

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Here Comes Santa Claus... Santa Claus visited Portland Sunday for the town's annual Holiday Lights Parade, which also included fire trucks, military vehicles, a boat, a motorcycle – and even a VW Beetle. See story, more photos on page 14.

East Hampton BOE Sues the Town

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Board of Education on Monday served the town with a lawsuit in the latest installment of a post-election dispute about who has the authority to make appointments to the school board.

The suit asks a judge to assert the school board's jurisdiction when it comes to filling its own vacancies.

Republican Josh Piteo – whose election to the Town Council this November and subsequent resignation from the school board spurred the conflict – called the lawsuit “absurd.”

“The town is suing itself,” Piteo said at Tuesday's Town Council meeting.

The lawsuit came after the Town Council refused to cede to the Board of Education's demand for councilors to pass a resolution formally acknowledging the school board's supremacy in the matter.

Board of Education members had voted on Nov. 14 to authorize legal action if the council failed to pass the resolution by the end of the month.

Instead, Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson sent a letter dated Dec. 1 to Board of Education Chairman Kenneth Barber in grudging acceptance of the school board's appointment of Democrat Jeff Carlson. She said councilors continue to believe appointment authority rests with them, but simply want to avoid the “protracted and costly legal battle” that the

school board promised it would deliver.

That's why “the Town Council has decided to be fiscally prudent and will not seek to fill the vacancy on the Board of Education at this time. Rather, it will use the limited resources of our community toward resolving this issue through the pending charter revision process,” Anderson wrote.

The Town Council originally appointed Republican Michael Rose to the school board seat vacated by Piteo, in a move that would have created a Republican majority. Rose declined the nomination.

Then the outgoing school board appointed former member Jeff Carlson to the seat, tipping the new board's majority to the Democrats.

Councilors, armed with a legal opinion from town counsel, say that while the debate is a “close call,” the town charter gives them the edge.

State law governing school boards specifies that vacancies shall be filled by the remaining members of the board “unless otherwise provided by charter or special act.”

The town charter empowers the Town Council to fill any vacancy unless another “appointing authority” has been “designated by law.”

But the school board maintains state statute clearly makes it the other “appointing authority” referenced in the town charter.

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Amston Woman to Appear on ‘Jeopardy!’

by Geeta Schrayter

For Amston resident Dee Daigle, dedication definitely paid off when, after applying each year for a decade, she became a contestant on the classic game show *Jeopardy!* last month. She is scheduled to appear in an episode that will air on Christmas Day.

Daigle, 51, lives in town with her husband Bob and has two children, Marie and Jimmy. She shared this week she's been a fan of “America's favorite quiz show” for years and vaguely remembers when Art Fleming hosted the show prior to Alex Trebek.

But Daigle had dreams of doing more than just watching the show – she had dreams of being *on* it. Mostly because, as she said with a smile, “I have a brain full of what is otherwise useless knowledge.”

This knowledge, the substitute teacher explained, she has gleaned “from everything.”

“Some of it is my education, but I also hear something or I read it and it just sticks in my head!” she shared.

And it's that “otherwise useless knowledge” that led her to apply for the show again and again, which is a multi-step process beginning with an online test.

“The first time I took it, I was called for an

audition,” Daigle shared. That phone call never led to anything more, but that didn't deter Daigle and she continued to take the online test each year. Then, in 2014, she was once again called for an audition.

Following the audition over the phone, Daigle was told her name would be in a pool for 18 months. She said she remembers looking at the calendar in early November and thinking that period was almost up. And then, on Election Day she got the call she'd been waiting for – and the news distracted her so much she forgot to vote!

Daigle flew to Los Angeles to tape the show Dec. 1-2. She explained a week's worth of shows are taped each week – five shows per day – with two days back-to-back.

To prepare for the show Daigle shared she purchased an almanac “and started trying to go through that, but that's such dry information I didn't get all the way through” she laughed.

In addition she picked up trivia books and shared she goes to a trivia night at least once a week and continued watching the show.

But, she admits, “I did all this reading and preparing and I found that not one thing that I had read during that time came up in my game.

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Amston resident Dee Daigle recently taped an appearance on the game show *Jeopardy!* She also swung by the show's “Hall of Fame,” which features, among other things, a display case of the show's many Emmys. Daigle's episode of *Jeopardy!* will air on Christmas Day.

Holiday Shopping Guide Inside

BOE cont. from Front Page

Ultimately, the town attorneys said “the specific reference to the Town Council as the appointing authority would prevail over an ambiguous allusion to the possible authority of the Board of Education to fill a vacancy.”

The Board of Education lawsuit points to 25 years of precedent during which the school board filled its own vacancies without opposition from the Town Council. The school board made appointments on seven occasions, according to the suit.

And while the Town Council acquiesced to the school board’s appointment this time, the lawsuit said the same controversy is likely to emerge every time a vacancy arises on the Board of Education.

Republican Councilor Melissa Engel said at Tuesday’s Town Council meeting that the lawsuit is unnecessary since the charter revision process the town is embarking upon – which members of both the Town Council and school board have agreed should clarify the appointment process – would trump any decision made by a judge.

But the lawsuit countered that argument when it said charter revision “is a lengthy process that can fail to achieve any outcome” – and is not the immediate solution the school board is looking for.

The Town Council at the same meeting pushed off a resolution initiating the charter revision process because the timing of the holidays would hinder efforts to find volunteers and identify the committee’s charge within 30 days as required by statute.

The resolution to authorize the charter revision must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Town Council. If passed, the 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 of-

fice 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.

Republican Councilor Ted Hintz described the lawsuit as “absurd” and a waste of taxpayer money.

“Every year we have issues trying to get a town budget passed, and every year the Board of Education says they can’t go without anything. All of a sudden, they’re going to sue the town over something that will be resolved in a matter of months,” he said. “I find it absolutely absurd that they have that kind of extra money and quite frankly I think we need to very much address this in the budget season.”

Democrat Kevin Reich characterized the lawsuit as a “disappointment.” He said he hoped the other members of the Town Council would consider opening the lines of communication with the school board to work around a lawsuit by coming to a mutual, temporary understanding while the charter revision process plays out. “We’re not here to create a problem,” Reich said. “There’s some confusion, let’s clear it up. That’s the whole reason why we’re having the charter revision committee.”

Barber said Wednesday morning that he would not comment on pending litigation. He also refused to comment on questions related to the cost to taxpayers of taking the issue to court.

The amount of legal fees spent by the Town Council and Board of Education over the course of the appointment controversy is not yet available, according to finance director Jeff Jylkka and interim Superintendent of Schools Mark Winzler. They said neither the town nor Board of Education has received a bill for services rendered in November.

Jeopardy! cont. from Front Page

However, I did see a couple things that I had read come up in other people’s games!”

Speaking about the experience Daigle said, “It was great. It was *so* much fun. Everyone who works there is fantastic.”

In fact, she added she was in the middle of writing an email to thank the staff “for how wonderful they all are.”

As for Trebek, Daigle said he doesn’t spend any time with the contestants apart from what viewers see on television, but “from what his coworkers all say about him, he’s wonderful.”

Other things that stuck out for Daigle include the stage, which is much bigger than she thought it was.

“It’s huge!” she stated.

She also mentioned getting down the timing on the buzzers as difficult.

“If you’re one hundredth of a second too early, you’re locked out for a quarter of a second; but if you’re one hundredth of a second too late, someone buzzes in before you,” she explained.

To prepare for the actual taping, Daigle said the contestants prepared by completing the usual paperwork, recording a bit about themselves for the camera and going through practice runs and mock games ringing in against other contestants. She added contestants don’t know until three to five minutes before they’re set to head on stage who’ll they’ll be competing against.

Then there’s just enough time to have their

make-up touched up, use the bathroom and then – showtime!

But for Daigle, “showtime” is exactly the time when everything became a bit of a blur.

“I actually do not remember much of the game because I was the last game of the day,” she shared. “In the morning I was fine, then as the day went on I got nervous and more nervous. By the time I went on stage I was shaking. So I can’t wait to see the show when it airs!”

Daigle couldn’t give away any specifics about the show, such as categories or how she fared. She even said “I have something I learned but I can’t say, because it’s on the show!”

In addition, “I learned an answer that I missed that I will never forget again.”

For those looking to follow Daigle’s lead and try for a spot on the show, Daigle advised practicing with a buzzer “as much as possible” and said to “pay attention to everything because you don’t know where you’re going to learn something – when you go on, it truly is random.”

And for everyone planning to watch – or tape – the Christmas episode, Daigle had one thing to say: “Do not fast forward through the part where Alex is speaking to the contestants after the first commercial.”

Curiosity piqued?

* * *

Jeopardy! airs weekdays at 7 p.m. on WTNH-TV Channel 8, the state’s ABC affiliate.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I wasn’t planning to mention Trump again this week, but, well, the dude had to go and open his mouth, so here I am again.

The pride of Queens, N.Y., has said he would ban all Muslims from entering the country. Yes, you read that right: The man who wants to be the leader of what is known as “the land of the free” wants to prohibit all people of a specific faith from entering the country.

The response to the comment – one of the most ludicrous moments in what’s been an epic run of ludicrousness – was really quite interesting. Republicans were, quite frankly, aghast. In fact, Republicans and Democrats shared a rare moment of unity in how appalled they were by Trump’s incredibly un-American proposal.

Some friendly advice to The Donald: If even Dick Cheney is saying “Hey now, wait a minute...” maybe you’ve gone a little too far.

* * *

Here’s a question for you: “We can’t allow the refugees in this country; they may be terrorists” and “We can’t deny a suspected terrorist the ability to buy a gun” seem like contradictory ideas, no?

I guess the Republicans don’t think so. The day after last week’s reprehensible mass shooting in California, there was a proposal in the Senate to prohibit people on a federal terrorism watch list from buying guns. The measure failed, with just one Republican (Senator Mark Kirk of Illinois, in case you’re wondering) voting in favor of it.

I’ve known for quite some time many Republicans are averse to additional gun control – regardless of how many mass shootings take place, frankly. But I felt if there was one gun control measure they could agree with, it would be this one. It wasn’t too long ago – it was literally a couple of weeks – Republicans were clamoring for us to close our borders, at least as far as the Syrian refugees were concerned. “Can’t let them in – they might be terrorists.” I disagreed with that, I was very proud of our governor for declaring Connecticut would still accept the refugees, but if that’s the way the Republicans wanted to go, fine.

So now we have people on a federal terrorism watch list. As in, a list you get placed on *when you’re suspected of being a terrorist*. But these guys, it’s totally fine to let them buy guns?

It makes no sense. None. It’s amazing how little people are willing to bend on this issue. We can’t let the refugees in, but we can give guns to suspected terrorists? How much deeper in the NRA’s back pocket can you possibly get?

Like I said, it’s been clear for quite some time many Republicans hate the idea of any additional gun control. The argument I’ve heard time and time again is that they don’t think it would prevent future mass shootings

from happening. And that may very well be true. I have no crystal ball.

But don’t we owe it to the victims of these horrendous mass shootings to at least *see* if it makes a difference? Can’t we at the very least say to a suspected terrorist “sorry, no guns”?

The other day, an old college friend wrote on Facebook, “We’ll never end all gun crime, just like we’ll never cure all disease and we’ll never visit every inch of space. But refusing to try is about the most damned un-American thing I can think of.”

That’s it precisely. We won’t even try. We just won’t even try. It’s shameful.

* * *

On a much happier note, it’s the time of year for all things Christmasy. And that means it’s time for *The Nutcracker*.

If, like me, you’re listening to Christmas music non-stop every time you get in your car, you may have heard pieces from *The Nutcracker* once or twice already. And if you want to see where those songs came from – well, you’re in luck.

The Connecticut Concert Ballet is putting on several performances of *The Nutcracker* over the next two weekends. And once again, Emma Triantafyllou, a 15-year-old Hebron resident, will be a part of the action.

Emma was chosen from more than 200 applicants and won multiple lead roles when auditions for *The Nutcracker* were held in September. Among the parts she’ll be playing are a shepherdess, a Chinese soloist and a rosebud in “Waltz of the Flowers.”

This is Emma’s 12th *Nutcracker* – and she’s being joined in the show by several *Rivereast*-area residents. They are: Gianna DeSimone of Andover, Maya Dobson and Amarylla Ingala of East Hampton, Anna Beard and Kaylin Hadley of Hebron, Matthew Chicoine, Olivia Chicoine, Clara Grove, Jason Grove, Maria Grove and Nora Pierz of Marlborough and Katerina Reeves of Portland.

If you’re interested in checking out the show, it’ll be performed in the Bailey Auditorium at Manchester High School, 134 East Middle Tpke., on Saturdays and Sundays, Dec. 12, 13, 19 and 20. Showtimes on Saturdays will be at 2 and 7 p.m., and on Sundays will be at 2 p.m.

Purchased in advance, the tickets are \$35 for “preferred front and center” seats, \$25 for general admission adults, and \$15 for general admission child/student/senior. You can also buy tickets at the door, for \$38, \$28 and \$18, respectively.

Tickets can be purchased online at connecticutnutcracker.com, and are also being sold at Dance Village, 171 Spencer St., Manchester, and Hairdresser on Fire, 176 Broad St., Windsor.

Call 860-418-7294 for additional show information.

* * *

See you next week.

Andover Roof Repairs Characterized as ‘Critical’

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Education Wednesday received a draft report on the elementary school roof – and learned there were a number of sections recommended for repair in the next few years.

According to the report, which was conducted by DRA Architects, three sections of the roof are in “critical” condition, while five other sections are “reaching the end” of their lifespan “but still have a little life yet,” according to DRA senior project architect Angela Cahill.

With proper maintenance, Cahill shared those sections will likely last five to 10 more years.

As for the sections listed as “critical,” they’re located over the gym, the kitchen, and over classrooms 105, 107 and 109. These areas contain issues such as worn coating, splitting seams and problems with the insulation.

For example, the roof over the kitchen has “active leaks,” Cahill stated, adding it’s “a very small area but complicated” because there’s ventilation for the kitchen equipment that comes out through the roof and any time punctures are made, there’s the chance for eventual leaks.

After Cahill discussed the various roof sections, she shared a number of recommendations for moving forward.

She said the firm recommended “proceeding immediately” with an application to the state for a grant for the three areas listed as critical.

She added it may also be beneficial to apply for a grant for the remaining sections as a “second phase” since a larger project usually attracts more bidders, and can sometimes result in savings.

The total cost for the three critical sections is \$422,625; the cost for the remaining sections is \$478,170.

Of that, Cahill presented an estimate on the cost to the town, taking into consideration the current rate for reimbursement by the state for school building projects in Andover – 58.93 percent.

“The rate in Andover is incredible,” she said. “For a small town this is a great rate.”

Subtracting the reimbursement amount, the town would be responsible for approximately \$210,322 for the first three areas and \$237,964 for the remaining areas.

Cahill mentioned, however, “You don’t know what exactly the final money from the state will be until after the project is completed – most of these numbers are predictions.”

Cahill said the board had a number of considerations to make for the school’s re-roofing, and to that regard, following the presentation, the board voted to create a roof committee to work through some of those considerations and report back to the board. That committee is to consist of board members Jay Linddy and Mike Russo along with Board of Finance member Dan Warren and residents Rusty Billings and Ken Romeo.

* * *

Also at the meeting, the board voted to approve the use of \$2,000 from money placed in a bank account for the school from a donation made by resident Chester D. Norton 100 years ago.

The funds will go toward bringing a free archery program to the school, which was dis-

cussed at last month’s meeting. The program was the idea of fifth grade teacher Lisa Robinson and her daughter Emily. Lisa explained at last month’s meeting she recently became a certified instructor through the National Archery in Schools Program (NASP). After completing the program she decided she wanted to bring it to the school.

At last month’s meeting Principal John Briody said the program would begin by being opened up to students in fifth grade. The specifics of the program regarding the exact day and time have yet to be worked out.

Lisa explained it will cost \$3,100-\$3,200 to get the program started. The balance will be covered by a \$1,000 grant awarded through NASP, and another \$500 awarded through the non-profit Safari Club International.

* * *

In addition Wednesday, the board approved the acceptance of a baby grand piano appraised at \$6,000 that was donated to the school.

“It’s a gorgeous, gorgeous piano,” said board member Jay Linddy, who knew the couple that donated the piano but wanted to remain anonymous.

Schools superintendent Sally Doyen felt similar, saying, “It’s beautiful – it’s amazing.”

Briody added, “It’s so nice I’m afraid to try and play it!”

Also related to music the board approved the donation of a bell kit from the non-profit Horns for Kids, which awards “clean, playable instruments to deserving school music programs throughout Connecticut,” according to the website hornsforkids.org.

* * *

Also discussed at this week’s meeting was the school readiness preschool program at the school, which currently has four slots still available for students from families at or below 75 percent of the state’s median income level.

According to the state Department of Education website, sde.ct.gov, the program is a state-funded initiative meant to “provide open access for children to quality programs that promote the health and safety of children and prepare them for formal schooling” and “provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable and accredited programs” among other things such as improving “the availability and quality of school readiness programs and their coordination with the services of child care providers,” and strengthening the family through “encouragement of parental involvement in a child’s development and education” and “enhancement of a family’s capacity to meet the special needs of the children, including children with disabilities.”

Children 3- and 4-years-old along with 5-year-olds who aren’t eligible to enroll in school are eligible to enroll in the school readiness program.

For more information contact Assistant Principal Barbara Wilson at the school, 860-742-7305.

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 13, at 7 p.m., in the library at Andover Elementary School, 35 School Rd.

Bieri Maintains Confidence in Serving Two Town Boards

by Geeta Schrayter

A little over a month after Election Day, some concern remains regarding resident Ray Bieri, a Democrat, and his ability to serve unbiased on both the Hebron Board of Education and the town Board of Finance, the latter of which he was elected to this year.

Among those concerned are Republican Town Committee Chairwoman Catherine Marx, who said this week, “It’s going to be very difficult for Mr. Bieri to work in the budget process unless he decides which budget he’s going to vote on upfront.”

The Board of Education budget is voted on separately from the town operations budget at referendum each year and, should the bottom line need to be reduced, it’s up to the Board of Finance to decide how much will – or will not – be cut from each budget.

“It’s nothing against Mr. Bieri,” Marx said. “It’s not personal. But what it does is, if we do not address the problem of someone serving on two boards like this, it creates a precedent for boards in the future. So I think that we have to do due diligence in understanding and dealing with it; we can’t allow it to go undiscussed and not vetted through the current process.”

Marx spoke at the Dec. 3 Board of Selectmen meeting, asking the board “to seek a resolution to uphold to the common law doctrine of incompatibility and the doctrine of the appearance of impropriety as stated in Attorney [Ken] Slater’s letter.”

Marx is referring to a letter submitted to Town Manager Andrew Tierney Nov. 11 regarding dual membership on a board of finance and a board of education.

Slater wrote he read “substantial case law that supports the fact that membership on a board of finance and a board of education are inherently in conflict and that no person should serve in both roles” however he went on to mention General State Statute 9-210, which contains a list of incompatible town office – an does not include Board of Education members serving on the Board of Finance.

From a legal standpoint, Slater wrote, “I am advising you that a member of a local board of education can serve on a board of finance.”

However, he added, “While that is my opinion based on the state of the law” he went on to explain the common law doctrines of incompatibility and impropriety.

The former is meant to ensure “that an officeholder discharges his or her duties with undivided loyalty.”

Slater said membership on both the Board of Education and the Board of Finance “is incompatible,” since the finance board “exercises a very important degree of supervision” over the Board of Education; the finance board establishes the school budget and considers any special appropriations for the schools.

The “undivided loyalty” of a local Board of Education member, he furthered, “is inconsistent with the duties of a Board of Finance member” since they “must balance the financial wants and needs of both municipal government and education.”

Slater added, “It is inherently in conflict for a person who in one capacity must devote exclusive loyalty to educational needs of the com-

munity and also serve in a capacity charged with balancing the financial needs of both education and general municipal affairs.”

Meanwhile, the common law doctrine of the appearance of impropriety says that “the appearance of impropriety created by a public official’s participation in a matter is sufficient to require disqualification,” which Slater wrote “supports my opinion that a person should not serve concurrently on both” the Board of Finance and the Board of Education.”

Yet despite the above concern, Bieri and Hebron Democratic Committee Chairman Bill Rudis maintained this week they were confident in Bieri’s ability to serve the best interest of the town while serving on both boards.

“I did my due diligence before I was elected and when I was considering to run to investigate if there were any legal conflicts in town charter or state statute and as I found there were no conflicts, and that there were no issues legally to serve the town that I live in either in the town charter or the state statute,” Bieri shared Wednesday. “I also consulted other members of town boards to see if there was anything that may be considered illegal or inherently conflicting – and they said there wasn’t.”

Rudis said this week the Democratic Town Committee had “looked over what the legal responsibilities are of the elected official [and] we’ve also had discussions with Ray to determine two things: one, his availability for purposes of attending meetings and second, whether or not he himself found the fact he is

now serving on two boards to be in conflict; he does not see it to be conflicting.”

Rudis furthered the DTC was “concerned about continuity and the surety that the individual elected will serve in the best interest of the town and at this point, I’m satisfied that Ray is also dedicated to the best interest of the town.”

Rudis added since Bieri was elected rather than appointed, the Board of Selectmen doesn’t have any right under town charter to take action regarding his roles as they would for those appointed to positions.

“It’s really up to the elected official if they believe there is a conflict – and [Bieri] does not believe there is,” Rudis said.

Bieri added he makes sure to serve “with honesty and integrity and so when I decided to run for this board [of finance] I wanted to make sure that when I was going to serve the town I would be able to do it with honest and integrity, and according to the statutes of the town and state I am able to do so – and I will continue to do so as a member of both the Board of Education and Board of Finance.”

He concluded, “With that said, if there is a circumstance that changed that I may reconsider.” And, “If there was a conflict, I would have to consider recusing myself from making a decision that would compromise my position on either board.”

But for now, Bieri doesn’t see that as being the case, and will continue to volunteer his time serving as an elected official on two town boards.

Marlborough Residential Care Home Going Forward

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A residential care home on Jones Hollow Road is going forward after the Zoning Commission requested town counsel to draft up a motion with conditions.

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 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 to live in the same building. If the Dibaccos had proposed six people in the home, they would not need the special use permit. 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. Zoning Commission public hearings were held in October and November, before wrapping up last week.

Paul Sciano of Standish Drive stated he was concerned about the parking at the property, wondering how the Dibaccos can assume 10 people aged 55 and older would not want to drive. In answer to that concern, Laurence Pryor of Jones Hollow Road suggested people could use the senior bus and travel to the senior center and other places in town.

Corinne Dibacco stated many people closer to 55 years old would not want this kind of housing. She said she expects the residents to be closer to 80 years old and would not be driving. The house would also have a green, but not paved parking lot, that would allow for additional parking for doctors and visitors. The green parking area would make the area look better than a paved lot, Frank Dibacco said.

Zoning Commission Chairman Kevin Asklar told Sciano that the commission could set a condition where only two residents out of the 10 could have cars on the property and that the green parking area has to be built. Asklar also confirmed that any car that is in town for over six months is taxed in town.

While resident Subby Magro of Virginia Trail Drive advocated the project at the meeting last week – and said he supports adding tax base to the town – Zoning Commission member Su-

san McFarland noted many people have spoken out against it – and asked the Dibaccos if they had considered scaling down the project accordingly.

“The project would work for six [residents],” Frank Dibacco said. “We would build for six [residents] if it doesn’t pass. The 10 [residents] make it more affordable.”

Under state statute, the Dibaccos do not need the special permit to build the home with six residents.

“We want it to be affordable, and not just for the elite,” Frank Dibacco said.

Frank also presented a letter from the town assessor’s office stating that after reviewing other projects like it, a home such as the one proposed would not lower property values.

After the public got their chance to speak, the commission closed the hearing, limiting the comments to the commission and Director of Planning and Development Peter Hughes.

“Some of the concerns as misunderstandings,” McFarland said about the neighbors’ concerns that have been presented to the board such as that people with Alzheimer’s or other mental issues could live in the home. The state license the Dibaccos hold for the project do not allow for that kind of resident.

McFarland said another misunderstanding has been if the building were to be sold, anyone could move in with 10 unrelated people. If the building was to be sold and the buyer wanted to use the home for more than six unrelated people, it would have to come back in front of the commission.

“With or without [the commission’s permission], the same size is going to be built,” Asklar said. “I’d rather have the chance that the changes come here.”

“We have three options,” McFarland said. “Option one, build for six; option two, apply the conditions and approve the 10 people; or option three, build for six and come back later for additional residents.”

She said either way the building was going to be built.

The commission moved the project forward with the consensus that approving the project with the 10 people would give the commission the control to apply conditions such as only two cars out of the 10 residents and having a green parking lot. Asklar asked Hughes to speak with counsel and draft a motion with the conditions so the commission may approve the special use permit.



The Gathering on the Green returned this year – and for the first time featured fireworks. (It also marked the first time there were fireworks in town at all since 2003.) The Gathering also featured a return appearance by Santa Claus, seen here giving a pep talk to his elves.

A ‘Perfect’ Gathering on the Green in Marlborough

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Children sat on the shoulders of their parents, eyes wide in amazement, as they watched fireworks boom, exploding in every color over the town green Sunday.

No, the town wasn’t holding a Fourth of July re-enactment. They were ushering in the Christmas season.

This year’s Gathering on the Green was one to remember as 1,500 residents stood in a circle around the Christmas tree, merrily singing carols and counting down to the lighting of the tree. The smell of freshly-made popcorn and the warmth of hot chocolate and cookies blanketed the green as children wrote letters to Santa. Members of Fellowship Community Church sang Christmas carols to attendees, spreading the holiday cheer for all to hear.

At 5:15 p.m., kids and parents alike rushed to the stone wall facing North Main Street as Santa arrived on a fire truck, escorted by four other trucks from Marlborough, Colchester, East Hampton and Hebron strung up with lights. Some had firefighters on top, waving to the

crowd. Santa had a group of elves with him and attendees could say hello to Santa and take pictures with him.

The fireworks then went off at 5:45 p.m. with a blast. Put on by Atlas PyroVision out of New Hampshire, the fireworks included some new designs in an array of colors including green, red, blue, gold and silver.

“It’s such a perfect night,” Allison Mahon of Marlborough who attended the event with her son Eamon said. “It’s perfect being from a small town.”

Mahon said it was the first time she attended the event having heard of it last year and the fireworks were a big draw. Mahon said Eamon, 19 months old, was excited to see Santa, but more excited to see the fire trucks.

Several attendees opined the event, chock full of community support and cheer, was described as “just what Marlborough needed.” Almost all of the parking lots near the town center were filled with cars as residents showed their support for the event.

The weather was mild for this time of year, with no wind – a welcome change from last year’s Gathering, when the polar vortex froze attendees.

Previously run by a group of community residents, this year the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department and the Knights of Columbus took over the event. The fire department met its fundraising goal of \$5,000 just in time for the fireworks show. Mark Merritt, rescue captain and one of the organizers of the event, said the event couldn’t have gone much better.

“Other than if we had some light snow falling, it was pretty much perfect,” Merritt said. Merritt confirmed there were no issues with the fireworks and that people were patient with traffic leaving the event.

“It was absolutely magnificent,” Joe Asklar, the town’s fire marshal, said. “The nicest comment came from a young adult who grew up in town and said she was very fortunate to have grown up in Marlborough with this kind of neighborhood spirit.”

Merritt said everyone was in a good mood after the event.

Given the amount of people who supported the event, the fire department may try and host the fireworks again next year.

“We are really proud of the residents of Marlborough who stepped up to contribute and pay for the show,” Asklar said. “No money from the town’s budget was used for the show. If we get the town’s support, we are more than happy to do it again.”

The only change, Merritt said, would be to stress that any donation is welcomed even if it’s just \$1.

“Any money left over will go into a separate account under the fire department in hopes of doing it again,” Merritt said. “It will be a nice jumpstart.”

Merritt said the fire department appreciates everyone’s support of the event including the other town fire departments, the residents and everyone who donated.



The annual holiday lights parade returned to the streets of Portland last weekend. The parade included nearly 30 vehicles, floats and groups – including Portland Cub Scouts from Pack 2. Also spotted in the parade was none other than Herbie the Love Bug, decked out in Christmas lights. The 1964 Volkswagen Beetle is owned by Portland resident Greg Mattesen.

Great Crowd Rings in the Holiday Season in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

Lights flashed and sirens screamed as Santa Claus's rowdy escort wound its way through downtown Portland Sunday evening, before a record crowd of revelers.

The annual holiday light parade featured a line of fire trucks taunting each other with volleys of sound that mixed with prepackaged tunes blaring from a speaker atop one of the rigs. The sky was illuminated in bright bursts over rooftops that lined the streets between the Town Hall and Brownstone Intermediate School.

Youth Services Director Mary Pont said the unseasonably warm weather helped bring in the event's largest crowd to date. She estimated 700 to 800 attendees, with many happy faces among them.

"It's one of those [events] that just makes you smile," she said. "That's what I was seeing. A lot of smiles."

For 8-year-old Danny King, a second-grader at Valley View School, it was a ladder truck blaring Christmas songs that brought the big-

gest smile to his face. After his own group of Cub Scouts finished the parade route, he was able to enjoy the cacophony from the trucks still in motion. "I was dancing and dancing," he said. "I was dancing with no one around me!"

As for the marching, that was fun too. "It was awesome," King said. "Holdin' the flag and walkin' down Main Street."

Hanna Stone, a third-grader at Gildersleeve School, looked at the event as a unique chance to get together with her Brownie Girl Scout troop and so many members of the wider community.

"It's a good feeling participating in a really big event," she said. "It feels sort of special."

Stone marched in the parade with multiple troops of Portland Girl Scouts, many of whom wore or carried their own lights.

The annual holiday parade, tree lighting and carol sing, which began over a decade ago through the efforts of the Connecticut Cellar Savers, was sponsored this year by the Parks and Recreation Department and the office of

Youth Services.

In addition to more than a dozen fire trucks and emergency vehicles, there was a contingent of military vehicles from the Connecticut Military Vehicle Collectors club and a boat pulled by Petzold's Marine Center truck. Portland's Buddy Hernandez rode a "Santa Motorcycle" while the Murphy family was aboard the "Portland Polar Express." Also making an appearance was a 1964 V.W. Beetle, outfitted as Herbie the Love Bug, owned by Portland resident Greg Mattesen.

The Friends of Portland Fife and Drum Corps marched in period regalia as they competed with the modern, electronic beat of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra coming from one of the fire trucks.

The event was capped off when Santa Claus disembarked his sleigh at the end of the parade to hand out candy canes and chat with kids waiting for the tree lighting in front of the school. The Portland High School band and an a capella choir picked up where the parade left

off by filling the air with the sounds of the holidays.

Claus also took some time to speak with the event emcee, Dave Kuzminski.

"It's great to be back in Portland," Claus said – though he lamented the relatively balmy temperatures. "I had to put wheels on the sleigh last night."

Claus then saw to the lighting of the tree by picking one lucky child to flip the switch. Charlize Landry, 4, earned the honor when he pulled her raffle ticket.

Before Landry lit up the tree, she put in a request with the jolly old elf for an Elsa Ice Castle from the Disney movie *Frozen*.

First Selectwoman Susan S. Bransfield described Portland's holiday tradition as one that has something for everybody.

"Whether you're young, you're old, you're in a group or you just come by yourself, it's a great way to come together and enjoy the spirit of the season," she said.

East Hampton Gets Bond Rating Upgrade

by Elizabeth Regan

A distinction often bestowed upon the state's wealthier towns has been given to East Hampton with the announcement of an upgrade to an AAA bond rating by Standard & Poor's.

East Hampton joined the ranks of an elite group of 26 municipalities and one regional school district – including Greenwich, Guilford and Avon – that have been identified as the most credit-worthy municipal entities in the state. In addition to East Hampton, only four of those towns can be found east of the river: Glastonbury, Hebron, Old Lyme and Tolland.

S&P upgraded East Hampton from an AA+ to AAA rating for its general obligation bonds because of a record of general fund surpluses that supports the financial company's view of strong management, according to a press release.

With the newfound prestige comes higher investor confidence and lower interest rates.

And that means savings for taxpayers, according to East Hampton Finance Director Jeff Jylkka. He said the enhanced rating has the potential for big savings down the road.

Jylkka estimated the town saved about \$225,000 in interest when it went to market Wednesday with its new bond rating. That's compared to the rate the town would have got-

ten if it still had the AA+ rating.

The town sold \$21.2 million in 20-year general obligation bonds with an interest cost of 2.55 percent.

Matthew Spoerndle, a senior managing director with Phoenix Advisors, has been serving as the town's financial advisor for two years. He said what makes the rating upgrade particularly impressive is the fact that it comes even as the town is working on the costly renovation of the high school.

"They're adding debt – which is obviously relatively large for them – and even in the face of that, they're able to get an upgrade," Spoerndle said.

While the town may not have the kind of median incomes or property values reflected in more affluent towns with the AAA bond rating, Spoerndle and Jylkka there are many similar characteristics.

"Where East Hampton doesn't have the same income per capita as a Fairfield or a lower Fairfield County community, they are very well-run fiscally, very well-managed, and they have policies in place," Spoerndle said. "The S&P saw that and recognized it and rewarded the town for that."

According to Jylkka, the town can't control

how much money residents make or what their homes are worth, but it can control how it spends its money – and how it saves. He cited a \$5 million operating fund balance in the general fund that the town has built up over the years.

"The things we do have control over are having sound financial policies, having a strong fund balance, and conservative budgeting practices. Those are things that help us," he said.

Jylkka credited the finance board and Town Council with honing the policies that have made East Hampton successful.

"It's having good staff, too, that are going to make the right recommendations," Jylkka said. "You hope that the elected officials agree with your recommendations."

And he said officials do agree with staff recommendations, by and large.

An exception played out last month when the Town Council voted to fund a new ladder truck for the fire department through a debt sinking fund all at once instead of signing a lease-purchase agreement over ten years.

Jylkka had expressed reservations about buying the truck outright because of reasons related to cash flow and the effect on the mill rate.

But he said this week that he doesn't expect the decision to affect the town's bond rating. That's because the money was taken from a sinking fund in the capital reserve account, not from the healthy general fund cited by S&P analysts as a reason for the rating increase.

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson presented Jylkka with a framed copy of the upgrade announcement at Tuesday's Town Council meeting.

For Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, two bond rating upgrades in three years is an impressive accomplishment that will help pave the way for continued financial strength. He cited Jylkka's strong management practices as well as efficient budgeting by department heads as driving forces in the town's success.

"Recognition and appreciation is clearly deserved for all the town staff and elected officials whose hard work and fiscal discipline is paying off," Maniscalco said.

The potential interest rate savings represented in the rating upgrade comes as the town mulls expensive projects ranging from relocating the town hall to overhauling the town's water system. According to Maniscalco, the AAA rating will save millions of dollars in the long run.

\$25M Living Facility Proposed for St. Clements in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

St. Clements Castle & Marina is looking to construct a \$25 million, two-story community living facility and hotel on its riverfront property, located near the Portland-East Hampton town line.

The project is part of the Rev. Edward Doherty's vision for a multi-generational community incorporated into the building's four connected "neighborhoods," each square built around an enclosed, climate-controlled atrium. He calls it the Port-Hampton Village of the Welcomes.

The community model featured in Doherty's plan for the 82-acre property represents a shift from traditional assisted living settings that Doherty referred to as "geriatric jungles." Rather, elderly people would live among staff members and their families, so that all ages are represented. About 75 of the estimated 375 units would be available for overnight accommodations for wedding guests, he said.

The idea is to bring the outside in through geothermal atriums with year-round gardens and amenities including an Irish pub and Italian bakery, according to Doherty.

Doherty is chairman of the Roncalli Institute, a non-profit created to address the health and welfare of elderly people. Numerous non-profit entities and trusts, as well as the for-profit St. Clements banquet facility, exist under the umbrella of the Roncalli Institute.

More than 20 years ago, Roncalli purchased St. Clements Castle for direct service to the elderly and their caregivers. Doherty had no idea it would turn into a wedding destination. But he saw an opportunity, he said - "and opportunities are only given to you once."

Now the facility sees approximately 40,000 annually.

"When this one makes money, it makes money for charity," he said.

Doherty said some of the biggest causes served by the Roncalli Institute include St. Vincent de Paul Place in Middletown and Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell. Tax filings from 2013 indicate the organization gave \$9,200 to the Middletown charity for homeless people and \$11,897 to the college.

Roncalli also owns elderly housing facilities in West Hartford and East Hartford. At the lat-

ter facility, a similar plan for a multigenerational community living arrangement built around an enclosed atrium is set to begin construction in March, Doherty said.

To make the plan a reality in Portland, St. Clements' business and development consultant Raymond Termini said the state is requiring an overhaul of the facility's current engineered septic system.

The solution St. Clements proposed at last week's Board of Selectmen meeting showed a cooperative arrangement that would result in a forced main extending from a planned wastewater pumping station on the St. Clements property about 2.5 miles to the treatment plant off Route 66 in East Hampton.

Project engineer Christopher B. Wester of Weston & Sampson, Inc. said the proposed agreement would require the Town of Portland to own, operate and maintain the forced main from the point where it exits the St. Clements property until it arrives at the manhole in front of the East Hampton treatment plant. The 6-8 inch pressurized line would be able to carry 200,000 gallons of flow per day.

The pump station and forced main would cost approximately \$7 million - a tab that would be picked up by St. Clements, Wester said.

Termini told selectmen St. Clements looked into other sewer options that didn't prove feasible or cost-effective, including connecting to the Portland wastewater treatment facility; sending the flow under the river to the Middletown treatment facility; and building their own wastewater treatment facility for discharge into the river.

According to Termini, the sewer system from Portland to East Hampton is a "flush it and forget it" approach that will fulfill the state's requirement and allow St. Clements to go forward with its master plan.

The East Hampton treatment facility is operated by the Colchester-East Hampton Joint Facilities Committee.

The St. Clements proposal includes 50,000 gallons of flow reserved for the Great Hill Pond area, should the town decide to tie into the line. Wester said there are no plans currently in place for bringing service to Great Hill Pond - but there is enough capacity in the St. Clements pump station and the pressurized main to handle

the flow if the town decides to address the longstanding issue.

"What we have done is, we're planning capacity for them to eventually tie in somehow," Wester said. "We don't have a route envisioned at this point."

Portland Water and Sewer Commission member Norm Ward said ensuring capacity in the sewer system doesn't help the town if there's no plan to use it. He told the selectmen he feels the town's needs should be fully addressed in the St. Clements proposal.

"I think we're very shortsighted if we don't include the Great Hill Pond area in this proposal," Ward said. "It has been talked about and talked about and talked about, and I think it would be a shame, I repeat, a shame, if we leave the Great Hill Pond area out."

Wester said the plan's provisions are reserved for Great Hill Pond only: "There won't be an opportunity for anyone else to tie in."

When pressed on the issue, he acknowledged it's technically possible to let other entities use the system - but said it's an undesirable configuration with a host of design issues.

"I tend to answer it's not going to be available," he clarified.

Wester said a similar presentation to the one given to the Portland selectmen's board, which also acts as the town's sewer authority, will be made to the Colchester/East Hampton Joint Facilities Committee.

The chair of that committee, Mark Barmasse - who also chairs the East Hampton Water and Sewer Commission - said this week he's not sure the committee is necessarily the most appropriate party to enter into the agreement with Portland.

While both Colchester and East Hampton own the sewage treatment facility, Barmasse said Marlborough discharges its wastewater into the East Hampton system and thus has an agreement with East Hampton. And since Hebron discharges into the Colchester system, that town's agreement is with Colchester.

He said East Hampton's direct involvement in the sewer system could be beneficial because of the potential need for the town to tie in somewhere down the line. He cited an idea that's been floating around to build a water treatment

facility in Cobalt, which would need a sewer to discharge its backwash into.

As for Wester's statement that the system won't be available to entities outside St. Clements and Great Hill Pond, Barmasse said additional tie-ins are possible, and can be resolved through negotiations: "If it's designed properly, that's not an issue."

Termini told the Portland selectmen last week that the question before them is not about cost of operation and maintenance - which Public Works Director Richard Kelsey agreed is "not significant" - but about economic development.

"I think if you keep your eye on the prize it wouldn't be on the cost of the discharge, it would be the fact that we're going to be constructing a \$75 million to \$100 million facility on the grounds of St. Clements which will create a tax base for the town," Termini said.

Doherty said the price tag Termini referred to was for St. Clements' entire master plan, not just the proposed community living facility.

The community living concept represents the latest iteration of an expansion plan that has been in front of the Planning and Zoning Commission in one form or another for over 10 years. A 2002 special permit and a subsequent five-year extension led to the 2012 authorization of an 80-room inn and helicopter pad on the northern portion of the property.

Deanna Rhodes, the town's planning and land use administrator, said the 2012 approval is good until 2017. Deviations from the plan would require St. Clements to return to the Planning and Zoning Commission to request a modification, she said.

The 2012 permit modification includes a prohibition against any more than six extended-stay rooms, which must be confined to the penthouse level. It also specifies that "these rooms are for inn guests and are not be converted or presented as residential dwellings units for rental, sale or lease."

Planning and Zoning Commission minutes from March 2015 indicate the master plan for St. Clements, which was requested as a condition of the 2012 permit modification, will be shared only with the zoning commission chairman "as to prevent their future plans from becoming public."

Colchester School Administrators Movin' On Up

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Education Tuesday welcomed two new administrators - though neither of them are exactly new faces.

Josh Vinoski, currently program coordinator for the alternative education program, will start in the new position of assistant director of pupil services and special education Jan. 4.

Bacon Academy assistant principal Charles Hewes will take over July 1 as director of teaching and learning, following current director Barbara Gilbert's retirement at the end of this school year.

Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Kelly McNamara told the school board Vinoski cares about the students and about making good decisions regarding special education.

Vinoski has been part of the school system for 18 years - and said joining Colchester was "one of the best things that ever happened." He added that, while he's excited about his new role, it's "bittersweet" leaving the classroom.

"Mr. Vinoski's experience with special education and the community of Colchester will certainly complement and elevate the district's vision of supporting exceptional learners," Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu said. "Mr. Vinoski is a dedicated and compassionate professional whose talents are a wonderful addition to the team."

Mathieu said the district has begun searching for Vinoski's replacement in the alternative education program - and may hire an interim for a month while that search continues.

The district is also now looking to hire an assistant principal for Bacon Academy, thanks to Hewes' selection to fill Gilbert's shoes.

Hewes began in Colchester nine years ago as a social studies teacher at Bacon. For the last three years, he has served as assistant principal, while obtaining a doctorate from Central Connecticut State University.

"The district is near and dear to my heart," Hewes said. "There are a lot of encouraging and exciting things going on for education and for the students."

"Dr. Hewes has an endless amount of energy with a passion for teaching and learning through curriculum development," Mathieu said. "His knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy is superior and Colchester is fortunate to have someone with his knowledge and expertise."

* * *

The school board also voted unanimously to move forward with accepting Norwich students at Bacon Academy.

Since the Norwich school board had yet to approve the arrangement, the Colchester board motioned to move forward with the concept



Charles Hewes

subject to the terms of the agreement.

If the agreement is approved, there would be 15 freshmen from Norwich at Bacon for the 2016-17 school year.

Bacon Academy Principal Matt Peel explained Norwich does not have its own public high school. Rather, the town pays for students to attend one of a select number of schools - which are either magnet or technical schools, or Norwich Free Academy, which has 2,400 students spread out over a large campus.

"They don't have a traditional, average-sized, comprehensive high school," Peel said of Norwich. "Bacon fills a niche."

After going to multiple high school fairs at Norwich's middle school, Peel and Mathieu said they did see interest from the students.

Norwich would pay \$14,254 per student, which is Colchester's per pupil rate set by the state. Norwich would also pay for transportation. The first year would see 15 new students; from the second year on, Bacon would accept 10 students per year. Students would submit a five-page application and then there would be a blind lottery.

It hasn't been decided yet if a serious offense that occurred in Norwich - such as a drugs or weapons charge - resulting in an expulsion, would prohibit a student from entering the program.

Mathieu explained the Norwich school board had a meeting Tuesday, right before Colchester's meeting, and that there may be revisions to the agreement language. (At that meet-

ing, the Norwich board, which had already approved the general concept, sent agreement language to its counsel, Colchester Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said Thursday.)

Goldstein was in favor of the arrangement, as "it's an innovative way to bring revenue into town," Goldstein said.

Fellow board member Mary Tomasi also was in favor, mentioning that, when Bacon Academy was first started, students came from all over the country.

Member Brad Bernier, though, wanted to wait until there was a final agreement before him before approving anything.

"I'm in favor, but hesitant to approve [the agreement]," he said. "I'll approve moving forward with the concept."

With the Norwich board having sent the agreement to its counsel, Goldstein said Thursdays he expects the Colchester school board to hold a special meeting next week for a final vote on the concept.

* * *

The next regular Board of Education meeting is Saturday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m., at Jack Jackter Intermediate School in room 120.



Josh Vinoski

Colchester Resident Spreads Message of Hope and Healing

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

As Michael Ferris sat at his potter's wheel in the basement of his home, concentrating on molding the clay into a beautiful vase, God called on him.

God called on him to save many lives emotionally and spiritually which he has begun doing through his program "A Journey to the Potter's House."

It began in 2007 in a classroom of adult learners he was teaching a master's level course to in counseling.

Ferris serves as an adjunct professor at the Alliance Theological Seminary and the Alliance Graduate School of Counseling in Rockland County, N.Y. He is also an ordained minister with the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

"I told the students if you're going to be effective as a counselor, counsel out of your own brokenness," Ferris said. "If you don't do the journey yourself, you can't do it with the person you're counseling."

Ferris explained before he has the students rewrite their life story, he tells them the story of Joseph in the Bible. Joseph went through many trials and tribulations in life; however, he chose to be positive and be a good man.

"He could be bitter and cynical or transcend it," Ferris said. "It's how he chose to respond."

That night after teaching the class, Ferris said he was home at his potter's wheel—a hobby that is therapeutic to him—thinking about the order of operations of making a pot. To make a pot, he explained, one has to gather clay, which begins as imperfect and muddy from the swamp. This is like a person being imperfect and marred, he said.

The potter then kneads, or wedges, the clay to get it all going in the same direction and to get the air bubbles out. Ferris likened this process to cleansing a person's sins.

The potter then continues to work his clay on the potter's wheel with patience, meaning and purpose to make a vessel of honor. The potter also uses pressure and pain, two things people go through in their lives as well.

"God spoke to my heart," Ferris said. "He said this is you under this process. This is what

I'm doing with your life."

In his mind, Ferris began going through a life review of growing up in New York in an unfortunate context and feeling the need to save many lives. As a young boy, Ferris said, his mother abandoned him, and he lived at a wealthy Thoroughbred horse barn, working for room and board. At 19, he went into the Navy, becoming a deep sea diver and later a psychologist. For years, he had a private counseling practice while also teaching in New York.

"I just wept," Ferris said after feeling God speak to him while at the wheel. "I thought, 'I must show this to the class.'"

The next day he did exactly that. He brought his wheel to his class and shared with them the same revelation that the potter's wheel and what the potter is doing is exactly how God shapes people.

"No matter the pretty faces, all are hurting," he said. "The place was a wreck. People were crying. It was incredible."

The night after the class, Ferris said he got a call from a very serious man.

"He said that his wife was in my class and came home shaken up and hadn't been the same. I was worried he was mad," Ferris said. "His voice softened and he asked me to come to his church and do it for the people there."

Ferris said he went and did for the church the presentation he had done for the class.

"God touched their hearts," he said.

That first year Ferris went to a dozen churches. The next year it was 33 places then 43 places then 63 places. It hasn't been just churches. He said he's been on the street, in ghettos, in hospitals, in schools, in parks, almost anywhere. Ferris closed his private counseling practice and turned "A Journey to the Potter's House" into a 501c3 non-profit. The presentation is on DVD and Ferris also performs it live. He's been on cable shows and just came back from Trinidad in September. Ferris has been broadcast in five countries and the DVD is now being translated to Chinese as well.

"The power of the message is universal because pain is universal," Ferris said. "It's a tre-



Michael Ferris of Colchester has been spreading his message of how God works in people such as a potter with his clay all around the world.

mendous message of hope."

Ferris said people really respond to his lecture.

"There was a woman I saw last year that came up to me while I was in New York," Ferris said. "She said she had cried all night long and for the first time, she was free."

Another woman, he said, told him she knew God had sent Ferris to her to find forgiveness for the man who murdered her son.

"As a psychologist, if people don't heal from their pain, they organize their life around it and recreate it," Ferris said. "They are seeking healing, but don't know how."

He explained forgiveness is not going to change what the other person did, but is a prin-

icipal that sets a person free.

Performing the lecture all over the world without a full-time job has its downfalls. To supplement his income, Ferris sells his pottery and also teaches private pottery lessons at his home in Colchester.

"This is all I'm doing," he said. "I do the pottery for the message, not for the pottery. It's the vehicle to get the word out."

Ferris said he sees himself as taking "A Journey to the Potter's House" all over the world for the rest of his life.

To learn more about Ferris or to contact him about booking a lecture or pottery lessons, he can be reached at ajourneytothepottershouse.com or at 860-966-1667.

Colchester Town Planner Search Stalled

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

There hasn't been a full-time town planner for months—and that void is expected to last a while longer, at the most recent potential appointee withdrew her application.

Adam Turner departed his town planner position in June, to take a job in Martha's Vineyard. Since that time, Randy Benson, assistant town planner and zoning enforcement officer, has stepped in when needed. Meanwhile the town has conducted a search for Turner's replacement—a search that has proven fruitless.

The latest would-be planner, Janell Mullen of Sharon, was on the cusp of being appointed—the issue was about to go before the Board of Selectmen—but withdrew to take a job elsewhere.

So it's back to the drawing board. "We have to send the job description back out and start taking applications again," Shilosky said. "It's been a long process. I don't know where it's going to end."

Mullen is just the latest applicant to change her mind. Since Turner resigned, the town has seen others people apply for the job only to take other jobs elsewhere before the town could appoint them.

Shilosky said the town is considering shortening the appointment process, in the hopes that one of these applicants will actually stick around.

"[The applications] go to one place for review, another place for review, back to my of-

fice then a selectmen meeting," Shilosky said. "We need to streamline that system."

Shilosky also said finding high-quality candidates has proven difficult.

"If you're any good, you [already] have a job," he said.

"People send in applications nowhere near qualified," Shilosky said. "Out of 14 applications, two were qualified—and by the end of the process they already have jobs."

Shilosky said there are five qualifications applicants need to meet. If a person has most of them—four out of five—he said the town may be willing to work with them.

"We have employees we hire with not all of the qualifications, but who are in the process of getting that qualification," Shilosky said.

The problem though, he said, is that some applicants have only had two of the five needed qualifications.

Meanwhile, Benson will continue filling in as town planner when needed. But the first selectman was clear this is hardly an ideal situation.

"It's being covered, but not being covered the way it needs to be," Shilosky said. "[Benson] only has so many hours in the day."

Shilosky said it's imperative the town bring in a new planner soon.

"I want to get some more economic development going," he said, "and you can't without a town planner."

Two Arrested in Connection with Colchester Arson

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Police reported two people have been arrested in connection with torching a car in town last September.

On Sept. 4, 2014, Colchester Police investigated a vehicle found in a wooded area off Miles Standish Road that had been burned. The vehicle had been reported stolen from a home on Middletown Road, police said, and the incident was declared arson.

Police said Shawn Aldrich, 31, of 14 Wildwood Ln., East Hampton, was charged with first-degree arson, conspiracy to commit first-degree arson, third-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, second-degree criminal trover, conspiracy to commit second-degree criminal trover, insurance fraud, con-

spiracy to commit insurance fraud, first-degree criminal mischief, conspiracy to commit first-degree criminal mischief, second-degree reckless endangerment, and operating under suspension.

Wanda Folsom, 54, of 9 Cardinal Rd., Colchester, was also arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit first-degree arson, conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, insurance fraud, conspiracy to commit first-degree criminal mischief, and second-degree false statement, police said.

According to public records, both Aldrich and Folsom are listed with 698 Middletown Rd. in Colchester as a former address.

Colchester School Board Cancels Paris Trip

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A planned Bacon Academy French Club trip to France next spring has been called off, due to concerns over security and safety after the attacks on Paris, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu told the Board of Education Tuesday.

Twenty students, along with chaperones, were expected to go to France. Mathieu said he made the call before Thanksgiving, when the families would lose only \$300, rather than the \$600 if the trip had been canceled after Dec. 13.

"I didn't see ISIS was going to be elimi-

nated in the near future," Mathieu said. "I felt safe to make that decision. It is unpopular with students, but I have to think about safety."

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said Thursday that in the past, when other school districts have canceled planned trips due to security reasons, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents has asked the insurance provider for the trip to refund any money families have deposited for the trip—so there's a chance the Colchester families may be able to recoup that \$300.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Robert Michael Schunk

Robert Michael Schunk passed away peacefully Tuesday, Nov. 17, after battling a long-term illness, in Cape Coral, Fla. He was the longtime companion and partner of Laurie Sweet of East Hampton.

Robert was born in Middletown Dec. 9, 1955, and was the son of Robert Schunk Sr. and Chloris (Pelletti) Schunk. He resided in East Hampton and Portland, before moving to Florida. A carpenter by trade and was an avid outdoorsman.

He is survived by his brother, Kerry Schunk and his wife Deborah Schunk of East Hampton; his son, Justin Schunk and his daughter-in-law Katie Schunk of East Hampton; his daughter, Amanda Schunk of Cape Coral, Fla.; and his grandchildren Miranda Schunk, Maximus Schunk and Mabel Schunk.

A reception to celebrate Robert's life will be held at the VFW Hall, 20 North Maple St., East Hampton, Saturday, Dec. 12, from 3-5 p.m.



Portland

Terrence J. Hetrick

Terrence J. Hetrick, 60, of Portland, passed away Saturday, Dec. 5. He is the son of Barbara (Organek) Hetrick of West Hartford and the late James Hetrick Jr.

Born Oct. 24, 1955, in Middletown, he was a lifelong Portland resident. He was an avid reader, loved history and airplanes. Terry was a father to more than just his two daughters; his caring and giving personality made him a second dad to many. He dedicated many of his early years to volunteering for the Portland Fire Department and later as a coach to the Portland High softball team. He had a heart of gold and was always willing to help out wherever and whenever he was needed. He was a loved and trusted friend to all who knew him.

Besides his mother, he leaves his daughters, Jennifer Marshall and husband, Alan III, of Colchester and Rebecca Hetrick of Portland; a brother, James Hetrick III and wife, Carol of Coventry; six grandchildren, Chloe, Kaylee, Jillian, Alan IV and Zachary Marshall, and Emma Smith, stepmother; Joanne Hetrick of South Glastonbury; stepsisters, Kimberly, Karen and Kristin Smith, and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brother, Christopher Hetrick.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Dec. 10, at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial followed in the Swedish Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Wednesday, Dec. 9, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Portland Fire Department Company 1, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.

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



Colchester

Nora Janet Denis

Nora Janet (Bunker) (Montalvo) Denis, 62, of Colchester, formerly of Waterbury, beloved wife of Lionel "Michael" Denis, passed away Sunday, Dec. 6, surrounded by her loving family. Born Aug. 19, 1953, in Waterbury, she was a daughter of the late John and Yvette (LeVasseur) Bunker.

Nora had worked for Connecticut as an insurance benefits consultant for many years. Her greatest joy and devotion was found in caring for her family, especially cooking and baking for them. She especially loved to spend time with her grandchildren and share with them her talent for arts and crafts.

In addition to her loving husband of 18 years, she leaves three children, Cheryl Montalvo, Jolene Emmerson and Louis Montalvo, all of Colchester; two stepsons, Michael Denis of Plainville and Nicholas Denis of Enfield; eight grandchildren, Kayla, Erica, Taylor, Cameron, Rylee, Kara, Ethan and Kyle; five siblings, Wayne Bunker, Joyce Fournier, Kathy Battaglia and Annette Searles, all of Waterbury, and Tammy Bunker of Colchester; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends may call Saturday, Dec. 12, starting at 11 a.m., before a chapel service at 12:30 p.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Michael L. Gibson

Michael L. Gibson, "Hoot," 61, of East Hartford, formerly of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Dec. 5. Born Oct. 13, 1954, in New Haven, he was the son of the late Elijah and Geraldine (Hill) Gibson Jr.

He was a 1973 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester, where he gained his nickname of "Hoot." While in high school, he was very athletic, participating in track & field and wrestling, as well as playing both tuba and bass guitar in the band.

He served proudly with the U.S. Air Force, being honorably discharged at the rank of sergeant in August 1981.

Michael had worked as a laser technician for KAMAN Aerospace for many years.

In his spare time, he had continued to play bass with several different bands and was a fan of Tower of Power. Michael was known for his talent as a dart player, ability to win concert tickets from nearly any radio contest and his love of ketchup.

He is survived by three siblings, Anthony of West Haven, Craig of Rocky Hill and Deborah Mitchell of East Hartford; two nephews, Jahmal and Brandon Mitchell of East Hartford; a special uncle, Raymond Gibson of Middletown; longtime friends, Joan Dinnie of East Hartford and Marty Zibuda of Cromwell; former brother-in-law, Vaughan Mitchell of East Hartford; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by two brothers, Alan and Balery.

The family will receive guests starting at 10 a.m. today, Dec. 11, at the Shiloh Baptist Church, 346 Butternut St., Middletown, followed by the funeral service at 10:30 a.m. Committal with full military honors will follow in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 128 Stonemark Ln., Columbia, SC 29210.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Marlborough

Paul E. Belanger

Paul E. Belanger, 75, of Marlborough, formerly of Palm Coast, Fla., passed away after a long illness Friday, Dec. 4, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. Born in Hartford July 29, 1940, he was the son of the late Emile and Cecile (McCormick) Belanger.

Mr. Belanger was a proud veteran, having served with the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. Following which, he was a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans Association. He retired several years ago after an entrepreneurial career as a salesman and franchise sales regional manager. He will be remembered as a hard-working man, a dedicated patriot and a devoted father and grandfather.

Survivors include two sons and their spouses, Paul Belanger Jr. and wife Shari of Worcester, Mass., Patrick Belanger and wife Lisa of Marlborough, with whom he made his home in later years; a sister, Pauline Alfano; a brother-in-law, Anthony Alfano; five grandchildren, Darren, Caroline, Andrew, Jason and Lilah; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Calling hours were held Tuesday, Dec. 8, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral Mass was celebrated Wednesday, Dec. 9, at St. Andrew's Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial followed in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown, with full military honors.

Donations in his memory may be made to Disabled American Veterans, PO Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Amston

Christopher Opocensky

Christopher Jardo Opocensky, 39, of Amston, passed away suddenly early Friday morning, Dec. 4, at his home. Born July 7, 1976, in Hartford, he was the son of Jardo and Darlene (Banks) Opocensky of Amston.

Christopher married Sherri Folstrom on July 14, 1998. They made their home and raise their family in Amston. He was employed by KAMAN Corp of Bloomfield, working as their IT assistant manager.

Christopher was a charter member of the Sons of the American Legion, Post 95. He was an avid fan of the Mets baseball team, Manchester United soccer team and the Washington Redskins football team. He was also a former member of RHAM Board of Education. Most importantly, he will be remembered as a devoted and loving husband, who shared a very special connection with his beloved Sherri and was an adoring father to his three girls.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his wife, Sherri; parents, Jardo and Darlene; three daughters, Meghan Miller of Myrtle Beach, S.C., Lauren and Amelia Opocensky of Amston; aunts, Helen Opocensky of Andover, Nadine Greene, Threesa Sykes, Anita Greer and Tanya Banks, all of North Carolina; uncle, Edgar Banks of North Carolina; father-in-law, Albert Folstrom of Covington, Wash.; and numerous extended family and friends.

Funeral services were held Monday, Dec. 7, with a chapel service immediately following, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial was private.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Christopher Opocensky children's benefit fund, C/O Savings Institute Bank and Trust Co. Hebron Branch, 115 Main St., Hebron, CT 06248.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Amston

Carol DeCoste MacKay

Carol DeCoste MacKay, 72, of Andover, passed peacefully at home Sunday, Dec. 6, surrounded by her loving family.

Carol was born and raised in Melrose, Mass., the daughter of Esther and Leonard DeCoste. She graduated from the Tufts/Forsyth School of Dental Hygiene in Boston and practiced dental hygiene for many years in dental and orthodontic offices in West Hartford and Willimantic.

In 1963, Carol married Bruce MacKay and until his death in 2008, they'd spent 44 years together raising four children, maintaining their 40 acres of Andover woodlands and sugar bush, building a cottage in Newbury, Vt., as their second home, vacationing in St. John U.S. Virgin Islands, and enjoying their six grandchildren. Carol has been an active member of the Andover community for over 50 years.

Carol was an intelligent, creative, and spirited woman, and her talents were many. She was an expert on antique furniture, including Margolis, Fineberg, and Colonial, and enjoyed attending auctions, fashioned beautiful custom jewelry, created flower and vegetable gardens in Connecticut and Vermont, wrote beautifully, was proficient in sewing, knitting, and needlework, read extensively, especially historical fiction, and baked a mouth-watering apple pie. In mid-June, she looked forward with great anticipation to her field of abundant lupine blooms in Vermont.

Carol's life was enriched by her love of music. With Carol Howard, she led the junior choir at the Andover Congregational Church and a children's choir at St. Columba Church in Columbia. Carol was secretary of the Andover Rural Music Committee, which sponsored local musical events and was a precursor of today's Hop River Chamber Music concerts. For over a decade she was a member of The Rainy Day Trio with two friends who shared her love of folk music. The Trio performed in various venues around Connecticut. Carol's strong voice usually carried the melody.

Carol also served as secretary of the Andover Historical Society, was a cantor at St. Columba for many years, volunteered for hospice, took part in Andover Community Club plays, and volunteered for the Salvation Army. She was a member of the Fifth Wheel, a Manchester-area social club and support group. Carol also supported many charities, including the Sloan Kettering Cancer Hospital, The Smile Train, Heffer International, and the Newbury, Vt., public library.

Carol lived her life with compassion and caring for others, and enjoyed spending time with her friends. She especially enjoyed the summer and winter solstice gatherings. She cherished her many friendships and nurtured them in countless ways — thoughtful gifts, beautifully written tributes, and truly amazing thank-you notes! Carol was a true "Rainy Day Friend" — always there when you needed her. She set an example for us all in how to enjoy life and have compassion for others.

Carol's strength and courage during her valiant struggle with cancer was an inspiration to all who knew her. She took charge of her illness by building knowledge with extensive research to choose her doctors and guide her treatments. She rarely complained and actively participated in life until only a short time before her death. She has been a source of strength to many as a 17-year breast cancer survivor.

She is survived by four children, son Brian and wife, Kristen, of Ayer, Mass., daughter Michelle and husband, Yann, of Manhattan, N.Y., twin sons Scot, of Manchester, and Kevin, of Simsbury; and six grandchildren, Caitlyn, Mathis, Christopher, Connor, Jules and John. She is also survived by four sisters in Massachusetts, Kay, Lindy, Jean, and Jackie. She leaves behind many close and longtime friends who were amazingly supportive and loving. They were a second family to her.

Friends may call today, Dec. 11, from 4-7 p.m., at Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester. Funeral services will be held Saturday, Dec. 12, at 1 p.m. at First Congregational Church of Andover, 359 Route 6. Burial will follow in Townsend Cemetery.

Carol's family would like to give special thanks to Dr. Clifford Hudis, chief of the Breast Cancer Medicine Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and Dr. Patricia Defusco, of the Connecticut Multispecialty Group, her longtime oncologists, for their wise advice, loving care and continued support. The family would also like to thank Dawn and the other kind nurses at the Wethersfield Infusion Center.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Memorial Sloan Kettering Breast Cancer Research, First Congregational Church of Andover, Andover Historical Society, the Newbury, Vt., public library, or Andover Public Library.

For online condolences visit tierneyfuneralhome.com.

*Portland***Domenic DiDomizio**

Domenic DiDomizio, 94, of Cromwell, died Sunday, Nov. 22, at home. A lifelong resident of Connecticut, he was born in Bridgeport in 1921, and spent part of his childhood in Portland before settling in Cromwell.

Domenic survived the Great Depression to attend the University of Connecticut, where he played soccer and studied business administration. He was a great conversationalist, who enjoyed opera, fishing, hunting, and skiing. An accomplished artist, he traveled to Mystic often as a young man to show his oil paintings and drawings. In the 1970s, Domenic embraced photography and took his camera everywhere, shooting photos for friends and relatives and developing them in his home darkroom. He was also a master knitter and an avid baker, specializing in fruitcakes and cheesecakes. After retirement, Domenic took several trips to Kenya, and was greatly moved by the landscape, wildlife, and people.

He is predeceased by his parents, Carmenantonio and Elizabeth, and his brothers Ralph and Anthony. Domenic leaves a sister, Teresa B. DiDomizio; nephews Mark, Michael, and Matthew; niece, Milva; grandnephews, Christopher, Anthony, Nicolas, and Eric; and grandnieces, Justine, Katie, Claire and Abigail.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held Saturday, Dec. 12, at 10 a.m. at Saint John's Church, 5 Saint John Court, Cromwell. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Domenic's memory may be made to Saint John Church, 5 Saint John Court, Cromwell, CT 06416.

Cromwell Funeral Home is handling the arrangements. To share memories or send condolences to the DiDomizio family, visit doolittlefuneralservice.com.

*Portland***Nancy Goodrich**

Nancy (White) Goodrich, 89, of Chaplin, has entered eternal life and has gone home to be with the Lord Saturday, Dec. 5. She was born Feb. 9, 1926, in Portland, daughter of Charles and Yada (Bachman) White.

Nancy was predeceased by her beloved husband of 40 years, William Clark Goodrich. She is survived by her three dear children, David Goodrich of Hampton, Janice Taylor, Pamela Goodrich of Chaplin and her devoted and loving daughter-in-law Sandi Goodrich of Mansfield. She also leaves six devoted grandchildren; Kimberly Passarello, Seth Taylor, Nicole LaBoy, Stephanie Walker, Zachary Keenan and Nathan Goodrich and 10 loving great grandchildren; Brandon, Serena, Kaitlyn, Terrance, Hannah, Emily, Marlee, Yeshua, Quinn and Samuel. Patricia Makowski, of Higganum, is the only surviving sibling of six.

Nancy will be dearly missed by her fiancé of 26 years, Richard A. Brown of Storrs. Together, they enjoyed working various sporting venues for UConn.

Nancy was a graduate of Portland High School, Class of 1944, where she graduated with high honors. She volunteered with various organizations, including but not limited to the Girl Scouts, 4H and the PTA. She and her husband owned and operated Lost Acres Orchard in North Granby for 20 years. Nancy worked for 22 years for the Postal Service including Dennysville, ME, North Granby, Hampton, West Willington and Mansfield Center.

After Bill retired, they purchased land from Bill's parents in Chaplin, along the Natchaug River. Upon moving to Chaplin, she became involved in the Chaplin Republican Town Committee and the Chaplin Library Board. Mrs. Goodrich was very active in the Chaplin Congregational Church for many years, including church committee and the Women's Fellowship. She dearly loved her country home, family and many friends.

Nancy's family received friends and relatives Thursday, Dec. 10, at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Route 195), Willimantic. Her funeral service will be held today, Dec. 11, at 10 a.m., at the Chaplin Congregational Church, 43 Chaplin St., Chaplin, with the burial to follow at the New Swedish Cemetery, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Chaplin Congregational Church, 43 Chaplin St. Chaplin, CT 06235.

For an online memorial guestbook, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

*Colchester***Leo E. Comeau**

Leo E. Comeau, 87, of Glastonbury, formerly of Colchester, loving husband of 31 years of Rosemarie (Cascio) Comeau, passed away peacefully Friday, Dec. 4, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital. Born in Waterville, Maine, on January 14, 1928, he had resided in Colchester for over 20 years prior to moving to Glastonbury in 2009.

Leo was a proud veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and of the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Prior to his retirement, he was employed for over 30 years by the U.S. Postal Service in Hartford and later at Bradley International Airport, Windsor Locks. Leo loved playing golf and was a long time member at Goodwin Park Golf Course in Hartford where he participated in many leagues. He was also an avid walker and former member of St. Andrew's Church, Colchester.

Besides his beloved wife, Leo is survived by two stepsons, Pastor Mark A. Santostefano and his wife, Judy, of Glastonbury, Dean J. Santostefano of Glastonbury; a step-daughter, Elisa M. Paternostro and her husband, Pat, of Essex; seven step-grandchildren, Emily Santostefano, Nicholas Santostefano, Jesse Santostefano, Luke Santostefano, James Paternostro, Jenna Santostefano and Olivia Santostefano; a step great-granddaughter, Nina Kukulski; several nieces, nephews, dear friends and former co-workers.

A memorial service celebrating Leo's life will be Saturday, Dec. 12, at 11 a.m., at the D'Esopo-East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford, with his stepson, Pastor Mark Santostefano, officiating. Burial with military honors will follow at Neipsic Cemetery, (Military Section), Neipsic Road, Glastonbury. There are no calling hours.

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

Colchester Remains Identified as Deep River Man

by **Kaitlyn Schroyer**

The human remains found in the Salmon River State Forest Nov. 28 were those of a missing Deep River man.

Jeffrey Ziobron, 60, was reported missing May 2, 2013, from his 106 West Elm St. address. He was reported to have been seen on the Air Line Trail, near the Hebron/Lebanon line, the following month; however, the trail went cold.

In media reports from around the time he went missing, Ziobron, a Vietnam veteran, was described as someone who knew how to

survive in the wilderness. The reports said he may have been suffering from some memory loss, and may have left home distraught.

Detectives from the Eastern District Major Crime Unit and Troop K responded to the state forest near Flat Brook Road at 3:20 p.m. Nov. 28 to investigate the found remains. The chief medical examiner's office is still attempting to determine the cause of death.

However, state police said there is no criminal aspect to the investigation.

Uncasville Woman Dies in Crash

by **Kaitlyn Schroyer**

State Police reported an Uncasville woman died after a one-car crash on Route 2 eastbound at 11:45 p.m. Wednesday.

Stephanie Jones, 22, of 65 Kitemaug Rd., Uncasville, was driving a 2010 Mercedes GLK350 near exit 16 when she failed to negotiate a turn in the highway. Police said the vehicle swerved to the right, hitting a rock wall, police said. After hitting the wall, the vehicle crossed the highway to the left and hit a guard rail. Upon impact with the rail, the car erupted into flames.

Police said Jones died at the scene.

Woman Charged with Threatening Daycare

State Police said Kristy Ellison, 36, of 81 Old Colchester Rd., Amston, was arrested Dec. 4 after allegedly threatening to "blow up" and "shoot up" the Discovery Zone Learning Center at 45 Pendleton Dr.

Police charged Ellison with second-degree breach of peace and second-degree threatening.

Police reported Ellison, a parent at the center, threatened the daycare facility at 9:50 a.m. after becoming upset over an administrative issue.

Neither representatives from Discovery Zone or Ellison's family returned calls in time to comment on the incident.

East Hampton Police News

11/24: Lisa Dixon, 29, of 3 Old Depot Hill Rd., was issued a summons for interfering with officers, East Hampton Police said.

11/25: Jessica Nichols, 25, of 20 No. Main St., was issued a summons for shoplifting (sixth-degree larceny), police said.

11/26: Richard Washington, 61, of 9 West High St., was issued a summons for second-degree threatening, police said.

11/27: Following a routine stop for a motor vehicle violation, Gary Messier, 40, and Kimberly Rodrique, 28, both of 19 Main St., were arrested on a host of charges, police said. Messier was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of heroin, interfering with an officer, first-degree reckless endanger-

ment, violation of a protective order, reckless driving, disobeying an officer's signal, operating a motor vehicle without a license and traveling unreasonably fast, police said. Rodrique, Messier's passenger, was charged with interfering with an officer, possession of heroin and possession of drug paraphernalia, police added.

11/27: Richard Lewis, 41, of 9 Woodland St., was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

11/29: Brian R. Hurlbutt, 59, of 36 Phelps Rd., Marlborough, was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

11/30: Mark Valliere, 53, of 314 Tobacco St., Lebanon, was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

Colchester Police News

12/1: State Police said Carlos Gray, 43, of 108 Knollwood Rd., Manchester, was arrested and charged with evading responsibility and failure to drive in the proper lane.

12/2: Colchester Police said Devon Chicoine, 32, of 346 Lebanon Ave., was arrested and charged with violation of probation.

12/5: State Police said Billy McNamara, 41, of 59 Birch St., Manchester, was arrested and charged with two counts of failure to appear.

Marlborough Police News

12/1: State Police said Robert Slason, 23, of 15 Apple Ln., Colchester, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

12/2: State Police said Vincent Caccamo, 38, of 24 Deer Run, was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a child and disorderly conduct.