

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

Volume 39, Number 6

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

May 30, 2014



Hebron residents lined the streets Monday, cheering and waving as military members marched past – American flags proudly blowing in the breeze – in the annual Memorial Day Parade. More Memorial Day photos are online, at [glcitizen.com](http://glcitizen.com).

## Hebron Gathers to Honor and Remember

by Geeta Schrayter

On Monday, the weather seemed to be a perfect reflection of the day. Grey skies and occasional raindrops made an appearance, like a somber symbol of the lost lives Hebron residents gathered to remember.

Then, blue skies and sunshine showed up like a representation of the liberties and way of life Americans possess thanks to the sacrifices made since the country's onset.

"Since the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord and the Revolutionary War began, American men and women have been answering our nation's call to duty," said Tom Sousa, lieutenant colonel in the United States Army and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sousa spoke at the Memorial Day parade halted at the Veterans Memorial Green for the honors ceremony.

"Today, all across the country, people will gather together to remember, to honor, and to pay gratitude to those military members who have died while in the service of our country," he continued. "This gathering is just one small part of a national celebration. It is not a lot, but it is one small way we can honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice so that we may live in freedom."

Residents lined the streets as this year's parade stepped off from RHAM High School at 11 a.m. Monday and traveled along Main Street.

Veterans, town officials, community members and groups such as Boy and Girl Scout troops, baseball teams, school bands, the Hebron Lions Club and members of the fire department marched past cheering crowds to St. Peter's Cemetery and back again. On the return trip, the parade paused for the ceremony honoring military members.

"Our mission today is simple and profound," Joe Fetta, commander of the Hebron American Legion said as the ceremony began. "We are here today to remember and say 'thank you,' with our deepest gratitude and respect."

Sousa then spoke about Prisoners of War and service members who are missing in action (POW MIA).

"As we remember the fallen it is fitting to specifically think of those military members who are taken as prisoners of war, those who died while in prison, those who to this day remain missing in action, and those who remain captive," he stated. "It is appropriate to pause a moment to reflect upon their dedication to duty and to appreciate the sacrifices they made."

Gathering together, he continued, "is a tribute to our lost troops and to their families. It is a way to say 'we remember.'"

After Sousa, Air Force Master Sgt. Roger Krasusky, who is also a veteran of Iraqi Free-

See Hebron Gathers Page 2

## East Hampton Teen Eyed for MLB Draft

by Elizabeth Bowling

Marvin Gorgas isn't your typical high school athlete.

At 18 years old, he has a gold medal under his belt from this past summer when he played for Team USA in Taiwan.

And in just one short week, he's expected to be taken by a pro team in the Major League Baseball draft, June 5 through 7, which would make him the first East Hampton player ever selected.

The right-handed pitcher's record for his senior year is 8-0, with a 0.62 ERA. And, impressively, he has 99 strikeouts to just eight walks this year. East Hampton High School baseball coach Scott Wosleger called his strikeouts-to-walks ratio a "significant stat," because that ratio for a good pitcher, "at any level," is about 3-1; "4-1 is really good," Wosleger said.

Wosleger spoke very highly of the four-year varsity player, saying it's "been a lot of fun" to have had him on the team.

"He's a great talent," Wosleger said of Gorgas. "He is a great kid and very popular in the community."

According to Wosleger, the senior's fastball has been clocked as high 95 m.p.h., and there have been several scouts at every game Gorgas pitched.

Gorgas said of the upcoming draft, "I'm super excited. I'm hoping that I can be selected

in one of the top 10 [rounds] and pursue my dream of playing Major League Baseball."

If selected, he said, "I'm looking to accept."

Asked if there was a specific team he'd dreamt of playing for, the 18-year-old said, "As long as I get there I'd be happy with any team, but I like the Yankees so that'd be really cool if they drafted me."

Gorgas was born in Chicago but moved to Puerto Rico shortly after. He left Puerto Rico and moved to East Hampton after his parents divorced when he was in seventh grade.

Asked if he could have predicted this wonderful opportunity for Gorgas to play professional ball, Wosleger said definitively, "yes."

He recalled when Gorgas was in seventh grade and attended a high school baseball camp.

"I knew just by the way he moved around at that point that he was a special talent," Wosleger said.

"When he was freshman he was so good, he was so talented at that point, we had to keep him grounded," Wosleger recalled, adding, "not that he had a problem staying grounded."

"Our biggest challenge was trying to help him get better as a player each year," Wosleger said, "and help him grow as a person each of the four years as well."

He explained that another challenge was to keep Gorgas from "peaking at a young age."

In 2011, Gorgas' freshman year, Wosleger

See MLB Draft Page 2



East Hampton High School senior Marvin Gorgas has had quite the season – going 8-0 with a 0.62 ERA, sporting a fastball that's been clocked as high as 95 m.p.h. The 18-year-old is expected to be selected in next week's Major League Baseball draft.



As the Memorial Day parade made its way through town, the proceedings paused at the Veterans Memorial Green for an honors ceremony. There, various individuals spoke about the day in front of monuments – like the one above left – erected in honor of Hebron’s veterans. As the ceremony came to an end following the laying of wreaths and a 12-gun salute, the colors were restored, and the National Anthem was performed by the RHAM High School band, shown right.

### Hebron Gathers cont. from Front Page

dom and commander of Hebron’s Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8776 was introduced. He honored local veterans who passed away in the last year as well as those who recently came home and those currently serving.

“With respect and gratitude, we render a final salute to our veterans who have passed away during the recent year,” he said, before reading off their names: Eleanor Gale, Herbert Johnson, Greg Kozyra, John Perham, Marvin Ross and Paul Serra.

“As I stand here looking out at the American flags, and the hundreds of faces reflecting such patriotism and pride, we welcome home the veterans who have returned from tours in combat zones during the past year,” Krasusky continued.

Those were: Dan O’Connell, Dan Grano, Christine Kerry, Adam Miller, Ron Minas, and Carl Ottensen, all of the Army; and Pat Brunell of the United States Marine Corp.

Also, Krasusky said, “We proudly salute our veteran brothers and sisters currently in active duty in the global war on terrorism,” who are Tim Baumher of the Navy and Jared Billard of

the Army.

“Our current military is outstanding,” Krasusky stated. “These young men and women are proud of who they are and what they believe in and what they are doing to protect our country. If you are looking for examples of courage, commitment and honor you will find it within the United States Military Forces.”

He concluded, “We are grateful to have them defending our country, our way of life – we are proud to be Americans.”

After Krasusky, there was a slight deviation from the typical Memorial Day recognitions, as Vietnam veteran and USMC Sgt. Ron Parkyn spoke about RHAM Middle School teacher Dawn Mallory, who died after being struck by a vehicle in the school parking lot March 14.

“She was not a veteran,” he said, “but she was highly-respected by the veteran community.”

Parkyn explained about 15 years ago, Mallory asked veterans to come into her class to talk to students and answer questions.

“She created a forum where veterans could give firsthand experiences of life in the mili-

tary, what war really is, why we fight and sacrifice and why we are here today,” he stated. “It was a great success. We will all miss her patriotic spirit, her ideas, her energy and her dedication. Dawn Mallory will be remembered as an outstanding teacher who gave 100 percent in what she believed in.”

As Fetta took to the podium once more, he brought thoughts back to the meaning of the day.

“We gather to honor and remember our fallen. Most died not just for their country but for the comrades serving next to them. They died protecting those with whom they served,” he stated. “The survivors of conflicts are their legacy. Please keep alive this legacy by remembering those that have secured your freedom, those that have passed on since, and those that continue to serve today.”

He continued, “We serve so that we can keep the things we love the most: God, country and family. We remain true to these principles; we honor their sacrifices.”

Fetta then named the 17 Hebron residents who gave their all in the Civil War up through

World War II.

“We must never forget what these heroes have done and what their loved ones have lost. Remembering once a year is not nearly enough. The family survivors – husbands, wives, moms, dads, brothers, sisters – remember daily, that freedom is not free.”

The ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary then placed wreaths at the town’s war monuments, and the air was filled with the sounds of a 12 gun salute and a performance of Taps.

The ceremony came to a close after honorary grand marshal Wilbur Porter, a Navy veteran who served in World War II, restored the colors while the RHAM High School band performed the National Anthem.

“God bless our vets, the fallen, and the United States of America,” Fetta concluded as the parade returned to formation and made the final pass through town, leaving those present to reflect on everything said, on a day that was – as it should be – a mixture of both joy and sorrow, just as the weather brought both sunshine and shadow.

### MLB Draft cont. from Front Page

played him as a closer rather than a starting pitcher, playing just an inning or two at a time. By sophomore year, he’d go six or seven innings before seeing the bench, Wosleger said.

“As he got older,” the head coach explained, “he became a starter through a couple of our older guys graduating.”

Wosleger said one of Gorgas’ standout moments was when he threw a no-hitter against Cromwell in April, because “they’re a big rival of ours.”

Gorgas also called that game one of his fondest memories in his EHHS baseball career. It was his first career no-hitter, and in that same game, Gorgas recalled, his best friend, Alex Meeker, got a base hit, driving in the game’s only run.

Another of his fondest memories is winning the Shoreline Conference title in 2011 and, that same year, going all the way to the state tour-

namment and winning that, as well. It was the first and only state title for EHHS baseball history, he said proudly.

Last year EHHS won the Shoreline Conference tournament for the second time, in a game against Cromwell.

This year’s conference tournament started Tuesday, when East Hampton defeated Old Lyme 4-2. Yesterday (after press time) EHHS hosted Westbrook in the conference tournament semifinals.

The state tournament begins next week. The team’s record so far this year is 19-2. (That’s 15-2 in conference; 3-0 out of conference; and 1-0 in playoff games.)

Gorgas concluded, “We just have a great team and coaching staff and I’ve been really happy and blessed to be part of this team and program. I’m really happy to have spent all four years here with a great coach.”

# Marlborough Band Releases First CD

by Melissa Roberto

A band consisting of three Marlborough residents who enjoy making music in their spare time just released their first CD, titled *Fresh Hot SOOP* – and it just might be the most creative concoction served on the east side of the river.

SOOP is an acronym for the trio's name, "Seat Of Our Pants." The group of three plays songs from a long list of musical genres, and therefore define themselves as an "acoustic contemporary folk" band.

"It's very difficult to describe because we're very eclectic in that sense," said band member Jeff Gorman.

Gorman plays the acoustic bass and harmonica. The other two thirds of SOOP are Gorman's wife, Carolyn Brodgerski, and their friend, Mark Hall. Brodgerski supplies the vocals and plays an assortment of string instruments, and Hall is the percussionist, who taps away on a boxed drum set called a cajón.

The band members met as their children played sports together in Marlborough. To Gorman's surprise – and thanks to a plan devised by Brodgerski and Hall – the three learned of each other's musical talents during an open mic night at the former Marlborough Tavern in early 2011. At the time, Hall had been playing on stage with another band, and invited the married couple up to perform, which Gorman was not expecting.

"Jeff was not used to performing and he was a nervous wreck!" quipped Brodgerski, who said she had hidden her husband's harmonica in her purse that night.

It was the couple's first stint in the Marlborough limelight that inspired Hall to join the two in music-making. The trio began practicing within the couple's Marlborough home. One day the band would practice a song, the band members explained, and the next they'd be performing it at a local venue – which brought about the band name.

"I had been complaining that this felt a little 'seat-of-our-pants.' We would practice three songs and then the next night go out and play them," explained Gorman.

Today, SOOP has dozens of open mic nights and appearances to look back on. The band meets once or twice a week for about two hours at a time, where their repertoire of songs has grown from cover songs to ones they write themselves.

*Fresh Hot SOOP* features 14 songs, split between cover songs and originals. The album took "about three months" to complete – a quick turnaround the members attributed to the fact they had written some of its songs in the past.

The CD was recorded inside The Coffeehouse Recording Studio in Middletown and produced by Mike Arafeh. The album artwork – which fittingly features an illustration of a piping hot bowl of soup – was designed by Dick

Smolinski at Smolinski Studios in Glastonbury.

Recording inside of the studio was a first for the three musicians. Gorman said it's a process that "can be trying at times," and Brodgerski added, "You hear every mistake."

However, the only "tense moment" during the recording sessions was determining which songs to include on the album, Brodgerski said. She said she longed for it to feature all originals, but the group ultimately decided to include its covers that the band said "people always want to hear" at shows.

"They don't sound like the bands that used to play them," Gorman said.

Cover songs on the album include War's "Low Rider," "Seven Daffodils" by Lee Hays and Fran Moseley, and "In the Air Tonight" by Phil Collins.

Other songs on the album are generations old – in that the band members wrote them in their younger years. For instance, "The Love of a Sailor" is a song Brodgerski wrote when she was 19. Another, "Cadillac," is a catchy tune she wrote with a friend when she was 20.

"Love of a Sailor" was tweaked for the album to include instrumentation, a new verse and the addition of a male part sung by Hall. Other songs on the CD are more recent, and some "just evolved over time," Brodgerski said.

"When things are quiet, my mind will wander," she continued. "Some of them just come and then they're done."

That was the process for Brodgerski and her husband, who wrote "I Hardly Recognize You," in a span of three hours. It's a song written about Brodgerski's mother who has dementia.

Hall also wrote two songs on the CD titled "Song for Nancy" and "Trying to Make You See," both of which vary in meaning. Hall, a psychologist by day, said "Song for Nancy" was inspired by a client and the trauma she faced. The second is a lighter tune, about a man who "thinks he looks great and can't understand why she – his gal – isn't as interested in him as he is in her."

The three reflected on what it's like to see their songs – old and new – in the form of a CD. Brodgerski, who first sang in public when she was in third grade, said music became dormant when she married for the first time and had children. SOOP has been her outlet, she said.

"I think once I opened up that again, that vein, I just can't get enough of it. I love it," the singer exclaimed.

Hall began playing the drums in high school. Now, he's a member of three bands but says SOOP is the primary one. He said he "never" thought playing original music he wrote would end up on a CD. "To be playing it out is just amazing," the drummer said.

Gorman began playing in a band in sixth grade but he didn't "really" get into the "folk-rock" scene until about 10 years ago. However,



Seat Of Our Pants band members strike a pose relative to their style. The local band recently released its first album titled "Fresh Hot SOOP."

he said, shortly after college he could be seen driving long commutes with his harmonica in hand.

Reflecting on the CD, Hall said he's "really proud" of what SOOP has accomplished in a span of three years. He shared, "It's really neat to go into a studio and make a big, complex, polished sound. It was an absolute blast. It feels like a step ahead in one's musical career."

Brodgerski said it's "still humbling." SOOP recently opened up for the Connecticut State Troubadour, Kristen Graves, at The Breadbox in Willimantic on May 10 – the date they hoped to have a CD finished by. They did, and sold copies of it at the performance.

"They just do it with such ease," Brodgerski said of professionals. "It's getting easier for us to be in front of a crowd. You've got to start somewhere."

The three agreed their speciality is harmonies.

"Our musical tastes are very similar and our voices blend so well," Brodgerski said.

The members of the group laughed when asked what their next goal is, now that their CD has been released.

"That's what we've been asking ourselves ever since we got started," Hall said, adding they just enjoy making music. "This is like a

side venture for us that has taken on a life of its own. I think that's the interesting thing – we're not professional musicians, we're just doing this for fun."

The psychologist and Brodgerski and Gorman, both of whom have careers in computer security, said they'll stick to keeping it a side gig, adding the only goal they have for the future is to continue booking new venues.

The band has several shows coming up, which include a performance at the Marlborough Business Association Music Festival at Sadler's Restaurant on June 12 from 7-9 p.m., followed by a show at the Strawberry Festival in East Hampton from 2-4 p.m. on June 14, and a performance held at the University of Connecticut Storrs Center on June 25, from 5-7 p.m.

A full list of SOOP's event schedule is listed on the band's website at [seatofourpants.org](http://seatofourpants.org). The trio's debut album is being sold at the Marlborough Arts Center, Higher Grounds Coffee Shop in East Hampton, and on the band website through PayPal. Readers can check out the band's Facebook page at [Facebook.com/seatofourpants](https://www.facebook.com/seatofourpants), or email the band at [info@seatofourpants.org](mailto:info@seatofourpants.org) for more information about upcoming shows or how to buy *Hot Fresh SOOP*.

# Sklarz Receives Raise, Three More Years in Marlborough

by Melissa Roberto

David Sklarz will continue as the Marlborough superintendent of schools for at least another three years, and will receive a 3 percent salary increase in the coming fiscal year, based on unanimous votes taken by the Board of Education in its meeting last week.

The school board met in executive session, last Thursday, May 22, following its regular meeting to evaluate Sklarz. In public session the board came out and voted both to extend Sklarz's contract one more year, to the 2016-17 school year, as well as give the superintendent nearly a \$2,000 bump up in his annual earnings.

Chairwoman Ruth Kelly, vice chairwoman Betty O'Brien, and board members Louise Concodello, Carole Shea, Robert Clarke, Wes Skorski, Judithe Kaplan and Theresa Brysgel

were present at the meeting and voted 'yes' to the contract extension and the pay raise. Member Mimi LaPoint was absent from the meeting.

Sklarz, a part-time superintendent, was first hired in Marlborough in July 2009. He brought with him much experience as a superintendent in other Connecticut school districts – including a 14-year stint as the head of West Hartford Public Schools – and even across the country, serving as superintendent of Santa Cruz Public Schools in California for four years.

Currently, Sklarz is receiving a salary of \$64,927, and on July 1, the start of the 2014-15 fiscal year, his salary will increase to \$66,875.

Sklarz's contract calls for the superintendent to work a total of 110 days each year, and though his schedule changes from year to year, he's

often at work two to three days each week.

This past year proved especially busy for Sklarz. Following Marlborough Elementary School principal Scott Nierendorf's departure last August, Sklarz hired not one but two interim principals, Kathy Veronesi and Paula Schwartz. He recently hired Dan White, current principal of Chaplin Elementary School, as the new permanent principal of the school, and tapped Kim Kelley, already an employee at MES, to assume the permanent assistant principal position, following current assistant principal Maureen Ryan's departure at the end of this year.

Also, Sklarz delivered presentations on two much-anticipated feasibility studies to the board of education on a foreign language pro-

gram last October and all-day kindergarten last November.

This week, chairwoman Ruth Kelly commented on Sklarz's work.

"We're very pleased with Dr. Sklarz," Kelly said. "We are glad that we're going to have him into the future. He's done a great job especially giving us a fiscally responsible budget while providing everything the children need for their education."

Sklarz was just as pleased to receive the support.

"I'm just really thrilled to be able to commit myself and have the board commit to me for at least the next three years," Sklarz said. "It's a home for me here. I'm just delighted to continue that relationship with the district."

# Rallying for Alex Robley in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

Many who know Alex Robley, a senior at Bacon Academy, testify that he “never gets down” and is “always smiling.”

That in itself is inspiring, but several argue it’s even more remarkable coming from an 18-year-old with cerebral palsy, who is confined to a wheelchair and has undergone 13 surgeries. While his restraints have no effect on his positive outlook on life, Alex’s condition has placed a financial burden on his mother Laureen. Laureen transports Alex wherever he needs to go in a used 1999 wheelchair-accessible van; however, the van is breaking down, and now the mother is in need of funds to purchase a new van, which can be up to a \$50,000 expense.

But thanks to a dedicated group of women who have formed the committee “Wheels for Alex,” Laureen has hope. The committee has tasked itself with planning fundraising efforts to help raise money for a new van for the Robleys, with the first occurring at the Tag Sale on the Green on June 8.

The event (which has a rain date of June 22) will run from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and Wheels for Alex has planned a bake sale and an inflatable house to be set up in their designated spot on site. The inflatable was donated by Fantastic Inflatables of Colchester, and the committee also credited the local McDonald’s, CVS and Stop and Shop for donating necessities for the event.

Wheels for Alex was spearheaded by Colchester resident Nicole Reardon. Outside of her job as a medical assistant, Reardon substitutes as a lunch lady in the high school cafeteria, where she’s gotten to know Alex.

“He comes through the lunch line and is just always so happy,” Reardon said. “I see him at all the sporting events. He’s a very big part of the school.”

Reardon said she first learned of Laureen’s need for a new van via a Facebook post. She began putting fliers up around the school, but felt a committee outside of Bacon would help get the greater community involved.

“I kind of just decided to form a ‘Wheels for Alex’ Committee. I’ve gone and created a Facebook page for it, which is now about 35 women strong,” Reardon said this week, adding the people on the committee “have been absolutely amazing.”

That was just a few weeks back, and the de-

voted resident said she is pleased that the first event is only a little over a week away.

“They really deserve this,” Reardon said of the Robleys. “Laureen is not able to work due to her own health and she takes care of Alex full-time, so their funds are very limited.”

Laureen, who said she’s “never” asked for help, communicated her appreciation of the Wheels for Alex group. “Nicole called me and I said ‘absolutely.’ I’m willing to take any help that we can get,” the mother said.

Laureen explained she lives with Alex in Colchester, and that Alex spends weekends with his father, Rick Robley, of East Hampton. Laureen said she does not work because she is on disability, but “even on days I don’t feel good” she does her best to provide for Alex.

“He’s my world,” the mother said.

Laureen said Alex was born prematurely. He spent three and a half months in the hospital before he could come home, she said.

“Just two weeks before he came home from the hospital they told us he could be blind and not ever talk, but he doesn’t stop talking,” Laureen said with a chuckle.

“He’s a social butterfly,” she furthered, “which is a good thing. He loves being involved at the school. Any home games that there are in town, he goes to.”

And that’s just one of the reasons Laureen is in search of a replacement van. Laureen explained the current used van she drives has begun to break down, creating some “scary days” for her and Alex.

“We’ve broken down on the highway and the road has had to be closed down to unload Alex,” the mother explained.

Alex is confined to a power wheelchair, which the mother explained is a motorized wheelchair that her son uses to get around. They weigh 400 pounds, she said, so a van with a wheelchair lift is necessary to transport him.

Laureen said her goal is to find a newer, used van, which ranges from \$35-40,000. However, if enough money is raised, a new van could be purchased.

“My goal is just to be able to take him places and not worry about if we’re going to break down,” she said. “He’s going to be with me as long as I can take care of him. I want to be able to bring him back and forth to doctor’s appointments or if he wants to go to a school function – just to keep him out and be social.”

Those school functions are a major part of



It’s common to see Alex Robley, left, at Bacon’s sports games. His school spirit and positive attitude are among the reasons the community has formed “Wheels for Alex,” to raise funds to help Alex’s mom, Laureen, right, purchase a new wheelchair-accessible van.

Alex’s life. His friend, senior Michelle DesFosses, recalled going to prom with Alex last year.

“His cheeks must have hurt from smiling so much,” DesFosses said with a laugh. “He always has a positive attitude and he puts such a bright, positive look on life.”

At Bacon Academy, fundraising efforts for the Robleys van have been ongoing. From May 12-16, the school held a “Random Acts of Kindness” week and several students stepped up to help raise money in a fundraiser titled “Project Alex: Wheels of Kindness.” That included the selling of \$1 bracelets as well as 3 vs. 3 basketball games, with proceeds going to the funding of the van.

DesFosses explained why she feels it’s important for the community to help Alex and Laureen.

“His mom is such a hardworking person,” she said. “Alex makes so many people smile. He touches so many people’s lives and it would

be great if they could just give back to him.”

And now with the formation of Wheels for Alex, it seems Laureen’s goal has an even greater possibility of being reached.

“I feel like people are very excited and hopeful that we’re going to be able to raise money for him and his mom,” Reardon said.

The committee has set up a fund at Liberty Bank titled “Wheels for Alex.” Individuals can go to any branch and donate money to the fund, or make checks payable to “Wheels for Alex” and mail them to Liberty Bank, 219 South Main St., Colchester, CT 06415.

Reardon continued The Tag Sale on the Green is just the first of many plans for Wheels for Alex. The group is hoping to greet a lot of friendly contributors, and is also hopeful that their efforts will continue at events in the future.

To visit Wheels for Alex on June 8, look for the giant inflatable on the Colchester Town Green. The committee will be present during the entire event, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

# Schuster Says Goodbye to Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

At noon today, Gregg Schuster will officially bid his first selectman’s office goodbye.

Schuster notified the town in April he planned to resign May 30, as he had accepted the position of township manager in Pocono Township, Pa. Schuster’s term runs through November 2015; the Board of Selectmen has selected Republican selectman Stan Soby to fill the remainder of the term.

Schuster, a Republican, served in office since 2009 after having won three straight elections for the first selectman seat – although he was active in town long before his first election. Schuster was born and raised in Colchester, and although he lived in Fairfield County and New Jersey for a period, he returned in 2005 and has since raised two children, a daughter, Leah, and a son, Brett, with his wife Faith.

“I’ve been in this town most of my life,” Schuster said this week, pointing out a few things he’ll miss.

“I’m going to miss the community. It’s a fantastic community. I have family here; I have friends here,” Schuster shared. “I’ve been in this town most of my life. I’ll certainly miss walking down the street and seeing people I know or people I grew up with.”

The seasoned politician added he’ll also miss the “great staff here at Town Hall.”

“I tell everyone how lucky they are to have a dedicated and professional group who work for the town. A lot are residents themselves and they take a lot of pride in what they do,” he said.

Schuster also credited the town volunteers, and members of its boards and commissions for “helping run this town and making a huge difference.”

Schuster’s office may have been inside

Town Hall, but many who know him are aware he had many duties outside of it. Schuster was the individual conducting ribbon-cutting ceremonies at new businesses in town, he had the honor of being a judge at the annual Pumpkin ‘n Pooches festival, and he often gave speeches at several town-wide events, including yellow ribbon ceremonies where soldiers were greeted back home. The longtime Colchester resident said “there’s been a lot” of highlights but chose a few to reflect on that stick out in his mind.

“First is getting Tractor Supply to open up in town, which helped to extend the utilities at the south end of Colchester,” he explained. “I expect a lot of commercial growth in that area.”

Secondly, Schuster recalled winning the “Distinguished Budget Presentation Award” by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada. “We received that two years in a row,” he said.

Schuster also commented on Colchester’s ranking in *Money Magazine’s* 2013 “Best Places to Live in America” issue. The town was ranked eight in its “Least Crowded Towns” category.

“That’s a recognition I’m extremely proud of,” Schuster said.

Other than that, Schuster recalled work that was accomplished through grants. He was proud to look back on the streetscape improvements done to Merchant’s Row on Lebanon Avenue two years ago. He mentioned the town’s receipt last year of a Main Street Investment Grant; it will pay for new landscaping, solar lighting and widening of the sidewalks on Linwood Avenue, and Schuster said the work is “going to make the downtown area even better.”

Another aspect of his Town Hall duties

Schuster said he’s “certainly proud of” is improving communication with citizens. He referenced the town’s “up and improved” website, weekly email blasts, and something he thinks “the community has really appreciated” is his social media posts on Twitter and Facebook.

Even moreso, Schuster is proud to have been a part of the process in enhancing public safety. He referenced the ambulance incentive program at the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department, which was set up in 2013 to give incentives to fire and EMS volunteers in order to better staff ambulances.

“Now we’ve put in place an incentive program and we’re not having those issues anymore,” Schuster said.

Although on Monday, June 2, Schuster will be busy representing a new town in the Keystone State. It’s a role that – unlike the first selectman seat in Colchester – is appointed. However, Schuster explained last month some of his new duties will be quite similar to the role he’s used to, such as developing a town budget and coming up with methods to fund items such as capital and roads.

“Some of those issues and the budgetary experience I think is going to translate very well in my new position,” the Republican said. “They also don’t do a lot of [social media and website communication] so I’m going to take that new experience with me.”

He also mentioned something invaluable he’ll bring along with him that he says was evident in Colchester: “That sense of community.”

“That sense of cooperation is something I’d like to take from here and bring to my new position,” he said.

Last month several town officials spoke to



Gregg Schuster

the *Rivereast*, stating they wish “nothing but the best” for Schuster and his new endeavor. Schuster said he’ll spend the next few months returning to his hometown on the weekends, adding his family will officially make the huge leap to the Keystone State in July.

“It’s been an honor and a privilege to serve this community. It has been the experience of a lifetime,” Schuster concluded. “It really has been something which I’ve been blessed to be allowed to do.”

# Marlborough Enjoys a Sunny Parade

by Melissa Roberto

It was an afternoon of sunny skies in Marlborough on Monday, but more importantly was the action taking place on the streets. A spirited crowd lined the center of town to get a view of family, friends, local organizations and dignitary guests who proudly marched in the town's annual Memorial Day Parade.

The march stepped off at Marlborough Elementary School on School Drive to South Main Street and ascended across Route 66 to the town green on North Main Street. The drums could be heard before parade participants came into view, but once they did the streets looked like a sea of red, white and blue.

A Marlborough Police vehicle led the way, and the first to greet onlookers with smiles were members of the American Legion Post 197, American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5095 proudly raising stars and stripes.

The familiar faces of First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski and her fellow board of selectmen members Denis Soucy and Dick Shea then came into view, as did state Rep. Pam Sawyer and state Sen. Cathy Osten, waving to all those energetically clapping from the outskirts.

Old-fashioned cars followed, transporting veterans, and members of the National Guard in uniform walked by in synchronized formation. And if waving gestures and the tossing of wrapped candy wasn't enough to get the crowd's attention, the many bands performing national songs did. Some in the crowd sang along to music supplied by the RHAM middle and high school bands, the Colchester Continental Fife and Drum Corps and Connecticut Valley Field Music.

As always, the parade wouldn't have been complete without Marlborough's youngest citizens. Perhaps sporting the widest grins of the day were the proud members of the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, Daisy, Brownie and Girl Scout troops, and the youth sports groups, including Marlborough Martial Arts, Marlborough Soccer Club and Marlborough Youth Athletic League.

Following the march, parade-goers and participants gathered in the town green for a ceremony led by American Legion Post 197 Commander Bernard Hoyland, who introduced the event's public speakers. The first was Chaplain Ray Theobald who delivered an invocation.

"We ask that you will watch over the veterans of this land, inspiring them to serve you and this country in new and creative ways," he prayed. "We also pray for those who have given their lives to the service of our country and for those, our fellow veterans, who have served this nation in a time of battle and a time of peace."

Sawyer then stood on the podium and recited the traditional Memorial Day poem "In Flanders Field." Standing alongside Sawyer was Osten, who introduced herself as a Vietnam Era veteran. Osten encouraged the crowd to do one thing on Monday.

"I ask that you visit a cemetery and just take a moment to go by the graves of those men and women who were in the service and give them honor," she said furthering, "Each day you should remember that someone in our country was born in the blood of those who gave their lives. And there are men and women today giving their lives. So please remember, freedom is

never free."

Gaudinski echoed Osten. In addition to thanking all in attendance, Gaudinski reminded the crowd what the day is all about.

"This is our town's way to be here and to honor all those who have been our fallen heroes and we are here to pay tribute," she said. "This is a day of remembrance."

In between the ceremony speakers came performances from the RHAM middle and high school bands, who played the "Star Spangled Banner," "America the Beautiful" and "Washington Post March."

Shea also took the podium, and shared with the crowd an experience he recently endured that was "quite moving." For the last two years, he said, he's received email updates from "dedicated volunteers of businesses and organizations" who put together a series of trips to the World War II memorial in Washington, D.C., for Connecticut veterans of World War II and the Korean Conflict. In early March, he received one of those emails, which suggested individuals come to Bradley International Airport on a Saturday night to honor Connecticut veterans upon returning from a visit to the nation's capital.

"It just seemed like those guys deserved a welcome," Shea recalled, adding he attended. "I have to tell you, I was surprised and delighted by the turnout."

Shea said the turnout was even more surprising when the veterans' flight was delayed. Shea recalled, "Nobody left."

And once the veterans stepped off the plane, Shea said, "seeing those guys come through was truly inspiring. Many were in wheelchairs, others walked with assistance but all projected that military bearing and quiet sense of self confidence that seems unique to those who served in war time."

Shea wrapped up, "This day, this Memorial Day, is for them. And it's a great day to be in America. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for remembering."

The ceremony ended with the traditional laying of the wreath on the veteran's monument followed by a three-volley salute and the playing of Taps.

After the ceremony, the Bove family of Marlborough agreed it was an afternoon well spent. Kristin and Mike attended the parade with their three children, Ethan, 8, Breah, 4 and Keegan, 2.

"It was fun. It's a nice family tradition that we've been going to for about five years now," said Kristin, adding her son Ethan participated in the parade with the Cub Scouts Pack 39.

Ethan said his favorite part was seeing all the soldiers.

Others who made the event possible, like Senior Vice Commander of Post 197 Jim Dwyer, were pleased with the event.

"I think it was very professional. Everybody was just at the top of their game," Dwyer said, to which Theobald agreed.

"I think it was a very nice service and it had a good turnout," he said.

While Memorial Day only comes once a year, it's now up to the citizens of Marlborough and of the surrounding communities to take the advice Gaudinski shared in her speech – "never forget to remember."



Veterans raising flags marched proudly down South Main Street during Monday's Memorial Day Parade.



The RHAM High School band also marched in the parade, playing a variety of patriotic songs.

# School Board Revisits All-Day Kindergarten in Marlborough

by Melissa Roberto

The Board of Education in its meeting last Thursday revisited the topic of all-day kindergarten – and the discussion resulted in differing opinions from board members and the public in attendance.

The talk had been anticipated since last November, when Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz presented a feasibility study on the subject. It was then that the board decided the superintendent would give an update at the May 22 meeting.

Sklarz reminded the board last week the update was meant to assess how an all-day program would impact the district. He recalled the board's agreement to take into account the status of the Common Core State Standards curriculum and trends of kindergarten enrollment.

In his remarks Thursday, Sklarz admitted there are “conflicting findings.” He explained earlier research showed all-day kindergarten programs are necessary in “most low socioeconomic” districts. However, current findings have shown “the lasting effects in the high performing school districts is basically diminished by grade three,” Sklarz said. Back in November, Sklarz classified Marlborough as a district of a high socioeconomic status.

Sklarz furthered, “Despite the conflicting findings in most current research, there are strong opinions of educators on full-day versus half-day.”

To figure out where Marlborough's kindergarten teachers stand on the issue, Sklarz said, “I had spent a lot of time with teachers to help me understand.”

According to Sklarz, when asked if kindergartners are mastering the Common Core curriculum, the teachers responded “yes” with no hesitation. However, the superintendent pointed out the teachers came to the “outstanding conclusion” that “time outweighs class size.”

“They felt the idea of having three sections of 20 students [for all-day kindergarten] outweighs four sections of 14.5 students [for half-day kindergarten],” Sklarz explained.

Sklarz said he and teachers then discussed “what full-day k would allow for.” The benefits included: enriching the curriculum, more time for Writer's Workshop, time in the Science Technology Engineering Art and Math (STEAM) room, in-depth math instruction and socialization and outside activities.

Still, the superintendent explained he “tried to remain objective” on the topic. He suggested the board to reflect on it and to come to a decision in the October Board of Education meeting before the development of the 2015-16 fiscal year budget begins.

He furthered the price of switching from half-day kindergarten to full-day would be “about a \$50,000 difference.”

Board members went around the table Thursday expressing their personal opinions on the subject. Many said the cost was not an issue. However, deciding whether or not to offer all-day kindergarten is an answer members wrestled with.

“For me it's a question of what is the right thing,” Chairwoman Ruth Kelly explained. “Is the reason we're going to do the full-day k because they have it in Hebron and Colchester? I'm not sure that's the right reason. I think we need to do what's right for our community here and our children.”

Member Louise Concodello felt confident in the opinions of the teachers.

“I think the teachers pretty much have a good handle on this Common Core,” she pointed out. “They know what to teach the kindergartners. And time is probably the number one thing they need. Two and a half hours is not much time.”

Board member Judith Kaplan already had her mind made up.

“I've been reading everything that's been passed to us. I feel strongly about all-day kindergarten; I'm for all-day,” Kaplan said. “I think they need play time, socialization time, as well as academic time.”

Board member Wes Skorski said he was “on the fence,” but admitted he was “leaning towards half-day.”

“If we do have money to spend, I rather see it spent enhancing the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade programs,” he said. “The studies show that many gains in kindergarten are caught up in first, second and third.”

The board agreed to discuss the topic once more in September before the October vote, which Skorski said will allow the board to look at class sizes and the budget impact.

Similarly, opinions from the public swayed. Natalie Cooney, Marlborough mother and all-day kindergarten teacher of a neighboring district, spoke in support of an all-day program.

“The most significant difference in moving from half-day to full-day is obviously time,” Cooney said. “I no longer have to choose if I'm going to teach math or literacy, social studies or science. I now have the time to teach everything everyday and that is what I want for my children.”

Resident Dick Shea, who is also a member of the Board of Selectmen, said he felt additional time for socialization could be achieved right at home.

“You have a tremendous range of learning experiences outside of the classroom when you're that age,” said Shea. “And those experiences tend to be more diverse and far ranging than when they are all in the same class learning exactly the same thing with a state-dictated curriculum.”

Kimberly Disomma said she'd like to see her 3-year-old daughter have the opportunity to go to a full-day kindergarten program.

“I just think you should really consider the fact of making it a great day for them and allowing for extra time would do that,” she said.

Pam Farrington, a mother and a teacher at MES, said the kindergarten classrooms currently “don't have time to breathe” because of time. After emphasizing how great the kindergarten teachers are at the school, Farrington furthered, “A parent who feels their [child] is not ready for full-day kindergarten doesn't have to send them. We as educators have to make the decision as to what is best for the children and I think the kindergarten teachers told you that.”

Karen DeCorleto, whose daughter is in the half-day program now, also said it's the parent's decision to enroll a child into kindergarten. She said she is “not pro full-day kindergarten” because she feels her daughter has not “missed anything” in the half-day program. Although DeCorleto added if her daughter's teacher [Mrs. Sack] believes full-day to be necessary, “I think she knows a lot better than I do.”

The topic will appear on the September and October Board of Education meeting agendas.

\* \* \*

Also at last Thursday's meeting, Interim Principal Paula Schwartz shared the news that the district has received a \$50,000 federal grant that was spent towards purchasing iPads for

the school – and it was Schwartz who sought for it.

Schwartz told members the grant is a Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) grant from the United States Office of School Support and Rural Programs. Marlborough is considered a rural district, she explained, adding when she was first hired in January she heard word that a grant may be possible. So for two weeks, Schwartz said, she researched it.

“I got online and I kept looking for it,” she explained. “My understanding is this might be a yearly grant that we didn't even know we had available to us. It's really for those districts that do not fall into being eligible for other grants.”

The principal explained 100 iPads were purchased with the grant, which allows for every teacher in the school to one iPad for his or her classroom, as well as two carts of 20 iPads in each to be used for any classroom.

“We are very excited,” Schwartz concluded, receiving gasps and applause from the public.

Skorski later referenced this grant. He said he hopes the district keeps in mind the additional cost of supporting and replacing the technology.

\* \* \*

Lastly, in the board's fund balance update, Sklarz urged the board to “seriously consider” earmarking funding for playground equipment, if the board receives a surplus at the end of the fiscal year.

The superintendent pointed out the current playground equipment is 12 years old and the district “can't get parts for it.”

Playground equipment “is very, very expensive,” Sklarz said, but added purchasing new equipment would be money “well-spent.”

Sklarz continued his “biggest concern” in regards to the playground at the school is that it is not handicapped-accessible.

“We have children in our school who can't use the swing,” he said. “It's just flat wrong.”

Sklarz said the board should learn in its June meeting if it has a surplus. He said he'd like purchasing of equipment to be a “two- or three-year plan” with possible assistance from the Parent Teacher Organization.

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for June 26, 7 p.m. in the MES Library.

## Marlborough Awarded \$500,000 STEAP Grant

by Melissa Roberto

The town of Marlborough recently received a \$500,000 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant from the state to be utilized towards enhancements to the North Main Street Business Park.

The project, titled “North Main Street Exit 12 Gateway,” was first discussed in March by the Board of Selectmen. The town applied for the grant by its mid-April deadline and on May 19, state Rep. Pam Sawyer (R-55th District) shared the good news.

The project will improve the appearance and visibility of businesses on and abutting North Main Street from the intersection of West Road and Portland Road to the intersection of Austin Drive and Hodge Road, according to a press release issued by Sawyer's office.

Also, according to the news release, the project will “enhance vehicular access to the

area while promoting public transit use and public safety by giving pedestrians additional room to safely walk the area around the commuter parking lots.”

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski commented positively on the awarding of the grant.

“I'm pleased that Marlborough was once again awarded a STEAP grant towards enhancing its economic development efforts,” she said. “We hope this will assist the businesses in the North Main Street business park area and enhance the appearance to the area.”

The selectwoman anticipated design plans to be completed this summer, and following that, the project would go out to bid.

STEAP grants are awarded each year by the governor, who prioritizes and awards grants to

only a portion of towns who apply. The program is administered through the Office of Policy and Management, and the grants have a maximum of \$500,000.

The money for Marlborough is one of the final STEAP awards Sawyer will get to announce, as the 22-year state representative is not seeking re-election this fall. The grant program was initially proposed by Sawyer more than a decade ago, and, according to the news release, the money for Marlborough – a “small-town wonder,” as described in the release – is “exactly her vision for what STEAP grants should be used for.”

“Before this grant program was created, we only had Urban Action grants for the big cities, and the small towns in Connecticut weren't able

to take on these kinds of vital projects,” Sawyer said in the release. “So I talked with my friends in the Small Town Caucus and we all pushed for the creation of a grant program for towns like ours.”

Sawyer also expressed her appreciation for the state funding.

“I am very appreciative of Governor [Dannel] Malloy's understanding of the importance of this issue to the town of Marlborough,” she said. “This all-encompassing project will meet many business and safety needs in this neighborhood. The Exit 12 Gateway project is a great example of an effective state and local partnership, making improvements where State Route 2 meetings North Main in an effort to aid commuters, local residents and businesses, and tourists.”

# Survey Results Show Low Teacher Morale in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

The East Hampton teachers' union conducted a climate survey last month to measure morale and leadership efficiency in the school district. Results found low morale among teachers, as well as a low level of confidence between teachers and the superintendent.

A source who wished to remain anonymous provided the 90-page document to the *Rivereast* earlier this month. Just this week, the president of the East Hampton Education Association (EHEA), Robert Wyllie confirmed that the document was, in fact, a copy of the teacher climate survey his union conducted.

Wyllie wished to emphasize that he did not provide the document to the *Rivereast*; he simply verified its authenticity.

Earlier this week, Wyllie, an East Hampton teacher for 30 years, said this year is the first time in his career that the union felt it necessary to put together a teacher climate survey.

Wyllie has served as president and vice president of the EHEA for a combined 15 years. He has been a member for his entire 30 years of teaching in East Hampton, where he is an art teacher at the middle school.

Asked for additional comment on the document, Wyllie said, "The report speaks for itself."

According to the executive summary portion of the document, 146 out of 169 teachers, or 86 percent, responded to the survey. Thirty questions were asked of the teachers regarding "climate, morale and the efficacy of leadership structures across several areas of concern," it stated.

The questions were presented in statement form and allowed for one of four answers: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. There were also open-ended sections of the survey where teachers were welcomed to provide comments. These sections collected "well over 500 comments," the survey summary stated.

"Over the last 10 months, members of the EHEA executive board have observed a precipitous drop in the morale among teachers; this against a backdrop of years if not decades of positive, productive relationships with all constituencies within our educational community," the document stated. "The main issues seem to revolve around the district administration and their unrelenting insistence on an autocratic leadership style that is at once stifling and inefficient. These issues have been discussed at length with the superintendent and various members of the administrative team over the last 10 months. In each instance, the conversation ends with a wide gap in perception as to the nature and extent of the problem, and has been summarily dismissed by the superintendent."

Thus, the executive board came up with the teacher climate survey as a "quantifiable measurement of teacher climate," the methodology section of the document stated.

According to the document, 87 percent of teachers reported low morale. The survey summary stated the possible sources of this to be: "the overwhelming level of work," "the chaotic management of new initiatives" and "a low level of confidence between teachers and the superintendent."

According to the document's summary, problems identified by teachers who took the survey included: "the district leadership lacks a clear vision," "the communication feedback

loops are ineffective" and teachers "have little input into important decisions affecting their instruction."

Despite the "problems" teachers reported regarding Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas, and also, to a lesser extent, regarding Assistant Superintendent of School Tim Van Tasel, survey results show the majority of teachers have a positive relationship with their respective building administrators.

And not every comment regarding the district administration was negative.

For example, one teacher wrote in an open-ended survey section, "I have limited experience with personal and professional interaction[s] with the superintendent and assistant superintendent. In my minimal interactions, I feel that they are professional, courteous and kind."

Another teacher cut Dugas and Van Tasel some slack, too, writing, "They are new; they are going to make mistakes." (Dugas started last July, and Van Tasel began in August.)

That teacher furthered, "However, there has to be a way to do that without turning the district into the miserable place that it currently is."

\*\*\*

When taken together, the specific survey questions and their answers paint a fairly bleak picture. For example, just 12.67 percent of teachers agreed "staff morale is high in the district" (for simplicity's sake, the "strongly agree and agree" answers are grouped together); 58.04 percent agreed "I am generally satisfied with being a teacher in this district;" 19.86 percent agreed with "I like the way things are run in the district;" and 26.57 percent agreed "I have as much enthusiasm for the teaching profession now as when I started teaching."

When it comes to their peers and immediate supervisors, the mood among teachers is markedly better. For example, 96.53 percent agreed "There is a cooperative effort among staff members in my building;" 97.22 percent agreed "The principal and assistant principal at this school have confidence in the expertise of the teachers;" and 91.04 percent agreed "The principals and assistant principals behaviors toward the staff are supportive and encouraging."

However, the superintendent and assistant superintendent get lower marks. For "The superintendent has confidence in the expertise of the teachers," 22.63 percent agreed, and 62.32 percent agreed with "The assistant superintendent has confidence in the expertise of the teachers." Just 10.64 percent agreed with "I feel comfortable going to the superintendent and assistant superintendent if I have a problem," while 34.02 percent agreed with: "Beyond my general teaching responsibilities, I have a clear understanding of the expectations established by the superintendent and assistant superintendent."

The survey also suggests there's something of a communications breakdown in the school system, as only 29.08 percent agreed with "In this district, there is communication on important issues;" 10 percent agreed with "The superintendent and assistant superintendent communicate a clear vision to the district;" and 15.83 percent agreed with "The communication structures in place to deliver information and policy directives are clear, unambiguous, and consistently delivered to all staff members."

Also, 29.37 percent of teachers agreed with "I have a clear understanding of how the School Professional Development and Evaluation committees translate into my daily lessons/teaching practice," while 16.9 percent agreed with "Expectations regarding district developed curriculum documentation are manageable and efficient."

Overall, while 40.29 percent of teachers agreed "The schedule supports the learning needs of all students as well as the implementation of the curriculum, instruction and assessment," they were much less happy with how they, as teachers, are managed in the district.

Only 13.48 percent of teachers agreed "The district administration efficiently executes the elements of the Education Reform Act and the transition of CCSS [Common Core State Standards]. Their process is accessible to teachers, avoids wasted energy and manages the change effectively," and 19.56 percent agreed with "The various curricular documents designed by the district administrative team are user-friendly, time-efficient and add value to my instructional delivery."

Things only get worse from there. Just 7.09 percent agreed with "New initiatives are well planned, aligned with a clearly articulated philosophy and timeline, are administered consistently across the district, and have a direct, meaningful impact on instruction," and 5.11 percent agreed with "Teachers have direct input into decisions that affect them."

\*\*\*

The teachers' comments further expanded upon these percentages – and indicated many teachers are not happy.

One teacher wrote, "This is the first time that I have ever...considered leaving the field. I'm not comfortable that the decisions being made are in the best interest of our community and kids. I also feel that my professional competence is constantly being questioned and that overall experience of the staff is not being used to make decisions."

Another commented, "The district administration may have a direction they want the district to go in, but unfortunately they are not very clear about it, nor do I feel comfortable enough approaching them about it."

Similarly, another wrote, "I would absolutely never go to the superintendent or assistant superintendent with a problem or for professional advice for fear of being labeled as an incompetent teacher."

Regarding the federally-mandated new Common Core State Standards, one teacher expressed, "The change [to] the Common Core was inevitable, but the approach the district administration took was all wrong."

One teacher wrote, "I do not feel valued as a professional by my superintendent. All of my interactions with her feel contrived at best."

Another described Dugas as "evasive." The term "top down" was used frequently to describe the district administration's style of management.

Another common problem as noted in the teachers' comments was the constant pulling away of teachers from their classrooms, as well as principals and assistant principals from their school buildings though this may be a result of state mandates and not necessarily Dugas' fault.

Lack of communication was also a theme in

the comments.

"Within the last year, I feel there has been a significant disconnect between the administration and staff," one teacher wrote. "I also feel the disconnect at a personal level in the nature that Ms. Dugas neglected to respond back to me after requesting needed time off."

Others said they had "little interaction" with the district administration.

Additionally, several comments addressed professional development.

"The superintendent has continuously dictated professional development programs without allowing the district's Professional Development [Teacher Evaluation] Committee to have any say in them," one teacher wrote.

According to the document's summary, "By state statute, the PDTE Committee is to be comprised of a broad range of stakeholders and is to make decisions by mutual agreement. Based on a number of comments, the superintendent has ignored this statutory mandate and continues to make decisions unilaterally."

\*\*\*

Now that the survey has been completed, Wyllie affirmed it has been sent to the Board of Education.

"This survey is now in the board's hands. Anything having to do with the administration is out of the teachers' purview," Wyllie concluded. "We thought it was important for the board to know the teachers had some issues."

Board of Education Chairman Ken Barber commented on the Teacher Climate Survey in a phone interview Wednesday.

"We appreciate the union making their concerns known and we are evaluating the survey. We will give it the weight that we feel it deserves," Barber said. "We have every confidence that the superintendent and the union will resolve any concerns that they have raised."

Dugas also commented on the survey in a phone interview Thursday.

"I'm in receipt of the survey and take it extremely seriously," the superintendent said. "We have an outstanding professional team here in East Hampton and I believe we're working in an unprecedented time in education right now."

Asked to elaborate on this "unprecedented time," Dugas said, "You can't pick up a newspaper right now without reading about Common Core, Smarter Balanced and teacher evaluations."

Those state and federal mandates put a "huge pressure on districts," she furthered.

Dugas concluded that she looks forward to working as a "collaborative team" to move the East Hampton district forward. She said, "I certainly look forward and am confident that we can move forward... We're here for children and to do what's best for children."

In a concluding statement in the open-ended section of the survey, one teacher wrote, "I hope that this survey helps spark discussion about what we can do to help this district succeed, and does not turn into a vilification of one or two individuals."

\*\*\*

A Board of Education executive session took place May 12 to discuss the superintendent's performance.

A superintendent's evaluation is scheduled for a Board of Education executive session Monday, June 2.

# Belltown Remembers Fallen Soldiers

by Elizabeth Bowling

Despite threatening gray skies and on-and-off sprinkles, the weather cleared up and the East Hampton Memorial Day parade and Remembrance Ceremony went on as scheduled Monday morning.

The parade featured the usual suspects – town officials and East Hampton’s state representative, Melissa Ziobron, and, of course, veterans.

When the veterans marched or drove by, spectators applauded and yelled “thank you.”

Also featured were the East Hampton Police Color Guard; VFW Post 5095 Color Guard, Firing Squad and Color Guard Auxiliary; 118th Multifunctional Medical Battalion; among others, including the “Horse of the Fallen Soldier,” provided by John Allegra of Allegra Farm.

But a parade wouldn’t be much fun without some music and local color. The East Hampton middle and high school bands proudly marched, along with East Hampton Little League players.

The parade was followed by a Remembrance Ceremony at the Boulder Monument next to the Yellow Ribbon Tree.

VFW Post 5095 Commander Lou Carillo, a Vietnam War veteran, served as parade marshal and awarded the winning floats, which were all of a patriotic theme. The winning floats were: Pack Eight Cub Scouts, first place; Anchor Lodge No. 112, second place; and Troop Eight Boy Scouts, third place.

Carillo went on to thank the members of VFW Post 5095 Color Guard; VFW Post 5095 Ladies Auxiliary Color Guard; East Hampton’s town manager, town council, police chief and fire marshal; the high and middle school bands; and other participants in the 2014 Memorial Day parade.

Town Manager Mike Maniscalco said a few words to the East Hampton community Monday, too.

“It’s an important day,” he said, adding that while “we have a lot of fun,” Memorial Day is about more than parades and barbecues. It’s about “those who fought for our freedoms.”

“Today’s about talking to our relatives, our friends, our veterans and saying ‘thank you,’” he concluded. “It’s very important that East Hampton supports its veterans every single day.”

The guest speaker at Monday’s ceremony was East Hampton native and U.S. Army Specialist Kurt Schluntz. The young man was deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Carillo said when introducing him.

Carillo furthered, “Schluntz was stationed at Bagrham Airforce Base, where he worked in an American-Afghan prison that housed criminals and terrorists, along with point and capture missions throughout Afghanistan.

“He was recently promoted to the rank of E-4 and is currently assigned with the 344th Military Police Company in Middletown Army Reserve.”

Schluntz gave a moving speech about the importance of remembering and celebrating the lives of those soldiers who “made the ultimate sacrifice” for this country.

He said he had truly appreciated all the “thank yous” he’d gotten since his homecoming, but reminded those in attendance that Memorial Day isn’t about the living veterans like him.

“Today’s not for me,” he said. “It’s for the men and women who failed to come home.”

He added, “It’s not a day to mourn; it’s a day to celebrate.”

He said the flag should fly from the top of its pole on Memorial Day, rather than at half-staff because “these men and women gave everything



**East Hampton’s 2014 Memorial Day Parade offered Belltown residents an opportunity to show appreciation for their living veterans, and, more importantly, to remember and celebrate those veterans who sacrificed their lives for their country. A Remembrance Ceremony was held after the parade in front of the Boulder Monument, pictured here.**

for that flag to stay right where it is.”

And for their sacrifice, he said, he is “grateful.”

Carillo continued in the theme of remembrance and gratitude by reading off 35 names of veterans who passed away in the past year. The solemn list was followed by a prayer for deceased veterans, led by Chaplin Ron Chris-

topher, then the playing of the National Anthem by the East Hampton High School band, a salute to the deceased by the VFW Post 5095 Firing Squad, and the trumpet playing of Taps, with an echo.

On that note, with the sun shining down on a particularly patriotic East Hampton, the ceremony concluded.

# East Hampton Town Council Discusses Handful of Matters

by Elizabeth Bowling

While it hasn’t been united on the town budget lately, the Town Council at its meeting Tuesday did agree unanimously on several other items.

The council accepted a bid from Belltown Motors Inc. for police vehicle automotive repair. Belltown Motors was the only qualified bidder and was thus awarded an “on-call contract” for \$20,000, as the town manager called it.

The contract period will last until Dec. 30, 2015.

Belltown Motors will be responsible for repairs to all vehicles in the Police Department fleet. Those repairs may include things like transmission, tire and battery replacement, but not brake pad or oil changes, Town Manager Mike Maniscalco affirmed.

Minor repairs and routine maintenance will be conducted by the Department of Public Works, he said.

Maniscalco explained if the town exceeds the \$20,000 throughout the course of the contract then it would have to find additional funding elsewhere.

Also on Tuesday, the board voted to “fix the beach” at Sears Park for \$35,000.

According to a report submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Checko to the Town Council, the beach area at the park “sustained damage this winter. Damage includes the compromise of the timber retaining wall at the edge of Lake Pocotopaug as well as run-off damage (erosion) to the sand portion of the beach.”

The document continued, “It has been determined that the best approach and preventative measure is to remove the timber retaining wall and regrade the beach toward the lake.”

According to the document, Parks and Recreation is requesting \$35,000 to fund the removal and disposal of the existing 280-foot timber wall, the removal of all sand, debris and

other materials from the beach necessary to obtain a desired grade to the water.

Maniscalco explained the \$35,000 would come out of the capital contingency fund so that “the project could move along a little faster so that way we could get the beach open this summer so residents can use it.”

Councilman George Pfaffenbach, however, said, “That wall needs to be there and needs to be maintained.” He furthered, “The wall was put there for a reason – to keep sand on the beach. If we take that wall down and we put sand on the beach we’re going to be doing truckloads of sand every year like we did before that wall was there.”

He said if the wall comes down, then a jetty should be installed.

Council member Ted Hintz disagreed. “I still agree that it should be a walk-in,” he said.

Maniscalco said the project, though unani-

mously approved by the council, still needs Inland Wetland, Planning and Zoning, and Conservation of the Lake approval.

The council also agreed unanimously on a viewing draft for a library advisory board at a future meeting.

The town librarian was “very receptive” to the idea of a library advisory board, Maniscalco said. Council members agreed to ask the librarian to draft an advisory board, before they approve the board’s formation.

Lastly, Maniscalco updated the council on police department personnel. He said, “It’s estimated right now that June 4 the police department will be issuing their written examination for their two police officer positions.”

\*\*\*

The next regularly scheduled East Hampton Town Council meeting is Tuesday, June 10, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

# \$40.55 Million Budget Referendum Tuesday in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Bowling

The voters spoke – quite loudly – earlier this month, and next week they can step up to the metaphorical mic again, as they’ll flock to the polls to vote on a proposed \$40.55 million 2014-15 budget.

The spending package is down \$322,355 from the \$40.87 million proposal that was handily defeated by voters, 1,180-839, at a May 6 referendum.

The budget calls for a mill rate increase of 0.75 mills, a 2.82 percent increase, from the current year. The mill rate, if voters approve the budget Tuesday, will be 27.38. A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So, under the new mill rate, if a house is assessed at \$200,000, then its taxes for the 2014-15 fiscal year would be \$5,476, up from the current year’s \$5,326.

For this second go-around, the Board of Edu-

cation budget was reduced by \$227,463, bringing it to \$28.37 million, a 3.06 percent increase from current year spending.

Meanwhile, the town operations budget was trimmed by \$119,300, bringing it to \$9.91 million, or a 1.79 percent increase over the current year. (A “transfer to other funds” of \$968,997 – an amount composed mostly of \$910,465 for capital improvement spending – and \$1,299,680 for debt service make up the rest of the money in the \$40.55 million budget.)

Among the cuts to the town side were: \$40,000 from contingency; \$15,000 from the employee wellness program; and \$10,019 from the town manager’s budget.

An additional \$29,873 was cut from the town government budget as a result of pushing off the hire of a police captain from Oct. 1 to Jan. 1. This would make the impact of the hiring

\$59,747 in the 2014-15 budget. However, for the 2015-16 budget, the cost of the captain is estimated to be \$119,474.

The Town Council approved the budget cuts 4-3 at its May 13 meeting, with the Democrats on the council – Barbara Moore, George Pfaffenbach, Phil Visintainer and Kevin Reich – voting in favor, and the Republicans – Ted Hintz, Patience Anderson and Mark Philhower – voting against.

Chairwoman Moore said this year, like any year when the budget doesn’t pass in its first referendum, the council worked to bring the budget to a number tax payers will approve.

“We’re hoping that we can come to a figure that the residents would vote for and that’s what we’re striving to do and have strived to do,” she said Wednesday. “Hopefully they will pass

it and if they don’t pass it we will decide what to do then.”

She added, “I’m optimistic.”

Hintz, however, said the budget is “still too high.”

“Unfortunately, I cannot support the budget,” he said Wednesday. “I am not in favor of any new positions, especially a mid-year hire that increases the budget for the following year.”

The mid-year hire to which he referred was the police captain position.

Hintz concluded that East Hampton is “kicking the can down the road,” and he simply cannot get behind that.

\*\*\*

The second budget referendum is scheduled for Tuesday, June 3, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at East Hampton High School.

## Obituaries

### Colchester

#### Sylvia Marie Rogers

Sylvia Marie Rogers, 86, of Colchester and formerly of Moodus, widow of the late Clarence H Rogers, passed away Friday morning, May 23, at Apple Rehab in Colchester. Born Nov. 19, 1927, in Portland, Maine, she was a daughter of the late Carol and Esther (Walker) Rogers.



Sylvia and Clarence were married Aug. 28, 1944, in Brownfield, Maine, and shared 65 years of marriage before he predeceased her May 19, 2010.

She leave five children (and their spouses) Clarence "Sonny" (Sharon) Rogers, Jr. of Fryeburg, ME, Doris Berner of Moodus, Brenda (Michael) Ryder of Colchester, Bob Rogers of Marlborough and Robin Rogers of Meriden; 11 grandchildren, Cherie and Gary Martin, Dawn Snow, Wendy Mutre, Amy Brown, Shaun and Tony Berner, Derry and Brittany Taylor and Tasha and Erin Ryder; numerous great grandchildren; a sister, Helen Blake of Brownfield, ME; and many extended family and friends.

She was predeceased by a son-in-law, William Berner, Jr.

Private graveside services will be observed in the Rogers family plot in Pine Grove Cemetery, Brownfield, Maine.

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

The family wishes to send a special thank you for the excellent care and support from the staff at Apple Rehab of Colchester and the staff of Vitas Hospice.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

### Marlborough

#### John "Bud" Vashalifski

John "Bud" Vashalifski, 89, of Marlborough, husband of the late Katherine Jean (Sawyer) Vashalifski, died Tuesday, May 27, at Marlborough Health Care. Born Feb. 4, 1925, in Marlborough, he was the son of the late Martin and Frances (Piotrak) Vashalifski.

"Bud," as he was affectionately known, was a lifelong resident of Marlborough and proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during WWII. He was a retired carpenter, having worked for Consolidated Cigar Company. He was an avid fisherman and hunter and also enjoyed camping in Vermont and Rhode Island.

He is survived by his son and wife, Scott and Donna Vashalifski of Andover; a son, David Vashalifski of Colchester; a sister, Sophie Wrobel; and three grandchildren, Scott, Tyler and Devin.

He was predeceased by a son, Danny; two daughters, Donna and Pamela; three brothers, Frank, Martin and Stanley; and three sisters, Stephanie, Jennie and Vicki.

Funeral services will be held today, May 30, at 11 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Robert Faulhaber officiating. Burial will be at a future date in Marlboro Cemetery. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home today, May 30, from 10 a.m. until the time of the service at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Assoc., P.O. Box 308, Marlborough, CT 06447.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### Andover

#### Raymond L. Conrad

Raymond L. Conrad of South Windsor completed his ride Sunday, May 18. Son of the late Clyde Wilson and Lillian Hiltz Conrad, Ray was a Hartford native who resided in South Windsor for 40 years.



His passion for his 1981 Yamaha motorcycle was exceeded only by his love and devotion for his wife Patricia (Linares) and his children Carrie Conrad-Moses (Michael) of Maryland and Christopher Conrad (Ellen) of Massachusetts.

Born on the 4th of July 1944, Ray was the true version of a Yankee Doodle Dandy and had a 1950s sense of morality and responsibility. He was known as a good and compassionate man. He worked at Hartford National Bank for 16 years and retired from Hartford Insurance after 25 years as an IT professional in the audit department. He received many awards and earned his CPCU at The Hartford.

Ray volunteered for Habitat for Humanity with his children and was involved with many activities with them. He was also involved in many charitable activities and donated 19 gallons of blood to the Red Cross. His pride and joy was always his children and then his grandchildren, Alden, Emeric and Amilia Moses and Kadie Conrad. He also enjoyed muscle, American Classics and his 1949 CJ 2A as an original member of The New England 4 Wheelers Club with his brother Clyde.

Besides his brother Clyde and wife Georgette of Andover, Ray is survived by his niece Deanne Bowen (John) and her children Danielle and Chantelle, of Colchester; his nephew Garland Conrad (Doreen) and their daughter Kayleigh.

Ray's favorite thought was "The ride is the adventure and the scenery is the reward."

Online condolences and guest book are at [carmonfuneralhome.com](http://carmonfuneralhome.com).

### Marlborough

#### Edward Wazer

Edward Wazer, 89, long-term resident of Marlborough, passed away peacefully Monday, May 26, after a period of failing health. He was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Dec. 14, 1924, and graduated from Forest City (Pa.) High School in 1942.

He was predeceased by his wife of 47 years, Eleanor Monaghan Wazer, in 2000.

He retired from Hamilton Standard in 1987 after a career of 32 years, retiring as a purchasing agent for Electrical Systems. He remained active in his retirement, playing golf, tennis and working part-time until last year at the Manchester Racquet Club.

He is survived by his two sisters, Patricia Wazer of Washington, D.C., and Betty Davenport of Connecticut; his three children, Joan O'Connell of Marlborough; David Wazer and his fiancée, Alice Finn of Ashland, Mass.; and Mary Ellen Hoerman and her husband Walter of Rochester, N.H. He was also the proud grandfather of 10 grandchildren; Thomas O'Connell of West Hartford; Katie O'Connell Lucier and her husband Matt of Westminster, Mass.; Caroline Wazer of New York, N.Y.; Alex Hoerman of Somerville, Mass.; Gwendolyn Hoerman of Portsmouth, N.H.; Daniel O'Connell of Marlborough; Annie Wazer of New York, N.Y.; Abigail Hoerman of Portland, Maine; and Peter and Michael O'Connell of Marlborough. He also leaves behind several nieces and nephews.

Donations in Ed's memory can be made to Richmond Memorial Library, P.O. Box 387, Marlborough, CT 06447. There will be no calling hours. A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 31, at 1 p.m., at The Church of the Holy Family in Hebron.

### Marlborough

#### Warren F. Able

Warren F. Able, 82, of Ft. Myers, Fla., and Marlborough, beloved husband of Patricia (Madden) Able, died Monday, May 26, at the Heartland Health Care Center in Fort Myers, Fla.



Born June 17, 1931 in Valparaiso, Ind., son of the late Edward and Olga (Ruehl) he had lived in Ft. Myers for the past 22 winters. Prior to his retirement he was an engineer for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford. He was a graduate of Purdue University and had served in the U.S. Air Force in Alaska where he met his wife.

In high school, he broke the State of Indiana Indoor Quarter Mile track & field record in 1949. He took up serious bicycle riding in mid-life and rode 285,000 miles in 35 years. He was an Olympic torch-bearer, representing Fort Myers in the run to the winter 2002 games in Salt Lake City. In 1994 and 1996 he won four gold medals at the Maine Senior Games bicycle riding. In early retirement, Warren and Patricia resided in York Beach, Maine.

In addition to his wife of 58 years, survivors include two sons, Edward and John; two daughters-in-law, Darlene and Eileen; and two granddaughters, Colleen and Emma of Hartford.

Friends are invited to visiting hours Monday, June 2, from 5-7 p.m., and a funeral service Tuesday, June 3, at 11 a.m., at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, followed by burial at Green Cemetery, Glastonbury, with full military honors.

In lieu of flowers those wishing may make a donation to the American Heart Association.

For online condolences, visit [mulryanfh.com](http://mulryanfh.com).

### East Hampton

#### Scott Donald Root

Scott Donald Root, 33, of East Hampton, husband of Julie (Pent) Root died unexpectedly Friday, May 23, at Marlborough Medical Center. Born June 24, 1980, in Middletown, he was the son of Annabett (D'Amico) Latronica and the late Perry Root.

Scott had worked as a carpenter and was a life-long resident of East Hampton, having graduated from East Hampton High School.

Besides his mother and wife, he is survived by his two sons, Blake and Matthew Root of East Hampton; a stepdaughter, Shannon Dickenson of East Hampton; a brother, Clifford Root of East Hampton; two sisters, Leslie Gibbs of Clinton and Annabett Plazarin of Ohio; and many nieces and nephews, cousins and friends.

He was predeceased by his father, Perry Root, and a brother, Perry Root Jr.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Thursday, May 29. A funeral service will be held today, May 30, at 11 a.m., in Abundant Life of the Assemblies of God Church, 85 Skinner St., Colchester. Burial will be private.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### Andover

#### Lewis W. Spencer

Lewis W. Spencer, 91, of Andover, beloved husband of over 68 years of Vera (Fogle) Spencer, passed away peacefully Friday, May 23, at his home. Born in Machias, Maine, to the late Forest and Sophie (Hill) Spencer, he was raised in Maine and has been an Andover resident since 2006.

Lewis served his country proudly with the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean War. He was an avid Red Sox and Patriots fan and enjoyed watching movies, especially Westerns and historical films. And with his quiet integrity, he earned the respect of all who knew him.

Besides his wife Vera of Andover, he is survived by his sons, Robert Spencer of Stafford and David Spencer of Andover; his daughters, Diane Tully and her husband Richard of Windsor Locks, and Jeannette Spencer of Machias, Maine; his brother, Jim Spencer of N.Y.; his sister, Barbara Bruce of Machias, Maine; his close sister-in-law, Dot Spencer of Whiting, Maine; seven grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and many loving nieces and nephews.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his son, Clayton Spencer; his brothers, Joseph and Stanley Spencer; and his sisters, Betty Wright and Esther Spencer.

Services and burial will take place in Maine at the convenience of the family.

For online condolences, visit [carmonfuneralhome.com](http://carmonfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Alison Kali Kozikowski

Alison Kali Kozikowski, 26, of East Hampton, beloved daughter of Steven and Diane (Kilduff) Kozikowski, died unexpectedly Monday, May 26. Born Aug. 9, 1987, in New Britain, she was raised in East Hampton.



Besides her parents, she is survived by her brothers, Justin Kozikowski of Cromwell, James Kozikowski of East Hampton; paternal grandmother, Geraldine Kuronya and her husband Joseph of Columbia; maternal grandparents, Karol Kilduff of New Britain and William Kilduff of Southington; godparents, Christopher Kozikowski and Susan McCabe; niece, Krystal Strom; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and extended family.

She was predeceased by her paternal grandfather, Al Kozikowski.

Our sweet Alison's beautiful soul has been taken up to the heavens to shine down upon us all. Her smile will warm us in the rays of sunshine and her sparkling eyes will laugh with us in the stary night. Her kind compassionate heart has touched many lives. She was a joy to many and will be deeply missed.

Family and friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home Saturday, May 31, from 5-8 p.m. A celebration of her life will commence at the William O'Neill gazebo at Sears Park on Lake Pocotopaug at noon Sunday, June 1.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her honor to St. Vincent DePaul Middletown, 617 Main St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### Portland

#### Ceceilia Tobias

Ceceilia Tobias (Bak), 90, of Middlefield, formerly of Portland, passed away Thursday, May 15. She was the beloved wife of Walter Tobias. Born in Middletown, daughter of the late Joseph and Mary (Niedziela) Bak.

She lived in Middletown, Portland, Middlefield and Cromwell. She worked at Jerome Garment for several years and was an excellent seamstress.

She especially enjoyed family gatherings and traveling to Hazelton, Pa., with her husband.

She is survived by a sister, Josephine Tenerowicz of Meriden; and brothers, Edward Bak and his wife Doris of East Hartford, and Raymond Bak and his wife Barbara of Bristol; as well as many nephews, nieces, great-nephews and great-nieces.

She was predeceased by a brother, John Bak; and sisters, Jane Pavelka and Stephanie Balamucki.

Ceil was a devoted and caring daughter, sister and wife and a kind and gentle lady.

Burial will be at a later date and a memorial service will be celebrated at a date to be announced.

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Elizabeth Bowling has a story this week about East Hampton High School flame-thrower Marvin Gorgas, who's projected to be selected by a team in the Major League Baseball draft next week. Gorgas, a senior at the school, can hurl a fastball in the mid-90s, and the website [minorleagueball.com](http://minorleagueball.com) back in February ranked him as the 153rd best draft prospect in the country. That's pretty sweet.

As a baseball fan, I find it very exciting that somebody from one of our *Rivereast* towns can go in the draft – and, of course, reading about Gorgas made me think of A.J. Pollock, the former RHAM star who was selected by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the first round of the 2009 draft.

Pollock made his major-league debut two years ago – I had the pleasure of interviewing him in the Citi Field clubhouse not long after he made his big-league bow – and while his first two seasons were a little uneventful, I'm happy to report Pollock's been on quite a roll lately.

As of Tuesday night, Pollock's hitting .296, with six home runs – one of them a game-winning two-run homer Monday, the first walk-off homer of his young career – 13 RBI and six stolen bases. He was also named the National League Player of the Week (along with the Dodgers' Yasiel Puig) for the week of May 12. That was truly an illustrious week for A.J. – he batted an even .500 (11-for-22), slugged .909, had a .522 on base percentage, and collected a total of 20 bases. The week included a sparking four-hit day on the 17th, when he had two RBI and three runs scored in an 18-7 drubbing of the Dodgers.

Pollock's defense, which has always been a standout of his game, continues to be splendid, with just one error in 43 games this year, and highlight-reel catches building in his portfolio.

Heck, even Pollock's fantasy baseball star is rising. The percentage of ESPN teams that own him has skyrocketed in the past couple of weeks, and is up to 63 percent (the defending champion in the league I play in just scooped him up last week).

Pollock's a good guy, and a class act, and I'm glad he's having such a great start to his 2014 season. I hope he continues to find success.

And Marvin? I hope the draft goes great for you next week too. Enjoy every second of it.

\*\*\*

Speaking of baseball, I was a little disgusted when I read about the Red Sox brawl Sunday afternoon. Not so much because of the brawl itself – those happen, and I suppose you can argue it fired Boston up a bit, as they went out and won the next night, ending

their woeful 10-game losing streak – but because of what instigated it:

The breaking of one of baseball's glorified – and, frankly, for the birds – “unwritten rules.”

The Red Sox and Tampa Bay Rays were tied 3-3 in the bottom of the seventh. The Rays' Sean Rodriguez hit a tie-breaking, three-run homer. Later in the inning, Yuniel Escobar hit a two-run double, increasing the Rays' lead to five. Escobar then stole third base – and that's what got Boston fired up. Words were exchanged, and evidently they were fightin' words, because before you knew it an old-fashioned brawl was underway.

After the game, Boston manager John Farrell – while admitting his team may have been a little frustrated they were headed for their 10th straight loss – said, “We're down five in the seventh, so it's somewhat a gray area when you shut down the running game.”

When a team has a big lead in the late innings of a game, it's long been considered bad form to steal a base; it's perceived as trying to pile it on, and it's an unwritten rule that you just don't do that.

I think that's baloney.

In baseball, a lead that you think is big can sometimes evaporate in the blink of an eye. I remember well the night in June 2000 when the Mets were down 8-1 against the Atlanta Braves, going to the bottom of the eighth inning. All seemed lost – until the Mets scored 10 runs in that inning to take the lead (and eventually win the game) 11-8.

Is that rare? Sure. But it can happen.

If your team is up by seven runs, and you wind up losing by a run, wouldn't you, as a player, feel kinda dumb for not taking second when you had the chance? The game's not over until the 27th out is recorded. Until then, score as much as you want.

Besides, it's not even like the Rays had built an insurmountable lead. They were up by five – and all five of those runs they had scored in the seventh. Who's to say Boston couldn't turn around and score five in the eighth?

Maybe Farrell didn't think they could. Still no reason to start a brawl – or to imply the Rays were being a bunch of spoiled brats by wanting to add to their cushion.

As I said, some of baseball's “unwritten rules” really deserve to go into the circular file – and perhaps the biggest offender is this one. The great thing about baseball is it's completely unpredictable; looking down at a team for wanting to make sure they've done all that they can to win a game – to protect themselves if and when the unpredictable happens – is a little ludicrous.

\*\*\*

See you next week.

## Portland Police News

5/22: Nicole Laplante, 21, of 24 Lake Rd., was charged with third-degree larceny, fourth-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, and conspiracy to commit fourth-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

5/24: Matthew Kimball, 23, of 53 East Main St., was charged with first-degree criminal mischief, police said.

## Hebron Police News

5/22: State Police said at approximately 2:17 p.m. a two-car accident occurred on Route 66 at the intersection of Burrows Hill Road. Police said Briana Unique Camp, 17, of 7 Caffyn Dr., was traveling west on Route 66 when she hit Judithe Jane Newton, 70, of 45 Chittenden Rd., Amston, from the rear. Police said both drivers reported back pain and were transported via the Hebron Fire Department to the Marlborough Medical Center for evaluation. Police said Camp was found at fault for failing to drive a reasonable distance apart.

5/24: State Police said Christopher Willson, 20, of 39 Tuck Rd., Manchester, was arrested for DUI.

## Marlborough Police News

5/10: State Police said Patrick Coffey, 57, of 455 Buckboard Ln., was arrested for DWI and failure to drive in an established lane.

5/23: State Police said Philip A. Plourde, 35, of 91 Shawn Dr., Bristol, was arrested for reckless driving and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

5/24: State Police said Beau E. Dugas, 22, of 60 Linwood Ave., Apt. D, was arrested for DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple-lane highway.

5/25: At about 6 p.m., State Police responded to a residence on Jones Hollow Road for a reported residential burglary. Police said the burglary occurred that day, between 12:55 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. Police said entry was made by cutting through a window screen and a Toshiba 42-inch LCD HDTV model T42RV530U color black was stolen from the residence. Police ask

## Colchester Police News

5/17: State Police said Sharon Ternowchek, 36, of 57 Day St., Brooklyn, was arrested for first-degree reckless endangerment, risk of injury to a child, DUI, and reckless driving.

5/24: State Police said Sharon Brunetti, 50, of 164 Stoddard Rd., Waterbury was charged with criminal violation of a protective order.

5/24: Colchester Police said Albert Overbeck, 53, of 19 Boulder Rd., was arrested for criminal violation of a restraining order.

5/24: State Police said Vincent Rutchick, 31, of 109 Hebron Rd., Marlborough, turned himself into Troop K on an active arrest warrant for second-degree failure to appear.

5/25: Colchester Police said Nicholas Donald Majek, 51, of 1 Labella Circle, Middletown, was arrested for DUI, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and obstruction of view because of a defective wind-

## East Hampton Police News

5/14: Dwayne Shippee, 24, of 20 Lake Ridge Rd., Marlborough, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and second-degree breach of peace, East Hampton Police said.

5/14: Jasara M. Hall, 34, of 63 No. Main St., was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

5/18: Jeffrey Daniel Hyde, 55, of 77 Smith St., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault, disorderly conduct, violation of a protective order and possession of narcotics, police said.

Three days later, on 5/21, Hyde was also issued a summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

5/19: Kyle Turner, 20, of 2 Sears Pl., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

5/21: David L. Gaudino, 55, of 75 Old Marlborough Rd., was arrested and charged with second-degree violation of conditions of release and two counts of disorderly conduct, police said.

## Andover Police News

5/25: State Police said Brian Richman, 21, of 5 Stone Lodge Rd., New Milford, was arrested for DWI, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana.

anyone with information regarding this incident to contact Trooper Xavier Cruz of Troop K at 860-465-5455 ext. 4002.

5/25: State Police said Conrad G. Byfield, 41, of 62 Magnolia St., Hartford, was arrested for DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple-lane highway.

5/26: State Police said Amber Pierce, 21, of 531 Old Colchester Rd., was arrested for DUI and possession of drug paraphernalia.

5/12: State Police said Hector Oyola Davila 54, of 278 South Main St., Middletown, was arrested for interfering with an officer, DUI, operating a motor vehicle with no insurance, failure to maintain lane and driving with a suspended license.

5/27: State Police said Jose Juan Perez-Hernandez, 36, of 63 Scott Rd., East Lyme, was arrested for DWI.

shield.

5/25: At approximately 8:22 p.m. Colchester Police received an anonymous tip that Mariano Rivera, 47, of 192 Washington Ave., West Haven, had an active arrest warrant for felony domestic violence related charges out of West Haven Police Department. The warrant was confirmed as active and Rivera was taken into custody without incident. Rivera was transported to the Troop K detention facility where he was transferred to the custody of West Haven Police.

5/26: State Police said Joanne Halpern, 56, of 55 McDonald Rd., was arrested for DUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating a motor vehicle with no insurance, and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.