

RIVEREAST

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Who Won?... Signs lined the entrance of Colchester Town Hall Tuesday for the referendum on the town and school budgets—and the votes of each tipped heavily to one side of the scale. To find out if the spending packages passed, turn to the story on page 30.

Tournament to Honor 'A Beautiful Girl'

by Geeta Schrayter

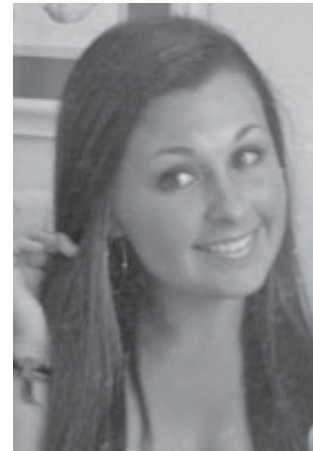
Exactly nine months ago this past Tuesday, the hearts of a Hebron family – as well as many others – were shattered when 17-year-old Paige Houston died in a car crash. Since that time, Paige's mother Michele said she's been learning along with the rest of the Houston family – which includes husband Ken and sons Cody and Shane – how to heal after an event she said "just devastated everybody."

"The world lost a very, very special human being," Michele said this week.

"There is nothing positive about what happened," Michele continued – but the family is hoping to *make* something positive come from the tragedy, through the start of an annual golf tournament in Paige's memory.

"If I can make some positives out of it – that's going to help me heal and honor my child," Michele explained. "We need to honor her the best way we can."

She went on to say her fear was that Paige would be forgotten – and she wanted to ensure that didn't happen.



"My biggest fear as a mother is that she's forgotten," Michele stated. "She wanted to be a teacher. I vow that she *will* be a teacher. Maybe not quite the way she or any of us expected her to be, but she will teach through me. And someday, when I'm able to talk about this [what happened], then I will educate other children and other parents."

And in the meantime, Paige's memory will be kept alive through the Paige Houston Memorial Golf Tournament on June 2 – the first of what Michele hopes will be an annual event.

Michele explained it was the thought of Paige not participating in this "milestone year" – what would have been her senior year of high school and the beginning of her adult life – that led to the tournament.

"The thought of her not being able to go on made me think of a way that I could have her go on in spirit to help others," Michele stated. "And the best way I thought of was a golf tournament."

Ken, who enjoys golfing and is on the board for the annual golf tournament held for AHM Youth and Family Services, added onto that.

See Tournament Page 2

Belltown Voters Shoot Down \$40.87 Million Budget

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Town Council's proposed \$40,872,675 budget for the fiscal year 2014-15 was shot down at referendum Tuesday by a vote of 1,180 against and 839 for.

The referendum asked voters the question, "Shall the annual budget for the fiscal year 2014-15 as recommended by the Town Council be approved?"

That recommended budget would have been a 4.17 percent increase from current year spending. It would have allotted \$28,492,560 to the Board of Education budget, and the remainder would have gone into the Town Operations budget, Transfers to Other Funds, and Debt Service.

The proposed budget, which was endorsed by the Democratic members of the Town Council but not the Republicans, called for a 1.09 mill rate increase from the current year from 26.63 to 27.72.

But alas, the majority of voters did not approve those numbers.

As motorists drove up into the parking lot of East Hampton High School, the polling location, they saw signs that read, "vote no, it can be better," "less is more," "no new hires," and "can't afford it."

Republican Town Council member Ted Hintz agreed with those signs, as well as the outcome of the polls. Minutes after the results were in, he said, "I'm very happy that the voters shot down the budget."

Hintz furthered that he is hopeful the council can come up with and put forward a "reasonable budget" to present to the taxpayers for round two of referendums.

The 1,180 East Hampton residents who voted "no" hope so, too.

One such voter, Troy Junker, said as he exited the polls Tuesday, "The mill rate is too high."

He said he voted 'no' because he would like to see a lower mill rate than the proposed 27.72, though he did not suggest any specific cuts to the budget.

Another voter, who wished to remain anonymous, said he voted 'no,' too, because of the proposed mill rate.

"A whole mill is too much [of an increase]. A half a mill I could deal with," he said, noting that he would rather see the mill rate increase "a little bit at a time."

A third 'no' vote, cast by Norman Godwin, was also the result of the mill rate being too

high, among other concerns. Godwin said he voted against the budget because he was being mindful that next year "we're getting hit" with the taxes associated with the high school building renovation project.

Godwin added he couldn't get onboard with the proposed budget because enrollment is down in East Hampton public schools, yet the Board of Education budget would have been a 3.49 percent increase from current year spending.

But for many Bellringers who voted 'yes' Tuesday, the funding for education was a top priority.

One of the 839 'yes' votes came from Anna Fagan, the mother of a 2-year-old and a newborn.

Her vote, she said, was based on the promise of full-day classes for all kindergarten students.

"I don't know what I'd do with half-day," she said.

Another mom, Becky Cummings, also voted 'yes' on Tuesday.

"I'm a teacher and it's very important that we invest in our children's education," she said.

A total of 2,019 ballots were cast Tuesday

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Signs such as this one were scattered throughout the parking lot area of East Hampton High School, where voters rejected the town's proposed budget.

Tournament cont. from Front Page

“These golf tournaments can raise a lot of money,” he said. “So we thought having one would be a great way to raise money in Paige’s memory and give the money back to the community in the form of scholarships and donations to local non-profit type groups,” like the fire department, AHM Youth and Family Services and RHAM Football and Cheerleading.

Regarding the scholarships, Michele explained the original idea was to raise money for a single one in Paige’s name, but that number has since grown to four.

“The cheerleaders decided to do one,” Michele shared. Then “AHM decided they wanted to honor our family and do one, so then we said, ‘I think we can handle two.’”

The golf tournament will take place at Blackledge Country Club, 180 West St., Hebron. Ken explained the day will begin at 9 a.m. when everyone arrives for registration and to enjoy coffee and doughnuts donated by the local Dunkin’ Donuts.

There will be a 10 a.m. shotgun start, Ken said, and the golfing will continue throughout the day, with the ability to enjoy a hot dog lunch thanks to Ted’s IGA Supermarket, which will be providing their hot dog cart.



The inaugural Paige Houston Memorial Golf Tournament will be held June 2 at Blackledge Country Club. The tournament will raise money for a scholarship fund in Paige’s name as well as funds to donate to local non-profit organizations on her behalf.

There will also be a buffet dinner put on by Blackledge at the event, as well as a DJ, raffles and a silent auction.

“But we still need donations for the raffle” and silent auction, Ken said. “We’ve been working on it but it’s a lot of work. What we have so far is decent but we don’t have a lot.”

Michele furthered, “We’re getting nervous because we’re still looking for donations for raffle items, a variety of canned soda and water bottles for the dinner portion [of the event].”

She explained they had already acquired some items such as gift certificates to restaurants and hair salons, golf equipment, both a New England Patriots and New York Giants sweatshirt and grill set, tickets to Red Sox games and Yankee games, a gift certificate to a bike shop, a wine tasting, sunglasses and jewelry – but they were hoping for more.

She explained they were planning to contact businesses like breweries and comedy clubs and were trying to think of items men might like – like more game tickets – since they had plenty for the women. But, she said, “We’re not picky.”

“Whatever anyone is willing to help us with we’re happy – we’re absolutely happy about,” she stated. “My big thing right now is – we need to get a tent and table and chairs. That’s a big thing. We’re trying to hold off to the last minute since it’s such a big expense.”

And then, of course, for a successful event in Paige’s honor, there needs to be people – plenty of people.

“The more support we get and the more participation we get the more successful it’ll be,” Ken said.

Players can register for golf for a contribution of \$125 per player; dinner reservations can be made for a \$50 contribution per person; and anyone looking to sponsor a tee can do so for \$25-300 depending on the desired sponsor level.

Ken added the fundraiser could use more Diamond-Level tee sponsors for \$300, who will receive a personalized Major Sponsor tee flag delivered in person at the event as well as special recognition.

“Anybody can do it,” he said. “A couple families have done it, then some businesses. But we’re not sold out on the flags and that’s a good profit.”

And while Paige’s parents said they’re unsure just how much they’ll bring in the tournament’s inaugural year, Michele said it was important to have the first fundraiser this year.

“The reason it was so important to get it done for this year was so her class could be the first to receive her scholarship,” she explained. And that class was one she had nothing but praise for.



Paige – whom her mother Michele said “could light up a room with her smile” – is shown here at a Red Sox game with her brothers Cody (left) and Shane.

“I can’t even say enough about the RHAM students,” she said, calling them “classy” and adding, “They are the most thoughtful young adults. ...they’re loving and caring and they include Paige in everything,” such as adding her name to the senior wall at school and ordering butterfly decorations for prom.

“They saw the double rainbow two days ago and said [on social media] ‘look it’s Paige and Garret [Campen, another RHAM senior who died this year from a car accident],’” Michele recalled Tuesday.

And in the end, that’s what the tournament is all about too: thinking of Paige Houston – a girl her mother said had a radiant smile, beautiful green eyes and “a heart the size of Canada” – in everyday moments, and making sure her memory lives on through the tournament.

“I want to give back so that everybody knows that ‘Wow, this is in memory of Paige,’ and that

name will never escape anyone,” Michele explained. “That’s my goal, because she lives within *my* heart – always – but to the people who didn’t know her, they’ll know her name by what she’s giving back.”

She concluded, “I have no regrets with this girl. She and I had a very special relationship, and I can say without a doubt she passed knowing how much she meant to all of us. And I have to make something beautiful for a beautiful girl.”

The deadline for registrations and sponsorships is May 23. Registration forms can be acquired by stopping in to Americare Medical Supply, 7 Liberty Drive, Hebron or on the event’s Facebook page at [facebook.com/PaigeHoustonMemorialGolfTournament](https://www.facebook.com/PaigeHoustonMemorialGolfTournament). For more information, email KMPCS@comcast.net or call 860-729-3305.

Belltown Voters cont. from Front Page

night, which is more than 25 percent of registered voters in East Hampton.

Registrar of Voters Alannah Coshov said the turnout was heavier than expected. She said the day started slow, but voter turnout picked up as the day went on.

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore, a Democrat, said she was “happy about the turnout.”

“It’s great that the residents came out to vote to show what they want us to do,” she said.

Moore said the Town Council’s recommended budget would have been an investment in the town’s future, but “it seems that the majority of the residents that voted are happy with status quo in East Hampton.”

Moore explained that the next step is for the Board of Finance to meet and make cuts to the budget. From there, the Town Council would be responsible for approving the budget and sending it back to referendum.

The Board of Finance met yesterday evening, after press time, to discuss and hopefully ap-

prove a budget to be sent forward to the Town Council for its meeting Tuesday, May 13.

Going into the Board of Finance meeting Thursday, board chairman Ted Turner said, “The two added positions will probably go.”

He was referring to the police captain and the facilities and grounds foreman positions, which were included in the Town Council’s first recommended budget for 2014-15.

Turner also said, “I, personally, am going to try to stay away from [making cuts to] the education budget as much as possible.”

The finance board chairman said he was “surprised” by the outcome of the votes in terms of the large difference between “yes” and “no” votes.

But, he concluded, “The voters have spoken.”

The next regularly scheduled East Hampton Town Council meeting is Tuesday, May 13, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall. A second referendum date has not yet been set.

Arrests Made in East Hampton After Shooting in Hurd Park

by Elizabeth Bowling

Three New Britain residents were arrested last week after an incident at Hurd State Park in East Hampton.

David Nieves, 30, Angela Blanchard, 29, and Arielle K. Beaudoin, 28, all of 63 Brook St., New Britain, were arrested by East Hampton Police Monday, April 28, on a slew of charges, according to a news release from the EHPD.

East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox explained the incident. He said, “We received a 911 call from a gentleman who was actively fishing. He was wading in the river. He was about 15 feet from shore.”

Cox furthered that the man fishing heard “several gunshots,” and described bullets splashing in the water about 15 yards away from him.

“He retreated to land,” Cox said. “He was able to observe a couple of people, and relayed their description in the 911 call.”

Officers then responded to the scene and found three people who matched the description given to them by the fisherman. The three in question originally denied having any in-

formation or even having heard any gunshots, Cox said.

Officers then discovered a handgun “under the leaves in close proximity to one of the three arrested,” Cox said. “At that point they became more cooperative.”

According to Cox, the handgun was “lawfully registered and owned by one of the three.”

Blanchard, the gun’s owner, was charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree breach of peace, interfering with police, and illegal/unlawful discharge of a firearm.

Nieves was charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree breach of peace, interfering with police, illegal/unlawful discharge of a firearm, criminal possession of a firearm, and possession of a deadly weapon. He appeared in Middletown Superior Court Tuesday, April 29.

Beaudoin was charged with interfering with police. She and Blanchard are both scheduled to appear in Middletown Superior Court Thursday, May 15.

RHAM Budget Wins on First Try

by Geeta Schrayter

The results are in, and the RHAM Board of Education budget for 2014-15 passed Tuesday by a vote of 863-653.

In all three towns in the region – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – the majority of the votes were in favor of the spending plan, which totals \$26,850,922.

In Hebron, the vote was tightest, with 597 taxpayers casting ballots in favor of the budget and 558 against, while in Andover and Marlborough, the outcomes were more definitive. In Andover, 82 voted in favor of the budget while 38 voted against; and in Marlborough 184 voted in favor while 57 voted against.

Speaking on the approval, schools superintendent Bob Siminski said, “We’re really pleased. I think that the budget was carried in all three towns is a tribute to the hard work of the board, reviewing and coming up with a budget the towns can afford.”

He concluded, “I’m very pleased and proud.” The approved number is an increase of 3.49

percent over the current year’s budget and includes drivers such as the cost of continuing existing programming, mandated and statutory increases, capital requests, the Common Core State Standards and teacher evaluation plans.

In addition, health insurance is rising 4 percent, or \$190,180, and special education is increasing \$360,649. The amount of money for instructional supplies is also listed as increasing \$37,604.

Also included in the number are contractual increases: certified staff is scheduled to have a .5 percent general wage increase plus step, administrators are scheduled to receive a 1.9 percent increase, and the non-certified staff contract is currently in negotiations.

Other increases include: \$100,000 in funds for capital projects; an additional \$132,980 for contracted services; \$102,000 for a curriculum coordinator; \$79,830 for security; \$73,220 for two special education paraprofessionals; and \$28,864 for a part-time middle school music

teacher.

Another \$38,245 is also included for the implementation of a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program in the middle school to help combat the draw of magnet schools and keep students in the district.

In previous budget presentations it had been shared there are currently 79 students enrolled in magnet schools, along with 30 in vocational/agricultural schools and 44 at Windham Technical School, costing the district \$456,475.

Next year, magnet school tuition is expected to drop, from \$312,624 to \$300,000.

Transportation costs are also being reduced as a result of RHAM and the member towns going out to bid together for a bus contract – the new bid reduced the account by \$172,763.

Other reductions in the budget include \$125,319 from teachers’ salaries resulting from some teachers taking advantage of a retirement incentive, and the decision to hire new teachers that are Step 1 with a bachelor’s degree in-

stead of Step 3 with a master’s degree, which would result in lower salaries; \$58,466 from utilities resulting from energy conservation measures like installing solar panels on the roof; and a \$13,811 decrease in heating oil from lower fuel costs.

Hebron is responsible for the largest portion of the newly-approved budget at 56.26 percent, which amounts to \$15,103,516; Marlborough, meanwhile, is responsible for 29.03 percent, or \$7,793,371; and Andover is responsible for 14.71 percent, or \$3,949,035.

Board of Education Chairman Danny Holtsclaw spoke about the results Wednesday.

“I’m very happy that the budget passed in all three towns and I believe the membership [of the board] is pleased as well” he said, concluding, “We’re looking forward, now that the budget is behind us, to working on getting back to our strategic planning and the regular business of the board.”

More Traffic Changes Coming for RHAM Schools

by Geeta Schrayter

When students and staff returned to RHAM after April vacation, it was to find new traffic patterns in place that affected the morning drop-off period. And now, some more changes are coming, after the initial adjustments caused some unintended issues in the center of Hebron.

The initial changes came as a result of the March 14 accident where middle school teacher Dawn Mallory was struck by a car; she later died from her injuries. The revised route required all buses to enter RHAM through the main high school entrance on Wall Street, and drop students at the high school.

Parents dropping off high school students, as well as parents with students in both schools, were also told to enter RHAM from Wall Street, as were student drivers.

But all the added traffic coming in from Wall Street has meant chaos in the center of town.

Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney said this week his phone has been “ringing off the

hook” because of the issue.

“Yesterday [there] was total gridlock in town” he said, explaining the coach buses meant to take students on their trip to Washington D.C. arrived at the same time as the regular buses, “and Wall Street was jam-packed.”

Tierney said the town wasn’t unsympathetic to what happened in March, “but in response to that I think we overreacted. We tried a traffic pattern to see if it would work, but it hasn’t. ... We’ve tried it, we tried it for a while, but it’s just not working.”

He added, “It’s taking a situation from RHAM – and we understand there is a situation – and now also creating an unsafe situation out here in town for the commuting traffic.”

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski, whom Tierney said had been “very cooperative,” added onto what Tierney said.

“We’re going to be doing some modifications

to the traffic pattern because of its impact on Hebron,” he stated. “It’s impacted the traffic on routes 66, 85 and 316 – all those streets are adversely impacted.”

And so, beginning today, Siminski said middle school parents will be allowed to come in from RHAM Road to drop off their children. Signs will be put in place instructing people where to go, and more speed bumps have already been added to keep down speeds.

For now, Siminski added, the bus traffic and high school drop-off will remain as is.

“I think the changes will primarily be allowing parents to come in RHAM Road,” he said, adding he’d be meeting with some engineering firms next Wednesday and hoped to get somebody on board to perform a traffic study.

“We’re also seeking proposals from qualified engineers to design a new flow pattern on the RHAM campus but also to access the im-

pact of the traffic flow on routes 316, 85 and 66,” Siminski stated.

He added Tierney “has helped us out a great deal by adjusting the lights at Wall Street and Route 66 [so there’s a longer left turn arrow], so we’ve been working together – it’s just gotten to the point where a lot of people are upset and frustrated.”

But the hope is this latest change will help alleviate some of that upset, and that, eventually, there will be a new traffic pattern that works for both the town and the schools.

“We want to get to a point where we maintain a good traffic flow on campus and on those three roads,” Siminski said, adding the issues “weren’t from a lack of trying on anybody’s part. We’ve been working with the town engineer, the town manager – everybody. I just think we’ve got to find a way to make it safe and allow traffic to flow smoothly.”

Budget Vote Next Week in Marlborough

by Melissa Roberto

The proposed \$22.23 million Marlborough town budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year will be decided upon by voters at an annual town meeting next Monday, May 12.

Marlborough taxpayers will cast their votes at 7 p.m. at the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria, 25 School Dr.

The bottom line number of the town budget is \$22,230,125, which reflects an overall increase over the current fiscal year of 2.86 percent. The Board of Finance voted 5-1 to send the total to the annual town meeting last Monday, April 28, in a meeting that followed the annual public hearing. Board of Finance Chairwoman Evelyn Godbout, Vice Chairman Cliff Denniss and members Ken Hjulstrom, Susan Leser and Doug Knowlton voted in favor of the proposed spending package, while alternate member Lauren Cragg voted in opposition.

The town budget is made up of five components: Marlborough’s portion of the RHAM budget, which stands at \$7,793,370, an increase of 6.85 percent; which passed at referendum Tuesday, the local Board of Education budget at \$7,271,585; an increase of 1.25 percent; the town operations budget at \$4,612,856, an increase of 3.96 percent; contingency, which stays the same as the current fiscal year at \$20,000 to be used for unanticipated emergencies; and town debt at \$2,532,314, which decreases by 4.80 percent compared to the current fiscal year.

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

According to unapproved meeting minutes from the April 28 finance meeting on the town website, the budget sent to the annual town meeting featured reductions. \$30,000 was taken out of the local board of education budget, which the minutes state was a result of “mostly salary changes for the new administration,” and in addition, the town operations budget was reduced by \$12,000, also “in salaries,” while other reductions were made to the RHAM budget.

This week, Cragg explained she voted against the budget due to the amount of reductions made, and hinted that she would have liked to see more reduced.

“I did not feel that the Board of Finance had done their job in scrutinizing costs and expenses to the town,” Cragg said. “But given the vote, the rest of the board thought differently.”

However, Hjulstrom spoke in opposition.

“The time for Board of Finance members to provide input was during the numerous budget workshops,” said Hjulstrom, who stressed he was speaking as an individual, and not representing the finance board. “However, Ms. Cragg was often absent from those sessions and failed to provide substantive input when she was present.”

And relative to next week’s town meeting, Hjulstrom said he does not want to see a repeat of last year, which was when former finance board member Beth Petroni handed out a new budget to voters at the last minute, which was approved by voters and then later said to be flawed and dismissed, resulting in a second town meeting.

“I am hoping we do not see a repeat of last year when the Democratic Town Committee leadership, including DTC Chairman Lauren Cragg and Vice Chairman Joe LaBella, waited until the town meeting to throw a monkey wrench into the process at the 11th hour,” Hjulstrom, a Republican, said.

In addition to sending the \$22.23 million spending package to voters next Monday, the finance board also agreed last week to send forth three other questions to voters. The second question that will appear before voters is the transferring of \$485,750 from the general fund undesignated fund balance to the Capital and Non-Recurring Fund to be used for capital expenses. The proposed capital requests include \$45,000 for the future capital expenditure reserve, \$40,000 for the revaluation reserve from the 2014-15 fiscal year, \$136,500 towards the engineering of rebuilding Fawn Brook Bridge, \$35,000 for design and engineering repairs to Williamsburg and South roads, \$30,000 for an above ground fuel oil tank at Firehouse No. 2, \$4,200 for the replacement of a police car mounted radio, \$11,500 for three police portable radios, \$60,000 for a fuel master system at Public Works, \$73,550 for a Public Works backhoe/loader, and \$50,000 for road improvements.

In addition, the public will vote to return \$8,634.62 of leftover funds to the capital and non-recurring fund, per the town charter. \$410.62 is left over from the purchase of a Public Works 4x4 and the remaining \$8,224 is left over from the library roof project.

Following that, the final vote to be taken by

the public next week is the recommendation of entering into a lease/purchase agreement to purchase 20 air packs for the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department that is not to exceed \$180,000 over a five-year period. The lease would begin in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Selectmen Dick Shea this week said he’d like to see more people at next week’s town meeting than have attended the meetings in years past.

“We’d like to encourage people to come out and vote,” Shea said. “The process is very important and it has a major impact on the town and on people’s tax rates. Historically, attendance at town meetings has been very low and we’d like to see that improve.”

Hjulstrom also is in hopes of getting a good turnout from the public Monday.

“Unlike some previous years, this year’s budget does not include any ‘hot button’ topics pertaining to the Board of Education, so we might see a low turnout among parents,” he said. “But I would like to encourage everyone to attend the town meeting. Failure of the budget could lead to reductions in the Board of Education budget and cuts to town services.”

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski reflected on this year’s budget process.

“The budget process was reviewed by the town departments, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance in a collaborative approach,” Gaudinski said. “We’re hoping the public will support our initiatives.”

The first selectwoman added, “I would encourage the public to attend and vote on the budget.”

Sixth Grade Academy Coming to Marlborough

by **Melissa Roberto**

Thanks to a group of staff members at Marlborough Elementary School, and support from the Board of Education, next year's sixth-graders in town will be the first to attend a new initiative at the school: the Sixth Grade Academy.

Similar to the format middle schoolers enter into when they head to RHAM, starting in the 2014-15 school year, sixth-graders at MES will undergo a modified rotating schedule. This is not to be confused with the building of a lone sixth grade school. Rather, the sixth-graders at MES will remain in the corridors where the classrooms are located now, at the lower level of the school. The difference is that the program will allow for students to transition to various classes throughout the day—and at no cost to the district.

A group of four MES staff members – Kim Kelley, future assistant principal and currently a curriculum specialist; Kerri Zmeskal, a sixth-grade teacher who will take Kelley's place next year; and sixth-grade teachers Karen Craig and Delvine Coachman – presented the program to the Board of Education at its April 24 meeting, which resulted in much praise from board members and members of the public in attendance.

The idea of the Sixth Grade Academy was spearheaded by the staff members a year ago. They have since met with Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz and principals to discuss it. Sklarz positively commented on the group's efforts at the board meeting.

"There's no better plan than a plan that comes from the grass roots and this was certainly a grass-roots movement always at the focal point of the child in transition," Sklarz said.

Interim Principal Paula Schwartz was also on board, stating that the program is one sixth-graders at the school are ready for.

"We spent a lot of time in the months that we've been together talking about the sixth-graders," Schwartz said. "And how they're a group that's ready to go, ready to flourish and have some new experiences. The [current] program is a solid sixth grade program but we think we can do a lot more things with the kids that they're ready to do."

Schwartz highlighted the goals of the program. Preparation for middle school was among them, in addition to providing opportunities for

enrichment and support, enhanced parent communication as well as offering a "balanced approach to academics" and "a systematic approach to the Common Core standards."

Coachman then discussed how the rotating schedule would work. She said students' classes would rotate on a daily basis but that the schedule for each day of the week would stay the same.

"They wouldn't necessarily have the same classes at the same time every day. However, every Monday they would have the same schedule," Coachman explained.

The sixth-grade teacher continued that one of the benefits of the rotating schedule is to allow students to learn a subject at various times of day throughout the week.

"Math is sometimes in the afternoon, sometimes in the morning," Coachman said, "so that they'll be able to have the classes at their optimal learning time. Some students are morning people, so we're trying to target that as well."

Additionally, the schedule allows for a 15-minute period of Spanish every day. Currently, the language program is in its transition year and is only being offered to sixth-graders at an abbreviated time, Sklarz said this week. Sklarz said the daily inclusion of Spanish is "the perfect way to learn a language," adding "we're pretty excited about it."

The schedule also includes five minutes of locker time between classes "to get prepared," Coachman said. The students will also have a homeroom teacher in the morning, similar to how the schedule works at RHAM.

"They'll get to adapt to different teaching styles as they do different schedules and they'll have a home base," Coachman said. "It will be a change for them but it won't be something as drastic from here to RHAM."

Craig commented on how the academy would prepare students for middle school. As it's done at RHAM, Craig said the sixth-graders will receive a "central binder."

"They're going to have greater independence," she said. "They'll gain organization skills."

The teachers also highlighted improvements to the curriculum, as well as efforts to keep in place the benefits the school already has.

"Math Explorers will still exist as it does

now," said Craig. "And there will be more opportunity for enrichment."

Zmeskal said there will be extra help during study halls, and there will also be specialized help as each teacher will be teaching one subject.

"You'll have the math teacher, the science teacher," Zmeskal explained. "Each teacher having one subject that they're focusing on will be much better and much easier for [teachers] to focus on the Common Core standards and deliver them effectively to students."

In addition, the presenters stressed materials for each subject would be pooled into one room rather than each teacher only receiving a portion to split up between an entire class.

"We're going to utilize materials," said Zmeskal. "All math materials will be housed in the math room so we'll have enough. Right now you may have some and some people get to use them."

In terms of the budget, Zmeskal stressed the initiative will use existing materials and classrooms, and will not require extra teachers. Thus, presenters explained, it is of no cost to the district.

"We don't need extra staff to do it," Zmeskal assured.

Additionally, Kelley said an approach to the academy that will be strengthened in the coming year is communication with parents. In order to support students at home Kelley said an electronic board, referred to as an "e-board," will be available for students to log onto online outside of school to view their homework for the following day.

"Just in case the binder doesn't reflect everything that's necessary for that night, there will be an opportunity to get on the e-board," said Kelley. "The website will also provide the schedule."

The future assistant principal furthered the group is also looking into a parent portal in which parents would receive a username and password sent to them in the mail that they can also use to monitor what is being studied in their child's classrooms.

Board members and residents in attendance expressed enthusiasm about the initiative.

"I think it's great," said member Mimi LaPoint. "The sixth-graders are really ready for

something different."

School board vice chair Betty O'Brien also voiced enthusiasm, saying, "I think it's really exciting. I think that you've done an absolutely fantastic job. I love the fact that you've called it the Sixth Grade Academy and I think the kids are going to respond to that...It's really special."

The Board of Education unanimously endorsed the proposal.

Member of the public Lisa Seethaler told the presenters she was "just so impressed."

"You've had so many other things on your plate. Thank you," Seethaler said. "This is why regardless of any institutional bureaucratic change you guys deal with, our students are in such good hands because you are clearly preparing them for the social and emotional things which aren't quantitatively measure but reassuring to a parent."

PTO Co-President Carrie Packer, who said she was speaking as an individual, said her daughter just finished sixth grade last year.

"I didn't think I could say anything nicer [about] sixth grade and how they could possibly improve on what they already did," said Packer. "This is fantastic, perfect. I applaud you."

With no additional costs bearing down on the district, and the schedule already in the process of being confirmed, Sklarz said this week the Sixth Grade Academy is "ready to go" for the coming school year.

* * *

Additionally, on April 24, the Board of Education approved a transfer of \$6,200 to go towards registration and travel costs of five students and one staff member heading to the International Future Problem Solvers competition in Iowa this June.

Sklarz said the money covers \$1,000 of registration and board costs per student, and \$1,200 for the supervisor. He positively commented on the group's success.

"I just think it's such a compliment to the quality of our students," said Sklarz. "We've watched the number of [Future Problem Solvers] participants double in the last few years. It's probably the most successful elementary program of future problem solving in the state."

New Road Signs on Route 66 in Portland

by **Elizabeth Bowling**

Following two fatal car crashes last fall, the state Department of Transportation this month will replace all existing road signage on Route 66 in Portland with new signs, officials said.

According to a press release from state Rep. Christie Carpino, the new signage includes upgraded Chevron signs in areas with curves or bends. These signs warn motorists to slow down for big curves in the road and are typically yellow, rectangular signs with black arrows.

The DOT, in addition to replacing signs along the full length of Route 66, will install new signs in the area known as "the ledges," Carpino's press release stated.

Carpino addressed the dangerous set-up of the area. She said some parts of it are "narrow with stone outcroppings on either side of the

street, very close to the shoulder. The road in that area is winding and lacks lighting in some areas."

Last fall, "the ledges" saw two fatal single-car motor vehicle accidents in the overnight hours. The first occurred Sept. 20, just before 2 a.m., when a truck hit a rock ledge on Route 66. The truck caught fire and the driver, James Stamm, 51, of East Hampton, was killed.

The second took place Nov. 10, at 12:45 a.m., near the ledges on Portland/Cobalt Road. That accident, according to a November statement from Portland Police, involved speeding. The vehicle was traveling westbound and went across the eastbound lane. It struck a dirt/rock embankment and continued westbound when it became airborne and struck a utility pole, then a tree, traversed down the embankment about

60 feet, and finally came to a stop. The driver, Donald Sorvillo, 52, of East Hampton, was pronounced dead at the scene, and his brother, Robert Sorvillo, also of East Hampton, was critically injured.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield applauded the new signs, saying last week, "Anything we can do to improve safety on that road is a good thing."

She added, "I want to thank the DOT for agreeing to replace the signage. It's very important that the signs that are there are able to be read and are in good condition" especially in regards to their reflexivity.

Bransfield said officials in Portland, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and other neighboring towns have been meeting regularly "to try to coordinate our safety activities along

[Route 66]," the first selectwoman explained.

Additionally, she affirmed, Portland is applying for more grant money to go toward DUI checkpoints. Specifically, the town applied for DUI checkpoint money for July 4 and Labor Day.

She also noted that the Board of Selectmen's proposed budget, to be voted on by Portland residents at referendum Monday, includes the purchase of a portable sign known as a "digital speed readout," which Bransfield called "self-policing."

Regarding road and motorist safety in general, Carpino concluded in her press release, "Speed, road conditions, lighting, weather conditions and fatigue all play a part in the safety of our travelers. We all must be a little more vigilant on our roads."

\$10.65M Budget Sent to Referendum in Andover

by Geeta Schrayter

The proposed Andover town budget for 2014-15 is off to referendum.

The proposed spending package, which totals \$10,651,362.45, for a \$27,320.93 or .26 percent decrease over the current year's budget, was approved at town meeting Wednesday by a 44-4 vote, and will now head to referendum May 20.

If approved, the budget would result in slightly lower taxes for residents, as the proposal calls for the mill rate to decrease .05 mills, to 30.72. For a house valued at \$200,000, this would mean a \$10 tax dip, from \$6,154 to \$6,144.

The figure includes \$4,269,044 for Andover Elementary School and \$3,949,770 for Andover's portion of the RHAM budget, which was approved Tuesday by voters in the three RHAM towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad explained at the meeting the overall decrease came from the Andover Elementary

School budget, which is decreasing \$65,074; Andover's contribution to RHAM, which is based on the number of students from town who attend the school and is decreasing \$11,905; AHM Youth and Family Services, which is decreasing \$1,559.08; capital expenditures which are listed as dropping \$5,433; and interest expense, which decreased \$3,870.

Despite the overall decrease, some proposed increases are also included, such as an additional \$12,000 for snow removal, which Conrad explained is to replace money cut in a previous years' budget; an additional \$6,865.83 for the Public Works Department which includes union raises and funds for tree removal and vehicle maintenance; and \$6,154.32 for the Town Office Building account for the replacement of laptops that run on Windows XP, which is no longer supported by Microsoft.

There is also a \$4,977 increase for maintenance and gas for the senior vans as well as more money for the drivers; \$3,096.44 was also added to the Planning and Zoning Department

budget which includes wage increases and an additional \$1,000 for legal fees and professional services; and \$1,380 was added to update wiring at the Old Town Hall.

As far as salaries, non-elected employees are set to receive a three percent wage increase, while unionized employees will receive a two percent raise. A three percent raise was also included for elected personnel. The latter raise was also voted on, and approved, at the town meeting 41-6.

Also included in the proposed budget number are three capital requests: \$50,000 for the purchase of a minivan with a wheelchair/walker accessible ramp; \$33,145 for the second of a five-year annual lease to purchase a dump truck; and \$16,306 for 16 voice amplifiers and radio interface units for the fire department.

Speaking on the meeting, Conrad said Thursday that "all in all, it went well."

"And you can tell by the vote, there were just a few out there that were against the budget," she said.

First Selectman Bob Burbank felt similarly.

"I was very pleased. I think overall we had strong support for our budget from all the voters there," he said. "It passed overwhelmingly and I was just happy to see it go through as it was presented by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance."

He furthered, "I'm looking forward to a relatively-easy passage of the budget on May 20, and it does seem the people appreciate when you try to keep everything in line."

Burbank mentioned this would be the second year in a row there would be a slight drop in the mill rate, "so I think people do appreciate the hard work it takes to come up with things like that."

The budget referendum will take place Tuesday, May 20, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at the Andover Town Office, 17 School Rd.

Andover Resident Charged with Leading Hartford Drug Gang

by Geeta Schrayter

A man who federal authorities said has lived in Andover has been arrested and accused of leading a Hartford drug gang.

According to a May 1 release from the U.S. District Attorney's Office, Melkuan Scott, 23, who has addresses on Lake Road in Andover and Eastford Street in Hartford, was identified as the alleged leader of the West Hell street gang, who distributed crack cocaine in the Westland Street area of Hartford.

The year-long joint investigation leading to Scott's identification was headed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Northern Connecticut Violent Crimes Task Force, and included "the use of court-authorized wiretaps, controlled purchases of narcotics and physical surveillance," the release explains. The investigation was into "narcotics-trafficking by members and associates of [the] West Hell street gang, and gang-related violent activity."

Scott, who is also known as "Young God," "Mel," "Young," and "YG," was arrested April 15 along with five others after they allegedly participated in a quarter-kilogram crack cocaine transaction; nine more individuals were arrested April 30.

In total, the release states, 25 individuals have been charged in a 52-count indictment with federal narcotics offenses related to the

gang-related distribution of crack cocaine in Hartford's North End.

Scott, along with 15 others, were charged with conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute cocaine base ("crack cocaine"). If convicted, based on the quantity of narcotics charged, the release states Scott faces a minimum 10 years in prison and a maximum life sentence.

According to the release, Scott and 10 others were also charged with one or more counts of possession with intent to distribute, and distribution of, various quantities of crack cocaine. Scott and one other were also charged with multiple counts of possession with intent to distribute, and distribution of, crack cocaine and crack powder. Scott and two others were also each charged with one count of maintaining a premise to manufacture a controlled substance – a charge that, if convicted, would result in a maximum prison term of 20 years.

In addition, the release states Scott was charged with one count of possession of a firearm by a previously-convicted felon, after a loaded Heckler & Koch, model P2000, .40 caliber handgun was found during an April 15 search of his residence. If convicted, the offense carries a maximum 10-year imprisonment.

Hebron Man Sentenced for Tax Fraud

by Geeta Schrayter

A Hebron man was sentenced this week for filing false tax returns for his former business in Bolton.

Alan Miskunas, 52, was sentenced May 1 to three years' probation; he was also ordered to perform 100 hours of community service, according to a release from the U.S. District Attorney's office.

The sentence comes after an investigation by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service that found during the 2003 and 2004 tax years Miskunas, who formerly owned Bolton Flooring Center, filed tax returns that underreported the company's

gross business receipts by approximately one half.

The release explained this underreporting resulted in his failure to pay more than \$64,000 in personal income taxes.

In addition, Miskunas didn't file tax returns for 2005 and 2006, resulting in his failure to pay more than \$88,000 in taxes owed for those years, the release stated.

Miskunas pled guilty Feb. 6, 2013 to one count of filing a false tax return.

Along with his sentence, Miskunas is required to pay \$152,417 in back taxes, plus applicable interest and penalties.

Town Funds New Windows at Brownstone School in Portland

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Board of Selectmen last week held a special town meeting at which residents moved forward with funding \$497,500 worth of "Long Range Capital Improvement projects."

The \$497,500 will go toward window replacement at Brownstone Intermediate School, to be completed this summer, and a vehicle replacement for the Board of Education.

The other projects to be covered by the \$497,500, according to last week's meeting's resolution, include: grant match leverage funds; land acquisition; the Fire Department bottle replacement; Department of Public Works' salt shed roof; overhead doors in various buildings, including the Public Works building and the Fire Department; and a dump body truck for

the Department of Public Works.

Last Wednesday's meeting resulted in 32 members of the Portland community voting 'yes' and none voting 'no,' on the supplemental appropriation from the General Fund fund balance.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield explained the financial aspect of the vote. She described the general fund balance is essentially Portland's savings account, which allows the town to put money into capital.

Bransfield affirmed that last Wednesday's vote was separate from the town budget, which will be decided at referendum next Monday, May 12, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Portland Senior Center.

Uneventful Town Budget Meeting in Portland

by Elizabeth Bowling

The Board of Selectmen held its annual town budget meeting Monday night at Portland High School, and the crowd was small and quiet.

Board of Selectmen member Ryan Curley acted as moderator of the meeting that drew a crowd of only about two dozen, half of which were Portland High School students required to be there for their civics class.

Curley explained that in order to increase or decrease the proposed budget, at least 5 percent of registered voters, or 290 voters, would have needed to be present.

Curley proceeded to read off the Board of Selectmen's proposed budget, which yielded no discussion from the public.

The \$31,561,273 budget, on which Portland residents will have the opportunity to vote

Monday, is broken down into \$9,208,532 for General Government, \$19,249,703 for the Board of Education budget, and \$3,103,038 for other expenditures.

The estimated mill rate would be 31.78, an increase of 0.5 mills over the current year's mill rate. A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So, under the proposed mill rate, if a house is assessed at \$200,000, then its taxes for the 2014-15 fiscal year would be \$6,356, for example.

Detailed copies of the Portland budget for fiscal year 2014-15 are available at Town Hall and online at portlandct.org.

The town referendum for the 2014-15 budget will be held Monday, May 12, at the Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Colchester House Fire Victims Searching for Cats

by Melissa Roberto

The Olsen family in Colchester lost their home on Oconnell Road to a three-alarm fire last month, and while the residents of the home fortunately were not home at the time of the blaze, their two cats were – and now family members are looking for them.

Buddah, a 5-year-old tabby cat, black and beige in color, and Baby, a 7-year-old tabby, black and gray in color, have not been seen since the fire. The fire at the home, located at 120 Oconnell Rd., was reported shortly after 1:30 p.m. April 17. The blaze resulted in three alarms to request for additional apparatus, and eight area fire departments responding to the scene. It took fire crews two hours to put the fire out, and as a result, two Colchester firefighters sustained injuries, but have since returned to work.

Colchester Hayward Fire Department Deputy Chief Donald Lee reported the home sustained “very significant damage to the second floor and roof area, and heavy smoke and water damage to the first floor.”

The residence belonged to Hans and Denise Olsen, who resided at the home with their two children, Hunter, 15, and Hannah, 14. The family also lived with four beloved pets – one dog named Griffin and a tabby cat named Pud, in addition to Buddah and Baby. Griffin and Pud were rescued from the home with the help of family members and firefighters, but Buddah and Baby are still missing—a loss the Olsen’s niece, Melanie Enders, says has been the most difficult for the family to endure.

“Between the fire itself, and the water damage, my family lost almost everything they own, from the attic down to the basement,” Enders said. “We are all so grateful that they weren’t at home and are safe, and also that Griffin and Pud made it out safely. However, the toughest loss that they are dealing with right now is that of Buddah and Baby. Things can be replaced but animals cannot.”

And now the search is on to possibly locate the cats. Enders says family members are in hopes that the two cats have been rescued, per-

haps by residents unaware of where they came from.

“I am hoping that a loving family has taken the cats in and has been caring for them since the fire, not realizing that they belong to the Olsens,” Enders said.

Buddah and Baby are both neutered male, indoor cats that the Olsens rescued and bottle-fed from birth. Both cats’ front paws are declawed.

Denise Olsen this week said fliers are being put up around town with information about Buddah and Baby. She also shared how appreciative her family is of the community’s support. She mentioned family members, friends and “even complete strangers” have reached out to the Olsens, offering meals, well-wishes and prayers.

“I would just like to thank our community,” said Olsen. “I’ve received things from people I’ve never even met before. I don’t even have the words to say thank you to the magnitude of my gratitude. I’m just absolutely in awe at everybody’s generosity to my family and to myself.”

Olsen confirmed the American Red Cross was on scene assisting the family the day of the fire. Following that, a close family friend helped the family locate a home in Colchester, which they are now renting.

“It’s a beautiful little house and it’s clean and sound and functional,” said Olsen. “We’re very, very appreciative to have it.”

Support from family and friends started just days after the fire. That week a donation page was set up on youcaring.com by family friend Shawna Diano. The goal was to raise \$1,500, and that goal has been met; in fact, within just a few days following the April 17 fire, the page had raised \$1,080.

Additionally, close family friends Dawn and Tom Shumbo have stepped forward and have set up a donation fund through Liberty Bank. Citizens can go to any Liberty Bank branch and make a donation to the Olsen Family Fire Fund.



A fire last month destroyed the Oconnell Road home of Hans and Denise Olsen and their family – and now, the Olsens are looking for their beloved cats, Baby, left, and Buddah, who went missing during the blaze.

The Shumbos’ daughter, Ashley, also stepped in and helped set up a donation event at Sweet Frog at 139 South Main St. in Colchester. On Wednesday night from 5-8 p.m. 10 percent of the sales were donated to the family, in addition to money raised through a donation box on site.

In addition, Amy Spencer, Olsen’s daughter, is also in the process of planning a fundraising event for the Olsens on June 14 in Coventry. Time and place is still to be determined and more information about the event is anticipated to be printed in the *Rivereast* in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, anyone wishing to donate items to be raffled off at the June event is asked to reach Spencer at 860-916-2389. The event is anticipated to include live bands, food and beverages.

As for how the Olsens are coping, Denise said the four are “holding up.”

“It’s obviously been very difficult, but if it weren’t for the support of so many people I think that we probably would have crumbled by now,” the mother said. “I think in the beginning you’re in the stage of shock and as the shock wears off the pain comes in. We’re just grateful no one was injured. The greatest loss in all of this is our animals and we’d love to have them back.”

If anyone has tips or information on the whereabouts of Buddah or Baby, or have located the cats, they are asked to return them to the Colchester Veterinary Hospital, 364 Old Hartford Rd. The hospital has been notified of the missing cats and the family confirmed all medical bills would go to the Olsen family.

Additionally, anyone still wishing to donate to the family can log on to youcaring.com/help-a-neighbor/helping-the-olsen-family-/166951 or visit a Liberty Bank branch.

Soby Picked to be New First Selectman in Colchester

by Melissa Roberto

The Board of Selectmen last Thursday appointed Republican Stan Soby to take over as the town’s first selectman – a position he’s familiar with.

Soby will become the town’s interim first selectman following the May 30 departure of Gregg Schuster, who is moving to Pennsylvania. Soby, like Schuster, is a Republican.

Soby’s bump up to the top office created a Republican vacancy on the board, but that isn’t the only change that has occurred. Last week Democratic member Mike Caplet submitted a resignation letter to Town Clerk Nancy Bray, which also was approved by the board Thursday. Caplet said he was “sorry to shock everyone,” but that he had to step down from his elected position due to an unanticipated promotion he received outside of Town Hall.

Caplet, who works as a regional planner for the Connecticut division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, was offered and accepted the position of Region 4 coordinator – a region that includes Colchester – within the state department. He explained his new role would create a conflict of interest if he still served as a selectman.

“I have a potential of being in conflict with myself as a public official. It seems the prudent and correct thing to do if I’m going to accept this position, which I did, is to resign this position,” Caplet told board members. “It’s incredibly bittersweet for me. I was unbelievably excited to be able to take on this role here and to work with all of you.”

Caplet furthered, “It certainly won’t be the end to my public service. The law will prevent me from serving in an elected capacity but there’s nothing to prevent me from serving in a volunteer capacity so I will return probably after my second child is born.”

Schuster thanked Caplet for his service, and congratulated him on his new endeavor.

“It’s a very important job,” Schuster said of Caplet’s new role. “There are five regional coordinators from the state and they hold a lot of sway. A lot of decisions have to be made. It’s how we coordinate our emergency response efforts amongst the 169 municipalities through these five regions. I’m sure Colchester is going to be well-served with you in that role.”

Caplet added his position as regional coordinator will allow him to work “very closely” with the new first selectman in Colchester.

Shortly after, Schuster read aloud his letter of resignation. The first selectman had already shared his intent to resign with the board last month after accepting the position of township manager in Pocono Township, Pa.

In his letter, Schuster, who was elected first selectman in 2009 and re-elected in 2011 and again last November, stated, “It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as first selectman of Colchester for the last four and a half years. I am extremely proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish as a town during that time. Colchester is blessed with talented officials, employees, and volunteers who all work to make this such a great community and it has been a pleasure to work with everyone.”

Schuster’s letter continued, “The time has come for me to move on to other challenges and opportunities in my life.”

Schuster abstained from the vote while all other members accepted his letter of resignation, with Coyle adding into the motion that the board wishes Schuster “the best of luck in future endeavors.”

Then came along the appointment of Soby to first selectman. Soby first expressed his interest in taking over Schuster’s seat at the selectmen’s April 17 meeting. Per town charter, the vacant first selectman seat is to be filled by one of the remaining members on the board of the same political party.

For Soby, the appointment to interim first selectman is a familiar one. In 2007, the Republican was picked for the seat when former First Selectwoman Jenny Contois resigned with 11 months of her term left to serve.

Following his appointment last week, Soby quipped, “In 2007, I described becoming a successor first selectman as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I got that wrong, didn’t I?”

He continued, “I want to express my appreciation of support from the board of selectmen members on this. We’ve had good conversations and that was a real big factor of being able to say yes in all of this. It is an honor and a privilege and I will do my very best going forward.”

In a phone interview this week, Soby said that, aside from serving as first selectman, he will continue working as an administrator at Connecticut Institute for the Blind, just as he did back in 2007.

“What I tried to do last time was to be in Town Hall just about every day. I will be in as much as I can be,” Soby assured.

And come May 30 at noon, Soby said his first task will be to get “settled back in and see where everything is.” The next step is to communicate with department heads, officials and board/commission members looking ahead at the next year and a half, he said.

Schuster this week said he’s already met once with Soby following his appointment to discuss the transition process, and the two will continue meeting up until May 30. The current first selectman defined Soby as a “great choice” as a successor.

“He served as first selectman in the past in a very similar circumstance and I believe Stan is going to do a fantastic job,” said Schuster.

Soby’s term is to expire in November 2015. As for now, the Board of Selectmen has two vacant seats, one Republican and one Democratic. Per the town charter the board must fill each seat with any citizen of the same political party. The board agreed Thursday that it will begin advertising the seats and move swiftly in filling them.



Stan Soby

Colchester Budgets Soundly Defeated at Referendum

by Melissa Roberto

The Colchester town operations and Board of Education budgets for the coming 2014-15 fiscal year were soundly rejected at referendum Tuesday.

The town operations spending package, which went to voters at a total of \$13,478,094, fell, 1,108-724. The town budget proposal was a 2.50 percent increase, or \$328,244, over the current fiscal year.

The Board of Education budget, which amounted to \$40,180,795, was supported by even fewer voters, 640, compared to the 1,194 who cast ballots against it. The school spending plan would have produced a 2.74 percent increase over the current year, or \$1,432,985.

Town officials were dismayed at Tuesday's outcome – not only because of the wide margins, but also in regards to the turnout of voters. Town Clerk Nancy Bray confirmed that 1,837 voters of the total 9,897 registered voters in Colchester took to the polls Tuesday. That converts to an 18.6 percent of voters weighing in.

Bray coined it a “very low turnout.” The town clerk, who's worked in town for 20 years, compared the turnout to years past.

“It's typically 22 to 23 percent for a referendum, so that's very low,” she said. “I don't ever remember it being this low.”

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said he was “obviously disappointed with the failure and the turnout,” as was First Selectman Gregg Schuster.

“I'm disappointed in the results and the turnout,” Schuster said. “I was hoping that more people would exercise their right to vote but obviously the voters spoke very clearly and we'll have to look at the budgets again and make reductions.”

It was no different for Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov, who said he was “surprised and disappointed at the low turnout.” In regards to the failures, Tarlov said, “Clearly people are concerned with taxes as we all are.”

A Board of Finance meeting was already scheduled for Wednesday night, following Tuesday's budget vote. Finance members went into the meeting knowing each budget needed to be reduced. At the meeting, Tarlov explained that Tuesday's budgets combined resulted in a 2.94 percent increase in spending over the current fiscal year. The board discussed interest in lowering that percentage increase down to either 2.25 percent or 1.98 percent. Ultimately, the board reached an agreement to request the budgets to be lowered to a 1.98 percent increase.

In order to do so, finance members determined each budget would need to be reduced by the same percentage. Dollar-wise, that means the finance board is requesting \$102,000 to be trimmed off of the town operations budget, and \$247,000 cut from the Board of Education budget.

Finance board member Rob Esteve, who said he preferred to see the 2.25 percent increase, said he had some “caveats” when it comes to reducing the budgets. He said he did not want to see minor trims throughout various line items of each budget. Rather, he said he was hoping for “simple, easy-to-communicate, tangible” cuts.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle, seated in the crowd, wanted to be sure the 1.98 percent isn't set in stone – that if the cuts officials need to make to get to that point are not in the town's best interest, the finance board will show some leeway.

“If you feel that some of [the cuts are] not in the best interest of this town, you're going to move from that point,” she said. “I wouldn't want people to go out and start that bandwagon of 1.98.”

Finance board member Tom Kane assured Coyle of that. “I'm expecting that to be the lowest budget moving forward,” he said.

* * *

On Tuesday, some voters made it clear they were against the taxes rising. An elderly couple, Rose and Don Smith, said that was the reason they decided to vote against both.

“We just don't want any more taxes,” said Rose. “I figured they could do a bit better.” Her husband Don agreed. “When you're a senior citizen it does make a difference.”

Gayle Ziemba was another citizen who turned down both spending proposals. “I think everybody needs to tighten their belts,” she said. “The budget keeps increasing and it needs to stop.”

Another citizen, Brian Gauger, said rising taxes has become a tradition.

“I think they raised it high years ago and now they're just rolling with it,” he said.

However, other voters, like Denise Turner, may not be happy with Tuesday's outcome. Turner said she feels it's “very important to come out and vote.”

“It's one of the things I always make certain I come out and do,” she said. “I kind of think it's important that the school budget gets passed. I think there's a lot of stuff that the school needs and don't need to cut out. I hate to see them lose teachers; I hate to see them lose programs. I think our kids are getting short cheated as it is.”

John Barnowski shared that he voted for both budgets and advocated for funding education. “I'm for the budgets, both of them. I certainly support education budgets because education is probably the most important thing we do in America.”

Citizen Brett Rhodes added he also voted ‘yes’ to both.

“I think it's reasonable after looking at it,” said Rhodes. “The town needs to continue to fund what we want to happen in town. I have a 14-year-old and a 17-year-old, and the budget for education I still don't think we probably

have enough.”

At Wednesday's finance board meeting, town officials discussed why the voter turnout seemed to be so low. Several shared they heard comments from citizens saying they were not aware of the vote Tuesday.

“There were a lot of comments about that,” Democratic Registrar of Voters Dorothy Mrowka said.

Schuster said an email blast, social media communication, a notification on the town website, articles in the newspaper, as well as letters and legal notices, were posted to make citizens aware. Kane said he felt turnout was low because people are not interested.

“I've come to the conclusion that the information is out there if anyone wants it,” Kane said. “But if they don't want it they're not going to get it. If anybody wants to take the time or effort to find it, it's there.”

Finance board member James McNair said he felt the downward trend in voters may be contributed to a “generation thing.”

“I was shocked,” McNair said of the turnout. “To me there was just not the passion. My point is, they're aware. Whether or not they choose to go vote is a different story.”

Coyle, however, said she feels citizens simply “didn't know”—which was a comment she said she heard “over and over again” following Tuesday.

On Wednesday, town officials set up a timeline for the budget process towards a second referendum. The boards of selectmen, education and finance are expected to all have reduced the two budgets and vote on them by Wednesday, May 14, when the Board of Finance has a meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. A town meeting has been tentatively slated for Wednesday, May 21, with a second referendum tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 29, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Town Hall.

Colchester Man Gets Five Years in Prison

by Melissa Roberto

A Colchester man arrested in February for operating a drug factory out of his Colchester home was sentenced Tuesday to five years in prison.

Ezckholm Jacques, 29, of 43 Settlers Ln., was arrested Feb. 5 after a surprise visit from his parole officer resulted in the discovery of a mass amount of drugs inside of his home. Jacques had been standing in his driveway at the time of the visit, and upon the officer's arrival, Jacques ran on foot, throwing an object into the bushes, state police reported. The suspect then returned to the officer and surrendered. The object was later seized from the bushes as suspected narcotics.

Police had executed a search warrant of Jacques' home and seized 600 bags of heroin, 62 grams of crack cocaine as well as packag-

ing materials and \$2,738 in cash. Jacques was originally charged with two counts of possession of narcotics and two counts of possession of narcotics with the intent to sell.

On Tuesday, May 6, Jacques appeared at the New London Superior Court, 70 Huntington St. He pled guilty to one of the four charges for possession of narcotics with intent to sell, and was sentenced to five years in prison followed by eight years of special parole. The other charges stemming from the Feb. 5 arrest were dismissed.

Jacques had previously been convicted of several offenses in the past ranging from assault, carrying a pistol without a permit and illegally selling narcotics, according to the state judicial website.

Thefts Reported at Colchester Senior Center

by Melissa Roberto

Colchester Police are currently investigating two thefts reported to have taken place at the Senior Center at 95 Norwich Ave. last week.

The first occurred last Monday, April 28, when Director of Senior Services Patricia Watts reported to the local police department that money had been missing from a donation jar kept in the dining room of the center. The jar collects donations that are used to help fund the center's programs, activities and other miscellaneous items, Watts explained. Watts said she believed less than \$30 had been stolen. Colchester Police Sergeant Joseph Mercer said police believe the money had been taken sometime between April 25-28.

Three days later, on Thursday, May 1, at approximately 7:57 a.m., Watts reported that a mounted metal safe on the wall of the center's main office was also missing. The incident was reported to occur sometime between 4/30 at 5 p.m. and 5/1 at 8 a.m. Police said the box is used to store “miscellaneous” keys.

Mercer called both incidents “unfortunate” for the center. In relation to the money stolen from the donation jar, the sergeant said, “It's unfortunate because they use those donations for different senior projects and activities.”

In regards to the stolen key box, Mercer said the center is “going to have to closely monitor the storage areas and rooms to make sure they aren't being used or accessed.”

Watts said all locks at the center have since been replaced. She stated, “We're doing our best to ensure that the senior citizens are safe and continue to do all the great things that we always do here.”

She added it's “obviously discouraging to see that happen anywhere – but especially at a senior center.”

The director furthered that the center is looking into getting cameras to monitor the building.

Mercer confirmed both thefts are currently under investigation by the Colchester Police. Anyone with information on either incident is asked to contact the Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

This Year, Hebron Budget Passes on First Try

by Geeta Schrayter

The votes are in, and this year, the town budget for the upcoming fiscal year has been approved on the first try – a different scenario from the last two years, when it took three and two referendums, respectively, to get the numbers approved.

The \$35.76 million budget for the 2014-15 year passed Tuesday by a vote of 654-503; out of 6,414 registered voters in town, 1,145 or 17.85 percent came out to cast their ballot.

The approved number is an \$807,118 increase, or 2.31 percent, over the 2013-14 budget and includes \$8,666,437 for the town government, \$11,990,454 for the Hebron Board of Education budget, and \$15,103,516 for Hebron's portion of the RHAM budget (a story on the RHAM budget, which also passed at referendum Tuesday, appears elsewhere in this issue).

Resident John Golan headed to Hebron Elementary School to vote Tuesday evening, and said he was in favor of all the numbers.

"It was a very modest increase overall," he said, explaining it was "a very low increase obviously, for the Board of Ed. The town government budget increase – I mean, we can only neglect our roads for so long, so I think it was appropriate given the past years' increases. And RHAM is what it is, when you have that many students attending."

But one resident – who only wished to give her name as "Caitlin B." – felt differently. She explained she'd lived in town for several years and was hoping to have her children go through Hebron schools – but the constant increases might hinder that.

"I was against the budget," she said. "Considering the cost of living and everything else within our state, it keeps going up and up – it's

getting to the point where it's starting to have a very negative impact on our ability to stay in this town."

However, resident Sean Connolly said while he voted for the budget, he felt more money should be spent – specifically on education.

"More focus should be on the education budget and not penny pinching on education for the kids" he stated, adding a quality education was "good for the kids so they can compete on a global scale. It also keeps families in towns, brings new ones to town, and increases property values as a result."

The approved education budget is a .29 percent increase over the current year's school budget or \$34,501, with the majority going toward staff and insurance.

The largest portion of the education budget, at \$5,967,287 or 49.77 percent, covers certified staff which includes classroom teachers and administrators. Although two classroom teacher reductions are included in the budget due to declining enrollment, as well as one retirement, that number is up \$8,276 from the current year and includes a 2.75 percent increase in certified staff salaries and a three percent increase for administrators.

Funding for an additional work day (moving from two to three days) for the Director of Finance and Operation to provide additional financial control and oversight to the district is also included. In addition, funds are included for a technology integration specialist who will work with the library media specialist in order to bring services back to the library in both buildings (one of the media specialists was cut during last year's budget deliberations). This new, certified position would replace the existing non-certified technology specialist position.

The second largest portion of the school budget amounts to \$2,367,400 or 19.74 percent for benefits. Although health insurance is slated to rise 4 percent next year, this account will actually decrease slightly, down \$14,301, due to a full review of the district's health care enrollments which provided changes and savings.

Another \$1,610,114 or 13.41 percent of the budget is for non-certified personnel. Non-certified staff will also receive a salary increase over the next three years, totaling 6.75 percent, but this amount is also a decrease from the current year of \$29,976.

"We're very excited this passed on the first try," Superintendent of Schools Jeff Newton said after he learned the results Tuesday. "We put forth a very responsible budget and we're happy people could see that and came out to support it."

Town Manager Andrew Tierney felt similarly about the budget overall.

"I'm pleased," he said. "One referendum is always good. One of the goals given to me by the Board of Selectmen was to get the budget passed on the first round – so thank you to the voters that helped me successfully achieve that one."

The general government budget is made up of \$6,841,960 for town government; \$963,364 for debt service; \$125,000 for open space; a \$50,000 contribution to revaluation; a \$34,000 contribution to capital projects between \$5,000 and \$25,000; and \$10,000 for capital non-recurring projects.

The proposed budget also includes a number of initiatives, like \$23,736 for a part-time mechanic for the public works department; \$1,725 for a subscription to JobNow! Live Job Assistance and adult programming at the Dou-

glas Library; \$1,000 for a network based emergency notification system; and \$1,000 for the Citizen's Green Committee.

Tierney added now that the budget had been approved, the focus would be on finishing up the rest of the year "and to start planning for some of the projects put in CIP and moving forward for next year."

Along with the budget, voters were asked Tuesday whether or not to approve the 2014-15 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget of \$946,284; that budget also passed, 683-471.

The CIP budget includes money for projects such as road resurfacing and improvements at \$245,967, a mechanical system upgrade at the Douglas Library for \$105,000, \$95,000 to work on the roof over the 1947 wing of Hebron Elementary School and \$76,370 for the lease payment on a replacement fire truck.

Other projects include \$50,000 for a salt shed at the public works department, \$45,947 to join Glastonbury in the shared purchase and use of some equipment for the parks and recreation department, \$36,500 for the purchase of a single stream recycling compactor and \$30,000 to put toward the restoration of the Peters House.

The approved budget will result in a mill rate increase of 1.05, bringing the mill to 35.75. For a house valued at \$200,000 this would mean a \$210 increase in taxes, from \$6,940 to \$7,150.

"I think the town government [budget] was very responsible," Tierney concluded. "I know taxes are going up but there are some things you've just got to take care of."

He added, "I think it's an appropriate increase to take care of the demands in front of us at this time."

Charter Commission Pushes for Status Quo in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting May 1, the Charter Revision Commission presented its first draft report – a report that doesn't call for many big changes to Hebron government.

Commission Chairman Ken Slater began by saying he was "very proud" of the work the commission had done.

"I'm very proud of the hard work everybody put into the deliberative process," he said, sharing some members came in with opinions on certain issues who, through the process, changed their mind – which was a testament to the work they put in.

Slater explained throughout the charter, some organizational changes or wording changes had been made, but he spoke specifically on some of the bigger issues the commission had been tasked with examining.

The first was the form of government in town. To this, Slater said, "having a Board of Selectmen is something we believe is right for the community."

But Slater added as to the question of whether or not the authority of the selectmen should be expanded and the Board of Finance should be eliminated, "we concluded the checks and balances associated with the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance was valuable."

Slater furthered, "we ultimately concluded the status quo is the best approach."

However, the commission *was* recommending the number of members on the finance board drop from six to five, which mirrors the selectmen, in an attempt to prevent the board from ever becoming deadlocked on a decision.

The other major issue the commission was charged with examining was whether or not to implement budget bifurcation. In the end, after much deliberation, Slater said the commission decided against it.

Slater explained this was the issue they heard the most about, and there was "certainly some

ambivalence about whether there were pluses or minuses."

But in the end, he said, "the idea is that it's really one checkbook; we have one budget we need to approve."

However, Slater went on to say it was important to the commission that, if a budget were to fail, the message could be given to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance in terms of *why* it was rejected.

"So we're not recommending a complete bifurcation," Slater said, "but we're recommending mandatory advisory questions [on the ballot] to indicate whether the budget, excluding the RHAM budget and the Hebron education budget, is too high or too low, and then a second question whether the local Board of Education budget is too high or too low."

Slater said the Charter Revision Commission's hope was that the questions would provide necessary information about the budget, and that the finance board, "will pay attention to that, and then the voters message will be reflected in the next budget."

He stated the commission had decided the questions would be less divisive than bifurcation, "but would, we hope, achieve what people in the community who want bifurcation are looking for."

A number of other, smaller issues were also mentioned. For example, Slater said the commission recommended changing the time period between referendums if the budget vote fails from the current two weeks to three weeks, to allow for a longer deliberation process for officials.

While the selectmen had asked the Charter Revision Commission to look into possibly modifying when the town's fiscal year starts and ends, Slater said the commission discovered state statute requires the town to keep the fiscal year as is. On the idea of adding another

voting location in town – another item the selectmen suggested the commission look at – Slater said the commission felt it was "not sufficiently inconvenient" for residents to travel to Hebron Elementary School to vote "to justify the cost of another district."

The commission also "felt strongly," Slater said, that all town officials should be subject to the town's Code of Ethics. As a result, the code was modified to fit the style of the charter and incorporated, and if the proposed revision is approved, "all officials are going to swear to adhere to the law of the federal state and organic law, and the code of ethics."

After Slater summarized some of the major points in their first draft report, the public had an opportunity to speak.

Resident Henry Sawicki said he agreed with "almost everything" the commission had done, but not its decision on bifurcation. He stated the commission decided not to approve the addition of bifurcation during a meeting when there wasn't a majority since some commission members weren't there – which he didn't agree with.

However, Slater explained at the meeting in question, a vote was taken to move the discussion forward, but he didn't consider it a formal vote on the issue.

"We did have quorum that night," Slater stated, "but more importantly I don't think it was the main vote – that was superseded by the ultimate vote which happened after" at a later meeting when the commission unanimously voted to move their draft document forward.

Sawicki, however, was adamant the decision wasn't what residents wanted.

"Do what the people requested," he stated, adding the commission hadn't been thorough enough, and wasn't listening to the public or taking into account comments made about bi-

furcation on last year's exit poll.

But Board of Selectmen Chairwoman Gayle Mulligan added her own thoughts to the mix, telling Sawicki while she appreciated his opinion, she was present at the meeting where the commission discussed bifurcation and witnessed "intense conversation" that was "very in-depth."

Mulligan furthered the commission also examined the bifurcation study conducted in 2011, which found "no indication of a benefit" to separate the budgets.

"They looked at that study; they took it very seriously," Mulligan stated. "There were different opinions on that and in this instance there was someone specifically who thought the budget should be bifurcated but having gone through the process, decided that was probably not the best choice for the town."

Commission member Arlene Snyder added, "I would be remiss, I think, if we went away from here – or it would be unfortunate – if the public felt we discounted their comments and concerns on bifurcation."

Whoever attended the meetings, Snyder continued, "saw the discussion – and the length of discussion. Our decision may not become the popular decision of the voting people, but certainly we had a lot of respect for what people said, and to give the impression we had total disregard for the public would be wrong."

* * *

After discussion came to an end, the selectmen accepted the first draft report and scheduled a public hearing to take place on the report Thursday, May 15, at 7 p.m. The hearing will be followed by the next regularly-scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting.

For more information on the charter revisions, go to hebronct.com and click on the link for the Charter Revision Commission.

Observations & Ruminations

East Hampton got a nice feather in its cap recently, when the real estate brokerage Movoto released a list of the top 10 most affordable places (of at least 10,000 people) in the state.

East Hampton was number two on the list.

Motovo compiled the list – which also featured my hometown, Manchester, at number four – by ranking each town on the following criteria: food costs, utility costs, miscellaneous costs (such as restaurants, repairs, entertainment, clothing), median home price, unemployment rank and adjusted median income. The lower the number a town scored in each category, the better. Motovo then averaged the numbers for an overall “big deal score.” Greenwich came away with the number one spot, but right behind it was Belltown.

Motovo said East Hampton “ranked really well for its low unemployment rate – just 6.5 percent – low cost of utilities, and low cost of miscellaneous expenses, such as restaurants, entertainment, repairs and clothing.”

Those impressive scores were apparently more than enough to make up for a ho-hum cost-of-food index, or a median home price of \$260,300 – which, Motovo said, “isn’t exactly expensive for Connecticut,” but is bested by several towns in the state.

Still, Motovo came away pretty impressed with Belltown, commenting that while “it might seem surprising that any place with the word ‘Hampton’ in its name is affordable,” East Hampton is indeed a pretty affordable place to call home.

Of course, as any Belltown resident knows, the town was originally called Chatham, and only changed its name to East Hampton in 1915 – for reasons I admit I’m not quite sure I get. For one thing, the town is *west* of Hampton.

Anyway, for the full Motovo top 10 list, go to movoto.com/ct/most-affordable-places-in-connecticut.

* * *

I was sad this week to hear about the imminent closing of Books & Boos in Colchester. It was a small, independent bookstore that opened in late 2012. I knew they had been having a rough go of it – last fall they launched an online campaign to raise \$7,000 to allow them to keep their doors open through the winter – but it’s still a shame to see them close their doors.

While the store’s location didn’t do them any favors – tucked away in a tiny little plaza way down Route 149, next to a doctor’s office – it was also gutsy to open up a bookstore when they did, just when the stench of Amazon.com really began to squash the brick-and-mortar competition.

I suppose you can argue small, independent bookstores were first squashed by the big-box stores like Borders and Barnes & Noble. And I suppose to an extent you’re right – which is why probably a lot of people didn’t shed many tears when the Borders chain went belly-up a couple years ago. However, at least Borders was an actual, physical bookstore; a place to go, meet other people, browse some interesting titles, have a warm cup of coffee. It could be a great place to spend a rainy Saturday afternoon.

An online site like Amazon offers none of this. And yet, it certainly looks like we’re headed down the road where Amazon will be the only book seller left. (Barnes & Noble has managed to hang on, but I fear it’s only a matter of time for them too.) Shopping at a bookstore is a unique, tangible experience one should be able to have – as was shopping at a video store or a record store. I’ve said it before, but we’re building a society where people are not just enabled but encouraged to never have to leave their home for, well, *anything* – and that’s not just sad, it’s no way to develop a society.

I guess I don’t have a problem with the existence of sites like Amazon or Netflix so much as I do with them becoming the *only*

options. Brick-and-mortar stores are becoming a thing of the past, replaced by these behemoth websites, so if you want to go out and, you know, *interact with society* while you shop, you’re out of luck. We should have the ability to choose to do their book- and music-browsing out among the living – and soon, we won’t.

Anyway, back to Books & Boos. The store will remain open at its 514 Westchester Rd. location until May 31. Between now and then, though, all paperbacks in the store will be priced at \$1, with the rest of the books at 50 percent off. (New books will continue to be sold at regular price.)

The Books & Boos operation will continue – it will simply “hit the road,” appearing at fairs, open-air markets, conventions, etc. – and it will also continue its Amazon storefront, located at amazon.com/shops/booksandboos. (Yeah, I know, I just railed against Amazon; but I feel my general complaint – about the Internet killing brick-and-mortar bookstores – is still valid.)

Books & Boos says on its website it hopes to have another physical store “in a better location” in the future. And I wish them the best of luck. We need more bookstores, not less.

* * *

The annual White House Correspondents’ Dinner is always a fun experience. Lovingly known as “Nerd Prom,” it’s when reporters, politicians and, sure, Hollywood actors gather together for a night full of food and laughs. The evening is emceed by a popular comedian – it varies each year; this year it was Joel McHale – but it also features the president also taking the podium, cracking jokes.

It’s interesting to see what presidents act like when they don’t have to be so, well, presidential; when they can let their guard down and have some fun. The best ones are able to crack jokes at their own expense – I don’t care who it is, every president is going to do some things he or she is going to regret, and it’s nice to see a president self-deprecatingly acknowledge this sometimes.

The last few years, with Obama in office, have been fun. Love him or hate him, you have to admit the guy’s a great public speaker, and has a very affable, charming presence. Like Bill Clinton before him, he knows how to deliver a speech. And he’s funny to boot. When he takes the podium, he knows just what to say to good-naturedly razz the journalists in the crowd, the other politicians – and himself. This year’s dinner was held last weekend, and the website politico.com listed some of his funniest lines:

“These days, House Republicans are actually giving John Boehner a harder time than they’re giving me, which means orange really is the new black.”

On 2016: “Let’s face it, Fox...it’ll be harder to convince the American people that Hillary was born in Kenya.”

On his last year: “At one point, things got so bad, the 47 percent called Mitt Romney to apologize.”

“I did notice, [daughter] Sasha needed a speaker at Career Day. She invited Bill Clinton. I was a little hurt by that.”

“I haven’t seen somebody pull a 180 that fast [as an Olympic snowboarder] since Rand Paul dis-invited that Nevada rancher [Cliven Bundy] from this dinner.”

“Gridlock [in D.C.] has gotten so bad, you’ve got to wonder, what did we do to piss off [Gov.] Chris Christie so bad?”

“If you want to get paid while not working, you should have to run for Congress just like everyone else.”

“MSNBC’s here; they’re a little overwhelmed. They’ve never seen an audience this big before.”

On HealthCare.gov: “In 2008, my slogan was ‘Yes, we can.’ In 2013 my slogan was ‘control-alt-delete.’”

* * *

See you next week.

Colchester Police News

4/29: Colchester Police said a 17-year-old juvenile was arrested for third-degree burglary after a neighbor observed the juvenile entering a home on Meadow Drive through the back window and notified police.

4/30: State Police said Stephanie Paresi, 25, of 52 Balaban Rd., was charged with second-degree failure to appear.

5/1: State Police said William Depietro, 24, of 225 West High St., East Hampton, was arrested on an active PRAWN warrant for first-degree failure to appear.

5/1: State Police said Heather L. Reese, 46, of 78 School Rd., Bolton, turned herself into Troop K on an active PRAWN warrant for violation of probation.

5/2: Colchester Police said Brian R. Gustafson, 24, of 151 Taylor Rd., was stopped on Gillettes Lane for failure to have tail lamps. An investigation on scene located marijuana and drug paraphernalia inside of the vehicle. Gustafson was charged with failure to have tail lamps, possession of less than a half ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia.

5/2: Colchester Police are currently investigating a car break-in into a motor vehicle that occurred at the Air Line Trail parking area on Bull Hill Road sometime between 12:45-1:40 p.m. Police said several items were taken from the vehicle and the rear driver’s side window had been broken. Anyone with information in regards to this car break-in is asked to contact Officer Shannon Owens at 860-537-7270.

5/3: Colchester Police stopped a vehicle on Lake Hayward Road and after a further investigation, the operator, Hayden Scott Cavallari, 18, of 50 Longwood Dr., was arrested for the charges of failure to have tail lamps, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of narcotics, possession of less than a half ounce of

Hebron Police News

4/30: State Police said Brian Edward Seredynski, 19, of 8 Congress Dr., Amston, was charged with DUI, traveling unreasonably fast for conditions, making an improper turn and failure to wear safety belt in the front seat.

5/1: State Police said Daniel A. Pensak, 18, of 41 Reidy Hill Rd., was involved in a domestic dispute and arrested for disorderly conduct and criminal violation of a protective order.

Marlborough Police News

5/4: State Police said Bridget Provost, 50, of 545 Maple Ave., Hartford, was stopped for a motor vehicle violation and subsequently arrested for DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple lane highway.

marijuana and interfering with an officer.

5/3: State Police said Syed Abbas, 29, of 63 Hill Top Dr., Willimantic, turned himself into Troop K for an outstanding arrest warrant for second-degree failure to appear.

5/4: Colchester Police said Patricia Culhane, 56, of 26 Brainard Rd., was charged with risk of injury to a child, third-degree assault, and disorderly conduct.

5/4: Colchester Police are investigating a two-car crash that occurred on Linwood Avenue (Route 16) at its intersection of the Route 2 westbound on-ramp at approximately 1:33 p.m. Police said Alexa Lynne Bourcier, 17, of 7 Novelli Place, was traveling westbound on Linwood Avenue when she struck the vehicle in front of her driven by David Capestany, 47, of 573 Durham Rd., Madison. Capestany was transported to Marlborough Medical Center for possible injuries and Bourcier was cited for operating a motor vehicle without minimum insurance, failure to renew registration and traveling an unreasonable distance apart.

5/5: State Police said Kenneth Robert Harakaly, 26, turned himself in on a PRAWN warrant for first-degree failure to appear. State Police said they could not verify an address for Harakaly.

5/5: Colchester Police said between 5/2 and 5/4 a blue 2003 Yamaha TTR 125 dirt bike was stolen from a residence on Pinebrook Road. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

5/5: Colchester Police said Stanley J. Knight, 45, of 225 Mccall Rd., Lebanon, turned himself in on an active arrest warrant for second-degree failure to appear.

5/5: State Police said Jayaprakash B. Shetty, 66, of 103 Brook Ln., Windsor, was charged with DWI, reckless driving, failure to drive in the proper lane and failure to carry registration.

Andover Police News

5/4: State Police said Dylan P. Lalashuis, 20, of 633 Route 6, was arrested on an outstanding arrest warrant for first-degree failure to appear.

East Hampton Police News

4/26: Gregory Dasso, 42, of 5214 Corporal Wolcalt Rd., Syracuse, N. Y., was issued a summons for disorderly conduct and second-degree criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said.

4/29: Nicholas Hall, 20, of 64 Main St., turned himself in pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest stemming from an incident that occurred in early March. Hall was charged with third-degree burglary, conspiracy to commit third-degree burglary, fifth-degree larceny and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

Obituaries

Portland

Kathleen A. Tierney

Kathleen A. Tierney, 62, of Portland, formerly of Glastonbury, was welcomed into the loving arms of God Monday, May 5, at Hartford Hospital surrounded by her loving family and friends. She is the daughter of Arthur R. Tierney of Glastonbury and the late Kathleen P. (Cross) Tierney.



Born on April 11, 1952, in Paterson, N.J., she lived in Glastonbury for most of her life, before moving to Portland three years ago. She was a member of the Church Of St. Mary in Portland. Throughout her adult life she worked extensively in sales in the area of electrical distribution. Kathleen loved gardening, camping and was a talented artist.

Kathleen is survived by her father, Arthur R. Tierney; her loving son, Sean R. Pelc, and daughter-in-law, Andrea, along with the love of her life, grandson Christopher J. Pelc, all of Westbury, NY; brothers, Robert Tierney and wife Susan; Michael Tierney and wife Sandra; Patricia Toller and husband Robert; Sharon Tierney all of Glastonbury; Susan Gates and husband Spencer; Carol Butler and husband Walt all of East Hampton; 20 nieces and nephews. She also leaves her longtime friends, Joanie Martin, Vicki Dougherty, and a special friend, Rev. John Ashe. Kathleen was predeceased by her son, Justin T. Pelc; a sister, MaryAnn Tierney, and her mother, Kathleen P. Tierney.

The family gives special thanks to Dr. Samuel Pope and colleagues at Hartford Hospital, as well as Masonicare, for their compassionate care.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, May 13, with a Mass at 11 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial will be at the Old Church Cemetery, Glastonbury. Relatives and friends may call Monday, May 12, from 5-8 p.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Intensive Education Academy, 840 North Main Street, West Hartford, CT 06117.

To send online expressions of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

Colchester

Catherine Ann Sherer

Catherine Ann (Williams) Sherer, 91, a longtime resident of Waterford, passed away Sunday, April 27, at Apple Rehab Center of Colchester, as a result of a heart attack suffered earlier in the month.

Born May 20, 1922, in Columbus, Ohio, she was the daughter of Glyndwr and Hattie (Davies) Williams. She attended Columbus public schools and served as a WAVE in World War II. She was stationed at San Diego Naval Hospital, where she met her future husband, Navy Hospital Corpsman Norbert R. Sherer. They married in May 1946, and celebrated their 53rd anniversary shortly before his death in 1999.

Mrs. Sherer worked at Briarcliff Convalescent Hospital in New London for 15 years, first as a nurse's aide, then as a secretary. She later became the administrator after obtaining the required state license, one of the earlier women in Connecticut to do so. In 1975, she became the administrator of Smith Memorial Home, retiring in 1990.

Mrs. Sherer was a past matron and 50-year member of Fidelity Chapter No. 54, O.E.S., and a member of the First Congregational Church of New London. She also belonged to the Waterford Women's Club. She possessed a beautiful soprano voice which she generously shared at church services, weddings, and Masonic and Eastern Star gatherings throughout the region for many years.

Mrs. Sherer is survived by her daughter, Karen Devlin (Michael) of Chicago; her son, Dan Sherer of Old Lyme; and her brother, Richard Williams (Vi) of Brownwood, Texas; as well as four grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Middlesex Hospice and Palliative Care, Middlesex Hospital Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Information on the planned memorial service will be shared when arrangements are complete.

Colchester

Pauline Smith

Pauline (Surrall) Smith, 83, of Wethersfield, died Wednesday, April 30, at home. She was the beloved wife of the late Ronald Smith. Born in Birmingham, England, she lived in Newington and Colchester before moving to Wethersfield 10 years ago.

Pauline enjoyed following and supporting her sons at their motorcycle races for many years.

Survivors include her two sons and daughters-in-law, Keith Smith and Susan and their two daughters Courtney and Amanda, of Marlborough; Marc Smith and Jennifer and their two children Emma and Erik, of Newington; her daughter-in-law Debra Smith of Newington and her son and his wife Jarrad and Julianne Smith and their son Jacob of Farmington.

She was predeceased by her son, Graham Smith.

Family and friends called Wednesday, May 7, at Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington. Burial was private in West Meadow Cemetery, Newington.

Memorial donations may be made to the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, Hartford Hospital, Attn: Fund Development, P.O. Box 5037, Hartford, CT 06102-5037.

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

East Hampton

Alfred H. Royce Jr.

Alfred H. Royce Jr., 77, of East Hampton, son of the late Alfred H. and Ethyl (Nichols) Royce Sr. and husband of 58 years to E. Anne (Phelps) Royce, passed away Wednesday, April 30, surrounded by his family, at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

He leaves behind his wife; his brothers, Paul Royce Sr. and Everett Wright of East Hampton, Jack Wright of Florida; and was predeceased by his brother Richard Wright. He is also survived by his children, Terry-Lynn Muller of Haddam, Debra Zdeb of Venice, Fla., and Alfred (Butch) H. Royce III of East Hampton; his grandchildren, Jamie-Lynn Nanfito, Keith Thody, Daniel Muller, April Betters, Darcy Parmelee, and Stacy Muller; two great-grandchildren, Tucker Parmelee and Bailey Betters; and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

A lifelong resident of East Hampton, Al graduated from East Hampton High School, was Class President of 1955, and was still heading annual class reunions. He was an active participant in the community, having been a lifetime member of the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, Board of Fire Commissioners, East Hampton Ambulance Association, and president of the Connecticut Fire Police Association. He was proud to serve as chair of East Hampton Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Tax Review and Lake View Cemetery Association. He also belonged to the East Hampton Congregational Church and served as superintendent of Sunday School for many years.

Al received a degree in Industrial Engineering from Hilliier College and later a degree in business from Middlesex, and retired from Pratt & Whitney as a senior cost reduction analyst. Al enjoyed cheering on the New York Yankees and was an avid fan of UConn Huskies Basketball.

Friends called Sunday, May 4, at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be private in the family plot in Lake View Cemetery in East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, 5 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424; or to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Terrell Francis Beliveau

Terrell Francis "Terry" Beliveau, 83, of Simsbury, formerly of Marlborough, passed away Wednesday, May 1. Terry was born Nov. 30, 1930, in Melrose, Mass., son of the late Francis Goodwin Beliveau and Mother Virginia (Boyce) Beliveau.

Terry served in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1948-59 aboard the *USS Kearsarge*, *PCE Patrol Craft Escort*, *USS Salem*, *USS Vulcan*, *USS Missasinewa*. He was employed by Aetna Life and Casualty from 1954-75, owner of KDL Printing of West Hartford from 1976-1986, and had also worked for Holo-krome West Hartford.

Terry proudly served on many fire departments: Melrose, Mass., Auxiliary (1951-55), Little Rock, Ark., Auxiliary (1960-65), Cammack Village, Ark. (1960-65), West Des Moines, Iowa (1965-67), Marlborough (1968) and Simsbury (1968-84) and was extremely proud of his sons and grandsons also being firefighters. In addition to fire service, Terry also enjoyed photography and trains.

He is survived by three children, Kenneth and fiancé Sue Wilson of East Granby, David and wife Judy of Simsbury and Linda of Simsbury; grandchildren, Jennifer of Salem, Mass., Andrew and wife Julie of West Hartford, Jessica and husband Eric Harding of Petal, Miss., Justin and wife Tiffany of Petal, Miss., and Kayla and fiancé Brent Roberts of Simsbury; great-grandchildren Brianna Harding, Eric Harding, Kenzie and Tanner Beliveau; and Sue's children Ben, and Emily.

Calling hours were at the Vincent Funeral Home, 880 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, on Wednesday, May 7. He was privately laid to rest at Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston, Mass.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, P.O. Drawer 498, Emmitsburg, MD 21727, or an animal care or shelter of their choice.

Visit Terry's "Book of Memories" at vincentfuneralhome.com for online condolences.

Portland

James H. Burns, Jr.

James H. Burns Jr., 84, formerly of Woodland Drive, Durham, husband of the late Virginia (Giacco) Burns, died Thursday, May 1, at Portland Health and Rehabilitation Center, Portland.

He was born in Middletown, the son of the late James H. Burns Sr. and the late Helen (Porter) Burns. A veteran of the Korean War, he served with the US Army. Following his service in the army, he graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Connecticut with a degree in accounting.

He was employed throughout his lifetime as an accountant, and, prior to retirement, had worked for many years as senior vice president of finance at Prototype and Plastic Mold Company in Middletown. An accomplished singer and dancer, Jim also for many years performed as a member of the senior choral arts group the Middletuners.

He is survived by his brother, Charles Burns of Cobalt, and a sister, Jean Helenek of Haddam; also numerous nieces, nephews, and great nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by a sister, Rita Burns Southard, of Ventnor, New Jersey. He is also survived by his longtime companion, Kathleen M. Hamel, of West Springfield, Mass.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, May 7, from Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, followed by a funeral liturgy that morning at Notre Dame Church, Main Street, Durham. Burial, with military honors, was in Mica Hill Cemetery, Durham. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home Tuesday, May 6.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to the CT Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd, Newington, CT 06111.

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

Portland

Barbara Ann Gilletti

Barbara Ann (Bazidlo) Gilletti, 76 years of age, a resident of Albuquerque, N.M., since 2006, died Saturday, April 26, after a long illness.

Barbara was born April 3, 1938, in Portland, to Jacob and Alice (Guzewicz) Bazidlo. She attended Portland High School and was a retired State of Connecticut employee.

She is survived by her children, Don Gilletti of Campbell, Calif., Shari Lindsay and her husband Guy of Middletown, and Ron Gilletti and his wife Emma of Albuquerque, N.M.; her three grandchildren, Allison Lindsay, Ron Gilletti Jr. and Gianna Gilletti; her sister, Anna May Spooner; as well as many other cousins, nieces, nephews, and close friends.

Barbara was preceded in death by her sisters, Ella Marie Sauermann, Virginia Natalie and Lenore Kane, and her brother, James Bernard Bazidlo.

She was a loving and caring mother, grandmother, and friend and will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

A memorial service is currently being planned for June in Portland.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in her name to the UNM Cancer Research Institute, 1 University of New Mexico, MSC07 4025, Albuquerque, NM 87131.

Visit the online guestbook for Barbara at FrenchFunerals.com.