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Fourth- and fifth-grade students held American flags at the doorway to the Hebron Elementary School gym Tuesday, ready to form a patriotic welcome arch for veterans in attendance of their Veterans Day assembly.

## Veterans Share Tales With Hebron Students

by Geeta Schrayter

At Hebron Elementary School Tuesday, dozens of veterans paid a visit to various classrooms where they talked about their time in the military.

In James “Griff” Jones’ sixth-grade class, the students were rapt from the get-go, as two veterans arrived to share their tales.

John Shepardson, the father of a paraprofessional at the school, discussed his time in the Navy during World War II when he was stationed on the *U.S.S. Alabama*.

He brought his sea bag along, which still contained some of the clothes he wore back in 1945. The class got to see his dress blues, including his white sailor hat, a pair of 13-button wool pants, and a jacket with white seaman stripes garnered when he finished boot camp and the ruptured duck honorable discharge pin. He also shared a package of letters he exchanged with his parents, sent with three-cent stamps.

Although Shepardson said he was glad for his service, he also downplayed it, because he didn’t travel overseas.

“I never left the United States so I didn’t get to see the world, but I did get to see the U.S.,” he said, adding “I did nothing particularly notable except that I did get to do a little traveling.”

Jones, however, was quick to tell him his service was still valued.

“What’s notable is – one – you served. And – two – you were part of World War II, regardless,” he said. “Not everyone goes overseas in

the military. You go where they tell you to go and that’s where you get stationed. So not every veteran sees combat, but they’re always ready to go.”

“So that’s important to realize,” he said to the class. “He plays it down [saying], ‘Oh, I didn’t really do or see anything,’ but he really did. He put his life on hold to serve his country. ... It’s nothing to downplay.”

Army veteran Albert Hartenstein spoke after Shepardson. The grandfather of one of Jones’ students, Hartenstein talked about his initial desire to join the Navy to follow John Kennedy.

“John Kennedy was a [Patrol Torpedo Craft] commander and I wanted to go into the PT boat service and they wouldn’t take me.”

Hartenstein explained it was discovered he had an eye condition that made it difficult for him to discern different shades of the same color when they’re near each other. At the time, he said he thought that shouldn’t be a big deal.

“I said, ‘What difference does it make?’ and the doctor said if I’m in combat and a ship goes by on the horizon I won’t see it.”

Hartenstein said he was skeptical at the time, but a year later a friend pointed out a ship passing by “and I said, ‘What ship? Where?’ So I discovered the man knew what he was talking about.”

Although he didn’t get into the Navy, Hartenstein became one of the last men in his town to be drafted, and he entered the Army in 1945.

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## Belltown BOE Rankled by Council Appointment

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Town Council’s new Republican majority flexed its muscles Tuesday night, with the appointment of fellow party members to vacant positions on the Board of Education and the Board of Finance.

Thursday, the Board of Education responded by scheduling a special meeting for this Saturday at 10 a.m., to hold an anticipated executive session to talk about possible legal action against the town. The final item on the agenda calls for members to discuss – and possibly act on – making their own appointment to fill the school board vacancy.

The Town Council appointed Republican Mike Rose to the seat relinquished by newly elected council member Josh Piteo. The vote was 6-1 with the lone nay coming from Democrat Pete Brown.

The Democrat-dominated school board will change over when its newly elected members are sworn in on Nov. 17. With the appointment of Rose, there will be a 5-4 Republican majority.

The vote by councilors contradicted the discussion held two hours earlier on Tuesday, when the Board of Education met in a special session to direct interim schools superintendent Mark Winzler to post the vacancy publicly so

that interviews may be held and a new member appointed by the school board. No vote was taken; board chairman Kenneth Barber said it was an administrative action that did not require one.

“Let the new board figure out who they want to work with,” Barber said Tuesday night – before the Town Council figured it out for the school board.

Wednesday morning, Barber said the Town Council appointment was “really quite a surprise.” He cited a lack of communication between the council and the school board that contradicts the Republicans’ campaign promise to bring the historically-divided town together. Now the Town Council has, he said, “within the first meeting taken steps to show they’re going to play all by themselves and disregard any sort of process, and very well may have gone outside of the law.”

But Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said Wednesday communication and respect is a two-way street. She said Barber did not advise her about the school board’s special meeting to discuss filling the vacant seat, either.

Democrats on the council also brought up communication issues Tuesday, when they

asked why the appointments to the finance and school boards weren’t on the agenda for that night’s council meeting.

“No one else in the public had any knowledge of any vacancy,” James “Pete” Brown said during discussion on the board of finance position.

While there was an item titled “Appointments” on the agenda, it referred to “subcommittee appointments.” But appointments of elected officials do not go through the council’s subcommittee on appointments, which is responsible for non-elected boards.

Kevin Reich, also a Democrat, said he would prefer to know in advance when important decisions like appointing officials to elected boards are going to be made: “I would rather have you share with us and rearrange the agenda to have it on there. I guess that’s the problem I’m having.”

Reich ultimately voted with the majority for Rose’s appointment to the school board, but voted against appointing Republican Alannah Coshow to the finance board.

Rose ran for the school board and lost by 40 votes on Election Day, making him the next in line for a seat. Coshow, a former Republican Registrar of Voters who has served on multiple

boards, was not a finance board candidate during the election.

The Town Council appointments were made after members received a legal opinion late the same afternoon from the town attorneys at the Law Offices of Halloran & Sage. The memo concluded the council is empowered by the town charter to fill any vacancies unless “another appointing authority has been designated by law.”

The opinion did not acknowledge a Board of Education bylaw that says that any vacancy “shall be filled by the remaining members of the Board of Education within 30 days.” The bylaw states it is based on several sections of state statute.

But town attorneys Richard P. Roberts and Duncan J. Forsyth said language in the town charter trumps state statute.

Statute allows the school board to fill its own vacancies “unless otherwise provided by charter or special act.”

The attorneys said the town charter provides otherwise.

According to the charter, “Whenever a vacancy in an elective office occurs, the council or other appointing authority so designated by

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**Prior to the assembly, veterans paid a visit to different classes to talk about their experiences in the military. Here, sixth-grade teacher James Jones holds up a shirt that's part of the dress blues worn by Navy veteran John Shepardson in 1945, while Shepardson rummages through his sea bag and Shepardson's daughter, WWII Army veteran Albert Hartenstein, and students look on.**

#### **Veterans Share Tales cont. from Front Page**

As a photo album containing some pictures from the time was passed around, Hartenstein talked about traveling through the Panama Canal, and shared the reason they weren't allowed off the boat when they stopped in Panama City, Fla.: "The U.S. mainland was right there and they were afraid we might not come back!" he laughed.

Hartenstein was stationed in Manila for a little over a year, something he said was "quite the experience."

He was frank in sharing the fact that many of the buildings that got ruined over there weren't a result of the Japanese invasion but American bombs. He added "I have often wanted to go back," to see how things are today.

Hartenstein also spoke about how the military might change up where you headed. "We were told we were going to Europe so we were given two to three winter uniforms," he shared – attire that certainly wasn't needed in the South Pacific.

"You met some awfully good people," he added of his time in the service. "It was quite the experience. ... It did me a lot of good."

Jones, who was in the Navy during Vietnam, also talked about his service. He shared he flew on his first plane after joining at 18 when he headed from Richmond, Va. to Orlando, Fla., for boot camp. After finishing school, he was assigned to a ship that had just returned from Vietnam, and served on it for his entire time in the military.

"They say 'Join the Navy, see the world,' and I saw the world," he said. "I traveled to about 38 countries in my short time in the military."

He added, "I'm a better person for my service."

Although, Jones confessed, he hated it while it was happening. He explained being out to

sea nine months of the year, away from home, was "a tough life. But then as you're older, after you get out, you reflect back and you realize what it did for you. How it builds your character and independence. So the military really shapes young men and women. It's not for everybody, but it's definitely for me and I don't regret one minute of my life going into the military. ... It made me who I am."

\* \* \*

Following the classroom visits, everyone headed down to the gym for a Veterans Day assembly where students and staff expressed their gratitude to more than 50 veterans who entered the gym to a standing ovation through an archway of American flags.

The assembly included a bit of learning, as those present were taught about the different branches of the military, the difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day, and a silent way to thank a veteran by placing your hand over your heart then extending it forward.

In addition there were speeches by students, and musical numbers such as "God Bless America," the service song for each branch of the military, and a special song that summed up the entire point of the assembly:

"When I lay my head down every night and go to sleep in peace, I can stay there knowing all is well, while you're standing on your feet. Keeping watch, protecting shore to shore, in the air and oceans, too. Defending freedom at all cost, for the red, white and the blue. ... Thank you men and women brave and strong, to those who serve so gallantly, we sing this grateful song. To the soldiers who have traveled on to countries far and near, in peace and war you paid the price for the cause you hold so dear, that we may wake each morning bright, and know that freedom rings."

#### **Belltown BOE cont. from Front Page**

law, shall fill the vacancy by appointment for the unexpired portion of the term."

The legal opinion determined the specific reference to the Town Council as the appointing authority in the town charter "would prevail over an ambiguous allusion to the possible authority of the Board of Education to fill a vacancy."

The school board has filled its own vacancies on at least four occasions – but the town attorneys said that's not necessarily enough to go on.

"While the past practice and the apparent repeated acquiescence of the Town Council in such appointments suggests that it was proper and reflects an appropriate interpretation of the Town Charter, it would be useful to know if those appointments were made up on the basis of specific legal advice or not," the town attorneys wrote.

Winzler said Thursday the school board has not yet received its own legal opinion on the matter – and that when it does arrive it will not be available to the public.

The state's Freedom of Information statute allows public officials to withhold documents based on attorney-client privilege, and to discuss such matters behind closed doors.

Barber questioned the validity of the Town Council's legal opinion because it is based in part on precedent set in 2006 when former town attorney Jean D'Aquila said the council was the appropriate body to fill a finance board vacancy.

"Their town attorney is relying on a legal opinion given by a former town's attorney that was the same town's attorney that gave the legal opinion saying it was okay to eliminate the chief of police position [in 2010]," Barber said.

"I hope I don't see the Ghost of Christmas Past," he added.

According to Anderson, the last thing East Hampton needs is more drama.

"The opinion – it's today's legal opinion," she said. "It's the opinion of our present attorneys that represent the town. They did look at previous opinion to see if there was any prece-

dent set; there was a look to that but it was not the reason that they rendered their opinion."

Other towns in the area have addressed any potential conflict between their school board and town council or board of selectmen with specific language in their town charters. Portland and Rocky Hill empower their school boards to fill vacancies, for example, while Marlborough puts appointments for all boards other than the planning commission into the hands of the board of selectmen.

Wethersfield has very specific language, which not only gives its school board the power to fill its own vacancies but also says it must "select an elector of the same political party as that of the former incumbent, unless the incumbent was not an enrolled member of a political party, in which case a successor shall not be an enrolled member of a political party."

All sides seem to agree that the situation underscores the need for a charter revision. The Town Council moved Tuesday to authorize Town Manager Michael Mansicalco to draft resolution language to start the charter revision process.

"That's why we need to have a charter revision," Reich, a Democrat, said at the meeting.

"This is all the more reason why we need to revise our charter so we can have a clear cut direction," Anderson said later.

The town will be accepting applications for a charter revision commission. Applications are available in Mansicalco's office or online at [easthamptonct.org](http://easthamptonct.org) through the link on the home page titled "Volunteers Needed for Commissions." The deadline is Dec. 4.

The resolution to authorize the charter revision must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Town Council, according to state statute. If passed, the Town Council is charged with appointing a board of no less than five and no more than 15 members. Only one-third of the members may hold public office and no party can have any more than a bare margin of majority. The commission is entitled to take between 90 days to 18 months to complete its work.

# Veterans Share Experiences with PHS Students

by Elizabeth Regan

A quintet of veterans gathered before the Portland High School 10th grade class Tuesday morning to share their experiences. And all agreed – their military service gave them direction.

For retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Reg Farrington, of Portland, that direction was Vietnam in the 1960s.

“The airplane always flew west,” he said.

Farrington served two tours in Vietnam, followed by a 13-month stint in Korea. The U.S. Army infantryman, who eventually accrued 26 years of service, said his most vivid memory of those early years was the time he spent washing off the mud of the Mekong Delta.

“Once a month we could get maybe away for a day or two days and I’d go to this place called Vinh Long Airfield where they had the helicopters,” Farrington said. “I would go to the PX there buy a towel and a bar of soap, go to the shower and stay there in the shower ‘til the soap was gone. And you still stunk when you came out.”

Farrington did not detail the tough slog through the mud of the Mekong, but he alluded to its lasting impact when he spoke of a 2007 trip back to southwestern Vietnam.

“We had a particularly bad day Easter Sunday, 1967, and these helicopter pilots wanted to go back to where it happened and just say their prayers there,” he said.

He said he was persuaded by fellow veterans to make the trip. Farrington had served during the war as an advisor to a South Vietnamese infantry battalion, where he forged a lifelong bond with the helicopter pilots.

“I was there, but it wasn’t as bad for me as it was for the helicopter unit. I still keep in contact with all of these guys. It’s been now 48 years,” he said.

Portland High School physics teacher Wayne Kukucka forged his new direction when he became a nuclear technician in the Navy from 1999-2005 on the nuclear carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln*. He recounted for students the time the ship’s trajectory changed abruptly on what should have been his trip home.

He said he looked outside one Sunday morning to find the sun on the wrong side of the ship – “which means we weren’t going this way;

we were going back that way.”

“Then the admiral for our carrier group got on the mic and said, ‘Alright, we just declared war on Iraq, we are turning around, and get over it,’” he said. “And that was his motivation speech, because we didn’t have a choice.”

The ship became the first one in, Kukucka recalled, and “our six-month deployment quickly turned into a 10-month deployment.”

Tuesday’s panel discussion was the seventh Veterans Day event coordinated by Portland High School social studies teachers James and Michelle Stotler. James Stotler, a Navy Reservist, said he signed up in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and served a tour in Iraq in 2007-08. He moderated the panel.

His wife, Michelle, called the assembly a chance to honor veterans and “to learn from them and hopefully gain a better, lasting respect and understanding not only of the sacrifices our military makes but the spirit of what Veterans Day is all about.”

The panelists, armed with a microphone on the auditorium stage in front of 90 students, spoke about the friendships forged in muddy fields of war, in the cramped quarters of submarines, and on months-long tours on warships.

Skip Petras, a Navy veteran who served in the early 1960s and a member of the town’s Veterans Affairs Commission along with Farrington and fellow panelist Bill Willinsky, said his participation in veterans groups keeps the camaraderie alive.

“It’s the camaraderie and the attachment you have to the ... guys that were on the ship,” Petras said. “Because you were dependent on them, they were dependent on you, and everybody depended on each other to make the ship do what its mission was.”

Portland resident and retired U.S. Navy Senior Chief George Swanson settled on his life’s course when he chose the Navy because he liked the uniforms and thought it would be a good way to meet girls.

“It worked. I only got one, but we were married for over 40 years,” Swanson quipped.

For retired Naval torpedoman Willinsky, the decision to become a submariner was made in a movie theater in sixth grade, when he saw *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.



**Veterans from the Portland community shared stories of their military service with Portland High School 10th-graders Nov. 10 at the seventh annual Veterans Day assembly coordinated by PHS social studies teachers James Stotler, a Navy Reservist, and his wife Michelle. From left are George Swanson, Skip Petras, Bill Willinsky, Reg Farrington and Wayne Kukucka.**

“I was fascinated with the story and it was probably about then when I decided, ‘Yeah, I think that’s what I would like to do,’” Willinsky said.

Willinsky served on the nuclear attack submarine *USS Skipjack* from 1962 to 1964.

“Of course, I knew before I even got there that I wanted to be a torpedoman and I wanted to be on a submarine,” he said. “Fortunately, the Navy was good to me. I got everything I asked for.”

PHS senior Jacob Godwin asked to sit in on the assembly despite the fact that it was geared toward the 10th grade class as part of its social studies curriculum. He said he’s known for years now that he will join the military when he graduates.

“I’m looking into the Navy, specifically the SEALs,” he said after the panel discussion. “I’ve been doing a lot of research, a lot of training, a lot of prep.”

That training includes swimming, running

and strength training to prepare himself to become a member of what he called the “best of the best.”

Godwin said he wants to protect freedom and to become part of the brotherhood the panelists spoke about so highly. But he knows there will be heartache and pain – topics not discussed by the veterans that morning.

“They didn’t talk about their hard experiences,” Godwin said. “I know I’m going to face that.”

He acknowledged the students can only envision what the veterans on stage encountered on a regular basis.

Future recruits, such as himself, “haven’t really dealt with a big experience like that. You’re going to have to make really hard decisions,” Godwin said. “But the military is going to train you so that you can deal with those decisions and make the right choices.”

“I know that all these men made the right choices,” he said.

# \$10 Million in State Bonds Sought for RHAM

by Geeta Schrayter

The RHAM Board of Education Monday unanimously approved the submission of an application for a \$10 million school construction grant from the state, in order to deal with various repairs and upgrades at the high and middle school.

However, the board approved the application – which is for a matching grant, meaning that, if approved, the school district would have to come up with a portion of the \$10 million – with the understanding most of it will likely get denied at the state level for not meeting the necessary criteria – mainly due to the school’s relative youth and the types of repairs that need to be done.

But that denial is all part of the plan.

State Rep. Gayle Mulligan (R-55th District) was present at the meeting and explained once the application was denied, she and state Sen. Cathy Osten (D-19th District) would move the package forward for bonding. And “it’s likely we will get it,” she said. “And if not the full bond, we’ll put forward priorities and then build a plan on where to go from there.”

Osten explained Wednesday, “The reason why we want to do that is because while there is an assumption that the school construction [grant] process will be denied, we have to make sure of that before we just move forward; you have to at least go through the current process of things and that’s what we’re trying to do.”

At the meeting, Mulligan said, “There’s a very good potential for additional funding, so we thought this would be a good time to look at and identify major needs. ... Ask for the pie in the sky.”

She said she wanted the board to “include everything” that was needed in the application and “we can take what isn’t approved” to bring for bonding.

The board’s motion on the application – and the amount it decided to seek – came following two presentations Monday.

First, Colliers International, a commercial real estate company, presented its findings following an assessment “to identify the current maintenance backlog” of the schools “and identify upcoming major capital expenses.”

As a result of the assessment, the company provided a list of high-priority items (priority one) that they recommended the board address within three years, as well as important items (priority two) to address within four to five years. They also shared a list of items that the board would need to plan to address in the next six to 10 years.

The items under priority one amount to \$500,000 and include projects such as floor repairs, recaulking windows, repairing or replacing certain furniture, repairing some lockers, repairing/replacing damaged electrical floor box covers, upgrading the dust control system in the wood shops, and replacing a number of hot water heaters.

Priority two items amount to \$1.4 million and include projects like refinishing certain exterior doors, repairs to some masonry work, carpet replacements, replacing the wood floor in the middle school gym, upgrades to the boiler burner controls and refinishing the stair and ramp railings in the middle school and more furniture repairs and replacements.

Following Colliers International, BSC Group, an engineering firm, presented a facilities assessment and a master plan for the schools, totaling \$5.5 million.

Included in that plan is: \$1,375,000 in campus traffic improvements; \$160,000 in pavement improvements; \$480,000 in handicapped-accessibility improvements; \$240,000 in sidewalk/walkway improvements; \$35,000 in landscaping improvements; \$82,000 in tennis court improvements; and \$450,000 for a new multi-use athletic field.

(The board wasn’t sold on the latter but they decided to go ahead and include it in the sum as part of that “pie in the sky” request.)

In addition, \$2,735,000 in track and main field improvements is included, which is comprised of the installation of a new all-weather synthetic turf field for \$925,000, as well as \$675,000 for the track, fencing and walkways; \$225,000 for 750-seat home bleachers and a press box; \$75,000 for 250-seat visitor bleachers; \$35,000 for a scoreboard; \$450,000 for restrooms, concessions and a storage building; and \$350,000 for field lighting.

Mulligan expressed her support for the field, saying “in my opinion, having at least one turf field in the district is very helpful.” It’s also been emphasized in the past that the current field was built incorrectly, and the track hasn’t been properly maintained.

Along with the above, included in the \$10 million figure is \$1 million to replace malfunctioning windows at the schools and \$1.5 million for a generator.

Mulligan shared, “Our hope is to get every-

thing in the bond,” adding, “it’s possible – that’s why we’re doing this.”

Meanwhile, Osten added, “We’ll work really hard to get this well-deserved project through. I’m not guaranteeing anything – I can’t guarantee anything. I’m only a single person and I’m not capable of promises but Rep. Mulligan and I are going to work very hard to get it through the school construction bonding package.”

“We think it’s deserved,” she continued, saying “It’s not a frivolous project.”

But whether or not it’s approved is a ways off.

Osten explained, “We won’t even get to talk about it until the General Assembly is back in regular session the first week of February, then it will take some time to follow through the process. We won’t know until the end of May. ... The school construction bond tends to be one of the last things we do.”

She concluded, “We just wanted to make sure that we’re working forward and not just standing in the same place, because this has been an ongoing discussion with RHAM High School for the three, almost four, years that I’ve been in.”

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The full presentations by Colliers International and BSC Group are available on the district website, [reg8.k12.ct.us](http://reg8.k12.ct.us). The next regular RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for next Monday, Nov. 16 at 6:30 p.m. in the RHAM High School music room, 85 Wall St.

# Colchester Ceremony Focuses on Meaning of Veterans Day

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

When he was a kid, William J. Johnston Middle School Principal Chris Bennett thought of Veterans Day as nothing more than a day off from school.

But all that changed when Bennett was in middle school, and he learned the story of his uncle Daniel.

Marine Sgt. Daniel Bennett, the brother of Bennett's father, was in his third tour of duty in Vietnam when he was killed in action. He had flown into a combat zone to save his fellow Marines when he was shot down.

Bennett told those gathered at WJJMS Monday for a Veterans Day assembly that his father rarely spoke of his brother, and it wasn't until the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., was dedicated in 1982 that the true meaning of Veterans Day became clear for Bennett.

"We searched the black granite for his name," Bennett explained of the family trip to the memorial shortly after its dedication. "My father stepped forward and touched the wall. My mother stepped forward to stabilize him."

That was the first time, Bennett recalled, that he saw his father cry.

"Hopefully Veterans Day means more for you than a day off," Bennett told the students.

Bennett's remarks were part of a memorable ceremony inside the WJJMS gym Monday. The now-annual event used to be a simple affair consisting of a gun salute outside the school, but three years ago physical education teacher Stephen Petty moved the program indoors and made it a more in-depth affair.

Petty, a Navy veteran himself, said the ceremony is a way for him to honor fellow veterans and say thank you to the veterans before and after him. He said he wanted to make the ceremony a bigger deal since the outside ceremony had no "substance."

"This country is formed on the backbone of

those who serve," Petty said. "The younger generation needs to be reminded of that."

As the students filed into the gym Monday, the names of veterans from the local community were read aloud. After the kids were seated, several veterans, including those from Colchester American Legion/Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 54, processed in.

"We gather together to thank you for your service and pay tribute to those that have sacrificed their lives for our freedom," Bennett told the veterans in attendance.

After screening two video clips about veterans and why they serve, there was then a procession of the service flags, one for each branch of the military. Students stood up if they had a family member in the branch when it was called.

The seventh- and eighth-grade band played the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," before Sgt. Dan Henderson took the floor to speak directly to the students.

Everyone has a job, he said, whether it is an athlete, student or veteran. This week, Henderson said, it is everyone's job to pay reverence and respect to all veterans.

"[The veterans] may be in a cap or a uniform," Henderson said. "Approach a soldier and thank him for his service. We owe them a deep gratitude."

Henderson then had five students stand up in various sections of the gym.

"This is the number of people in the nation who will raise their hand and take a solemn oath for our country; five out of 500," he said. "One percent of Americans will do what it takes. This is why we recognize what veterans do."

After Henderson's speech, students viewed another video, this one focusing on how veterans serve "for you."

Carla Kennedy, WJJMS assistant principal, gave the "white table tribute." The tribute was



**Sgt. Dan Henderson and veterans from the American Legion/VFW Post 54 of Colchester salute the flag during the Veterans Day ceremony at William J. Johnston Middle School Monday.**

created originally to honor servicemen and women missing in action or prisoners of war during the Vietnam War. Now it has become a tradition to honor all MIAs and POWs.

"It's a small table, a place of honor, set for one, a person missing from our midst," Kennedy said. "We remember them."

Kennedy spoke about the various symbols on the table, from the soldier's purity of heart

responding to the call to arms to the families and loved ones awaiting the soldier's return.

"We remember them until the day they come home," Kennedy said of the missing soldiers.

The program closed with the playing of Taps – a somber, but fitting, end to an assembly that hopefully taught all assembled Veterans Day is indeed more than just a day off from school.

## Hebron Selectmen Take Steps to Rehab Properties

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Selectmen last Thursday approved two grant applications relating to the remediation and redevelopment of two pieces of property in town.

The selectmen decided in September to move forward with efforts to take ownership of and improve a piece of blighted property at 501 Church St. The property used to house the Hebron Service Center gasoline station and body repair shop, but has been abandoned since 1991; the area was contaminated from underground gasoline storage tanks that used to be there.

At last week's meeting, Town Manager Andrew Tierney explained that, in order to assist with the clean-up of the property, the Brownfields Task Force appointed by the selectmen was looking to submit an application to the Remedial Action and Redevelopment Municipal Grant Program sponsored by the state Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development.

In a memo, Town Planner Mike O'Leary explained the grant, if received, would be used to update the existing environmental site assessment and for demolition costs, site remediation costs, administrative costs and legal expenses. The grant deadline is Nov. 16, and although the

grant is still in the process of being written, O'Leary said "we anticipate that the grant we will be seeking will be approximately \$1,000,000."

O'Leary furthered the task force has created plans for the property, including both a long-term and short-term vision "both of which supports the active nearby Air Line Trail use as well as removing a blight on the neighborhood, and a vision that creates some economic development for the town."

The short-term vision includes improving the site, demolishing the building and supplementing the nearby trail network with additional parking, picnic tables and benches, and an information kiosk containing info on businesses and other recreation and historic points of interest in the town.

Meanwhile, according to the grant application the long-term vision includes items that would bring "increased economic activity to the area as well as increased services" through the construction of a multi-use building with potential uses including "a bicycle shop, café, or convenience goods" as well as professional/business offices on the second floor.

"I've been working on this diligently with

the task force the Board of Selectmen appointed," Tierney explained at the meeting. "A lot of work has been done."

"I'm very happy that this is moving forward," added selectman Dan Larson.

The selectmen voted unanimously 3-0 to approve the application – selectmen Jeff Watt and Mark Stuart were absent from the meeting.

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The second grant, which is also from the Remedial Action and Redevelopment Municipal Grant Program for an amount up to \$100,000, is for property at 459 Church St. for environmental site assessments and the development of a remedial action plan.

The property is commonly known as the "Treasure Factory" or the "Turshen Mill," and has been vacant for years. In a letter to the selectmen, from Economic Development Coordinator John Guskowski, however, the property is described as retaining "significance as an historic and iconic cornerstone property of Amston Village."

Guskowski said both the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Economic Development Commission have identified the Turshen

Mill "as a key property for the revitalization efforts in Amston and the town's overall economic development."

The grant was approved at a public meeting held the week prior, and Tierney explained the selectmen's approval was "a formality to move forward."

He added, "This is another attempt through the Economic Development Committee to help" take a property, revitalize it and "put it on the tax rolls."

The application was approved unanimously.

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Also Thursday, the board voted to schedule a town meeting for the acquisition of two pieces of open space property: 2.1 acres on Burnt Hill Road, and 19.4 acres on Millstream Road.

Selectman Brian O'Connell shared both properties about other town land and said regarding the larger parcel, "not only are we protecting the watercourse in that area we're also one step closer to the town reaching the Air Line Trail."

The town meeting was scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 19, at 7 p.m. in the town office building, 15 Gilead St., and will be followed by the next regular Board of Selectmen meeting.

# Natural Gas Comes to East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

There are 120 homes, eight municipal buildings and 34 businesses in East Hampton in the process of converting to natural gas, now that a new pipeline extending 11 miles from the Portland border has been completed.

Connecticut Natural Gas Corp. last week announced gas is flowing east on Route 66 to Route 16, coming into the town center via Skinner Street. It then follows Main Street before reconnecting with Route 66 and extending northeast to the Laurel Ridge condominiums. Spurs extend from the town center along Main Street to the north and south. The overall cost of extending the gas line to town was about \$7 million and was paid for by CNG.

The company said it has started installing service lines to connect new customers to the main.

One of those customers is American Distilling, the town's well-known witch hazel distilling plant. CEO Ed Jackowitz said he was approached by the gas company when the project was in its formative stages to see if bringing natural gas to East Hampton was economically viable.

Jackowitz said he welcomed the natural gas option since he had, until then, "no choice but to have just oil."

"We were happy to participate," Jackowitz

said. "It's certainly a cleaner burning fuel, [which] helps with repairs and maintenance."

While he would not enumerate the cost of converting the site's oil burners and lines, he described it as a "major, major investment."

"It put production down for almost three weeks," Jackowitz said.

Jackowitz also declined to divulge the expected savings from the endeavor but said it looks like it will be less than initially expected. Still, he said the savings "will go a long way" toward recouping the cost of the conversion.

East Hampton Town Manager Mike Maniscalco said he heard the company's savings would be in line with the town's. That savings could amount to approximately \$200,000 per year – eventually.

Fluctuations in oil pricing, which are currently dipping, mean the savings is "just not going to be as fast as it was before," according to Maniscalco.

The price of retail heating oil came in at \$2.32 as of Nov. 2, according to the state Department of Energy and Environment. That's compared to \$3.73 on Nov. 3 last year.

Maniscalco said the plan to bring in the natural gas line included provisions for the town to convert its four municipal buildings and four schools, to apply a skim coat to even out af-

fect town roads once the trenches settle, and to reimburse the gas company for taxes on the pipeline. Maniscalco said the plan will cost the town \$1 million.

Terri Eller, the director of commercial/industrial sales for CNG's parent company, IUL Holdings Corp., said two town buildings have been hooked up to the pipeline so far and she expects the rest of the municipal sites to be hooked up by the end of the year.

Maniscalco described the project as a benefit to economic development in town and a new opportunity for residents: "So it's more of a free market society like it's supposed to be."

The cost of natural gas can be compared to roughly \$1.70 to \$1.90 per gallon of home heating oil, according to the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The average cost for a residential conversion to natural gas by an outside contractor is \$7,500.

Eller said rebates and low-interest financing options are outlined on [energizect.com](http://energizect.com) as part of the state's effort to promote energy efficiency and a cleaner environment.

Next year, the company expects to extend gas service nearly a mile further up Route 66 to serve a housing development under construction, the company said.

The gas company and the town credited the natural gas expansion plan promoted by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and approved by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority in 2013 with making the East Hampton expansion possible. The strategy aims to convert a total of 280,000 new natural gas heating customers statewide by 2023.

One thing the plan does is extend the so-called hurdle rate that has hampered growth in the industry. CNG spokesman Ed Crowder said the plan extends from 20 to 25 years the period of time over which the company must show it can recover the costs of expansion. The regulation was created to make sure current customers aren't forced to subsidize the cost of expansion to future customers.

If a company can't show it will break even within 25 years, Crowder said, "we'd have to ask the customer to contribute to the cost of it. In a lot of cases, that's just not an option."

New regulation also allows Connecticut Natural Gas to put half the proceeds from "non-firm sales" – such as stored natural gas sold in bulk for use in generators – toward expansion projects. Those dollars were previously returned to customers in the form of a bill credit, Crowder said.



As part of the Andover Elementary School Veterans Day assembly Tuesday, the veterans in attendance received a token of appreciation in the form of a single white rose, cards made by students, and a booklet of essays students wrote about the day.



After the veterans were led into the assembly by the kindergarteners, local boy scouts and cub scouts presented the colors and everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

## Andover Students, Staff Gather to Celebrate Veterans

by Geeta Schrayter

Gratitude and appreciation were on display at Andover Elementary School Tuesday, as staff and students gathered for their Veterans Day assembly.

After veterans were led into the gymnasium by the kindergarten class, the event got underway when preschool students and local members of the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts presented the colors and those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.

And as Principal John Briody took to the podium, with the names of local veterans scrolling on a large screen behind him, he thanked everyone "who chose to join us today in our celebration and recognition of veterans." He then added with a smile, "They are the reason that we have no school tomorrow!"

This, of course, received plenty of applause. But as the event went on, it was clear nobody – neither staff nor students – considered the day just an excuse to stay home; entire grades and individual students made presentations to the nearly three dozen veterans present, and the themes that ran throughout were gratitude and appreciation.

"As Mr. Briody said, we don't have school tomorrow," said Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen. "But it's certainly much more than just staying home from school. It's a day when we think about the many things that men and women in our country – who are very special people – have done to make us safe, to bring us

peace in our own country, and give us the opportunity to come to school and learn, to come to work, to worship as we please in our own lives, and to stay safe."

She added, "Tomorrow, whatever you have plans to do, take a moment and think about the meaning of Veterans Day and in your heart and in your mind say 'thank you' to everyone who has made it possible for us to be here today."

Andover Elementary School teacher John Gasper, who is also a Vietnam veteran, shared similar sentiments, saying, "It's a day to thank them for their contributions for our safety here at home."

Citizens of the United States have the rights and privileges that they do "because of all the veterans have done to fight for our freedom," he furthered.

A number of students spoke throughout the assembly, reading essays they had crafted about the day.

"Veterans are always out there serving our country," said Connor Townsend. "As far back since World War I they sometimes had to give their lives for ours. The one thing out of a thousand things we can thank them for is freedom; we should feel safe because veterans are all around us."

And Karlee Sklodosky emphasized, "Veterans Day isn't about having a day off or having to make an essay; it's about people the people who served for us and risked their lives. Without them, we wouldn't have the rights or free-

doms that we have today. There are still countries out there that allow people to get persecuted for believing in what's not thought to be right. Without them, we wouldn't be America. We would be just like those countries."

In addition to the speeches, there were also musical numbers and recitations Tuesday, as first grade students said "thank you to the people who help protect our nation!" and students in grades three and four sang, "You're a Grand Old Flag."

Along with the veterans present, the assembly also honored soldiers who are prisoners of war or missing in action (POW/MIA) with a small table meant to symbolize their lonely battle. An empty, pushed in chair represents the missing soldier, and on top of the table is a white cloth symbolizing their pure heart. In addition, the table contains a lemon slice and salt that symbolize their bitter fate and their family's tears; a black napkin represents the sorrow of captivity; while an overturned glass stands for a meal that won't be eaten. There is a single candle for peace, and a rose for hope that they'll one day return.

Each veteran in attendance Tuesday received a small gift as a token of the school's appreciation. The gift included a single rose, cards made by students, and a booklet of student essays about the day.

And while Tuesday was meant to focus on the veterans, students also learned the school

would be receiving something as well from the Joe Foss Institute, a non-profit that works to "close the civics education gap," according to the website [joefossinstitute.org](http://joefossinstitute.org). They do this through a number of programs including bringing veterans to classrooms to speak. In addition, the institute also works to ensure there is an American flag in every class.

To that regard, Steve Pinterich, an Army veteran and father of teacher Amanda Beloin explained he'd met with the Foss Institute in August at the American Legion National Conference and every classroom at Andover Elementary School would be receiving a new flag, while each student would receive a small flag to take home.

\* \* \*

Following Tuesday's assembly, veterans and their families gathered for a reception in the cafeteria where they enjoyed refreshments, chatted and had positive things to say about the event and were grateful for the gratitude.

"It was quite nice – something I haven't experienced before," said Gary Iannantuono, who spent over 33 years in the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve.

Meanwhile, Air Force veteran Andy Kelly said, "It's a nice way for Veterans Day to take on a more tangible meaning for the students."

And Air Force vet Greg Hoisington added, "It's very nice. It makes you feel good – it makes you think that people remember you."

# Confusion Over AHM Agreement Continues

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A motion to approve a change to the AHM agreement failed at the Board of Selectmen meeting Tuesday, after the board said it needed more information.

The three towns involved in AHM – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – have been working to revise their agreement, as it has expired. A panel of six people – in Marlborough’s case, the Board of Finance chairman and the first selectman – looks over the agreement. However, it is each town’s Board of Selectmen that votes on the agreement.

The proposed change does not affect the percent of the overall AHM budget the towns are responsible for. Instead, the change would affect how that amount is divided up within each town. For instance, Marlborough’s portion is currently paid for with approximately 60 percent of the cost coming from the town operations budget, approximately 12 percent out of the local education board’s budget, and the remainder paid for by RHAM.

The proposed change would alter those percentages so that 50 percent is paid for out of the town operations budget, 25 percent by the local education board for the elementary school portion, and 25 percent by RHAM.

The proposed change came about after a discussion within the panel to try and change the formula to lessen the growing burden on Marlborough. The amount each of the three towns pays for AHM is determined by how many students from each town are at the RHAM middle and high schools. Although the number of students Marlborough has in RHAM is declining, enrollments from Hebron and Andover are dropping at a quicker rate, meaning the percentage of Marlborough students in the two

schools is actually increasing.

Next year, applying an estimated RHAM census formula for that year, Marlborough’s levy is expected to be 30.51 percent or \$148,455. Of that, 50 percent or \$74,228 will come from the town while 25 percent or \$37,114 will come from the school budget and another \$37,114 will come from RHAM.

Board of Selectmen member Evelyn Godbout made a motion to approve the change. Godbout was the former chair of the finance board and has been involved with the work on the agreement.

However, selectman Dick Shea said he is still confused about the proposed change.

“One of the things that came up with the [local] Board of Education is why it should go up,” Shea said. “There’s no change in the number of service hours. I admit it’s not clear to me why the [agreement] needs to tell the towns how to split [the cost] up.”

Shea said he also does not understand if the Board of Education receives more Education Cost Sharing (ECS) money if the school is paying more toward AHM.

“My perspective is it’s fair,” Godbout said. “It’s not a bad formula. It’s not anything that’s going to hurt the school.”

Godbout said since the local education board had a \$100,000 surplus last year, it should be fine with a \$16,000 increase.

“It’s not like their budget is being cut,” Godbout said.

Shea said he understands that, but he does not get why it’s a big deal just how Marlborough splits up the money it pays for AHM.

“I don’t care where Andover gets the money from,” Shea said.

Godbout asked why the town should pay 60 percent of the cost, when the school gets services. She also said the other two towns would like to schedule the signing of the pact soon.

“I’m not up to speed to make a decision,” newly-elected First Selectwoman Amy Traversa said. “I would like to see both sides. I’m not capable of making an informed decision at this point.”

However, Godbout, who made the original motion to begin the discussion, wanted to take a vote. The motion to approve the agreement failed, with Godbout in favor and Shea and Traversa abstaining.

During public comment, Board of Education member Louise Concodello said she checked with the town’s assistant treasurer and the superintendent’s office, and confirmed the school does not receive more ECS funds if AHM increases. She was told the ECS funds are based on school population, not budget.

Concodello also said that, for the money the school board pays to AHM, it only gets a one-day-a-week social worker from the youth service bureau.

But Godbout said she believes the school receives more services from AHM than just that – and the Board of Selectmen agreed to look into the matter to try to get more information.

“It’s good to postpone [the vote],” Traversa said. “We will all benefit from additional communication.”

\* \* \*

Also at the meeting, the board appointed Democrat Matthew Wilson back to the Zoning Board of Appeals as an alternate for a four-year term.

Wilson had unsuccessfully run for election to a full position on the board – and Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Alan Miller said the board would like to see Wilson stay.

As Wilson had run for a full term, there was a vacancy in the alternate slot.

The selectmen unanimously appointed Wilson.

\* \* \*

Also Tuesday, Fire Marshal Joe Asklar updated the selectmen about the planning for this year’s Gathering on the Green, saying the fire department continues to need \$2,000 out of the total \$5,000 for the fireworks display.

The holiday celebration is set for Sunday, Dec. 6 from 5-6 p.m. The fire department and the Knights of Columbus are hosting the event. Asklar explained this year will include Santa Claus on a decorated fire truck, carolers from Fellowship Community Church, hot chocolate and refreshments, the lighting of the tree – and a fireworks show to cap off the night.

“We have a poster in the center of town to show the progress [for the cost of the fireworks],” Asklar said. He said the remaining \$2,000 needs to be raised between now and Dec. 6.

To donate to the firework show, people can go to the Gofundme page, [gofundme.com/w63vppa4](https://www.gofundme.com/w63vppa4), or mail a check, made out to “Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department,” and mail it to: Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447. In the memo portion of the check, write that it is for the Gathering on the Green.

The next regular Board of Selectmen meeting is Tuesday, Nov. 24, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

# Hearing Continued for Elderly Home in Marlborough

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The public hearing on a proposed elderly home off of Jones Hollow Road was continued to December, so the Zoning Commission can review recently-submitted plans.

The application by Frank and Corinne Dibacco of Jones Hollow Associates, calls for a private residential care home to be completed by Dec. 31, 2017 at the corner of Jones Hollow Road and Standish Drive.

The proposed building is described as providing a “supportive, caring, and compassionate living experience” for people 55 and older. It would not be a group home or boarding facility and is licensed by the state Department of Public Health.

The application went in front of the Zoning Commission because the Dibaccos need a special use permit to allow 10 unrelated people live in the same building. State statute does allow this type of facility to be in a residential zone.

Neighbors in the area of Jones Hollow Road and Standish Drive have been against the facility, saying it is the wrong area. The public hearing was opened at the Oct. 1 Zoning Commission meeting and continued to last Thursday, Nov. 5.

And at that Nov. 5 meeting, residents of the area continued to express doubts.

George Hills of 424 Jones Hollow Rd. said

it’s not that the residents don’t want the project to go forward – they just feel the area is not designed for such a facility.

“There’s got to be a better place,” he said.

Ann Terezakis, of 333 Jones Hollow Rd., said there are no sidewalks and no shoulders and cars routinely run stop signs – and thus, it is not the safest neighborhood to have senior citizens who may want to walk outside.

“The other side of town seems like a legitimate way for the town to grow and still have everything” Terezakis said.

Richard Denno of 417 Jones Hollow Rd. agreed with Terezakis’ concerns.

“It’s a three- to four-mile walk to town,” Denno said. “It’s dark and there’s a serious curve.”

Mary Sciano of 26 Standish Dr. said the commission should “take to heart” the fact the room is full with people who are concerned.

“If there’s any possible decrease in property value, I don’t want it,” Sciano said.

But not everyone was opposed to the plan.

“Personally I think there’s nothing wrong,” said North Main Street resident Alan Miller, who is also chairman of the town’s Zoning Board of Appeals but stressed he was speaking as an individual. “We could get a lot of flack for not progressing forward. If we pass this,

Marlborough could be known as more progressive.”

The Dibaccos then had a chance to respond to some of the issues residents have raised about the project.

“The majority of the residents won’t drive,” Frank Dibacco said. “They are homebound and live alone. They want companionship, homecare, and a visiting nurse.”

Corinne Dibacco said there seems to be some confusion on what the facility is.

“It’s not a retirement home,” she said. “This is a place [where] elderly people can live and have a community with other elderly people.”

She stressed it is not a place where people would be walking frequently up and down the road.

“They want to live life, be comfortable, eat well and socialize,” she said. “Once people can no longer function, they go to a nursing home.”

Corinne Dibacco said she would personally do assessments to determine whether a potential resident is in an acceptable physical and mental condition.

Midge Denno, also of 417 Jones Hollow Rd., questioned how objective that process would be since, everything would be done by Corinne Dibacco, who also owns the facility.

“We cannot take Medicaid patients,” Frank

Dibacco said. “The state is not funding this. It’s a private home with patients who pay individually.”

He explained the license from the state is very specific as to who the facility can accept. The facility could not take dementia patients and patients must be able to take care of themselves. He said the home cannot have machines to prolong life and also cannot expand due to the restrictions of the land.

“We’re not judging the quality of your health care,” Hills said. “The neighborhood is not designed [for this.] People don’t want to be locked in either.”

Since the Dibaccos had brought new plans with them to the meeting, the Zoning Commission said it needed more time to look over them. Frank Dibacco then gave permission for the commission to continue the public hearing to its December meeting. Dibacco’s permission was needed because it has been over 30 days since the public hearing opened.

“We are not here to make waves,” Frank Dibacco said. “If you need more time for review, we can do that.”

The Zoning Commission will take up the proposed development again at its Thursday, Dec. 3, meeting. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

# Marlborough Students Thank Veterans in Celebration

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

At the close of Tuesday's Veterans Day celebration at Marlborough Elementary School, one veteran sat silent, overwhelmed by the love and support.

A Vietnam War veteran, he said had never been thanked once in his life until now.

The sixth grade took the lead of the second annual celebration. The students of social studies teacher Tina D'Auteuil had been planning the day for weeks, teaching the younger grades about Veterans Day and making projects with them displayed all over the community room.

Approximately 75 veterans attended Tuesday's program, each sitting in a place of honor with a poppy made by a student with an individualized message on it. Some veterans sat in uniform, others with a cap on, and some in everyday clothes. All seemed proud to be in attendance, sitting tall.

"It's just so good they do this so the students are aware," Judith Kaplan, a member of the local Board of Education and an Air Force veteran who attended, said. "It really means a lot to me."

Kaplan said she is also proud to attend to show the girls of the school that the military is also for women since they don't see as many women in uniform.

The celebration began with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the veterans. The stage curtain then opened up, revealing a full stage of the school's band members playing the National Anthem.

A sixth grade student read a quote from John F. Kennedy: "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Vietnam War veteran Lou Carillo spoke to the students, saying he was pleased to see so many young people in attendance. He asked for

those who knew a family member in the military to stand up.

"Be proud of them," Carillo said. "This is a day set aside to honor those. Their contributions to the nation's security are appreciated."

Carillo told the students Veterans Day is a day to honor "all veterans who unselfishly placed their lives on the line for our freedom."

After Carillo spoke, the sixth-grade students spoke about the lessons they conducted with the younger grades along with the grades singing a patriotic song.

Sixth-grader Katie Hancin helped teach the preschool lesson where the students made an American flag with their handprints as the stripes and their thumbprints as the stars. The students learned what Veterans Day is and what the community does to celebrate it. Hancin said she learned there are over 22 million veterans in the country.

Stella Henderson, a sixth-grader, helped teach the kindergarten lesson where students made paper soldiers and the soldiers were then put together on a large paper, showing unity.

The preschool and kindergarten classes joined together to sing "Three Cheers for the Red, White, and Blue."

Sixth-graders Patrick Lynch and Sean Kelly helped teach the first- and second-graders. Lynch said the first-graders made eagles and learned why the eagle is the country's bird. Kelly said second-graders, meanwhile, drew pictures of themselves as Uncle Sam with the quote, "I want you not to forget."

The two grades joined together to sing "See the Veteran."

Fellow sixth-grader Spencer Eppinger handled the third and fourth grades; the third-graders learned about liberty, and wrote a poem on what it means to them to be free. The fourth grade learned about the military branches. The



A group of veterans stands and salutes during Tuesday's Veterans Day celebration at Marlborough Elementary School.

two grades then came together to sing "Oh Veteran" for the audience.

Sixth-grader Matthew Przeszlo helped teach the fifth-grade lesson, where students learned about the significance of the poppy. The fifth-graders then sang "Proud to be an American" for the celebration.

After the songs, the kids performed a White Table Tribute, which symbolizes servicemen and women missing in action or prisoners of war. Initially just for Vietnam War soldiers, the tribute expanded to represent all MIAs and

POWs. Each item on the table, even the size of the table and the tablecloth, symbolizes different things – such as a pure heart to answer to duty's call, a bitter fate, tears of their families, the sorrow and loneliness of captivity, peace – and all of those who await their return.

The sixth-graders folded a special flag for the table and sang "Thank You Soldiers."

Veterans also received a bottle hanging from a tree outside. Each bottle held a letter written by a sixth-grade student, thanking the veteran for their service.

## Bisbikos Remains on Board of Finance after Recount in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The numbers changed a little – and in one person's case, a lot – but the outcome of last Tuesday's Board of Finance elections stayed the same, according to a recount.

Election Day results indicated Republican Andreas Bisbikos edged Democrat John Bogush by just three votes, 1,688-1,685. That tight margin prompted an automatic recount, conducted by the registrars of voters' office at Town Hall last Thursday, Nov. 5.

And when all was said and done, both candidates saw their vote totals dip, but Bisbikos' margin of victory actually increased. Bisbikos had 1,686 votes to Bogush's 1,681. The numbers were slightly lower after the recount, since it was discovered a few ballots were counted twice by accident.

"I was pretty nervous since it was my first election and it was extremely close," Bisbikos said of the recount. "I'm very grateful it was all over."

Bisbikos, 30, is the youngest elected official in town and said he is hoping more young people serve.

"I am excited to join the Board of Finance and am looking forward to making a long-lasting and positive difference to our town," Bisbikos said.

The recount also left Republican and cur-

rent board chair Rob Tarlov with 1,920 votes. Interestingly, this left Tarlov with a much higher vote total than Election Day results indicated – 1,920 votes compared to the previous total of 1,722. How to explain the 200-vote differential? The number was simply read wrong on Election Night.

"Apparently when the vote count was written down when read off, the person read a nine as a seven," Tarlov said. "It was the misreading of someone's handwriting."

Tarlov said the town is certainly aware of the problem and looking for a way to eliminate similar problems in the future. As it was explained to him, the problem would have been caught Wednesday morning after the election, when the registrars checked the machines. In this case, the registrars were preparing for the recount, which is why the mistake was found the night of the recount.

While the recount is done, the Board of Finance remains in somewhat of a state of flux. There is currently a vacancy on the seven-member board, due to previous member Art Shilosky's election to first selectman last week. Shilosky had two years left on his six-year term, and the finance board will conduct interviews and make an appointment to fill that vacancy, Tarlov explained.

## East Hampton Police News

10/21: Frank Alvin Clegg, 41, of 35 White Birch Rd., turned himself in pursuant to four outstanding warrants for his arrest, East Hampton Police said. Clegg was charged with three separate counts of second-degree failure to appear and one count of first-degree failure to appear, police said.

11/2: Alan Greco, 58, of no certain address, was arrested pursuant to two warrants for his arrest for two counts of violation of a protective order, police said.

11/4: During a routine stop for a motor ve-

hicle violation, it was determined that the operator of the vehicle had several outstanding warrants for his arrest. Kaoas Lionel Ames, 20, of 176 Stonington St., Hartford, was arrested for driving while under suspension, failure to display marker plate, five counts of second-degree failure to appear and violation of a protective order, police said.

11/6: Randall C. Vonschoeler, 54, of 48 South Main St., was arrested for violation of a protective order, stemming from an Oct. 16 incident, p

## Scarecrow Winners Announced in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The winners of the annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest were announced last week, with first- and second-place winners chosen in a trio of categories.

Hosted by the Colchester Business Association and Colchester Parks and Recreation, the contest ran Oct. 16-31. During those two weeks, people could scope out scarecrows on the town green and then cast votes their favorites online, at [colchesterctbusiness.com](http://colchesterctbusiness.com), or at one of several local businesses.

In the funniest category, Colchester Eye Care's "HAY EYE'LL see you soon," which depicted a giant scarecrow taking an eye exam, took first place, while CT Chung Do Kwan's "Kick o' Treat," a martial arts scene, took second.

In most imaginative, Escapes Salon's "All

Eyes on the Witch-mas Tree," an interesting blend of Halloween and Christmas, took first, with the Ratzler and Edwards families' "Straw Wars," featuring Darth Vader, R2D2 and a storm trooper, taking second.

In the scariest category, two families took the top prizes. The Coutu family took first with "Grimm," a giant scarecrow of the grim reaper, and the Waterman family grabbed second with "Undead Fred," a graveyard scene.

First place winners received a \$100 gift card to a Colchester Business Association business of their choice while second place winners received a \$75 gift card to Colchester Parks and Recreation.

Pictures of the scarecrow scenes are still up in a photo gallery at [colchesterbusiness.com](http://colchesterbusiness.com).

## Marlborough Police News

11/5: State Police said Christopher Tucker, 29, of 99 Irving St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with DUI and reckless driving.

11/5: State Police said Dana Lunderville, 42, of 370 Babcock Rd., Tolland, was arrested and charged with DUI, operating under suspension, and failure to obey a traffic signal.

11/7: State Police said Gea Gonzalez, 29, of 117 Oxford St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with DUI.

## Portland Police News

11/3: Scott Harris, 44, of 85 Bradley Ave., Meriden, was charged with third-degree larceny and third-degree criminal mischief, Portland Police said.

## Colchester Police News

11/4: Colchester Police said Colleen Leary, 26, of 264 Millstream Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with fourth-degree larceny from an incident on July 2. Police said Leary allegedly stole over \$5,000 from Illianos Pizza while working there for six months.

## Obituaries

### Colchester

#### Carole R. McKenney

Carole R. McKenney, 55, of Auburn, Maine, passed away Saturday, Oct. 31, at Victorian Villa, Canton, Maine, after a long illness.

Carole was born in Hartford Dec. 8, 1959, the daughter of Walter and Edith (Gilmore) Nicola. Carole was raised in Colchester, going to Halls Hill School and Middle School. She attended and graduated from Norwich Tech and the beautician program in 1977. Upon graduation, Carole worked many years at the Cumberland Farms in Colchester.

Carole met and married Allen McKenney and after a short time moved to Auburn, Maine, where Carole worked many years at The Salvation Army and then for Big Apple.

She is survived by her husband, Allen McKenney, of Canton, Maine, and her mother Edith Nicola, her sister Nicolette Korman, and brother Rusty Nicola, all of Colchester. She is also survived by Sandy Nicola and wife Eve of Westbrook, and her nieces Sarah, Nancy, Julie and Shannon.

She was the apple of her father's eye, who predeceased Carole.

You are invited to pay tribute to Carole by visiting her guestbook at [thefortingrouplewiston.com](http://thefortingrouplewiston.com).



### Andover

#### Evelyn B. Cady

Evelyn B. "Evie" Cady, 87, of Coventry, formerly of Andover, passed away Thursday, Nov. 5, after a brief illness.

Born Oct. 18, 1928, in New Bedford, Mass., the daughter of the late Leroy and Edna Benzinger, she grew up on the family farm in Hebron, where her heart always remained.

Beloved wife of the late Roger L. Cady for 42 years, she worked at Art's Jewelers and American Thread in Willimantic. She also drove a school bus for many years for the town of Andover and then for East Connecticut Transportation, always referring to her young passengers as "my kids." She was a member of the W.A.T.E.S club and the Andover Senior Center. These two groups not only provided her a weekly outing, but there she formed some of her closest forever friendships.

Evelyn adored all her family and friends and cherished each one. She loved keeping in touch by sending cards and letters, talking on the phone, and going with friends to Bingo, the casinos and lunch.

She was predeceased by the love of her life, Roger, in 2008; her sister, Shirley Gaspie; and two brothers, Roy and Joseph Benzinger. She leaves her daughter and son-in-law, Jodie and Todd Mitchell, of Coventry; her son and daughter-in-law, Robert and Jane Cady, of Lebanon; son Richard Cady, of Palatine, Ill.; and son Roger Cady, of Glastonbury. She also leaves eight grandchildren, Rob, Julie, Richard, Rebecca, Adrienne, Adam, Alexis and Elizabeth, as well as 15 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren. She also leaves numerous nieces and nephews.

Calling hours were Tuesday, Nov. 10, at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Route 195), Willimantic. Services will be Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. at the funeral home with visitation held one hour prior. Burial will follow at St. Peter's Cemetery, Church Street, Hebron.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to North Coventry Fire Department, Main Street, Coventry, or Andover Fire Department, School Street, Andover.

In honor of Mom, please wear red, her favorite color, and a decorative pin to show your love for her. For online condolences, visit [potterfuneralhome.com](http://potterfuneralhome.com).

### Colchester

#### Tefta Alyse Norton

Tefta Alyse (Peters) Norton of Colchester, formerly of Somers and Rockville, died peacefully at Hartford Hospital Thursday, Nov. 5, surrounded by her loving children. She was born in Franklin, N.H., eldest child of Nicholas and Frosina (Naum) Peters. Her parents immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s from Albania seeking a better life for themselves and their children.

Tefta was named for the celebrated ancient Albanian/Illyrian queen Tefta or Teuta (abt. 231-227 B.C.), famed for her extraordinary naval exploits in the Adriatic Sea and political savvy against the Roman Empire. Like her namesake, Tefta was bold, adventurous and spirited, fearlessly meeting each new challenge that life presented head-on with intelligence, grace and style.

One of Tefta's proudest memories was making Franklin High School's varsity field hockey team as a freshman in 1936 and winning the New Hampshire State Championship that same year. Shortly thereafter, she and her family moved to Charlton, Mass., where she continued to develop her considerable athletic and academic gifts, graduating as salutatorian of the Class of 1939. Tefta was always a fiercely keen competitor and became a champion bowler later in life, holding high triple and high singles records for many years, and was inducted into the Connecticut Duckpin Bowling Hall of Fame. She followed sports avidly and was especially passionate about the New York Yankees and UConn Huskies college basketball.

Tefta was a brilliant, forward-thinking independent woman and had a long and successful career at the State of Connecticut Department of Labor and the Department of Administrative Services. She is remembered for her strength, intelligence, and drive, never backing down from difficult challenges and constantly striving to improve and refine complex Connecticut State Department accounting systems, policies and procedures.

Tefta had a lifelong love of learning, with a deep interest in world news and cultures. She was especially fascinated by China and made two trips there, proudly climbing the Great Wall and traversing Tiananmen Square only one day before the riots of 1989. Even in her 80s, she went hiking in Nepal, later telling her family, "It was quite strenuous; I really couldn't recommend it to anyone over 75."

Tefta is fondly but sadly remembered as a matriarch who deeply loved her family and friends. She was stoic and resilient in the face of numerous great personal challenges. She was truly a self-made woman, and nothing could stop her from figuring out a way to do what she wanted to do. She believed in others just as much as she believed in herself and was very generous with her resources and knowledge, always trying to help people get ahead and inspire them to reach for the stars.

Tefta loved to write poetry and read literature voraciously. While she painted and was highly knowledgeable about art, her true passion was antiques and the decorative arts. She avidly studied design during her many travels around the world and, more recently, enjoyed attending the learning symposia series at Nathan Liverant and Sons Antiques in Colchester. Tefta took great delight in her beautiful home and was a charming and gracious host. Her children fondly remember her spectacular cakes and delicious Jello salads, and she took great joy in decorating for Christmas each year so that her family and friends could gather to feast on the traditional Albanian lakror (spinach pie) and roast lamb.

Tefta is survived by her brother, Alexander Peters; her brother, John Peters and his wife Olympia; her son, Karl Norton and his wife Laura; her daughter, Blyse Soby and her husband Stan; her granddaughter, Alyssa Soby and partner Christian Drew; her grandson, Mathew Soby; and her granddaughter, Kimberly Soby. She is also survived by her niece, Jane Ledford and her husband Lawrence; her niece, Andrea Bazar and her partner Jim; her nephew Christopher Peters and his partner Nan; her great-nieces, Marie and Karen, her great-niece Stefanie and her husband Thomas, and her great-great-niece Lillian. Tefta is predeceased by her parents, Nicholas and Froso Peters; her beloved sister, Liris Peters; her brother USAF Staff Sergeant Daniel Peters; her uncle, Christopher Naum; her cousin, Gure Pano and his son Basil Pano; her niece, Karen Peters; and her great-nephew John Ledford.

Tefta leaves behind many dear friends, particularly her lifelong friend and travel companion, Bertha Reuss and her husband Ralph; her friends, Millie and Everett Morrill, and her former neighbors who were like a second family, Vivian and Bill Vankleek and their children and grandchildren. Tefta was especially close to Vivian's granddaughter, Marley and she delighted in watching her grow into a fine and capable young woman with a passion for horses. Her family would like to thank her many excellent physicians and their

staff for steadfast and compassionate care over the years, especially Dr. Gayethri Narayanswamy, Shawn Brady, cardiology PA, and Dr. Peter Judson who did his best to save her eyesight during her long struggle with Macular Degeneration and blindness, and the wonderful physicians and staff at Middlesex Hospital emergency center and at Hartford Hospital.

The family will receive guests from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial in the Peters family plot in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Southbridge, Mass., will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to do so may make donations to the American Cancer Society, March of Dimes, or NEAT Marketplace at Oak Hill.

Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home Inc. is in charge of the arrangements.

### Portland

#### Jean Austin

Jean (Roach) Austin, 88, of Portland, wife of the late Millard B. Austin Jr., passed away Saturday, Nov. 1, at Cobalt Lodge Health and Rehabilitation Center. Born in England, she was the daughter of the late Stanley and Annie Victoria (Trethowan) Roach.

A graveside service was held Thursday, Nov. 12, in Cromwell Hillside Cemetery East, 24 Hillside Rd., Cromwell.

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

Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown, is handling the arrangements. To share memories or send condolences, visit [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).

JEANNE: This is a smaller version of the above obit.

### Andover

#### Nichole Marie Sun

Nichole Marie (Madden) Sun of Andover passed away Wednesday, Nov. 4, at the age of 38.

She was the beloved wife of Carl T. Sun, loving mother of Connor J. Sun, devoted daughter of Neal and Michelle (Mellett) Madden of Pawcatuck, sister of David Madden of Plainville and Patrick Madden of Niantic.

Relatives and friends attended Nichole's life celebration Tuesday, Nov. 10, in the James H. Delaney & Son Funeral Home, 48 Common Street, Walpole, MA 02081. A funeral home service will be held Wednesday, Nov. 11. Interment followed in Saint Francis Cemetery in Walpole.

In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in memory of Nichole Sun to support cancer research and patient care at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, P.O. Box 849168, Boston, MA 02284 or via [dana-farber.org/gift](http://dana-farber.org/gift).

### Portland

#### Harry Albert Schwantor

Harry Albert Schwantor, 58, of Gales Ferry, passed into the arms of our Lord peacefully and with grace on Friday, Nov. 6. Harry was the son of the late Albert and Barbara (Hale) Schwantor of Portland.

In addition to his parents, Harry was also predeceased by his brother, David Schwantor.

Harry enjoyed life to the fullest. He participated for many years in the Special Olympics, vacationed from Maine to Florida with family and friends, enjoyed family softball games, arts and crafts, and Native American culture. He possessed a beautiful, kind and compassionate disposition, and brought a loving glow simply by his gentle sweetness. Harry loved animals and children, and they in turn were drawn to him. There are many whose hearts will forever be touched by having the honor to have known him.

Harry leaves his sister, Amy Wilson and her husband, John; his nephews, Adam Wilson and wife, Jackie, Seth Wilson and fiancée, Jessica; and his cousins, Clint Canning, Jeannie Cretella, Jessica Lizaire, Paula Motta, Josh Canning, and their beautiful children. Harry also leaves his Gales Ferry ARC housemates and friends, Tom Hesketh, Guy Heck, Noah Best and Ricky Carroll. Harry had a special bond with Dina Harris, Darlene Williams and Tremaine Swinson, who were as much a family to Harry as any by birth.

Harry was also predeceased by housemate and warm friend, Joyce Furbush.

"Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high... There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby. Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue... And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true."

Harry, you are loved. Harry, you will be missed. Memorial service for Harry's friends will be held at a later date. Graveside services and burial will be at the convenience of the family in Center Cemetery, Portland.

### Andover

#### Nichole Marie Sun

Nichole Marie (Madden) Sun, 38, of Andover, passed away in the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts on Wednesday, November 4, 2015, surrounded by her loving family. Born in Norwood, Mass., March 28, 1977, she was raised in Pawcatuck.

Nichole graduated from Stonington High School with the Class of 1995, where she was a member of the National Honor Society and the math team. She continued her education at the University of Connecticut, majoring in accounting, where she was a member of Beta Alpha Psi, an honorary professional accounting organization. She met her soon-to-be-husband, Carl T. Sun, during her senior year while working at the accounting firm, Deloitte, as part of her internship program. After graduating early in December of 1998, Nichole earned a full-time position at Deloitte in Hartford.

She transferred to Deloitte's Boston office in 2000 and passed her exam to become a Certified Public Accountant in 2005. Nichole returned to Connecticut in 2003 and took a position with Stanley Black and Decker in New Britain.

On Oct. 15, 2004, Nichole married her husband, Carl, in Watch Hill, R.I. Together they made their home in Andover, along with their well-loved black lab, Bogey.

In 2010, she earned a position with Gerber Scientific in Tolland, as the assistant controller. As an avid reader, she helped start a book club with her friends from Stanley Black and Decker. It also served as a way of staying close with them after she left.

When she and Carl welcomed Connor on Aug. 23, 2011, Nichole transitioned from a successful business professional to the role of a stay-at-home mom to care for her son. However, she still found time to give back to the community through her volunteer work as a board member at AHM Youth and Family Services Inc., a community outreach organization in Hebron.

Nichole loved the beach and looked forward to the yearly summer trips to her family's cottage in Marshfield, Mass. Marshfield held a special place in her heart as it was where the extended family gathered and where her parents also met. Family was incredibly important to Nichole, she loved spending time with them and always found a way to be with them at every holiday. She shared a special bond with her Dad over cars, and even rented him a Porsche for his birthday. Nichole's mom was her confidante, they talked daily and enjoyed various activities such as shopping together. Together with her husband, she enjoyed sharing similar careers, visiting with friends, family, going to concerts and traveling to many places including, Hawaii, Key West, Clearwater, Calif., and the Caribbean.

Her son, Connor, was the light of her life. She introduced him to horseback riding when she began riding at the Four Winds Farm in Hebron. Nichole made many close friendships through her activities with her son, from friendships with other mothers in Connor's preschool to play dates with neighbors. She also shared one of her favorite pastimes of going to the Marshfield Fair with Connor, where together they loved watching the demolition derbies.

She was the beloved wife of Carl T. Sun, loving mother of Connor J. Sun., devoted daughter of Neal and Michelle (Mellett) Madden of Pawcatuck, sister of David Madden of Plainville and Patrick Madden of Niantic.

Relatives and friends attended Nichole's life celebration Tuesday, Nov. 10, in the James H. Delaney & Son Funeral Home, 48 Common St., Walpole, MA 02081. A funeral home service was held Wednesday, Nov. 11. Interment followed in Saint Francis Cemetery in Walpole.

In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in memory of Nichole Sun to support cancer research and patient care at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, P.O. Box 849168, Boston, MA 02284 or via [dana-farber.org/gift](http://dana-farber.org/gift).

## More Obituaries on Following Page

## Obituaries continued

### East Hampton

#### Barbara C. Bear

Barbara C. Bear, 94, of Sun City Center, Fla., died peacefully Wednesday, Oct. 28. She was born on May 8, 1921, in Woodstock, Maine, daughter of Pearl Foster and Clarence Cole.

An accomplished pianist, active also in 4H and glee club, she attended Woodstock High School and in 1943 graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Maine, Orono. That year, she married teacher and coach, Edward Bear of Presque Isle, Maine, who was serving in the Navy out of Norfolk, Va. During and after the war she worked at the East Boston Settlement House and the New York Public Library. They later moved to East Hampton, then Middle Haddam. Every summer for 15 years, they operated Bearmac Day Camp in East Hampton, and for several summers they were trip directors at Camp Kineowatha in Wilton, Maine.

In 1954, she obtained a teacher's degree from Central Connecticut State College in New Britain, and taught first grade for 23 years, first in Marlborough and later Fairfield. In 1959, she obtained an M.A. from Fairfield University.

After retiring, she and Ed moved to Sun City Center, Florida, where she was active in the Emergency Squad, tennis, bridge, dominoes, and entertaining. Nearly half of every year they traveled in their motorhome the length and breadth of North America for square dancing, round dancing, motorhome rallies, elder-hostels, and to visit family and friends. They went to Maine each winter to ski, and also travelled to Europe and China.

She was predeceased by her husband Ed, her parents, Pearl and Clarence Cole, and her brothers, Paul and Gardner. She is survived by her daughters, Andrea (Darryl) Nicholas of Nekotkok, New Brunswick, Canada, and Melita Campbell of Tampa, Fla., five grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held at Mansion Memorial Park, Ellenton, Fla., Saturday, Nov. 7.

### East Hampton

#### Bruce Gunn

Bruce Gunn, 87, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Nov. 3. Bruce Gasiewski was born in 1927 in Southington. He later changed his name to Bruce Gunn. He was the son of the late Paul and Sophie Gasiewski.

He is pre-deceased by his wife Sarah, his brother Walter and his sister Eleanor. Bruce is survived by his son Bruce Jr, daughter-in-law Bonnie, his grandson Brett, grandson Bruce III and his wife Brianna, and great granddaughter Pippa. Also left behind are his brother Eugene Gasiewski, many nieces and nephews and his love, Frances Ball.

His family moved to Stamford and in 1944 where at age 17, Bruce decided to join the Navy. He trained in New York and was assigned to a ship in Honolulu, Hawaii. He witnessed two atomic bomb tests in the South Pacific and was honorably discharged in 1947. He moved to Hartford in 1952 and married Sarah Andonian and had one son, Bruce Jr.

Bruce then joined the National Guard and was given the rank of Staff Sergeant. He served during the flood of 1955 where he set up communication systems in Winsted. He later became a painter and wallpaper hanger and founded Gunn Paper Hanging which served West Hartford, Avon and Simsbury for over 30 years. Bruce was an avid golfer and had five holes-in-one to his credit, with one at Southington Country Club winning him a car in 1991.

A funeral service was held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 10, at Taylor and Modeen Funeral Home, 136 South Main St., West Hartford. Burial followed at Fairview Cemetery, West Hartford. Family and friends were received at the funeral home Tuesday, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, please make memorial donations in Bruce's name, to the VFW Post 5095, 20 North Maple St, East Hampton, CT 06424.

For directions and online condolences, visit [taylorandmodeen.com](http://taylorandmodeen.com).

### Portland

#### Constance Frances McBrien

Constance "Connie" Frances (Hughes) McBrien, 95, of Portland, wife of the late William J. McBrien, passed away Sunday, Nov. 8, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation. Born in Portland, she was the daughter of the late Albert and Maude (Minor) Hughes.

Connie had lived in Portland all of her life and was a member of Congregational Church of Portland. She served in Military Welfare Services in the Red Cross, stationed in Quantico Naval Hospital in Virginia for six months. Connie was the organist and choir director for 25 years at Haddam Neck Congregational Church and was also the organist at Doolittle Funeral Home for over 50 years. She was a member of the Hemlock Grange 182 in Portland for 70 years, member of the Portland Historical Society and the Portland River Valley Garden Club, where she was president from 1988-90.

Connie is survived by five children, Albert Thomas McBrien, James Emmet McBrien and his wife, Nancy, Joseph William McBrien and his wife, Donna and Jonathan Howard McBrien and Nancy Lynn McBrien, all of Portland; six grandchildren, Edward McBrien, Kelly (McBrien) Walker and her husband, Brad, Matthew McBrien and his wife, Amy, Colleen (McBrien) Richardson and her husband, Ryan, Meghan (McBrien) Reynolds and her husband, Kenneth and Christine (McBrien) Filanda and her husband, Peter; and several great grandchildren.

Along with her parents and husband, Connie was predeceased by her brother, Albert M. Hughes who was killed during World War II.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Nov. 14, at 10 a.m., at Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown. Burial will follow in Center Cemetery in Portland. Family and friends may call this evening, Nov. 13, from 5-7 p.m., at Doolittle Funeral Home.

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

To share memories or send condolences to the McBrien family, visit [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).

### Portland

#### Sara Y. Sinnott

Sara Y. "Sally" Sinnott of Hartford, formerly of Clinton, died Thursday, Nov. 5, in Hartford. She was born Nov. 29, 1914, in Portland, the daughter of Thomas and Mary (Webb) MacAlpine. She was the widow of Robert J. Sinnott and Everett R. Yates.

Mrs. Sinnott graduated in 1936 from the Teacher's College of Connecticut and taught kindergarten for 43 years in Middletown and Westbrook. She was an avid reader, a fast driver and loved children.

Mrs. Sinnott is survived by her daughters, Kathleen (Curtis) York, of Sydney, Australia, Maureen Finucane of Merritt Island, Fla., Arlene (James) Cavalieri of Marlborough and Gay (Robert) Weidlich of Vernon; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

She was also predeceased by her brother, Sydney MacAlpine.

A funeral service was held Monday, Nov. 9, at Swan Funeral Home, 80 E. Main St., Clinton. Burial followed in Resurrection Cemetery, Westbrook. A calling hour was held prior to the service at the funeral home.

To sign the online guestbook, visit [swanfh.com](http://swanfh.com).

### East Hampton

#### Chapin M. Stickler

Chapin M. Stickler, 33, of East Hampton, beloved son of David Stickler and Marsha (Alward) Reilly died Monday, Nov. 9. Born June 5, 1982, in Middletown, he was a lifelong resident of East Hampton.

Chapin loved to work on cars. He could take anything apart and put it back together again. Chapin was an avid gamer and enjoyed riding his quad motorcycle.

Besides his parents he is survived by his stepfather, David Reilly; his stepmother, Claudia Stickler; his brother, Mike and wife Constance Stickler; his stepbrother, Richard Tucker; his sisters, Tracy Woolley and Wanda Tucker; several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins and numerous friends.

He was predeceased by his stepsister Jessica Robinson.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., today, Nov. 13, from 5-7 p.m. Service to follow after calling hours at 7 p.m.

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

### Portland

#### Thelma Marie Youngs

Thelma Marie (Peterson) Youngs, 86, of Rockfall, wife of the late Lauren F. Youngs, passed away Sunday, Nov. 8, at McLean Care in Simsbury. Born in Mount Vernon, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late Rev. Harry and Florence (Loven) Peterson.

Thelma graduated Portland High School, received a bachelor's degree from Upsala College, a nursing degree from Hartford Hospital School of Nursing in 1952, and a master's degree from Central Connecticut State University in 1986. She was a member of Faith Lutheran Church, where she was part of the choir and the knitting group. Thelma enjoyed spending time at Camp Calumet and vacations to the Rhode Island shore.

Thelma is survived by her son, David P. Youngs of Rockfall and his fiancée, Cathy Neale; her daughter, Laurie J. Granstrand and her husband, Richard of West Granby and her grandson, Erik R. Granstrand of West Hartford.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Nov. 12, at Faith Lutheran Church, 300 Washington St., Middletown. Burial followed in the Swedish Cemetery at the corner of William and High streets in Portland. Family and friends called Wednesday evening, Nov. 11, at Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Thelma's memory may be made to Camp Calumet, P.O. Box 236, 1090 Ossipee Lake Road, West Ossipee, NH 03890.

To share memories or send condolences to the Youngs family, visit [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).

### Colchester

#### David M. Tomm

David M. Tomm 49, of Eagleville, Pa, passed away Saturday, Oct. 31, after a two-year battle with a heart arrhythmia, ventricular fibrillation. Dave is survived by his wife of 20 years, Michelle (Skully) Tomm and their son Brandon. He was the son of Diane (Boudreau) Schaal & the late David L. Tomm.

He is also survived by his stepfather, William Schaal; godmother, Nancy Boudreau; sister, Katherine (Tomm) Doyle; godson Patrick and special munchkin friend Alex; stepsiblings, Jeff Schaal, Jennifer (Schaal) Morgan, Jessica Schaal, Amy (Schaal) Kniffen; and countless other family members.

Dave grew up in Colchester, graduated from Bacon Academy and earned a bachelor's degree in communication from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Music and radio have always been the center of Dave's life. His career in radio broadcasting throughout New England prepared him for his next 18 years as a music researcher, where his vast knowledge made him an indispensable part of their team. Dave also loved sports - especially watching his son play soccer - and politics and craft beers. He was a founding member of the guizburus too. His sense of humor and ever-present smile will be missed by all.

A memorial service to celebrate his life will be held Saturday, Nov. 14, at the Marriott Courtyard, 225 Slater St., Manchester, from noon-3 p.m.

In lieu of flowers the family is asking that donations be made to the Electrophysiology (EP) Research Gift Fund c/o Penn Medicine Development, 3535 Market St., Suite 750, Philadelphia, PA 19104. Please make checks payable to the "Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania" and include a note indicating that the gift is in memory of David Tomm to support EP Research.

*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

The first issue after Election Week is typically a muted affair, at least as far as the letters to the editor pages go. After several weeks of an ever-growing collection of political-themed letters – including the just-barely-wieldy behemoth that drops the issue before Election Day – things dial back. Way back. The letters return to their old selves, touching on a variety of different issues – most not connected to the elections that just passed. There may be two or three “thanks for voting for me” letters, but that’s about it.

Not this year.

This year, as you’ll see on the ensuing pages, there seems to be many more “thanks for voting” letters from candidates than ever before. Even those who lost are sending in letters thanking those who cast ballots for them.

To be honest, it was nice to see the candidates take the time to say “thanks” this year. A little “thank you” can go a long way. Classy move.

\* \* \*

From classy to appalling.....here’s a disgusting story I read in the *Courant* Tuesday. Down in Stratford last weekend, the family of Victoria Soto, one of the teachers killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, held a charity 5K, as it does every year in her honor, to raise money for education.

An idiot from Brooklyn, N.Y., named Matthew Mills decided that would be the right moment to share his theory about the horrific shooting. After the race was over, Mills, 32, went up to family members – again, Soto’s own family members! – and told them the tragic shooting was staged, as part of a conspiracy.

Personally, I think the idea that Sandy Hook was somehow staged by the government is ridiculous, and sharing such nonsense belittles and demeans the memories of those who died that terrible December day.

And to share this belief with family members of one of the victims – at an event held to honor her memory – is beyond repugnant.

Mills, like a coward, tried to run from cops when they approached him. He didn’t get far, though, and was promptly charged with breach of peace and interfering with a police officer.

He was released on bond, and is due in Bridgeport Superior Court Nov. 17.

\* \* \*

Now here’s quite the story a friend recently shared with me from “The Oatmeal,” this delightful daily website written and drawn by Matthew Inman of Seattle:

On June 18, 1947, on a Pan Am flight from Calcutta to New York, an engine stopped

working, which caused another engine to over-heat, which caused a fire, which caused a panic.

While the pilot attempted to land the plane, the 25-year-old co-pilot unbuckled himself. He went into the main cabin to help with the passengers. He sat next to a young woman, who was all alone.

He told her it was going to be okay.

He told her this as he watched the engine continue to burn.

He told her this as he watched it fall from the wing.

He told her this as fuel lines became exposed, fire overtook the aircraft, and the plane pitched downward.

He told her this knowing that every single person on that plane was about to die.

The plane hit hard, crashing into the Syrian desert.

Fourteen people died instantly. Two crew members survived – including the co-pilot.

And with a pair of broken ribs, he went back into the burning plane, pulling survivors from the wreckage.

Eventually the wind turned, and fire overtook the aircraft.

And so the survivors waited.

Morning arrived – but a rescue did not. The co-pilot took charge, and formed two search parties. The first party went in one direction.

The second party, along with the co-pilot, went in the other, wandering into the desert.

They eventually found a village. A village that had a radio.

A call was made, and the 22 survivors were rescued.

As for the co-pilot, the crash changed him.

After that, he didn’t want to be a pilot anymore; he wanted to do something different with his life.

He resigned from Pan Am to pursue a career in writing and, ultimately, television.

His name was Gene Roddenberry, and he created *Star Trek*.

\* \* \*

Now, Inman explained on “The Oatmeal” that sharing the story was not meant to be a tribute to Roddenberry – although, as the site says, he certainly deserves one. Rather, Inman wrote, it’s meant to remind people that our journeys are short. “Roddenberry saw life’s ephemeral nature lit up against a backdrop of stars,” the site says. “He saw that we are all passengers pitching downward into the night. He saw that we’re all helpless.

“So get up,” Inman concluded, “and help someone.”

Powerful story. Powerful message.

\* \* \*

See you next week.