

RIVEREAST

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Russ Oakes relaxes with his wife Sheila behind Center School during last July's Old Home Days festivities. Russ, who passed away last week, was known in East Hampton for, among many other activities, his longtime involvement with the weekend-long event.

Remembering Russ Oakes

by John Tyczkowski

Anyone who lives in East Hampton knows how important Old Home Days is to the town. And anyone involved with Old Home Days knows how vital resident Russell Oakes was to the annual event.

Oakes, fondly known to many as "Mr. Old Home Day" or simply "Russ," passed away at the age of 75 last Wednesday, Jan. 7, at Middlesex Hospital.

Plenty of people turned out on short notice to pay tribute to him at his funeral this past Monday, Sheila Oakes, Russ's wife, said.

"There were people lined up along the (Old Home Days) parade route, waving flags, even in the rain and cold," Sheila said. "And they had this huge sign, saying 'Russ, thanks for the memories.'"

"It was amazing, it was wonderful to see the town coming together one last time to pay their respects to him," she said.

That morning, the funeral procession made the entire 1.5-mile "Glorious Celebration" parade route as part of their salute to Russ, winding past Center School, through the Village Center and then up onto Route 66, past town hall.

All six of the Oakes' children came to East Hampton for the funeral.

One of their sons, Timothy, said his father was simply "a real hard worker who deeply cared about his community."

"He was extremely community-oriented, and very proud of America. He spent a lot of time

working with the town community, and helping others be proud of East Hampton like he was," Timothy said. "And he was always moving, I'll tell you that."

Though born in New Hampshire, Oakes was a fixture of East Hampton, serving as chairman of the parade committee for the annual Old Home Days event in town for the past two decades.

Oakes also served as the Old Home Days Association's president, in addition to being a perennial parade master.

Old Home Days was a family business, as well, Timothy said, noting that he and his siblings always returned each July to help organize things.

"We come from all over the country to help with the parade, none of us live in town any more," Timothy said. "[Old Home Days is] such a proud tradition here, and it's become such a wonderful part of our lives."

"You'd think [Russ] wouldn't have had time for all of that with all of his kids, but he managed it," he said.

Jim Vick, OHDA entertainment secretary, first knew the Oakes as his neighbors, when Vick and his wife moved to town nearly 20 years ago.

"He was the consummate neighbor," Vick said. "If a tree limb fell, blocking the road, he'd be the first guy out there with a chainsaw cutting up that tree limb."

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Sentencing Proves Small Solace for Hebron Family

by Geeta Schrayter

Last Thursday, Jan. 5, RHAM High School graduate and Hebron resident Connor McKee was sentenced to five years in prison in connection with the 2013 death of his classmate, fellow Hebron resident Paige Houston.

Houston's family had been waiting for this day, but after McKee, 18, received his sentence, Houston's mother Michelle – and the rest of the family – found closure wasn't so easily gained.

"You'd think this might bring some closure, but for us, we realized it didn't," Michelle said this week. "It doesn't matter whether he goes to jail for one day or 20 years. It doesn't bring Paige back; nobody wins. We'll never get Paige back, but Connor will one day be able to return and live his life."

Michelle added she just hoped McKee would stand by what he'd said in court, and "do well by others" by speaking to other kids about drinking and driving.

Michelle said she also planned to speak about what happened, asserting "I will be that teacher [Houston wanted to be] for her. I will do right by my daughter – she deserved it."

McKee, whose drunk-driving crash in the early morning hours of Aug. 6, 2013, resulted in Houston's death, had initially been charged with first-degree manslaughter, which carries

a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, as well as a slew of motor vehicle charges. However, the sentencing range was lowered after McKee accepted a plea agreement last September and pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle.

In the end, McKee was sentenced last week to five years in prison, followed by five years of special parole, during which time, State's Attorney Matthew Gedansky said, McKee is "forbidden from operating any vehicle unless it has an engine lock device."

Michelle – who said she was "so tired of people telling me what I should and shouldn't say" – said that, during the sentencing, McKee's lawyer Ryan P. Barry had argued McKee's brain wasn't as developed as an adult's, which meant his sense of responsibility wasn't as developed either. She said it's an argument she didn't get behind.

"My kids knew right from wrong a lot younger than 18, so I don't know what part he's [Barry] talking about," she said. "As far as I'm concerned that brain development had nothing to do with anything. It was bad choices. You teach your kids from a young age right from wrong."

Even so, she added, "I think of Connor ev-

ery day. I'm a mother, and my father was a prison guard and police officer and I feel for the life he has to lead in prison. So as I think of Paige every day, I do think of Connor as well."

The events of Aug., 2013 took place after McKee left a party he'd been attending with three of his friends: Houston, 17; Andrew Burton, then 16; and Zachary Trapp, who was 18 at the time.

According to McKee's arrest warrant affidavit, the group left the party in his father's 2000 Toyota Tundra. Just before the crash, McKee was traveling over 80 miles per hour on a 35 m.p.h. road. He drove through a stop sign, and after traveling off the western side of the road and striking a mailbox, the vehicle "continued in a northeasterly direction for approximately 243 feet where it traveled across the southbound and northbound lanes," the affidavit said.

The affidavit furthered the truck then "traveled off of the eastern side of the roadway and collided into a large tree with its left side."

As a result of the crash, Houston, who was sitting in the middle back seat of the truck and had removed her seatbelt because she wanted to get out, was thrown from the vehicle. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to the warrant, McKee had a

blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .11 percent at the time of the accident. Under state law, an adult is considered legally intoxicated with a BAC of .08 or above; for anyone under 21 that number is .02 or higher.

The four had come from a party held on the property of Marlborough resident Paul Sibiga, 50, who allegedly allowed his sons to host parties on property located in the woods across the street from their home at 66 North Parker Rd. The property, which the affidavit said was referred to as the "White House" due to a "long, narrow tent covered in white plastic containing couches and tables," was determined to be the location of a party that night where there were 28 individuals – including the four who left in the truck – drinking and using illicit drugs, the affidavit said.

As a result, Sibiga was charged with 28 counts of first-degree reckless endangerment and 28 counts of permitting a minor to illegally possess liquor in their dwelling/private property. Sibiga, who is currently free on a promise to appear, pleaded not guilty to the charges and is scheduled to appear in court Jan. 22. If convicted, he faces up to a year in prison for each count.

See Hebron Family Page 2



Nearly two dozen people lined the sidewalk in front on town hall Monday for Russ Oakes' funeral procession. Despite the rain and cold temperatures, residents turned out with signs and flags to give a final salute to Russ. The funeral procession followed the 1.5-mile Old Home Days parade route.

Russ Oakes cont. from Front Page

Also, Russ and Sheila's involvement with Old Home Days is how Vick himself got involved.

"I went and thought, 'Oh the music is good, but I have ideas of my own,'" he said. "My wife and I ran into Russ and Sheila when we were out walking our dog, and he said, 'You like music? There's a job opening!' And next thing I knew, I was the entertainment secretary."

Resident John Tuttle said that, though he had a big heart, Russ still had plenty of opinions.

"He was blunt and would not mince words. If he had an opinion, boy, he'd tell you," Tuttle said. "He had strong convictions, and he'd debate you over them, but he was never nasty or mean about it."

Vick said the same thing.

"Russ had very strong thoughts and had no fear expressing them; on occasion he ruffled some feathers, including mine," he said. "But he was the kind of guy that you just got past that really quick with."

"Regardless of how you both disagreed, if you had a connection, through family, friends or an organization, he would put that first," Vick added.

As of press time, more than 20 residents shared their thoughts on the East Hampton Old Home Days Facebook page.

"What a wonderful legacy he leaves behind," Jennifer Spaulding Marozzi wrote. "[H]e will be dearly missed by our community. Surely, this parade should reflect his memory in some way. Rest well, Mr. Oakes."

Lorraine Valli wrote, "Our deepest sympathy for the Oakes family from the 3rd Connecticut Regiment of Fifes and Drums. We will miss you dearly Russ."

Oakes was a member of that regiment for over a decade.

Family members also said one of the initiatives Oakes was proudest of was starting "Flags Over East Hampton" in 2007, which entailed placing dozens of American flags around an area of town known as the Triangle to salute East Hampton's veterans.

Tuttle, who was then the vice chairman of the Town Council, related a serendipitous anecdote about how that event came to be in town.

"I got to know Russ at a local coffee shop he frequented, which was right next to my office next door," he said. "I'd see his car, and say, 'Oh, Russ is over there,' and I'd make it a point to say hello. That's how we met."

"It was funny; he'd call me Jonathan, but my

name is John," he recalled. "He's from New Hampshire, and my family is also, and he had a bit of an accent. It helped things feel more familiar."

"One day he shared his idea about doing these flags and I thought it was a great idea," Tuttle said. "I did my small part, helping him find companies and individuals to buy flags, but it was his idea."

Also, Oakes was very active with St. Patrick Church on West Main Street, especially with refereeing for the church's Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) basketball program there.

"My daughter participated in CYO for years, and we always joked she should try to win the Russell Oakes Good Sportsmanship Award," Jennifer Collingwood, who is also OHDA secretary, said. "And she actually did win it last year, which was her last year [in the program]. We were able to coordinate a picture with our daughter and Russ with the award."

Oakes was involved with the St. Patrick CYO for more than 25 years, and the award with his name was established in 2005.

"Russ was so active in the parish, and CYO was another one of his major passions, along with the Old Home Days parade," Collingwood said. "But he was never one to toot his own horn over what he did. He let what he did talk for itself."

Tuttle said what marked Oakes in town was the reach of what he did.

"He did things that touched so many people," Tuttle said. "I admired him a great deal. He really epitomized what it was to be a great citizen, to get involved with your community and make it better."

Timothy said he learned a lot from his father's sense of community.

"He taught us to give back because we're so blessed to be living here in America," he said. "In fact, three of his sons, me included, served in the military, and we're just as proud as he was to serve."

Also, Timothy said he found it was a wonderful experience to return to town and hear stories from various residents about his father.

"I found it very interesting to come back and hear all of these stories from people who knew him longer than I did," he said. "To me, he was my father, but he was so much else to the rest of East Hampton."

Russ's obituary appears on page 9 in this issue.

Hebron Family cont. from Front Page

Regarding Sibiga, Michelle said she had "no respect" for him as a result of his actions. She added, again referencing the brain development argument, that "[Sibiga's] 50 years old; his brain is developed. So if you want to make a point, don't use that."

Sibiga's sentencing could be another step in the Houston family's attempts to gain closure, although, as they discovered through McKee's sentencing, that closure is not easily attained.

"When you just get past one thing, the oth-

ers are still there," Michelle said disheartened. "And at the end of the day, I still came home and went into an empty room."

But through everything, she said the support the family had received from the community has been "amazing."

"Our community – and even people that I haven't seen in years, from my high school in New Jersey – has been so supportive and amazing," she said. If it weren't for that support, Michelle added, "I don't know where I'd be right now."

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

How low will it go?

As I watch gas prices continue to fall with seemingly each passing day, I can't help but wonder: when will it stop? Not that I'm complaining, mind you; gas is an unfortunate necessity if you own a car – and it's always welcome when you can get away with paying less for it.

This isn't the first time, of course, gas prices have fallen in a big way. After peaking around here at \$4.25/gallon in mid-2008, the cost of fuel cratered, eventually dropping below \$2 in my hometown of Manchester by early 2009.

I'm hoping to see them dip below \$2 again. In some parts of the state, they're already close. A friend of mine who lives in Newington told me Tuesday he noticed a Citgo station on the Berlin Turnpike in that town selling gas for \$2.06 a gallon. \$2.06! (Which made me feel a tad less satisfied when I fueled up for \$2.36/gallon that night in Manchester. Nevermind the fact it's still well over a dollar a gallon less than what I was paying a year ago – I wanted that \$2.06 price!)

Of course, many parts of the country are already under \$2. Fueled – see what I did there – by its very high gas tax, Connecticut still has among the highest gas prices in the country – and this tempers my enthusiasm somewhat for the lower stickers at the pumps.

According to AAA, as of Tuesday, the statewide average for a gallon of gas was \$2.46. Among the states in the continental U.S., just three had higher gas prices than Connecticut: California (at \$2.58/gallon), New York (\$2.60) and, surprisingly, Vermont (\$2.52) – which just seems a little cruel. At least California and New York get to be California and New York. Vermont has.....snow. Oh, and copious amounts of maple syrup.

I can't imagine gas station owners near the Massachusetts and Rhode Island borders are too thrilled; those states have average prices of \$2.30 and \$2.29 per gallon, respectively. That's a substantial difference; if you live in, say, Enfield, why

not hop on over and fill up on the cheap?

Don't get me wrong; I love the falling gas prices. And I hope they continue to plummet. It's just, as I said, when you realize how much less gas is in so many other parts of the country, it just makes the excitement over the lower prices a little less robust.

* * *

We've been lucky so far this winter, in that we haven't had a ton of snow. Oh, we certainly have had some real cold snaps (notwithstanding that very odd 55-degree weather around Christmas), but not a whole lot in the way of snow. Unfortunately, there's still plenty of time left for Old Man Winter to do his worst. Hopefully he won't, but you never know.

If you're trying to slim down after too much holiday feasting, though, some snow may not be the worst thing. I recently came across a list detailing just how many calories are burned during various winter activities. Among them:

Sledding/tobogganing burns about 120 calories every 15 minutes (also, the climbing of the sled hills gives your calves and quads quite the workout);

Shoveling burns about 200 calories every half hour (although it's very important not to do too much, especially if you're elderly; every year you read about people dying from heart attacks they suffer while shoveling. If you don't feel up to it – don't do it. It's just not worth it);

Cross-country skiing burns about 500 calories an hour;

Ice skating or ice hockey also burns about 500 calories an hour;

Ice fishing burns about 400 calories an hour; and

Snowboarding burns about 480 calories an hour.

Also, if you just aren't a snow bunny, you've still got options: mall walking burns about 250 calories an hour, while housework can burn about 225 an hour.

* * *

See you next week.

Brownfield Agency Presents Facilities Options in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

Tuesday evening, before discussing any business on the agenda, the town council took a moment to address the recent passings of residents Russ Oakes and Don Martin.

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore praised both men for their service to their community; Oakes was heavily involved with Old Home Days and instituted the Flags Over East Hampton program in town, while Martin had been a member of the Board of Finance, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Republican Town Committee.

“They were two great men who did so many great things for our town, right up until the day of [their deaths], I’m sure,” she said.

She and all those present engaged in a moment of silence in their memory before beginning business.

* * *

At the meeting, before the Town Council weighed in on the issue of town facilities (a full story about which appears on page 11), the members of the Brownfield Redevelopment Agency presented on the latest Village Center efforts, and offered their own facilities recommendations – which chair Carla Sylvester said the agency had discussed at its December meet-

ing.

Member Scott Bristol said the agency “would appreciate” seeing a plan for development from the Town Council should the council choose to make changes to who uses Center School, and for what purpose.

“There needs to be a plan in place so we make sure we don’t have a large building in a prominent location in the Village Center be empty for a long period of time,” he said. “That would be very problematic. An occupied building there is ideal.”

Bristol also reminded the council that no matter what happens to Center School, the town still retains ownership of the water system at the site, which, if the council decided to vacate or demolish Center School, could be used for new businesses in the Village Center.

In addition, Bristol mentioned that the former Barton building on Skinner Street in the Village Center could be of use to the town as a town hall and police station, instead of the facilities committee’s proposed West High Street site for a public safety campus.

“We should explore the possibility of a combined emergency services building in the Village Center as a viable alternative,” he said.

“The town has looked at that location, and at that building, in the past.”

To that end, Bristol also said that the town’s main opposition to the site, that it is located near a flood zone, should not preclude development this time.

“Don’t move so fast away from this site; it is a workable situation,” he said. “The zone is away from the building site on the property, and the building itself is outside of the 100-year and 500-year flood zones.”

Flood zone ratings are used to determine risk of property damage for insurance purposes. Town buildings designated critical infrastructure buildings must be constructed outside of 500-year flood zones according to state guidelines due to their crucial roles in town government.

The Brookside building is about 30,000 square feet, “give or take,” Bristol said, which he considered to be plenty of room for not only the police station, but also two fire companies, 1 and 2.

“That amount of space could well handle both police and fire needs,” he said.

On the matter of relocating company 2, lo-

cated in Cobalt, to the Village Center, Bristol mentioned a substation at the Cobalt location to increase response times.

“I think – and I think the Agency thinks – that having a combined facility for emergency services in the Village Center would be an excellent idea,” he said. “It has room for their day-to-day needs, for the equipment, and should be an excellent location into the future. That’s our thought process here.”

Councilor Phillip Visintainer, who served as the town’s fire marshal for more than 20 years, and as a volunteer firefighter for more than 50 years, raised several concerns over that proposal.

“That station is positioned strategically for Cobalt and Middle Haddam, the response time from the Village Center would be a real issue,” he said. “Not only that, company 1 is strapped for space right now.”

Visintainer suggested combining only police and company 1 at the Village Center site, so company 1 would have room for expanded office space and sleeping space, since it is the headquarters location, should the town decide to investigate that option.

East Hampton Council Discusses Center School Alternative

by John Tyczkowski

The Town Council Tuesday reviewed its opinions and impressions of last week’s public information meeting, which drew over 130 residents and included around three hours of presentations, public comment and statements from councilors.

Going around the council one by one, the resounding feeling among councilors was that they felt the town wanted a definite plan for development, and wanted action now, instead of more studies.

“What I took away from [last week’s meeting] was that [residents] are very much poised for something big,” councilor Patience Anderson said. “They very much want us to propose a big-picture, all-inclusive plan. They’re hungry for that, and for action.”

Town Council Vice Chairman Kevin Reich said the council should either hold longer meetings once a month, hold extra meetings each month, or designate one meeting a month for that purpose, in order to start forming that long-term plan.

“Any way you look at it, creating that kind of plan is going to take more than our usual two business meetings each month,” he said. “We certainly have enough information and input, and now we have to get started.”

In addition, Reich said the council should get all town departments equally involved in in-depth planning, such as the police and the Board of Education.

“Nothing would delight me more if, over the next few months, the chief and his staff go over all the information and pull together a mini-summary of what they think could be a segue into some action,” he said. “I also think we should take the Board of Education up on their offer regarding Center School.”

The Board of Education previously offered

the town Center School for use as town hall offices, the school board’s own offices, or police use – and reiterated that offer at last week’s public information meeting.

Reich further said the council should obtain a timeline from the Board of Education for the process of moving students out of Center School, and where they could go, if the town decided to relocate there.

Councilor Phillip Visintainer echoed Reich’s call for broader cooperative action to form that long-term plan.

“[Residents are] willing to support us and our efforts if we come up with an appropriate way to meet the needs that are facing us as a town,” he said. “And it’s going to take much more than the seven of us sitting here to come up with the best way to do that. We need to reach out, especially to the Board of Education.”

However, at the same time, councilors acknowledged that one of the main points of the Jan. 6 information meeting was rendered moot a week ago, when a local business purchased the property at 90 Main St.

That property was part of the proposed town hall/Board of Education offices campus option the facilities committee offered.

“We really need to talk seriously about acquiring some more land in this town,” Councilor George Pfaffenbach said. “We couldn’t move quickly and we lost a critical piece this past week, which I think is a shame. It was key spot the town should’ve had.”

“It was all because of our inability to move quickly, and we need to fix that so that next time, we can be on the ball with that,” he said.

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore said she agreed with all of the sentiments the council expressed, especially the long-term

plan.

“We need to give people an idea of what’s coming for the town,” she said. “I think that’s key. If people know what to expect in the future, they’ll be more receptive and it’ll help a lot.”

* * *

Councilors also discussed the Center School option more in-depth, focusing on its use for town hall offices and police services.

Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. said he was in favor of putting the town hall offices and police department together in Center School.

“I’ve always liked that idea,” he said. “It’s definitely something we should consider seriously.”

Hintz also said he wanted to find out from the Board of Education if it could move students out of Center School and into Memorial School for the time being, since enrollment in the public schools is projected to drop slightly.

“They said that they could do it, and that they wanted to do it, so let’s ask them and find out the specifics. Let’s ask them, ‘How soon can you do it?’” he said. “I think that the elimination of one of the schools, combined with declining enrollment over the next few years, plus bringing town offices and the police to the Village Center, at a fairly reasonable cost to the town, would be a pretty good place to start.”

Anderson agreed, saying that taking on Center School could help the town solve a number of its facilities issues at one time.

“Just take a look at the good things that would come out of that consolidation,” she said. “You would get boosted efficiencies, cost savings, reduced capital expenditures, it builds a sense of community since we’re working closely with the Board of Education and it would really help us revitalize the Village Center, one of our big-

gest goals.”

In addition, Anderson said Memorial School could take advantage of this opportunity to secure state education reimbursements to for small renovations to its facility with the hypothetical influx of Center School students.

Lastly, Anderson mentioned water benefits with moving over 300 students out of Center School and replacing them with a much smaller town and police staff.

“That would free up a whole ton of water for some additional development in the Village Center as well,” Anderson said. “The whole proposal has so much appeal to it, we should definitely pursue it and fast-track it to the Board of Education.”

In response to parking issues floated during the discussion, councilors talking about utilizing the planned parking lot at 13 Watrous St., once reclaimed and paved, as parking for town offices and police.

However, Visintainer said he would prefer to combine police and fire services together in their own building, similar to the facilities committee’s proposed public safety campus.

His proposal was for Center School to be reserved for town hall offices and Board of Education offices, while, per the Brownfields Redevelopment Agency’s proposal (which is discussed in this issue in an article on page 12), the Barton building become the new public safety complex.

The council decided to make a motion to send the Board of Education a letter asking them to clarify the exact details of their Center School offer, including logistics and a timeline.

The motion passed unanimously.

* * *

The next Town Council meeting will take place Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 6:30 p.m.

In Hebron – Out with Gayle, In with Gail

by Geeta Schrayter

Having been sworn into state office the day before, Gayle Mulligan officially departed the Board of Selectmen at its meeting last Thursday, Jan. 8.

Mulligan, who had been chairwoman of the board, announced in late November she would step down from her role as chairwoman to focus on her new responsibilities as state representative for the 55th District, which serves Hebron, Marlborough, Andover and Bolton.

In her place, the board was expected to vote on the appointment of Gail Richmond, who was endorsed for the position at the Dec. 22 Hebron Republican Town Committee meeting.

During public comment at last week's meeting, RTC Chairwoman Catherine Marx said she was "confident Gail will serve with confidence and integrity." She added Richmond has a "very diverse background that will bring a lot of color to her decisions."

Richmond holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology and education, a master's degree in counseling and education, and a professional diploma in advanced studies. She also has an associate's degree in business management with a minor in accounting.

Her work experience includes the insurance industry and education and she said in her resume she has experience in insurance liability, conflict resolution and budgeting.

Richmond also has a variety of volunteer experience which includes serving as president of the Douglas Library Association and Chair of the Douglas Library of Hebron Board of Trustees. She was vice chair of the Library Study Task Force and served on the Charter Revision Committee. She has also served as secretary of the Association of Connecticut Library Boards and vice president of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists.

Other residents at last week's meeting also threw their support behind Richmond.

June Danaher, who shared she's known Richmond for 25-30 years "as a neighbor and friend" said "I always found her to be very thoughtful, extremely hard-working and dedicated." Danaher added, "I just want to lend my support. I think she will do an excellent job."

To this, four more residents said they echoed Danaher's sentiments.

Meanwhile, Tina Blinn said Richmond was

"definitely someone who could add value to the board" who had a "wealth of knowledge."

And Althea Carr furthered Richmond "does her research," "knows the town very well" and would be an "excellent addition."

But, prior to voting on Richmond's appointment, the selectmen first had to vote to accept Mulligan's resignation. Before the vote was cast, each selectman said a few words and presented Mulligan with flowers and a clock which Town Manager Andrew Tierney explained was "in appreciation of her time here."

"This is going to be a break-up of what I thought was a very good team for a long time," said selectman Jeff Watt. Mulligan, Watt and fellow selectmen Dan Larson, Brian O'Connell and Mark Stuart had served together on the board since 2009; Republicans Watt, Mulligan and O'Connell joined the board in 2007, while Stuart, a Democrat, was elected in 2005, and Larson, also a Democrat, came aboard in 2009.

O'Connell, the board's vice chair, added Mulligan had been "instrumental in her time serving here."

Meanwhile, Stuart said Mulligan would be "sorely missed" on the board, and quipped "without your dedication, our grammar wouldn't be right on our documents."

"You're always digging into the details" he furthered, adding, "I think that you're going to be a great representative in the state capital and I'm very excited about you being up there."

Larson had similar sentiments, saying, "This really has been a dream team," and adding, "It's your leadership that's helped keep it all in time and focused."

Mulligan's resignation was unanimously accepted "with regret."

"I'm not going to forget where I come from," Mulligan said, adding, "You've all become close friends. I respect all of you and will miss working with you and I'm not going far."

As Mulligan handed the gavel over to O'Connell, the new board chair, and moved to sit in the audience, the focus moved to appointing a new member.

Richmond stood and stated, "I'm very pleased to be here and was delighted to get the RTC endorsement."

She added most of the board members have already worked with her in some capacity and knew "if I commit to something I'm going to



Jeff Watt presents outgoing selectwoman Gayle Mulligan with flowers at last week's Board of Selectmen meeting, while fellow member Brian O'Connell looks on. Mulligan is departing the board to focus on her new responsibilities as state representative.

dedicate to that."

"I will be hard working," she furthered. "You know my sense of integrity... you know I will do what I'm supposed to be doing."

Each selectman expressed confidence in having Richmond on the board before they voted unanimously to appoint her to fill Mulligan's vacancy, running through November.

Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz was on hand to have Richmond sworn in, and after swearing "to serve the board to the best of my abilities so help me God," Richmond was able to take a seat and participate in her first meeting as a Hebron selectwoman with her first vote being the election of Watt as board chair.

Also at last week's meeting, Tierney shared the town had been awarded a \$30,000 matching grant from the state's Historic Preservation office to continue restoration work on the Peters House.

The grant is matched by the \$30,000 ap-

proved for the project in this year's Capital Improvement Program budget.

In an announcement sent out by town planner Mike O'Leary, he explained the funds will go toward the installation of a heating and distribution system "that will be sympathetic to the historic character of the house."

In addition, the funds will be used for some work that needs to be done to the first floor framing.

"Other restoration work, such as a new staircase to provide second floor access, will continue at the same time as funding and volunteer assistance is available," O'Leary wrote.

"We're ecstatic we got the grant," Tierney stated at the meeting.

The next Hebron Board of Selectmen's meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hebron Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St.

Hebron Superintendent Announces Spring Resignation

by Geeta Schrayter

Hebron schools superintendent Jeff Newton announced this week he'll be leaving the district at the end of March.

In a letter sent Tuesday, Newton said he'd made a "difficult decision" to leave for the superintendent's position with East Lyme Public Schools, his hometown.

"I grew up in this southeastern Connecticut town, and the chance to return and lead the district that provided me with my educational foundation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he said.

Newton, a Colchester resident, joined the district in April 2013 following a nationwide search with the help of a search consultant,



Jeff Newton

Cooperative Educational Services.

He shared this week a new position wasn't something he'd been looking for. "I've been very happy in Hebron and planned to stay here," he stated. "The only reason I applied to East Lyme is because it's my hometown." And the possibility of being superintendent there "was an opportunity I just couldn't turn away from."

He added, "What pushed me to apply is I'd regret it all my life if I didn't."

Board of Education Chairwoman Maryanne Leichter said, "We're very sad to see him go but I certainly understand it was the opportunity of a lifetime for him to go back and be superintendent of schools he went to as a kid."

She continued, "I could see that having a very big draw but we're very sad to see him go because we spent a lot of time looking for him and felt he was a good fit. But we've got to take care of our kids and move forward with someone who will be good for them."

Leichter added the board would meet with different consulting groups in the near future

to decide which one to select to help with the search for a new superintendent.

"We're still in the beginning stages," she said.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney shared his own thoughts on the news and said Newton "did great things for the district."

Like Leichter, Tierney said "I totally understand [Newton's decision] even though it looks to be a loss to the district. I think I can speak for a lot of my staff; he was well-liked and easy to work with."

Tierney added he'd be able to work through the majority of the current budget process with Newton before he leaves, which Tierney was looking forward to since "we worked well together last year" and were able to get the budget approved on the first try. Along those same lines, Newton said it would be "business as usual" up until he leaves.

"We've got a lot still on the plate including a budget we're working on. There will definitely be no change in the work I'm doing between now and the date I depart," he stated.

But according to his letter, even after he leaves Newton will look forward to hearing about the district's progress.

He wrote, "Hebron is and always will be a special place with wonderful staff, students, and parents. I am proud to have been able to experience and partake in all that this wonderful community has to offer. I believe we have set the course for the school district to move forward and have prepared for many years ahead."

Newton furthered, "With a new mission, vision, and strategic operating plan, and the high caliber of administrators and staff that are present, Hebron will continue to excel in all facets."

He added this week, "It's bittersweet to leave this district especially after two years. It was not something I intended to do but we all have few opportunities in our lives: we want no regrets and want to make sure we take advantage of them when they come along. This is one of them, and I hope people can respect that."

Newton's last day is March 31.

Marlborough Couple Opens Two Businesses in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

When it comes to holistic products and strategies to manage stress among other health issues in the area, Amy and Nick Otzel are the ones to go to.

In December, the Marlborough couple opened two new businesses in the Homestead Plaza at 392 South Main St. Nick's store is Nature's Resource Wellness Market, while Amy's is Inner Resource Psychotherapy.

Co-owning their own adjacent businesses nearly happened to the Otzels in Norwich. Nick owned a market in that town, which he had purchased as a pre-existing business, and Amy had been planning to set up her psychotherapy business in the same building. But the building was foreclosed upon before Amy was able to open her practice.

"I was in the Army as a mental health specialist," Amy said. "I got home from Iraq in 2005 and a fellow veteran was interested in taking on a health food store."

That was when the original store, called Ginger Root Health Food Store, began at the location in Norwich. However, Amy explained that nine years later, the fellow veteran wanted to move on – and sold his business to the Otzels.

Getting into the health food store game wasn't originally in Nick's plans; he was going to school to learn construction when the school canceled the program. It was then his wife mentioned her fellow veteran's existing store for purchase.

Nick said "it was a great opportunity for us."

Amy commended Nick on his ability to learn about the holistic approaches and products.

"He's caught on so quickly," Amy said. "I've never really saw someone learn as quick as him."

Nick said he and his wife were already living pretty healthily, but they dove into the holistic approach – which Amy described as focusing on "optimal well being and [having] choices to prevent illness and disease before conventional medicine." She explained that conventional models treat the illness once the person is sick, while holistic approaches work to prevent that illness before it begins.

The store is fully-stocked with alternative

approaches to medicine, instead of strict medication. Those approaches include dietary supplements, herbal remedies, aromatherapies, soaps without harmful chemicals, alternative food items for vegans and those with food sensitivities, and a line of cosmetic products such as hair dye, toothpaste, and shampoo that do not have harsh chemicals in them.

"It's products to eliminate toxic exposures," Amy said.

At the time the couple purchased the Norwich business, Amy had been working for the state Department of Veteran Affairs helping veterans coming back from overseas. She felt it was a good time to transition to a private practice, creating Inner Resource Psychotherapy.

"I specialize in post combat post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but I deal with all mental health issues," Amy said. She went on to say that she really wants to see more regular clients, not just veterans. "It's just more community and family oriented."

Amy also said for the past year and a half, she has been studying integrative health and healing to get a better understanding of it. She stressed she is a licensed professional counselor for all people, not just veterans.

"There's people who don't understand that drinking a gallon of coffee before bed is related to not sleeping," Nick said. "The biggest problems people come in for are stress, sleep, and aches and pains especially arthritis, stiffness and headaches. Those physical problems are usually associated with stress."

Amy and Nick said another part of the business they are excited to do, which they were unable to do in Norwich, is network with other area wellness businesses, such as acupuncturists, massage therapists and more.

"We want to have an inner play of networking," Amy said. "Then we can refer people out. If I'm seeing private clients, there will be a good community base as well."

"We never got to reach out at our old location," Nick said. "We want to get people exactly what they need and want."

While the two are in the business of holistic healing, Amy stressed this doesn't mean she and her husband don't believe in conventional



Amy and Nick Otzel recently opened two businesses next to each other in Colchester at 392 S. Main St. One focuses on holistic products, while the other is a private psychotherapy practice.

medicine; she said they definitely do use it when necessary.

"We appreciate conventional medicine, but that's not the whole story," Amy said. "We are broadening the scope and bringing a new perspective."

"Don't go get a prescription immediately, but look at what's available," Nick said. "It will minimize the effects instead of adding in harmful things."

Nick said one of the things he's loved about Colchester is the community.

"We have an established customer base [from before] and hopefully will be seeing new regular customers," Nick said.

"The community has been happy to have something like this in town," Amy said.

To better serve their customers, Nick and Amy will be hosting a series of wellness workshops for free beginning on Jan. 31 with Nutrition and Stress from 11 a.m. to noon.

"Education gives options," Amy said. "People are empowered with education and choice. This workshop will help to understand mind, body and spirit and the role it plays."

Nature's Resource Wellness Market is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday. On Sunday, it is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. If interested in seeing Amy for a session, potential clients can call 860-603-2658. The two can also be reached on Facebook at [facebook.com/naturesresourcemarket](https://www.facebook.com/naturesresourcemarket) and [facebook.com/innerresource.org](https://www.facebook.com/innerresource.org).

\$1M Grant Approved for Camp Hemlocks in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

The State Bond Commission this week approved a \$1 million grant for the renovation of Camp Hemlocks in Hebron.

The grant was approved Monday Jan. 12 for Oak Hill, a non-profit based out of Hartford that became a controlling member of Easter Seals Fairfield County and Camp Hemlocks last August, following the October 2013 announcement that the camp would be closing for financial reasons.

After becoming the controlling member, Oak Hill announced plans to save and renovate the camp, which is located on more than 160 acres on Jones Street, and has allowed individuals with disabilities to experience summer camp since 1974 (prior to which the camp operated out of Trumbull, starting in 1950).

In a press release sent Jan. 9 from state Sen. Cathy Osten (D-19th District), Oak Hill President and CEO Barry Simon said the grant was "a wonderful opportunity to preserve this facility for individuals with disabilities."

"So many people were involved in this effort to save Camp Hemlocks" he stated, mentioning Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman, Osten, former state Rep. Pam Sawyer and Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney.

"We are truly appreciative of all of them," Simon said.

Osten furthered those sentiments. She wrote, "The effort to secure state funding to help save Camp Hemlocks is something I and a lot of other state officials have been working on for some time, and I'm glad our hard work is finally coming to fruition."

She added, "Everything that Camp Hem-

locks represents and has to offer handicapped residents from Connecticut and the region is worth investing in and saving. It's a very valuable local institution."

This week, Tierney said he was "the happiest guy in the world."

He explained he'd been working on this since he heard about Hemlocks closing. Adding he had worked to make a deal between Oak Hill and Easter Seals, and had worked with Simon to secure funding for the camp.

"Barry has been a pleasure to work with and Pam [Sawyer] and Cathy [Osten] were instrumental in getting those monies approved at the state level."

Oak Hill, he furthered, "needed this money to make everything up to code so they can open the camp. They plan to run it pretty much similar to how it was run before."

Receiving the grant, he furthered, gives Oak Hill "the green light to start making those repairs."

"It's just a wonderful use of the property," Tierney stated. "The camp benefits Hebron and the region and all the families who were displaced [after Hemlocks closed] that used to go there year after year."

Also supportive of the grant approval was Malloy, who said in the release, "Camp Hemlocks provides a great amount of opportunities for so many children, and I am glad that the state can help ensure that these services continue into the future."

Wyman also had thoughts on the camp, saying Hemlocks "helps ensure that all children in Connecticut – regardless of ability – can have a great summer camp experience."

Fatal Car Crash in Portland at the Ledges

by John Tyczkowski

An East Hampton man was killed in a two-car accident on Route 66 in the early morning hours of Saturday, Jan. 10.

According to police, a Mazda traveling eastbound and a Chevrolet Tahoe traveling westbound collided in a rocky embankment area of the road known as the Ledges shortly after 2 a.m.

The driver of the Mazda, Don J. Martin, 73, of East Hampton, was pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

The other driver, Sandra Civitillo, 45, of Middletown, was treated for injuries and released from the hospital that same morning, Sgt. Scott Cunningham said.

The SUV Civitillo was driving was registered to Civitillo Masonry in Newington.

Also, Cunningham said, it's too early to say

definitively what happened to cause the accident. The Portland police accident reconstruction team is currently investigating the cause of the crash.

This particular stretch of Route 66 is on the way to Cobalt. It is narrower than the rest of the highway in town, and has several blind curves.

Two previous fatal car accidents have occurred at the Ledges in recent years, in September and November 2013, respectively. Both were single-car.

Additionally, in July 2014, a single-car rollover car accident occurred at the Ledges during rush hour, but the accident was non-fatal.

Martin's obituary appears in this week's *Rivereast*, on page 9.

Colchester Building Committee Clears Up Question of Enrollment

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After learning more about enrollment projections, the William J. Johnston Middle School Building Committee now has to choose which of the two options for the revamped school it wants to proceed with.

During its Jan. 8 meeting, the building committee met with Donald Kennedy from the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), so he could explain some of the factors the council considers when developing enrollment projections – projections the building committee is using to help plan the size of the future WJJMS building.

Enrollment at WJJMS has been dropping in recent years, from 800 in the 2007-08 school year to 626 in the current year. And Kennedy told the committee to get used to it – at least for the time being.

“The decline you’ve been experiencing is expected to continue,” Kennedy said, but added, “Two to five years out is the most reliable, however, and after that [the projections are] less reliable.”

Kennedy explained the enrollment projections are based on population cycles and economic trends. NESDEC pays attention to home sales, building permits and number of births while determining projections.

Kennedy explained that, in 2004-05, prior to the nation’s economic slowdown, the U.S. Department of Education projected enrollment in the northeast to actually fall anyway during 2006-18, with increases due to migration in the west, southwest and south. Then the recession hit, and the numbers dipped further.

Historically, Kennedy said, “a lot of people were moving in according to the 1970 census to 2000 when the number of young people in the school system grew.”

However, Kennedy said, now those young people have aged – and they’re aging in place, meaning they’re not selling their homes and

settling elsewhere.

As a result, he said, “there’s fewer younger people [moving into town] and less births.”

When Kennedy began to lose those in attendance at last week’s meeting was when he showed a chart displaying the population of kids in grades six to eight compared with the enrollment at WJJMS. According to Kennedy, by 2020, only 73 percent of the sixth- to eighth-graders students eligible to go to WJJMS will actually be there, with the rest home-schooled or going to magnet schools, private schools or different districts due to special education needs.

In other words, out of 625 eligible students, only 457 would be enrolled at the middle school, Kennedy said.

But the building committee’s chairman, Tom Tyler, balked at this prediction, pointing out that Kennedy’s charts showed that, in 2014, only 92 students from the entire Colchester population of kindergarten through Grade 12 students opted out of Colchester Public Schools.

“This doesn’t add up,” Tyler said of the WJJMS prediction.

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said that, for the 2014-15 school year, only 23 students eligible for the middle school were enrolled in magnet schools – traditionally the largest-drawing of the public school alternatives Kennedy had outlined.

Tyler added that to go from that to more than 160 students “opting out” by 2020 was “huge.”

Meanwhile, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu predicted that, if there’s a new and improved academic building for students to go to, more of them may want to go to WJJMS than the projections suggest.

“When building a new school, you stop some of that migration,” Superintendent Jeff Mathieu said. “By 2020, we could be back to 94 percent of students [eligible for WJJMS attending the

school], because of the state-of-the-art building.”

That percentage was reached in 2000, Mathieu said, when Colchester had 94 percent of eligible students enrolled in the school system.

Kennedy agreed a new school may draw the kids – mentioning that when a new school was built in a town in Massachusetts, 99 of 200 students who had been previously enrolled in private school opted to attend the new building.

Goldstein also brought up that the state is revisiting the magnet school concept at the moment – noting that, except in Hartford, no new magnet schools are currently being constructed.

While this may be true, Kennedy said, “The general pattern [of students enrolled at WJJMS] will still be down.”

However, he again stressed that any projections beyond five years should be taken “with a grain of salt.”

Kennedy explained that something that could change the projections would be more senior citizens selling their homes to younger families who have children to place in the school system.

“We saw a surprise this year with 60 more students” in the overall K-12 Colchester school system, Goldstein said. “Will this pattern continue?”

“I’ve seen that happen in two to three other communities,” Kennedy said. “It’s in communities where real estate is selling quickly. They had two to three sustained years of it.”

“So we could have that surprise again,” Goldstein said.

“Once the economy is more upward, there will be more homes sold and more kids,” Kennedy said.

WJJMS Principal Chris Bennett, however, said the rooms at the school are built for a range of 20-30 students – so even if the enrollment

hits the numbers Kennedy warned of, the impact on the school itself is minimal.

Even with the projected decline, “we [would] still have too many kids to have less than two teams per grade,” Bennett said. “That’s eight classes per grade. We know the core academic rooms to build.”

Bennett said where enrollment really matters is determining how many electives, such as art, the school wants to offer; in the past, he said, the middle school had to hold art classes in the boys’ locker room at one time because the school had only one art room.

“More electives equal more rooms,” Bennett said.

Bennett did say that, because of enrollment, the plans for the school have been tweaked, with the academic teams trimmed from five-teacher teams to four-teacher teams – and as a result, the square footage in the options is no longer an issue. The school can function with either option.

However, while there now appears to be an option on the horizon that everyone can agree on, First Selectman Stan Soby said the process has already taken too long – the committee cannot have a March referendum on the project.

“The early March date for referendum is near impossible,” Soby said. “Right now we’re in the process of getting a new financial advisor. We need finalized projected costs and a time frame of construction.”

Tyler confirmed the committee is on track for an April referendum as long as they choose an option at their meeting on Jan. 22.

The building committee’s Jan. 22 meeting will take place at 7 p.m. at WJJMS, and then will present the option it chose to a joint meeting of the boards of selectmen, finance and education Thursday, Feb. 5, at 6 p.m.

Colchester Bobcats Celebrate Undefeated Soccer Season

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The boys’ soccer team at Bacon Academy may not have made it through the playoffs this year, but the team was praised by the Board of Education at its meeting this week for notching its second undefeated season in the past three years.

Coached by Andrew Storton, the team flew through their regular season with a 14-0-2 record however lost to Tolland in November in the playoffs for the Class M Championship. Ellington ended up winning that championship.

“They had a great work ethic,” Storton said of this year’s team. “No matter who was playing and who wasn’t, they wanted the team to do well.”

Storton said the undefeated record this year was a great accomplishment for both the program and the players involved.

“I knew this team was going to have a good season and they went on to accomplish that,” Storton said. “It’s put a team that wasn’t really on the map of outstanding teams in Connecti-

cut to a team where people are expecting us to be strong and competitive.”

Storton said that recognition as a strong team was his main goal as a coach.

“As a coach, you put a lot of time into planning sessions and formations and analyzing a lot of things and so when it comes down to the game and everything’s going well, you can be proud of what you’ve done,” Storton said. “Now we need to sustain that.”

One of the ways Storton said the team has sustained their competitiveness has been having every player involved and learning.

“Even when you’re a freshman and not playing any games, it’s important to be around the team and see how we do things,” Storton said. “Colby Decker was a freshman with no playing time. As a sophomore, he played some. This year as a junior, he was one of the stars.”

Storton said he’s “absolutely very proud of what we’ve accomplished.”

One of the highlights of the season, Storton

said, was when the team won against East Lyme early in the regular season.

“It’s no secret that East Lyme has outstanding players,” Storton said. “Going into the season, you expect East Lyme to be on the top of the pile.”

The team went into that Sept. 19 game “highly prepared,” Storton said. The Bacon Academy Bobcats beat East Lyme that day 2-0.

“It instilled lots of belief in the players that they could go against a team like that,” Storton said. “It was good for the team, good for the parents that came out and good in the way that it was a good competition.”

Storton also commended the team’s goalkeeper, senior Austin Rhodes, with starting them off right in game one.

“You look at all these results and in the moments in the first game, we were up and to the last minutes, there was pressure on the goalkeeper,” Storton said. “If it wasn’t for him that day, it could have been a very different season.

There are moments with very big impact on what we did this year and it turned out to be a good season,” Storton added.

Storton also commended underclassmen Sam Pipicelli and LJ Luster – along with seniors Hayden Couture and Trevor Bis.

“We’re losing a couple of key guys in Hayden and Trevor,” Storton said. “We’ll find the right players to replace them, though.”

Looking toward next season, Storton said anything can happen.

“It’s fair to say that at the high school level, you can never predict what’s going to happen,” Storton said. “We have these guys such a short amount of time. You can never tell the chemistry for certain and how they’re going to progress. Given this group right now, they’re going to come back and be strong if not stronger than this season.”

Storton said though, their goal is not to “win, win, win,” but to do things the right way and be competitive.

Andover Resident Questions Town Leadership

by Geeta Schrayter

Last week's meeting of the Board of Selectmen was dominated by lengthy comments from resident Jeff Maguire – who alleged the town has a major leadership problem.

At the Jan. 7 meeting, Maguire also stated the town lacked financial controls, "which is perpetuated by the current leadership," and stated that, in the most recent audit report for the town, six areas were identified as concerns relating to the town's internal controls – some of which had yet to be fixed, according to Maguire.

"When you run a business or a town and someone tells you that there is a problem what do you do?" he asked. "You can't make excuses such as, 'there is not enough time' or 'we don't have enough resources.' You find a way and fix it."

Maguire, who is a certified public accountant as well as a member of the town's soccer association, went on to explain he initially became involved in town issues because he wanted to learn how the Recreation Commission operates. For that initial goal, which he called "very modest," he said he approached Vice First Selectman Jay Linddy, but his attempt to get involved and recommend changes "was not received well."

From there, Maguire said he began to investigate how the commission spends its money.

"I must have struck a nerve because [the]

commission, that had not held a public meeting since 2009, started having public meetings" he said, adding "Selectman Linddy must have believed that I was specifically focused on the \$1,475.18 of reimbursement checks that he has received over the last three years listed on the Rec. Commission expenditure reports," because he provided information Maguire said he never asked for, including receipts for one of the summer concerts held last summer.

Maguire singled out one of the receipts, where Linddy had purchased water, soda and beer from Stop & Shop. He stated he asked Linddy what the beer was for, and was told it was for one of the bands.

This, Maguire said, made him wonder where the internal controls were that oversee how money is spent, and also made him wonder what the liability would be if a band member had gotten into an accident after the concert and killed someone. He also said he felt the purchase was a misappropriation of funds and "a gross violation of the trust placed with Selectman Linddy."

He concluded, "I also believe the first selectman [Bob Burbank] has failed to protect the taxpayers of Andover and needs to be held accountable."

This week, both Burbank and Linddy addressed some of Maguire's comments.

First, Burbank said he didn't think the town

had a leadership issue.

There are certain residents, he said, who "don't think that they need a leader; they think they need someone that agrees with them and lets everybody do their own thing. But the town manager, if he's not a leader, is not doing his job."

Regarding the concerns in the audit, Burbank said they were "relatively minor issues" flagged by the auditor, "many of which weren't even related to the town budgeting process but exterior checkbooks."

He elaborated, saying for example, that the town clerk wasn't having a third person sign off when she was reconciling the checkbook, while another concern was related to the fire department "and they do their own budget."

"All the other minor issues that were flagged have been addressed," Burbank said.

Regarding the accusation that Linddy had misappropriated funds, Burbank said it was more an issue of poor judgment.

"The band was playing at a far-reduced cost to the town, and [Linddy] had asked them what they needed and he put that on the town expenses," Burbank said. "I'm not saying it was right or wrong. I think perhaps it was poor judgment, but it wasn't for personal use; it was for the concert."

Linddy agreed, and shared a similar explanation.

"While negotiating we said we would do one case of beer and one case of water and this band was a touring band," he said, adding, "We were very fortunate to get them to Andover, for probably 10 percent of what they regularly charge."

He added, the request was considered reasonable "but now, since then, there is a check which is paying for the beer. It's just so stupid, but we're going to pay for it."

Still, Linddy concluded, "Would I ever do it again? Absolutely not."

Linddy also explained why he'd given Maguire receipts along with his purchase order even though they weren't asked for: "We don't just write a [purchase order] we attach receipts," he said. "We never hid a thing because if we did we wouldn't have given it to him."

Regarding why he felt these comments had been made when they were, Burbank added he thought it was political in nature.

"It was a political situation because of the caucus coming up the following week," he said.

A story on the caucus appears elsewhere in this issue.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held Wednesday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Community Room.

Republicans Endorse Dowling for Andover First Selectman

by Geeta Schrayter

Tuesday night, almost 100 Andover Republicans gathered in the town hall to vote for the candidates they wanted to endorse for the May municipal elections.

And by an 80-19 vote, Republicans endorsed Curt Dowling for first selectman over current first selectman Bob Burbank. Current selectwoman Cathy Desrosiers and newcomer Steve Willard were also endorsed for the Board of Selectmen; Dowling, Desrosiers and Willard last week said they were running for office as a team.

After being defeated, Burbank said this week "I'm still weighing my options at this point" as to whether or not he'd run as a petitioning candidate.

Speaking on the results of the caucus, Burbank said, "It's a situation where the opposition feels that I take too many controls and [Dowling has] convinced people that I micromanage. I do manage the budget and do not allow free reign of expenditures, as he is advocating, to let departments run their own affairs because of the fact that was the exact problem that I had to solve when I came into this office in 2007."

Under former first selectwoman Charlene Barnett, Burbank said, "People were given the free reign and – intentionally or unintention-

ally, I can't answer that – their budgets were overexpended, putting the town into financial chaos."

But Dowling said this week the caucus showed him people wanted a change.

"I'm feeling very, very good," he said of the results. "I was overwhelmed by the amount of people that turned out and wanted a change, based on the votes."

He furthered, "I think our message hit. People want change – the republicans want change."

Willard had similar thoughts.

"I thought [the caucus] went very well. I was very happy by the turnout," he stated. "How many townspeople we were able to get motivated to get involved with the political system made me ecstatic and we're looking forward to going forward from here."

Likewise, Desrosiers called the turnout "encouraging."

The number of people who attended "gives me hope that people want to be involved in their community and will help promote a better and healthy community for Andover," she said, adding, "I think it's an exciting time for Andover and I just feel so hopeful for the future; I think we have good people in town that are very talented that are willing to get involved and make

a difference."

Desrosiers concluded, "I've lived in town for 31 years and it's the first time I've really seen this much enthusiasm and involvement."

Republican Town Committee Chairman Ted Sakelarakis said Wednesday the caucus was "very, very orderly" and stated whoever ends up being the candidate – if there ends up being a primary – "we are going to back them and be unified coming into the election."

He added, "I was very, very proud of the caucus and of the republicans that attended."

Two newcomers for the Andover Board of Education were also endorsed Tuesday night: Fred Oliver and Mike Russo.

Current Board of Education Chairman Jay Linddy, who wasn't in attendance at Tuesday's caucus, said while some at the caucus thought he, like Burbank, had been outvoted, he simply had no intention of running again – and if he'd been there he would have said so.

"There's other stuff in life you want to do when you get older," he said of his reason for not running again. "You hear about people that want to go back to college at 55 and you say 'What are you, nuts?' Well I'm one of those nuts, and writing is beautiful."

East Hampton Police News

1/2: Troy Timothy McIntosh, 32, of 28 Main St., turned himself in pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest. McIntosh was processed and charged with third-degree burglary and second-degree larceny, East Hampton Police said.

Portland Police News

12/19: Brian Parker, 47, of 257 Middle Haddam Rd., was charged with second-degree breach of peace, Portland Police said.

12/19: Anthony Lombardo, 59, of 1 Brush Pasture Rd., was charged with second-degree breach of peace, police said.

1/7: Jamie Guitard, 36, of 23 Eastern Dr., Middletown, was charged with third-degree burglary, sixth-degree larceny and second-degree criminal mischief, police said.

Hebron Police News

1/7: State Police said they are investigating after a black sedan hit a sign and a pole on Burrows Hill Road and fled. Anyone with information can call Trooper Yvette Kramer at 860-465-5411.

Marlborough Police News

1/9: State Police said Thomas Williams, 51, of 465 Old Slocum Rd., Hebron, was arrested and charged with DUI, operating under suspension, failure to drive right and operating while using a handheld device.

Colchester Police News

1/6: State Police said Keith Cummings, 24, of 34 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to have lights on.

1/6: State Police said Douglas Perkins, 25, of 165 Wells Rd., East Windsor, was arrested and charged with second-degree forgery and obtaining drugs illegally on a warrant.

1/8: State Police said Edward Dobrinski, 27, of 238 Mount Parnassus Rd., East Haddam, was

arrested and charged with illegal sale of a controlled substance.

1/11: State Police said David LaCombe, 51, of 255 Norwich Ave., was arrested and charged with second-degree threatening and breach of peace.

1/13: State Police said Jesus Contreras, 23, of 169 Britt Rd., East Hartford, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Russell Fred Oakes

Russell Fred Oakes, 75, of East Hampton, husband of Sheila (Crowley) Oakes died Wednesday, Jan. 7, at Middlesex Hospital. Born in West Stewartstown, N.H., on Aug. 29, 1939, he was the son of the late Fulford and Mary Ellen (Bumford) Oakes.

Russ was a 1958 graduate of Colebrook Academy, N.H., where he played soccer, basketball and baseball and was in the marching band. He was a graduate of Manchester Technical Institute in Manchester, Vt., and the University of Pennsylvania, where he completed his apprenticeship program to become a sprinkler fitter. He was a Sprinkler Fitter in Local 676 National Automatic Sprinkler Industry for 35 years.

He was a member of the East Hampton 3rd Connecticut Regiment of Fife and Drum Corp for over a decade. He is a past president of East Hampton Old Home Day Assoc. and has been the Parade Chairman for twenty years. He is a member of the Cemetery Committee for the Town of East Hampton and a member of the American Legion Post 197 Marlborough, Past President and life member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 2, Hartford, and was a member of the AOH Connecticut State Board.

Russell was a proud member of the U.S. Army 503rd Engineer Corp. stationed in Stuttgart, Germany from 1961 until 1964. While in the military he became a basketball referee. He joined the International Assoc. of Basketball Officials, Central Connecticut District Board No. 6 and refereed girls' and boys' high school basketball in eastern Connecticut until he retired in 2005. Russell umpired in the East Hampton Park and Rec. Softball League for many years.

Russell was on the Norwich Diocese CYO Basketball Committee and Coordinator of St. Patrick CYO Basketball Program in East Hampton for over 25 years. In 2005, the St. Patrick CYO initiated the "Russell F. Oakes Good Sportsmanship Award." This award is given each year to a girl and boy from each CYO team that exemplifies good sportsmanship. He is a member of the St. Patrick Church Guild. Russell was an ardent sports fan and he loved the Boston Red Sox. The flags that are seen flying over the streets of East Hampton from Memorial Day until Veterans Day are a result of one of Russell's proudest endeavors, "Flags Over East Hampton." Russell approached the Town Council in 2007 and the result was the generous donations of the citizens of East Hampton to proudly fly our beautiful flag in honor and memory of those East Hampton residents who served in the military.

Russell was inducted into the East Hampton Athletic Hall of Fame in 2007, was awarded the Rev. Piechowski CYO Basketball League Trophy in 2008, was awarded the East Hampton Citizen of the Year Award in 2009 and was awarded the Rotary International "Service Above Self" award in 2012.

Russell is survived by his wife Sheila (Crowley) Oakes; his daughter, Maggie Joyce and husband David of Fairfield; five sons, Russell F. Oakes Jr. of Oregon, Timothy F. Oakes and wife Pamela of Massachusetts, Daniel T. Oakes of Vermont, Jonathan L. Oakes and wife Amphay of Oregon, David P. Oakes and wife Angela of Moodus; nine grandchildren Fiona, Finn and Owen Joyce, Sarah, Samuel, Lily, Teaghan, Gavin, and Declan Oakes; and several nieces, nephews and in-laws.

The funeral procession left the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Monday, Jan. 12, followed by the funeral liturgy that morning in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial followed in St. Patrick Cemetery. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home Sunday, Jan. 11.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Flags Over East Hampton, c/o East Hampton Town Hall.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Don Juan Martin

Don Juan Martin, 73, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Phyllis (Peterson) Martin, died Saturday, Jan. 10, in a tragic traffic accident in Portland. Born Feb. 10, 1941 in Las Cruces, N.M., he was the son of the late Don Luis and Pauline (Purvines) Martinez.

Don proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam era, 1959-61. Before his retirement, he was an insurance executive for the Cigna Insurance Company. Don was a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam, a former member of Rotary International, a member of the East Hampton Republican Town Committee, and the East Hampton Zoning Board of Appeals.

Besides his wife, Phyllis he is survived by his three sons, Jon Martin and wife Min-Shan "Maritza" Liu of West Hartford, Jeffery Martin and wife Laura of New Hartford, David Martin and wife Jackie of Farmington; two brothers, Patrick Martinez and wife Diane of Virginia and Michael Martinez of Washington, D.C.; a sister, Ann Bradley; and husband James of Maryland; six grandchildren, Nicolas, Tomas, Henry, Sofia, Sawyer and Zoe.

He was predeceased by a brother and sister-in-law Robert and Carol Martinez.

Besides his love, commitment and joy in being with family and friends, he was most happy piloting his Cessna 152 and working on the Old Purple Farm, his "ranch in Connecticut." Quick with a joke and seemingly always laughing, he truly loved life – and lived his to the fullest. He will be sorely missed by many.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 17, at 11 a.m., in Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

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

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Carlton Earl Durgan

Carlton Earl Durgan, 79, of East Hampton, beloved husband of 59 years to Sandra "Rustie" Durgan, died Saturday, Jan. 10, at Marlborough Health Care. Born June 8, 1935, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Alvin R. and Grace (Riford) Durgan.

Carlton had worked as a state forest ranger in the Meshomasic State Forest and as a cross country truck driver before his retirement. He enjoyed working on antique cars and car shows and he also raced at Connecticut Dragway for many years.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his daughters Dianne Durgan, Debra Wilmes and husband Michael; a brother Robert and wife Dianne; sisters, Beth Ballinger, Linda Durgan; son-in-law, John Sobolewski; grandchildren, Craig, Jaclyn and Jennifer Sobolewski and Alicia M. Wilmes; and several nieces and nephews and close friends.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his stepmother, Barbara Durgan, and his daughter, Darlene Durgan.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 17, at 11 a.m., in Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Route 66, in East Hampton. Burial will be private in the family plot in Union Hill Cemetery.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Beverley Ann Farkas

Beverley Ann Farkas, 77, of East Hampton, widow of Endre Farkas, died Monday, Jan. 12, at her home, surrounded by her family.

Born Sept. 24, 1937, in Westminster, Calif., she had lived in East Hampton for more than 40 years. Beverley loved to sew and quilt and enjoyed spending time with her family.

She is survived by her son Leland Farkas and his wife Rachel of East Hampton; her daughter Charlotte Brombacker of Hamden; and her seven grandchildren, Andrew, Elizabeth, Victoria, Haley, Philip, Monica and Caroline.

She was predeceased by her three brothers, Wayne, Leland and Charles Allen.

Funeral services will be held tonight, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Fred Dole officiating. Burial will be private in the Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home tonight from 5 p.m. until the time of the service at 7 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Middlesex Hospice c/o Middlesex Hospital, Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Marlborough

Mary VanDerlip

Mary (Fuchs) VanDerlip, 65, of Marlborough, loving wife of Roger VanDerlip, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 13, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Hartford, daughter of the late Frank and Florence (Lilly) Fuchs, Mary grew up in Newington and later resided in Glastonbury before settling in Marlborough.

She was a graduate of Newington High School and worked as a bookkeeper for various companies before settling in to a very successful position in printing sales with Davidson and McKirdy in Elmwood. Mary was generous and sympathetic, gravitating toward anyone in need and working tirelessly to help in any way that she could. Mary enjoyed collecting antiques, playing cards and in her later years became an avid sports fan. Some of her happiest times were her vacations to Cape Cod with her husband, Roger.

Family was the most important thing in Mary's life and she was exceedingly proud of her husband, son and grandsons. Mary spent the last 15 months fighting valiantly while maintaining a quiet dignity and selfless concern for the comfort and well-being of those she loved.

In addition to her beloved husband Roger, Mary leaves her pride and joy, her son Michael Turgeon of Newington and his girlfriend Violet Pierson; her grandsons Maxwell and Brian Turgeon, also of Newington; her brother Frank Fuchs and his wife Susan of Windsor; and her stepson Michael Perla of Georgia.

Mary's funeral service will begin Monday, Jan. 19, at 9:15 a.m., at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington, followed by a Mass of Christian burial at 10 a.m. at Church of the Holy Spirit in Newington. Interment will take place privately. Relatives and friends are invited to call Sunday, Jan. 18, from 2-5 p.m. at Newington Memorial.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Mary's name may be directed to St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough, CT 06447 or to the Susan G. Komen Foundation, P.O. Box 650309, Dallas, TX 75265-0309.

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



Portland

Phyllis Bristol Frisbie

Phyllis Bristol Frisbie, 90, of Portland, died Tuesday, Jan. 13, at home. Phyllis was born in Brookfield to Anne L. Deans and Clarence Darius Bristol.

Phyllis was a volunteer at heart and happiest when lending her time to civic organizations. These included the League of Women Voters, Harvard (Mass.) Finance Board, Harvard (Mass.) Conservation Trust, Portland Library Trustees and Friends of Portland Library. Most recently, she was active in the Portland Historical Society and assisted in the creation of the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History.

She was proud of her service as an air raid warden in New York City during World War II. She had a variety of intellectual interests and loved to travel, read history and research genealogy.

She is survived by her daughter, Lisbeth, and her husband, Raymond Wallace, of Frankestown, N.H.; daughter, Claire Frisbie, of Portland; grandchildren, Gregory and Christopher Wallace, Christopher, Matthew and Kelly McDaniel, and Samantha Holtane and family.

She is predeceased by her husband of 62 years, William Browning Frisbie, and her son-in-law, C. David McDaniel.

A celebration of remembrance of William and Phyllis will be held in the spring.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Portland Historical Society, PO Box 98, Portland, CT 06480.

Colchester

Helen Newton

Helen Newton, 95, peacefully passed away at Apple Rehab on Sunday, Jan. 11. She was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on Sept. 20, 1919.

She is survived by her daughter, Alix Rokita and her husband, Fred, of Colchester.

Service will be private and at the convenience of the family.

The Belmont-Sabrowski Funeral Home has been entrusted with Helen's care.

Portland

Karen A. Bevan

Karen A. Bevan, 63 of Middletown, formerly of Portland, passed away Sunday Jan. 11, at home. She was the daughter of the late Merrill and Shirley (Pierchar) Bevan.

Born Jan. 1, 1952, in Hartford, she had lived in Middletown for the last 25 years. She was a member of the Middletown Senior Center and enjoyed ceramics and crafting.

She leaves her son, Paul Bevan-Xenelis of Quakertown, Pa.; brothers, Dominick Calistro of Norwalk, Merrill Bevan of Southington and Richard Bevan of East Windsor; a sister, Lollie Nordquist of Portland; two grandchildren, Teddy and Alex; and many nieces and nephews.

Services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Middletown Senior Center 150 William St Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Colchester

Eugene St. Jean

Eugene "Gene" St. Jean, 71, of Colchester, beloved husband of the late Roberta (Cyr) St. Jean, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 7, at Hartford Hospital. Born March 10, 1943, in Van Buren, Maine, he was the son of the late Raoul and Rachel (Desjardins) St. Jean.

Gene was a self-employed carpenter for over 40 years. A loving brother, uncle and friend, he will be dearly missed by his three brothers, Delmont St. Jean of Maine, Roger St. Jean and his wife Mary of East Hartford and Clayton St. Jean and his wife Kelly of Manchester; two sisters, Geneva Lagasse and her husband Guy of Manchester and Winona Cavanaugh of Marlborough; his best friend of many years, Tony Batignani and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his wife and parents, Gene was predeceased by two sisters, Pauline St. Amand and Margorie Daigle.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, Jan. 13, at Blessed Sacrament Church, 36 Cambridge Drive, East Hartford. Burial followed in Silver Lane Cemetery, East Hartford. Family and friends called Monday, Jan. 12, at the D'Esopo-East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford.

Donations in Gene's memory may be made to the American Diabetes Association, 2080 Silas Deane Hwy., 2nd Floor, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To share a memory of Gene with the family, visit desopo.com.

More Obituaries on Following Page

Colchester

Della F. Zahacefski

Della F. Zahacefski, 89, of Colchester and formerly of Salem, passed away early Friday morning, Dec. 26, 2014, at the Backus Hospital in Norwich. Born May 13, 1925, in N. Westchester, she was the last surviving of 17 children of the late William Orville and Nellie Belle (Martin) Schmidl.

Della married Edward on June 12, 1954. He predeceased her on May 4, 1990.

Della retired several years ago after having worked for N. N. Hill Brass Factory as a press operator.

She was an active member of the Congregational Church of Salem, the Salem Fire Company Auxiliary, St. Joseph Polish Society Auxiliary and the Polish women's Alliance. She will be remembered fondly as a devoted mother, grandmother aunt and friend to many.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered by her daughter Deborah and her husband Mark Okarmus, grandchildren Anthony LaTerra, Shelby Okarmus and Cameron Okarmus and many nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by brothers and sisters, Pearl Brown, Hazel Lane, Louise Long, Bernice Ross, Ruth Cusimano, Viola Raecek, Lula St. Paul, Frederick Schmidl, Bernard Schmidl and Eleanor Rathbun.

Friends attended calling hours Friday, Jan. 2, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral service was held Saturday, Jan. 3, at the Congregational Church of Salem, 244 Hartford Rd., Salem. Burial followed in the Salem Green Cemetery.

The family would like to thank Interim Health Care, the Backus Hospital, Gardner Lake Fire Department, especially Jimmy Savalle, the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department, the Congregational Church of Salem, with deep gratitude to Pastor Timothy Dubeau.

Donations in her memory may be made to: The Congregational Church of Salem or the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation; 383 Main Ave., 5th Floor, Norwalk, CT 06851.

East Hampton

Peter G. Haidet

Peter G. Haidet, 80, of Manchester and formerly of East Hampton, beloved husband of Dolly (Anderson) Haidet, died peacefully Tuesday, Jan. 6, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. He was born May 28, 1934 in Carrollton, Ohio, son of the late Navy commander Russell Haidet and Grace (Keefer) Haidet.

Peter attended the Porter Military Academy, served in the U. S. Navy during the Korean War in the "Silent Service" and later as a Naval Reservist. He was a member of the U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc. of Groton and the American Legion Post 32 in Unionville. Peter was also a member of Manchester Lodge 73 A.F. & A.M.

He had worked as a property manager with the Farley Co. of Hartford and retired in 1994 from the Connecticut Natural Gas Co. as building services manager.

Peter was an avid car enthusiast who preferred Fords and had owned many Mustangs from his 1964 ½ red convertible to his current 2000 Mustang GT as well as several T-Birds.

In addition to his loving wife, he is survived by two sisters, Mary Nilsen and her husband Harry of Haddam Neck, Dorothy Morckel of Melbourne, Fla.; a nephew, Russell Nilsen of Haddam Neck; and several nieces.

Calling hours were held Monday, Jan. 12, at the Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester. Funeral services were private with burial in the Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to BrightFocus Foundation, 22512 Gateway Center Dr., Clarksburg, MD. 20871 for dementia research or to the American Heart Assoc., P.O. Box 417005, Boston, MA 02241-7005.

Hebron

Raymond T. Overton Jr.

Raymond T. Overton Jr., 67, of Hebron, passed away Friday, Jan. 9. He was born in Manchester, the son of the late Raymond T. Overton and Frances (Crawford) Overton Corrow.

His strong work ethic began at a young age, working on a paper route in town. As a young adult, he joined the Army Reserves. He earned a degree in civil engineering. One of his passions was building and design. At his time of death, he was working as an associate project manager for the State of Connecticut Department of Public Works.

In many ways, he was a renaissance man, an avid learner interested in the arts, the outdoors, travel, history and genealogy. He not only designed and built his own home, but he could generally build anything he put his mind to. He was a very kind and caring person. He truly enjoyed being one with nature and spending time with his family.

He leaves behind his wife, Patricia (Gaetano) Overton and daughter, Elizabeth Overton. He is survived by his sisters, Janet McLaughlin and Barbara Overton, brothers- and sisters-in-law, and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and -nephews.

He was predeceased by his sister, Caren Meyer.

Services were held at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester, Thursday, Jan. 15. Calling hours were that afternoon, followed by a family service.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in memory of Raymond Overton to One Spirit, "a native American service organization founded to assist and support American Indians." nativeprogress.org.

Portland

Charles B. Goodrich

Charles B. Goodrich, 80, of Portland and formerly of Cromwell, passed away at Portland Care and Rehab Monday, Jan. 5. Born in Middletown, he was the son of Burnham and Joanna (Jacobowicz) Goodrich.

He graduated from Middletown High School, Class of 1952, and was an Army veteran. Before retiring, he worked at Emhart Corporation.

Charles leaves behind a brother, Edward Goodrich of Middletown; nieces, Sue Cleland Smith (Bob) and Liz Cleland Kaminski (John); nephews, Edward Goodrich Jr and Joseph Goodrich; and great nieces and nephew, Sarah Smith, Kristie Kaminski and Jason Smith.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by a sister, Dorothy Goodrich Cleland and her husband Olin; a brother, Harold Goodrich; and a sister-in-law, Nellie Goodrich.

A funeral service will be held at the Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St, Rocky Hill, on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 10 a.m. Burial with military honors will follow in Rose Hill Memorial Park. Family and friends may call at the funeral home Saturday from 9-10 a.m., just prior to the service.

Portland

Edward A. Organek Sr.

Edward A. Organek Sr., 74, of Portland, beloved husband of Rosemaire (Spada) Organek, died Saturday, Jan. 10, at Middlesex Hospital Weiss Hospice Unit, with his family at his side.

Ed was born in Middletown, the son of the late Adam and Genivieve (Wojtusiak) Organek. Prior to his retirement, he was the owner and founder of Precision Plastic Products Inc. He was a communicant of Saint Mary Church. Ed was a veteran, serving with the U.S. Navy.

Besides his wife Rosemarie, Ed is survived by a daughter, Joanne Musumeci and her husband David of Middletown; two sons, Edward Organek Jr. and his wife Magdalena of Portland, Joseph Organek and his wife Eve of Portland; two sisters, Carole Adams of Florida, Lorraine Kemp of Cromwell; seven grandchildren, Matthew, Adam, Alexander, Michael, Sebastiano, Anthony, Edward III; also several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Jan. 15, from the Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, followed by a funeral liturgy in St. Mary Church, Freestone Ave., Portland. Private burial with military honors was in Calvary Cemetery. Friends called at the Biega Funeral Home Wednesday, Jan. 14.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions to Weiss Hospice Unit c/o Dept. of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Marlborough

Shirley Elmer Tourtillotte

Shirley Elmer Tourtillotte, 89, of Marlborough and Orlando, Fla., loving husband of 40 years of the late Patricia (Naughton) Tourtillotte, died at home with dignity with family by his side Monday, Jan. 12. He was born to Charles and Beulah Tourtillotte and grew up in Passadumkeag, Maine. He was named for his great-uncle, Shirley Doe.



A bronze star recipient, Shirley was a sergeant in the 10th Mountain Division and participated in the nighttime assault on Riva Ridge in Italy during World War II. In 1995 at the age of 70, he returned to Italy for the 50th reunion and reenacted their historic climb.

Shirley was a charter member of American Legion Post 197 and received recognition for his 50 Years Continuous Service in 2014. As a river log driver in his youth, Shirley was as comfortable on a bateaux and canoe as he was on skis. His career included cook, baker, lumberjack, dam builder, bridge builder, truck driver, bulldozer operator, firefighter, welder, painter, cement finisher, mason and carpenter. He was employed as assemblyman, machinist, salesman and electrician at Harper Buffing Machines, East Hartford, for over 30 years. Retiring to Florida, he became the neighborhood handyman.

While in Chicago, acting as best man for life-long friend, Richard Tracy, he met maid of honor, Patricia who became his wife. Shirley and Pat raised four children: Lynn (Tourtillotte) Williamson and her husband, Lee of Bolton, Steven Tourtillotte and his wife Patricia McClain of Marlborough, James Tourtillotte and his wife Lauri of Spokane, Wash., and Robert Tourtillotte of Orlando, Fla. Shirley was much loved by his grandchildren, Gregory Foote and wife Cholla of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, Jennifer Spencer and husband Mark of Spokane, Wash., Jessica Tourtillotte of Seattle, Wash., and Ross Williamson of Bolton. Shirley took great pleasure in great-granddaughter Olivia Foote and great-grandson Dylan Foote.

Besides his parents and his wife Patricia, his siblings predeceased him: Leon Tourtillotte, Lois (Tourtillotte) Goss, and Charles Roger Tourtillotte.

Shirley enjoyed woodworking and had a workshop to be envied. He will be remembered for his strong work ethic, dedication to family and community, and his cradles, picnic tables and Adirondack chairs.

The family would like to thank the entire team at Masonicare Hospice for their professional care and support. There are no calling hours. Burial will be private at Marlboro Cemetery at convenience of the family.

In honor of Shirley's life and his gift to others, memorial donations may be made to: American Legion Post 197, Scholarship Fund, ATTN: Ray Theobald, Treasurer, P.O. Box 178, Marlborough, CT 06447.