”

“Okay, you might be on to something,” a hopeful St. Peter said.

“Now, let me finish,” the man said. “The guy comes out of the ground – and if he sees his shadow, it’s six more weeks of winter!”

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Police News

4/3: James Kane, 28, of 8 N. Maple St., was involved in a one-car motor vehicle accident in the area of 100 Young Street. As a result, Kane was issued a summons for DUI and operating too fast for conditions, East Hampton Police said.

4/3: Holly Williams, 49, of 12 Railroad Ave., Dudley, Mass., was arrested for DUI, failure to drive right, failure to keep narcotics in their original container, and possession of narcotics, police said.

4/12: Kristen Ann Chapone, 24, of 101 Spring St., Middletown, was arrested for disorderly conduct, third-degree criminal mischief and violating a protective order, police said. Chapone was also arrested – stemming from a

separate incident – for second-degree breach of peace, violating a protective order and interfering with a police officer, police said, and three separate counts of first-degree failure to appear.

4/13: David C. Yarlott, 37, of 29 Depot Hill Rd., was arrested for disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

4/14: Alexis Lee Sypek, 19, of 17 Staeth Rd., was arrested for possession of drug paraphernalia and fifth-degree larceny, stemming from two separate incidents, police said.

4/14: Sara Carroll, 27, of 3 Markham Ln., was issued a summons for failure to maintain insurance and operating a motor vehicle without a license, police said.

Colchester Police News

4/14: State Police said Jessica Minney, 31, of 1 Skylark Rd., was arrested for DUI, breach of peace, interfering with a police officer and failure to wear a seatbelt.

4/15: State Police said Jaclyn Damato, 22, of 119 Mill Hill Rd., was arrested for breach of peace and interfering with an officer.

4/15: State Police said Gill Rachad, 31, of 49 Wade Ave., Bloomfield, was charged with violation of probation, illegal sale of drugs, possession of less than a half ounce of marijuana and possession of narcotics.

4/16: State Police said Cameron Mack, 25, of 8 Wellington Way, Amston, turned himself in on one PRAWN warrant for first-degree failure to appear and two PRAWN warrants for second-degree failure to appear.

4/16: State Police said Raheem Childers, 28, of Bank St., New London, turned himself in on two outstanding arrest warrants for violation of probation.

4/16: Colchester Police said Daniel Zaccaro, 26, of 98 Nelkin Rd., was charged with DUI.

4/17: Colchester Police are currently investigating a reported forced entry through the

main entry doors of the Colchester Bible Baptist Church located on Chestnut Hill Road. Police said the forced entry occurred sometime between 8:45 p.m. on 4/16 and 10 a.m. on 4/17. Police said nothing was reported to be missing and the church was not occupied at the time.

4/17: State Police said Joseph Machado, 20, of 40 Burnbrook Rd., was charged with possession with intent to sell and possession of drug paraphernalia.

4/18: State Police said Michael Ramchandani, 34, of 5 Warmingham Court, Cheshire, turned himself into Troop K for an active PRAWN warrant for second-degree failure to appear.

4/21: Colchester Police said at approximately 7:57 a.m. an employee of McCarthy Concrete reported that sometime between 4/18 and 4/21 unknown persons broke into the construction site office, located at 819 Norwich Ave., and stole two laptops, a wireless internet device and several keys. Police said this case is currently under investigation. Anyone with information on this case is asked to contact Officer Eric Watrous at the Colchester Police 860-537-7270.

Three Arrested for Larceny at Colchester Stop & Shop

by Melissa Roberto

Colchester Police arrested three individuals last weekend regarding a larceny that occurred at Stop & Shop on Linwood Avenue.

The local department said at approximately 12:59 p.m. Colchester Police were dispatched to the grocery store at 99 Linwood Ave. for a larceny in progress. Police said the assistant store manager called 911 to report two females inside of the store loading a grocery cart. Police said a male, later identified as Tywan A. Jenkins, 45, of 196 Jefferson Ave., New London, then walked in, grabbed the cart and ran out.

Police said that once the manager confronted Jenkins, the accused “took off run-

ning on foot behind Mackey’s” Home, Farm, Pet & Wild Bird Supply.

According to the news release at Troop K, Mackey’s employees helped police locate Jenkins in the woods adjacent to the route 2 on-ramp behind the store. A subsequent investigation led to the arrest of two other individuals, a 17-year-old juvenile, and Jacqueline A. Connors, 42, of 211 Vergason Ave., Apt. 1, Norwich. All three were charged with fifth-degree larceny.

Police said the stolen merchandise, which totaled \$545.26, was recovered and returned to the store. No injuries were reported.

Hebron Police News

4/14: State Police said Shawn R. Aldrich, 29, of 16 Hayes Rd., East Hampton, was traveling northbound on North Pond Road when he crossed over the center of the road and struck a tree on the west side shoulder. Police said Aldrich’s vehicle came to an uncontrolled final rest against a tree. The Hebron Fire Department transported Aldrich to Hartford Hospital for complaints of shoulder and leg injuries.

Portland Police News

4/19: Portland Police said Vincent Capello, 20, of 142 Marlborough St., was charged with reckless driving.

Andover Police News

4/17: State Police said a resident of Parker Bridge Road reported an unknown subject(s) forcibly entered her residence sometime overnight and stole cash and electronics. Anyone with information is asked to contact Troop K at 860-465-5400.

Marlborough Police News

4/20: State Police said Simone M. Dubois, 28, of 5800 Oakdale Rd., Apt. 159, Mableton, Georgia, was arrested for DUI and speeding.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Edward Tokarz

Edward "Eddie" A. Tokarz, 71, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Diane (Pinkerton) Tokarz, died suddenly Wednesday, April 16, at Marlborough Medical Center. Born April 20, 1942, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Adolph and Tessie Tokarz.

Eddie grew up in Portland and was a 1960 graduate of Portland High School, and had proudly served his country in the Air Force during the Vietnam War. Eddie had retired from Pratt & Whitney after 40 years of service. He was an avid golfer, loved bowling, fishing and working in his yard. He especially enjoyed traveling since his retirement and was the master float builder for the Old Home Days Parade for the East Hampton High School Class of 1962 of which his wife Diane was a graduate. But, what he truly cared most about was his family and friends.

Eddie is survived by his loving wife Diane, son William Tokarz and his wife Allison of East Hampton, daughter Tracy Moody and husband Christopher of Virginia; two sisters, Henrietta Prickett of Portland, Catherine Tokarz of Portland; and his two beloved grandchildren, Brooke and Jordan Moody.

Eddie's family would like to thank the 911 dispatcher, East Hampton Police and Volunteer Ambulance and the staff at Marlborough Medical Center for their compassion and the care they gave Eddie.

Eddie was a registered organ and tissue donor. His family honored his wishes, giving hope to others and their families.

A memorial service was held Tuesday, April 22, in Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial followed in St. Mary's Cemetery in Portland. Friends may call at the funeral home Tuesday morning, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Thomas Milewski

Thomas John Milewski, 77, resident of Marlborough and East Haddam, beloved husband of Mardi Milewski, passed away peacefully Wednesday, April 16, at home. His LVAD (heart pump) had a power supply complication.

He was born Aug. 26, 1936, in Meriden to the late Helen and John Milewski. He graduated from Meriden High School and Hartford Technical School. He served in the Army Reserves and worked to retirement from a supervisor position at Kaman Aerospace in Middletown.

He was a dedicated parishioner at St. John Fisher Church. In youth he competed with gas-engine model airplanes. He was a lifelong accordion player. And, as a competitive figure skater, he ranked among the best in the world. He was an active member of the Hartford Figure Skating Club during the World Figure Skating Championships. He was also an officer and member of the Bashan Lake Association.

Tom loved family, fishing and his cottage at Bashan Lake. He knew state rivers, brooks, lakes and waterways like few others. He fished them far into the woods. He also loved ice fishing daily in winter.

He leaves sweet memories with wife of 42 years, Mardi Milewski, daughters Laura (Milewski) Riopel and Mary Milewski, sons-in-law James Riopel and Richard Mason and beautiful grandchildren: Corey James Riopel, Madison Grace Riopel, Kai Bashan Milewski-Mason, Maren John Milewski-Mason and Eden Tide Milewski-Mason.

Calling hours were Sunday, April 20, at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury CT 06033. A funeral service was held Monday, April 21, at the funeral home. Friends and family gathered at the funeral home Monday morning, before the service. Burial followed the funeral in St. Stanislaus cemetery, Meriden.

Memorial donations in Tom's memory may be made to: Bashan Lake Association, Inc., P.O. Box 206, East Haddam, CT 06423

To visit Tom's online tribute and leave a message of condolence, visit glastonburyfuneral.com.

Portland

James A. McNaughton

James A. McNaughton, 87, of Sharpsburg, Ga., passed away Saturday, April 19, at his home. James, widow of Faith McNaughton, was a prior resident of Portland and Middletown, where he and Faith resided at Luther Ridge.

James was a World War II veteran, in the U.S. Navy, and fought in the Pacific during the war. James was natively from Pennsylvania, and also resided in Columbus, Ohio, and Tampa, Fla., for many years before moving to Portland, where he and Faith resided with their daughter, Susan Ives.

James held a variety of job positions over the years, and owned a small business in Tampa. James enjoyed writing and was an avid photographer. James an exceptional family man, and was deeply devoted to his wife Faith.

He is survived by his children, David McNaughton and Susan Ives; grandchildren, Scott McNaughton, Melissa McNaughton, Melinda Wellborn, Chet Ives Megan Stanley; and nine great-grandchildren, including Connecticut natives Arabella Ives and Skylah Ives.

The family will observe a private memorial service for James.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, which provides programs and services to meet the needs of injured service men and women. woundedwarriorproject.org

Andover

Leonard Gerard Perreault

Leonard Gerard Perreault, 87, of South Windsor, formerly of Andover, passed away peacefully Saturday, April 5, after a long battle with Alzheimer's, shortly before his 88th birthday.

Lenny was born May 17, 1926, in Portland, Maine, to Odias and Rebecca (Daigle) Perreault. He grew up in the Saco, Maine, area, and spent much of his youth in Old Orchard Beach, where he would later own the Echo Motel. He graduated from high school in Saco.

Lenny then spent part of World War II and the Korean War in the Merchant Marines, after being disqualified from the Armed Forces due to a disability but still wanting to serve his country.

Lenny spent much of his life in Andover, with his beloved wife Patricia (Noyes) and son Chris in their converted one-room schoolhouse, where he loved putting and tending his garden. He worked for many years at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford and made lifelong friends there.

Patricia passed away Sept. 15, 1997.

Lenny is survived by many family members, including his son Christopher, daughter-in-law Heather (Allen), and grandchildren Violetta and Jasper, who all currently reside in Rome, Italy. He is also survived by dear friends Dave and Joy Gaston and James and Dee Kidd, who were like family to him.

A memorial service will be in August; the date will be announced at a future time.

Memorial donations may be made to The Cure Alzheimer's Fund (curealz.org), 34 Washington St., Suite 200, Wellesley Hills, MA 02481.

To sign the online guestbook, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Marlborough

Richard S. Mendall

Richard S. Mendall, 64, formerly of Marlborough and Colchester, peacefully passed away Monday, April 21.

He was the beloved son of the late Grace Mendall of Colchester (2012), devoted father of Kathy Mendall of Bethpage, N.Y., brother of Lewis Mendall and his wife Lorraine of Columbia and brother to the late Joan Warner of Tolland (2002). He will also be deeply missed by several loving cousins, nieces and nephews.

He worked for several years at Bemer's in Glastonbury. He was an avid outdoorsman, loved fishing, gardening, spending time at the shore and sharing his infinite knowledge with family and friends.

Services will be held at a later date at the discretion of the family.

For an online memorial guestbook, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Arthur Omer Choquette

Arthur Omer Choquette, 78, of Lebanon, beloved husband of Irene (Rioux) Choquette, passed away peacefully Holy Saturday, April 19, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester. Born May 4, 1935, in Saco, Maine, he was the only son of the late Omer and Berthe (Heroux) Rioux.

Mr. Choquette earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration from St. Michael's College and went on to work as an actuary for AETNA and Travelers Insurance. Following his retirement in 1993, he worked at the former Tri-Town Foods in Colchester for many years. He loved to spend every possible moment outdoors enjoying the sunshine – regardless of the season – working in the yard, especially tending to his gardens or playing with his grandchildren, to whom he was ever devoted.

In addition to his loving wife of 55 years, he leaves seven children (and their spouses), David and Donna of Edgewater, Fla., Mark of Enfield, Michelle and Bill Bowden of Middletown, Denise and Michael Welch of Westford, Mass., Debra of Lebanon, Jim and Denise of Salem and Katie and James Densman, also of Lebanon; 12 grandchildren, Alicia, Christopher, Zachary, Rachel, Christina, Julia, Nicholas, Mathieu, Daniel, Adam, Erika and Emily; and numerous extended family members and friends.

The family received guests Thursday, Apr. 24, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. Today, April 25, directly at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 67 West Town St., Lebanon. Burial will follow in the New Lebanon Cemetery, with rendering of military honors in recognition of his service with the Connecticut Air National Guard from 1957-63.

Donations in his memory may be made to Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, P.O. Box 400, Harrison, AR 72602-0400, in support of their mission work with the Native American community.

To offer online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Beatrice Girard Nye

Beatrice (Bea) Nye of Bozrah passed away Wednesday, April 16, at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was born July 4, 1921, to Eugene Girard and Delia (Morrisette) Girard.

In 1942, Bea married Horace (Brownie) Nye. Together they owned and operated a landscaping and refusal business. Bea was a mail carrier for the town of Bozrah. She loved being involved with her church and community.

Bea was predeceased by her parents, husband Horace and several siblings.

Bea is survived by numerous nieces and nephews and their families whom she loved dearly.

There will be no calling hours. A memorial Mass will be held at Saint John Mission in Fitchville at the convenience of the family.

East Hampton

Richard L. Fancher

Richard L. Fancher, 64, of East Haddam, beloved husband of Alice (Fontanelli) Fancher, died Sunday, April 20, at his home. Born Oct. 9, 1949 in Winsted he was the son of the late Russell and Bernice (Larkin) Fancher.

Richard had lived in East Hampton and Middle Haddam before moving to East Haddam 14 years ago. Richard was a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam where he was very active. He was a member of the New England Chamber Choir for 25 years and had been very involved in the East Hampton Parks and Rec. Department as a coach when his children were little. He was retired from Pratt 7 Whitney where he had worked for 43 years.

Besides his loving wife Alice he is survived by his two sons, Dennis Fancher and his wife Robin of Granby, Stephen Fancher and his wife Michelle of Florida; his daughter, Cindy LaBrecque and her husband Dan of Florida; a brother, Christopher Fancher of Texas; two sisters, Maryann Dumond of Bristol, Janice Colomb of California; and his five beloved grandchildren, Bryson, Mylee, Sara, Jean, Piper and Sophie. He also leaves several nieces, nephews and many friends.

A memorial celebration of his life will be held Saturday, April 26, at 11 a.m., in Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to either New England Chamber Choir, P.O. Box 211, Cromwell, CT 06416 or to Middlesex Hospice, c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Portland

Rosaria Veneziano

Rosaria "Sarah" (Salafia) Veneziano, 100, of Kensington, died peacefully on Monday April 21. She was predeceased by her husband Michael "Mickey" Veneziano in 1977.

She was born in Portland June 25, 1913, the oldest daughter of the late Luigi and Sebastiana Salafia. She married, raised four children and lived her adult life in Kensington.

She is survived by her daughter, Rosaline "Roz" Ierna of Fort Myers, Fla.; son, Michael Veneziano and his wife Beverly of Kensington; daughter, Caroline "Carrie" Anderson and her husband Mark of Kensington; son, Joseph Veneziano of New Britain; nine grandchildren, Janice, Thomas, Roxane, Andrea, Michael, John, Meredith, Joseph, Kristen; nine great-grandchildren, Allison, Jeffrey, Robert (RJ), Anthony, Luca, Clara Rose, Charlotte, JoJo, Isabella; several nieces and nephews and dear friends.

Sarah was a true craftsman, her many talents included sewing, tatting, crocheting, quilting, gardening and baking. She produced many beautiful pieces for her family and friends. She was an active member of the Berlin Senior Center. She will be remembered by her family and loved ones for her gentleness and her creativity.

Funeral services are today, April 25, at 10 a.m., at Carlson Funeral Home, 45 Franklin Square, New Britain. Calling hours were Thursday, April 24, at the funeral home. Burial will be in West Lane Cemetery, Kensington.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the New Britain Salvation Army, 78 Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051.

Share a memory or note of sympathy at carlsonfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Lora DeBari Romine

Lora (DeBari) Romine, 66, of Portland, passed away Tuesday, April 22 at Middlesex Hospital.

Born June 24, 1947 in Wypotitlock, Maine, she lived in Portland for most of her life. She worked as an LPN at Middlesex Hospital for over 30 years and took great pride in the care of her patients. She was also an avid gardener and bird watcher.

She leaves her sons, Thomas and Francis DeBari; grandchildren Colin, Thomas and Taylor; a brother, Parker Pierce; many nieces and nephews and the extended DeBari family.

Services will be held Monday April 28 at 1 p.m. at the Swedish Cemetery, William Street, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Kidsafe CT, 19 Elm St., Rockville, CT 06066.

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

Portland

Barbara Newton Hahn

Barbara Newton Hahn, 88, of Portland, died peacefully April 15 with her family at her side. She was born June 27, 1925 in Hartford, the daughter of Helen (Marvel) and Theodore Burnett Newton, owner of the former Netherlands Hotel in Hartford.

Following her 1943 graduation from the Oxford School in West Hartford, she attended Centenary College of New Jersey for an associate's degree, followed by studies in journalism at Boston University, where she was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

While busy raising six children (including two sets of twins), Barbara still found time for her passion—oil painting. Her favorite medium was oil and she depicted many subjects and scenes in a realistic style using unique color and texture. In 2000, she participated with over 50 Connecticut artists in providing paintings of historic structures for Lebanon's 300 year remembrance celebration. If she was moved by an event, she would paint it, such as Hurricane Katrina or a walk on the beach.

She also volunteered at Trinity Church in Portland.

Barbara is survived by her six children: Theodore Hahn, Thomas Hahn and Marilyn Hahn, all of Middletown; Henry B. Hahn and Barbara Fuller of West Newton, Mass.; Janet Hahn Lougee and Alan T. Lougee of Chicago, Ill.; and Joan Earle Hahn and husband of New Hampshire. She is also survived by her brothers, Theodore Newton of Old Saybrook and Richard "Bud" Newton and his wife Ruth (Christie) of Virginia; three grandchildren Nolan Hahn, Paul and Lauren Lougee; and four nieces.

We will always remember her for her unwavering love, fortitude, strong ethics and great sense of humor.

Funeral services were held Saturday, April 19 at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield. Burial followed in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford. The family received relatives and friends prior to the service at the funeral chapel.

Donations in Barbara's memory may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

For online expressions of sympathy to the family, visit desopo.com.