

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Toy Drive... State Sen. Art Linares hosted a successful Toy Drive on Dec. 15 at Tri-Town Foods IGA in Portland. "Thank you to area residents for stopping by and donating an unwrapped toy for distribution by the Community Renewal Team to needy children in Portland," Linares said. "Year after year, the Community Renewal Team changes lives and creates opportunities in our communities. We are so appreciative of what they do for families throughout our region." Here, Linares and Community Renewal Team Early Care and Education Unit Manager Marla Hines stand at Tri-Town Foods IGA in Portland with the donated toys.

Former Supt. Gets Suspended Sentence

by Geeta Schrayter

Former Hebron Superintendent of Schools Eleanor Cruz won't see any prison time for bilking the town's school system out of thousands of dollars.

The embattled former administrator was sentenced Monday to three years' suspended jail time and five years of probation after pleading guilty in September to first-degree larceny – a felony – relating to the misappropriation of funds from the Hebron school district.

Cruz, 65, was Hebron superintendent from 2005 to 2012, before leaving to become superintendent of Plymouth public schools. She resigned from that role after her arrest in August 2014, following a lengthy investigation into her alleged misuse of the Hebron school system's finances.

Shortly after departing for Plymouth, the Hebron school system discovered around \$15,000 in questionable expenses made during Cruz's final year in town. An investigation got underway in January 2013 that involved the Connecticut State Police as well as Forensic Accounting Services LLC of Glastonbury, which was hired by the school board to conduct a forensic audit of spending by the Board of Education.

That investigation determined Cruz had made around \$6,300 in unauthorized purchases using Hebron school system funds.

Included among that, as listed in the warrant from her 2014 arrest, is a \$100 insurance reim-

bursement in excess of Cruz's agreement; a \$2,400 travel stipend not included in Cruz's contract; \$390.38 in fuel purchases; another \$351.88 in personal credit card purchases; a \$2,375 payment for consulting services; Federal Express charges amounting to \$198.07; an \$89.72 purchase made at Ted's Supermarket in Hebron the day after Cruz's employment ended; purchases made at Rite Aid amounting to \$235.44; and a Wal-Mart purchase for \$145.87.

Cruz was also in possession of a district credit card with a \$50,000 limit that the Board of Education was not aware of. Then-business manager William Mazzara said in an interview with police he didn't think the card was a good idea, but never formally fought against getting it. (According to the warrant, various school system employees told police they considered Cruz intimidating, and felt if they didn't go along with what she wanted, they could lose their job.)

Throughout the 2013 investigation different individuals were asked about Cruz's habits and purchases – along with Cruz herself. Based on interviews Cruz had with state police and auditors, Cruz was found to be inconsistent in some of her explanations.

For example, when Cruz was hired by Plymouth, she hired a consultant to help analyze data from the Plymouth school system – and paid for the consultant with Hebron Board of

See Cruz Page 2

All I Want for Christmas Is...

Tomorrow's the big day, the day kids have been anxiously awaiting since – let's face it, probably Halloween. They'll wake up and race to see what Santa has left for them under the Christmas tree.

What will they get? Only Santa Claus knows for sure. But we have a pretty good idea what at least some of the kids around here will be getting. Once again, Marlborough Girl Scout Troop 65220 collected letters to Santa from area kids – and was nice enough to let us at the *Rivereast* give the letters a gander.

We found the letters delightful, so we typed the letters up (we left in the charming little kid misspellings on purpose) and are presenting them here. Don't worry, kids: after typing the letters up, we shipped them up to Santa's workshop. We've got an inside source at the North Pole – it pays to have friends in high places – and he assures us the letters did indeed make safe passage, and that Santa will do his best to fulfill as many of the Christmas wishes as possible.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at the *Rivereast*.

Dear Santa,
I have been a good girl...most of the time. For Christmas, I would like Simon the game and a lamp for reading and because I am scared of the dark! Have a nice trip on Christmas Eve!
Love, Sawyer

Dear Santa
If your reading this, than you should know that all I want for Chirisma is nothing. My mom is who I want to be happy and my dad bc my mom and dad worck hard for me and i want them fo have a good Chirisma.
That's all I want for Chirisma
From, Angelina

Dear Santa,
I really really want magic pens for Christmas if you have it.
From, Marina

Dear Santa,
I have been a good girl! I have tried really hard with my sister all year. For Christmas, I would like Battleship and long sleeve shirts. I hope you have a safe flight around the world. Merry Christmas!
Love, Reese

P.S. Hi Rudolph, How are you? Have a nice flight.

Dear Santa,
Legos, Pokemon cards, Phlat ball, Wubble, bathrobe, shark slippers, wretlers, medal baseball bat and a baseball, Diary of a wimpy kid books, LeBrans, Slinkeys, Nike shirts, batting gloves, new baseball bag, 87 patriots jersy or 12 patriots jersy. For all with nubers and last names on back.
From, Hunter

Dear Santa,
I hope things are running smoothly up at the North Pole, the reason I'm saying this is because, 1) I really do care and 2) in the movies I've been watching the North Pole was in total chaos.
What I really want for Christmas is either a family game got all of us to play together, Project MC² because I absolutely love sience, or maybe a phone to call my parents on; it doesn't even need to be an iphone but my one condition is that it has to be from Verizon (that's where my parents work).
Well that's it for me, **Julia**

Dear Santa,
I have been very good this year. Well, except for the one time when I kicked the cat. I would really like to find a horse under the tree!
From, Cassidy



See Santa Letters Page 2

Santa Letters cont. from Front Page

Dear Santa,
What I want this year is chocolate pen, where you can mold super cute chocolate charecters and make some flat chocolate charecters and made some flat chocolates to put on cupcakes and stuff. Next I want this camera thing, I forgot what it was called but it's this thing were you could put it anywere and you whould press a button and it whould tape a video. Then I want sewcool, it's the thing were you can sew things with no tred, it's super cool. Last but not least , I want a crayon carver were you can carve words into crayons. Finally I want Jordens, by the way my size is probably a size 2 ½ or size 3 can I please have the white ones for girls

Love, Evelyn

P.S. There will be cookies and milk!

Dear Santa,
For Christmas, I would like ipod and ipad cases. I would also like beanie boos and mittens with covers.

P.S. is your favorit color red? Because you wear it a lot.

Love, Izabella

Dear Santa,
How are you. I have been sort of good. I have really tried being good but its hard to be a good boy. Im asking for \$10 dollars, a nerf gun, refill darts and I cam asking for a Lego Eiffle Tower and a 2DS.

Love, Nate

Dear Santa
All i want for Christmas is a IPOD, Bearback pad, riding pants, and one more thing: horse treats.

And about the ipod i want the 6th generation and the color pink

Was I on the naughty or nice list and was freedom on the naughty or nice list.

Love, Careline – I really want the IPod

Dear Santa,
thank you for all the presents last year and the presents before that. I loved them! This year, can you at least get me one of the game staitons I asked for?

also how high up is the north pole anyway?

From, Nico

Dear Santa,
How are you? Please don't work too hard. I don't know what I want for christmas. Please surprise me. Christmas is my favorite holiday. How do you deliver all the presents. Thank you.

Love, Stella

P.S. what is your favorite kind of cookie.

Dear Santa,
I have been a good boy this year. I have been eating all my dinner. I have been going to bed when I a supposed to. I have been helping take care of my puppy. I have been trying to have good listening ears and trying to keep my hands to myself. This year for Christmas I really want a mountain bike with a kickstand. I also need a new helmet because Justin ran over it this morning with mom's car. I would also like a remote control monster truck. I also like remote control boats. I like legos and would like a snow-ball gun.

I will leave you come cookies and some carrots for the reindeer. Make sure Rudolf gets the most carrots.

Love, Connor

Dear Santa,
My name is Leia. I have been good. this is my Christmas list. Shopkins cards and a binder to go with it and shopkins. Make up kit frozen. two packs of playdough. Wood elves great eagles thred with warhawk riders. Tree men. Orion. Diary.

Love Leia

Dear Santa,
This year has been a fun year! To wrap up this year is chirstmas. I was wondering if you could give me the following:

1. 4x4x4 rubik's cube (a little bigger than my 3x3x3)
2. 5x5x5 (big!)
3. Minor cube
4. Pyimad cube (regular)
5. A laptop (please Santa I really need this for games/schooll)
6. A kindle (to read with for school)
7. Joy (make this a special Chirstmas)
8. A gaint lego (I know I did not finish my other ones)
9. Minecraft storymode
- 10.) reeds for saxophone

Thank you Santa for reading my letter. I hope you take into consideration that I want a laptop.

Thank you for your time, **Dom**

Dear Santa,
How are you? Is it really cold in the North pole? I bet it's going to be warm here for Christmas, do you think so?!

1. A Toy Monkey
2. Abby Cadabi stuffed animal
3. thomas the train
4. Daniel tiger
5. Walky talky

Love, Lucy

Deer santa,
I cant waet for the elf on the shelf

Love, Isabella

Cruz cont. from Front Page

Education funds. When Cruz was interviewed by the auditors, she said she told the consultant the funds would come from her professional development account, and the purpose was to discuss sustainability for Hebron. This, according to the warrant, was inconsistent with information the consultant shared; the consultant told police she was told the work was on Plymouth data, and she'd be paid out of Cruz's pocket at first, then by the Plymouth School District.

When Cruz was interviewed by police regarding the same issue, she also said the consultation was for the Plymouth school system, according to the warrant.

"Cruz's statements made to this affiant contradicted what Cruz explained during the interview with the Forensic Accounting Services, LLC staff," the warrant stated.

Along with her probation, Cruz was ordered to complete 250 hours of community service – 50 each year during her five years of probation.

Speaking on the sentence this week, Tolland County State's Attorney Matthew Gedansky

pointed out her sentence was less than what the state recommended.

"The state recommended three years [jail time] suspended after one year of incarceration and a period of probation to follow," he stated, adding, "I felt that [the investigation] warranted the charge, and the facts that the charge were based upon warranted punishment."

Cruz refused to say anything about her sentence this week and her attorney, John Gesmonde, did not return calls in time to comment for this story.

Board of Education Chair Maryanne Leichter also said this week she had "no comment" regarding the issue, but Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney said the sentencing meant the town and the school district could now move forward.

"I'm disappointed that the whole incident ever took place," he stated. "The judge has made his ruling and now the town of Hebron and the school district can move forward in a positive manner."

Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

This week's entry in the "You can't make it up" department: A national poll was recently conducted, asking Republicans and Democrats how they felt about various political and world issues. One of the questions asked respondents if they were in favor of bombing Agrabah.

Thirty percent of Republicans said 'yes,' and 19 percent of Democrats said they would as well.

Ideally, however, those percentages would have been 0 and 0. Why?

Because Agrabah's not a real place. It's a made-up country from the 1993 Disney film *Aladdin*. I guess the name just sounded bomb-worthy.

Republicans and Democrats are often at each other's throats, but stupidity, it turns out, can cross party lines.

* * *

Speaking of blunders, did you hear what happened at the Miss Universe pageant Sunday night? As anyone who's seen a beauty pageant can tell you, typically there are two contestants left standing. Of the two, one's the winner, and one's the first runner-up.

At the end of Sunday's pageant, Miss Colombia and Miss Phillipines were the two Misses left standing. Host Steve Harvey opened the envelope he held in his hand and declared the winner was Miss Colombia.

The crowd applauded, the music played (it was no "Here she is, Miss Universe," but oh well), and a beaming Miss Colombia wiped away tears of joy as she waved to everyone.

She basked in the glow of her win for a moment, and then Steve Harvey came back on stage, and said, "I have to apologize."

Seems Steve messed up when reading the card. The first runner-up was actually Miss Colombia; Miss Phillipines was the one who won.

That's – well, it's quite the blunder.

I wasn't watching the show Sunday night; I was doing other things. But I saw on Facebook a number of people express shock over what they just saw. So I went to Youtube, found a clip and – wow. It's as awkward and painful to watch as you'd expect.

When Steve announced Miss Colombia was actually the first runner-up, words can't adequately describe the shock on her face. Then she had to stand there as the crown was taken off her head and given to an equally-shocked Miss Phillipines.

The whole thing must've seemed like a bad dream to Miss Colombia.

While Miss Colombia obviously came out worse – "winning" the pageant only to have her title stripped from her minutes later – it's tough not to feel bad for Miss Phillipines too. She got her moment, but it was delayed – and not the moment she was due. "Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of Miss Universe is Miss Phillipines!" is obviously something you'll only hear once in your life. She didn't get to experience that – at least, not the way

she was supposed to. Yes, she was declared the winner, but the whole thing didn't go down the way it was supposed to, through no fault of her own at all.

Like I said, though, she did win the pageant, so it's tough to feel too sorry for her. Miss Columbia, though – you could just feel the pain on her face. It's tough *not* to feel bad for her (provided, of course, you're of the mind to feel sorry for beauty pageant contestants; it's very much a love-it-or-hate-it kind of thing, I know).

And then, of course, there's Steve Harvey. I've always liked the guy and it seemed like an honest mistake – just a very high-profile honest mistake – so I felt bad for him. He immediately took to Twitter to show remorse – although that too didn't go smoothly, as Harvey wrote he wanted to "apologize emphatically to Miss Phillipian and Miss Columbia." The "Phillipian" thing you can chalk up to auto-correct on his phone rearing its ugly head. As for "Columbia" – well, that's just a straight-up misspelling. (Maybe he had Columbia, Conn., on the mind?)

I will say this – the mistake Sunday got everyone talking. It made the news, clips circulated online, and it provided some bona fide water cooler conversation. Would everybody have been talking about the Miss Universe pageant otherwise? Probably not.

Donald Trump was among those talking on Monday. The Donald, you may recall, produced the Miss Universe pageants for years, but sold it back in September. Trump couldn't resist taking to Twitter early Monday morning and saying this "would never have happened!" under his watch.

Later Monday, Trump expanded on this in an appearance on *Today*, telling Matt Lauer that what he would've done is declared them both co-winners.

But, alas, that didn't happen. There was only one winner declared Sunday night. And it was.....not Miss Colombia.

* * *

It's hard to believe, but we've come to the end of another year. Well, almost. There's still a week to go – including tomorrow, Christmas Day. But, for us at the *Rivereast*, this is it. The offices will be closed next week, and we won't publish an issue. The offices will open back up at 8:30 a.m. Jan. 4, and our next issue will be the Jan. 8 one.

And speaking of Christmas, I mentioned last week Amston resident Dee Daigle was scheduled to appear on the Dec. 25 episode of *Jeopardy!* Well, it turns out the NBA had other plans. ABC is slated to show basketball tomorrow night – and *Jeopardy!* will be pre-empted.

Dee's episode will air the next day, on Saturday, Dec. 26, at 1 p.m., on WTNH-TV Channel 8.

* * *

All of us at the *Rivereast* hope all of you have a very merry Christmas.

Colchester Lions Give 200 Families Holiday Meals

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

For many, the holiday season is a time of family, cheer and good food. But for some, the season can be a more difficult time – particularly for those who have trouble making ends meet.

For the past half century, the Colchester Lions every year have worked to help those families, with their holiday dinner basket distribution.

Local families came into the warm Town Hall on Monday and were greeted with smiles and holiday cheer as they came in for their basket.

After checking in, the families were shown over 500 hats, scarves and mittens – all knitted and crocheted over the course of the year by Lions members and non-members in a rainbow of colors, shapes and sizes.

They then proceeded outside where volunteers waited to carry their box of holiday dinner fixings to their car. Each box contained a variety of items, including a turkey, pie, stuffing, apples, vegetables, cranberry sauce, coffee, bread and potatoes.

The Lions began the baskets 52 years ago. That first year, they delivered just five meals to area families. Over the years, though, that total has grown – and this year, the Lions distributed 200 baskets, which is actually on par with what they delivered last year.

“As Lions, our goal is to make a difference,” Lion President Michele Wyatt said. “This is a great opportunity to help and to give back to our community.”

While most of the families pick up their baskets at Town Hall, some of the distributions are done as they were 52 years ago – with Lions personally bringing baskets to those that can-

not come to Town Hall.

But no matter how they get the baskets, “the families are very grateful,” Lion Ginger Boughton, co-chair of the event, said. “Some are sad when they have to join the list, though, especially when they were able to help out [with the baskets] other years.”

The list of families that qualify for a basket is provided by Colchester Youth and Social Services (CYSS).

Boughton co-chaired the event with Lion Jack McNichols. Overall, 25 Lions helped out at Town Hall that day and Boughton said in the morning there was even a small girl who gave out cards and told the families ‘Merry Christmas’ as they went by.

Boughton made special mention of Leo Glemboski, the oldest member of the Colchester Lions. Year in and year out, Glemboski is at Town Hall, helping with the holiday basket distributions – but this year, due to illness, he had to stay home.

Inside Town Hall, Lion Sue Currie manned the knitted items table since she is also the chair of the knitting throughout the year. The Lions meet monthly, along with non-members, to knit and crochet for this event. Families could take as many knitted items as they needed.

The knitted items are a relatively late addition to the holiday basket distributions.

“Five years ago, we decided there was a need also for people to stay warm,” Currie said. “We started with scarves and hats and made more and more each year.”

Whatever was not taken by families on Monday, Currie said, will go to CYSS and to homeless shelters.

And then, with their inventory cleaned out,



When families came into Town Hall to receive their holiday dinner basket from the Colchester Lions Monday, they were also able to choose from over 500 knitted items and take as many as they needed. Colchester Lion Sue Currie, chair of the knitting and crocheting, helped guide families to different hats, scarves and mittens depending on their needs.

it’s back to stitch one for the knitters,

“We start the new year new,” Currie said.

The funds used toward the baskets are from Lions’ fundraising events throughout the year – along with some extra anonymous donations, Boughton said.

“One hundred percent of our profits from events such as the pancake breakfast, carnival, Pumpkins ‘n’ Pooches, and comedy night are

used to support many community programs like this one,” Wyatt said.

Wyatt said she “absolutely” expects the Lions to continue with the program next year, to help area families put a warm holiday meal on the table.

Boughton agreed.

“This is what Lions do – we serve,” she said.

Marlborough Schools Chief Proposes \$22,000 Budget Increase

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Faced with declining enrollment, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz last week proposed a 2016-17 school budget that features just a \$22,000 increase from current year spending.

At \$7.42 million, the spending proposal would be a .30 percent increase from the current budget.

Sklarz pointed out the only thing raising the budget amount at all is a change in the way the town’s payment to AHM Youth and Family Services, the regional youth service bureau, is calculated.

The AHM budget formula was recently changed, altering how the costs to the bureau’s three member towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – are divided up. The overall amount the town as a whole pays to AHM did not change; however, whereas the local school board had been responsible for approximately 12 percent of that amount (with the rest coming from the town operations budget and Marlborough’s portion of the RHAM budget), it will now be responsible for 25 percent, effective with the 2016-17 school year.

The Board of Finance has told the Marlbor-

ough school board it would not hold the AHM increase against the board – meaning that it would disregard the AHM spike when looking at the school board’s budget amount.

Indeed, the AHM change is causing a \$22,000 rise in the budget. Without it, Sklarz noted, the budget would be flat with the current year.

“It is equivalent to a zero percent increase in the budget,” he said.

To get to that zero percent, though, meant the loss of two classroom teachers, and small reductions in a variety of line items including curriculum revision, paraprofessional substitutes, unemployment, legal fees, staff development, magnet school tuition, instructional supplies, maintenance supplies, workbooks/eBooks, and library books.

Sklarz also said the school is expecting Educational Cost Sharing, or ECS, money from the state to stay consistent.

Even with the elimination of two teaching positions, salaries and benefits by far make up the biggest chunk of the proposed budget – 84 percent of it – at \$6.25 million. Certified teach-

ers’ salaries rose 1.8 percent, in accordance with their contract, while health insurance costs are expected to rise 12 percent. Sklarz said the health insurance line can change from now until when the budget is approved.

Of that \$6.25 million, \$4.07 million would go to certified personnel; \$1.04 million to non-certified personnel (a 4.98 percent increase Sklarz attributed to additional funds needed for the preschool special needs program); and \$1.13 million to employee benefits.

Among the larger decreases in the budget was the 500 line – for other purchased services, such as bus contracts, liability insurance and magnet school tuition – which dipped by 13.87 percent, or \$62,000, to \$388,000, a reduction due largely to the fact there are no out-of-district placements expected for the 2016-17 school year.

The 600 line – for supplies and materials – also dropped 14.90 percent, or \$43,000, to \$247,000, a dip Sklarz attributed to a decrease in heating oil and gasoline costs.

The 700 line, for capital outlay, saw a 40

percent decrease of \$25,000, bringing it to \$38,000. This was due to money for an early childhood playground being removed from the budget.

However, that playground isn’t off the table entirely. Sklarz said he presented four items to the town’s Capital Non-Recurring Committee – including \$25,000 for the playground; \$37,000 for technology infrastructure upgrades; \$27,000 for an updated telephone system; and \$25,000 for a security alarm system. The CNR Committee takes large capital requests from various town departments and prioritizes them. The items then go to the Board of Selectmen to be put in the budget as the selectmen see fit.

The proposed budget will now be discussed by the local Board of Education at its next regular meeting, Thursday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m., in the media center at Marlborough Elementary School. The spending proposal will then go to a Board of Education public hearing on Feb. 25, following which the board is expected to approve the budget. The budget would then go to the Board of Finance.

Hebron Selectmen Approve Several Grant Applications

by Geeta Schrayter

New sidewalks, a water main extension and improvements to a heavily-used intersection may all be in the cards for Hebron – provided the state grants the Board of Selectmen’s three wishes.

The Board of Selectmen last week approved three different grant applications – two for submission to the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) through the state Department of Transportation, and one for a Small Town Economic Assistance Program Grant.

The first grant is for 6,000 feet of sidewalk on Route 85 (Church Street) extending from Route 66 to Hebron Elementary School and Sunnyside Shopping Plaza. Estimated to cost \$830,400, if approved the town would be responsible for \$120,000.

The second grant, in the amount of \$700,000 with \$100,000 to be matched by the town, is for improvements to the intersection of routes 66 and 316 (Main and Wall streets).

In a letter submitted to the board Dec. 11 by the town’s consulting engineer, it was explained

“although the Town of Hebron has and continues to upgrade and expand its sidewalk network within the Town Center and outward to key pedestrian generators, currently there is no pedestrian access to the Hebron Center from the south along Church Street.”

The need for sidewalks in that section of town is outlined in the 2014 Town Plan of Conservation and Development, which includes a long term plan of using sidewalks to connect the Town Center to the Air Line Trail. The extension of sidewalks along that area would also provide access to churches, the senior center and senior housing.

The proposed sidewalks would continue along the west side of Route 85 until the intersection with Kinney Road past Hebron Elementary School, where it will cross over to the east side of the street and continue to the Sunnyside Shopping Plaza.

Information was also shared regarding the application for funds to improve the intersection at Main and Wall streets. The proposed improvements are based on recommendations

made following a traffic study ordered by the RHAM Board of Education; as a result of that study the intersection was graded with an “F” level of service. If the grant is approved, the improvements include widening the road to create a right turn lane when turning from Wall Street to Main Street, and a left turn lane from Main Street onto Wall Street. This would improve the level of service to a “B.”

Improvements would also include replacing the traffic signal at the intersection with one that includes dedicated pedestrian signals and controls, and new crosswalks and ramps.

The STEAP grant application, for \$500,000, is for a water main extension along Route 85 from North Pond Road to 501 Church Street, a piece of recently acquired brownfields property the town is looking to clean up and revitalize. The extension would also provide water to the former Treasure Factory property, which Town Planner Mike O’Leary described as “an historically significant property.”

The extension has an estimated cost of \$550,000.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said this week, “Those projects are in our master plan – our Plan of Conservation and Development – and the water main is on the approved list of STEAP projects, so we’re not just pulling things out of the air. We’re trying to do things that’ll benefit economic development in town.”

Regarding the water main extension, Tierney said, “With the couple of parcels we’re seeking to clean up under the brownfields grant, water would really help with putting them back on the tax rolls.”

He concluded, “We’ve done a lot of work in the center [of town] and now we want to let people in the south end know we’re also mindful of that area as another business area. And we’re trying to fund these things with grants versus taxpayer dollars.”

The board unanimously approved the three grant applications.

The next Hebron Board of Selectmen’s meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the town office building, 15 Gilead St.

East Hampton Property Purchase Approved As Part of Center School Plans

by Elizabeth Regan

An as-yet-unreleased plan to turn Center School into a municipal hub is one step closer to reality now that voters have approved the purchase of a half-acre parcel across the street from the school.

A show of hands at a town meeting Monday evening revealed 115 taxpayers in favor of the purchase of 2 Bevin Boulevard and 77 against it.

Assessor's records indicate the foreclosed property includes a two-family home originally constructed in 1825.

Now, according to Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson, councilors are free to reveal the contents of an updated report that has guided a series of closed-door meetings over the past several months.

Anderson said she expects a Town Council workshop to be held in January with Friar Associates, the Farmington-based architectural, engineering and design firm responsible for a 223-page evaluation of East Hampton's municipal buildings and schools released in 2008 as well as the updated report commissioned this year for \$8,000.

Anderson described the property as an integral part of the council's vision for a repurposed Center School as detailed in the latest Friar report. The report examines the practicality and cost of using Center School as a municipal hub that could include any combination of a police station, Board of Education offices, Homeland Security-mandated space for the town's emergency headquarters, Chatham Health District offices and the Judge of Probate court.

The findings had been cloaked by executive session to protect real estate dealings associated with the purchase.

"None of the council members have possession of those plans. We've only had the ability to quickly look through them, ask some very quick questions and keep the topic of whether or not we wanted to pursue the property. That was the issue before us and that's why it was in executive session," Anderson said.

Some voters at the town meeting questioned the wisdom of authorizing a property purchase without understanding about how it's going to be used.

Resident Cynthia Abraham, a real estate plan-

ner and member of the High School Building Committee, said she would not be supporting the purchase.

"Typically there's a plan and a program in place before you take action on implementing anything. So even though I may support this if I had the facts, I really don't have the facts," she said.

Chatham Party member and former councilor Kyle Dostaler pointed to the site's location in a section of town well known for environmental contamination. He wanted to know what the cost for remediation would be if the town took over the property.

At least 23 brownfields have been identified in the Village Center, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

East Hampton Brownfields Redevelopment Agency Chairman Carla Sylvester said her group is unaware of the town's intentions for the property and has not been asked to provide any sort of environmental review.

"What we do know is that the site is listed in the state records for the presence of lead in soil and in the structures. Based on the age of the

structure, it's assumed there would be lead and asbestos. At this point we don't have adequate information to evaluate what the results mean or what potential costs to remediate or abate the building would be," Sylvester said.

Anderson said after the vote that she was not aware of any environmental concerns about the property.

"It's a surprise to me, really, because I was told that it was not an issue," she said, referring to Town Manager Michael Maniscalco.

Maniscalco said Tuesday that the site - which is zoned industrial according to assessor's records - has been used as a residence since it was first inhabited around the turn of the 19th century. The level of risk is not comparable to sites that have been used for industrial purposes, he said.

He added that comprehensive environmental analysis involving drilling and soil testing requires approval from the seller.

"The owner is a bank who's not interested in talking to anyone; they just want to sell it," Maniscalco said.

Fifty Years in the Jewelry Business in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

William Devine's boss was hidden away with a copy of the *Wall Street Journal* when the aspiring jeweler sold his first diamond 50 years ago in Boston.

Devine was supposed to be polishing the metallic edging on the shop's many display cases, but he knew opportunity when he saw it. A customer was shipping off to Vietnam and had no time to wait, according to Devine.

"I had heard my boss talk, plus on my lunch hour I used to go to different stores and pretend I wanted to buy a diamond for my girl to learn how these people did it," Devine said.

So he sold the new recruit a half-carat diamond engagement ring for \$250. His boss, returning to the showroom after finishing the newspaper, couldn't believe it - until Devine showed him the cash in the register.

"From then on, he let me sell diamonds," Devine said.

That was the start of a career trajectory that took him from a showcase in Filene's department store selling Bulova watches to the village center in East Hampton, where he opened his own jewelry shop about 40 years ago.

"I think I had six Bulova watches and 12 wedding rings and all the rest was costume jewelry," Devine said of his first shop on Main Street. "So I worked up. I just kept building and building."

Now, the husband, father and grandfather has numerous display cases in his shop on Summit Street. He sells earrings, pendants, small and

large diamonds, gold, silver and valuable antiques. He also does watch and jewelry repair, watch battery replacements, engraving and stone setting.

The Dorchester, Mass., native didn't waste any time integrating himself into the pub and politics scene, either. He speaks fondly of the old O'Neill's Tap Room - where he first met the local who would become governor, William A. O'Neill - as well as his own political experience as chairman of the town's last Board of Selectmen and its first Town Council.

He calls his customers friends and said he's made a lot of them over the years.

Longtime friend Kerry Schunk said Devine Jewelry is the only place he goes for silver, jewelry and repairs.

"You get good quality and you get a good deal," Schunk said. "I don't have to worry about getting screwed. I don't know much about gems and stuff, but he does. And to me that's worth it."

Devine said his experience with the Air Force during the Cuban Missile Crisis helped teach him to better understand and appreciate all kinds of people.

"You live in the barracks, and you're all like brothers - especially if you come to a crisis," he said. "Everybody sticks together, no matter who they are, no matter color or religion or anything - because you're all there to survive."

But while he values his time working on B-52 bombers with nuclear cargo on an airstrip in Spain during those several tense weeks in Oc-



William Devine is celebrating his 50th anniversary in the jewelry business. About 40 of those years have been spent as the owner of Devine Jewelry in East Hampton.

tober 1962, he said he couldn't make a career of military service: "I just wasn't the type."

Instead, he ended up just where he wanted to be, and where he wants to stay. The 72-year-old has no plans for retirement - at least not until sometime around 2032, when he turns 90.

"It's not a job. It's a living. If I sat at home,

I'd be watching TV and just waste away," he said.

Devine Jewelry is located at 4 Summit St. It's open from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. For more information, call the store at 860-267-4492.

East Hampton Voters Pass Fire Truck Purchase

by Elizabeth Regan

Almost 200 East Hampton voters spoke in one loud voice to approve the purchase of a state-of-the-art replacement for the fire department's 30-year-old ladder truck at town meeting Monday.

But despite approving the purchase, some still expressed reservations about how the town exactly plans to fund it.

There was no audible dissent as voters authorized an outlay of \$805,018 for the aerial ladder truck produced by Pierce Manufacturing of Wisconsin.

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson had initially said paper ballots would be used, but the town issued a press release last week saying a vote would have to take place at the start of the meeting to decide whether or not to use paper ballots.

Nobody from the floor made a motion to use paper ballots, so the traditional voice vote was employed.

The resounding show of support for the ladder truck came after a discussion during which voters gave a standing ovation to the members of the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, whom resident Dean Markham described as "the dedicated volunteers who jump to the call to battle fires and other emergencies."

Fire department officials have been touting the new ladder truck as the optimal way to keep the town and its first responders safe.

The fire truck has a 107-foot ladder on a single-axle wheel base to better navigate tight spaces in town. It incorporates five new patents and has been designed specifically for small town fire departments, according to Fire Chief Greg Voelker.

The Town Council's decision to pay for the truck outright was made despite the recommendation, back in October, of Finance Director Jeff Jylkka and a unanimous Board of Finance to finance it over a 10-year period through a lease-purchase agreement.

The council cited the 5 percent discount it would receive for paying up front as the driver for the decision.

The discount brings the price down by about \$45,000.

The Republican-dominated council voted along party lines in November to take money from funds set aside in the capital reserve account for fire department vehicles and vehicle repairs as well as from a mill rate stabilization fund, otherwise known as a debt sinking fund, administered at the discretion of the council.

The mill rate stabilization fund is \$1.35 million set-aside in the capital reserve fund to help offset future debt increases - in this case, the high school renovation debt. The ladder truck appropriation will use up almost half of those reserves.

The fund is designed to allow the total mill

rate increase to be phased in over several years instead of hitting all at once.

But some people at the town meeting, like Markham, approved the purchase hoping the Town Council will revisit its decision about how to fund it.

"Our new Town Council has unfortunately totally disregarded the recommendations of our finance director and a unanimous Board of Finance to lease-purchase the truck over 10 years by robbing the budget referendum-approved capital reserve fund to pay cash for this major item," Markham - who happens to be on the Board of Finance - said.

He said current low interest rates, combined with the town's new AAA bond rating from Standard & Poor's, mean East Hampton is well-situated to get the best deal on the loan.

"Now is the opportune time to finance this long-term asset," he said.

Mary Ann Dostaler, a former finance board member, reiterated Markham's call for the council to reconsider a lease-purchase option.

"The town needs this truck, the fire department needs the truck. It's the right thing to do to purchase it. It's the wrong thing to do to purchase it with the cash reserves we have," she said. "The community does not need to be burdened with an additional mill rate increase that could be offset through this long-term purchase which would also allow it to be paid out over

time by all of the beneficiaries of the town who will benefit from having this truck."

Jylkka said Tuesday he doesn't yet know how the mill rate will be affected by reducing the amount of money available with which to phase in the increase from the high school renovation.

"Once the [2016-17] budget starts getting developed, we're going to start looking at those numbers and how we're going to propose layering [the mill rate increase] in," he said.

Voelker, while receiving congratulations from one supporter after another following the vote, said the town's overwhelming approval of the new ladder truck left him "happy as can be."

"I only identify the need," Voelker said. "How they pay for it is their ball of wax."

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said after the town meeting that it's not her decision as to whether or not the council takes up the funding issue again.

"Someone from the council would have to request that it be put on the agenda," Anderson said.

The council's two Democrats, Kevin Reich and James "Pete" Brown, had opposed last month's vote to purchase the truck outright.

Reich and Brown said Tuesday they plan to bring the voters' concerns to the Town Council by requesting the item be added to the agenda for the next regular meeting.

Health Director Change Has Broad Implications

by Elizabeth Regan

The resignation of the Chatham Health District director and the appointment of an interim replacement have broad implications for health districts across the state, as the state Department of Public Health (DPH) cracks down on those who flout state law.

The Chatham Health District Board of Health last week accepted the resignation of Thad King, who had been the only director since the regionalized public health organization was created in 2002. King came under fire from DPH for allegedly using state resources to carry out contract work as a water system operator – despite a statutory requirement that he devote his “entire time” to his directorship.

Now, the state public health department will be making sure all health districts are in compliance with the law forbidding directors to take on additional work.

“DPH expects health districts to comply with state requirements, including the entire time requirement for health directors. DPH plans to meet in the New Year with board chairs and health district directors to review these requirements,” department spokesman William Gerrish said in an email.

With King’s resignation, the district’s Board of Health appointed assistant director Don Mitchell as the interim leader. Mitchell started as a sanitarian in Portland in 1989.

The changeover occurred after DPH withheld about \$130,000 in funding from the district while then-Commissioner Jewel Mullen considered removing King from his position based on an alleged conflict of interest arising from his side job. The agency also cited the “improper and/or fraudulent” use of the state health department laboratory for matters not related to his job as the district health director and the use of health district employees and property for “non-Chatham and/or personal business purposes.”

King’s resignation letter called his departure an “early retirement,” which allows him to remain eligible for his pension with the town of East Hampton.

The Chatham Health District serves the *Riverast* towns of Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland as well as East Haddam and Haddam.

Gerrish said the agency is aware of the resignation and that “DPH has entered into an agreement with Mr. King that resolves this matter with DPH.” (A copy of the agreement was not provided by press time.)

Gerrish also said the state has since paid out half of the district’s funding, with the remaining amount to be released upon the hiring of a full time health director who meets statutory requirements.

Mitchell, in addition to his role as acting director of the health, serves as an adjunct public

health professor at Goodwin College in East Hartford. That puts him at odds with the same “entire time” statute the state public health department is now actively enforcing throughout Connecticut.

Marlborough town planner Peter Hughes, who is serving as acting chair of the Chatham Board of Health following the resignation of former Haddam First Selectwoman Melissa Schlag, said the state is considering a “carve-out” to the requirement to allow for teaching.

But Gerrish said there would be no such exemption for educators.

Mitchell acknowledged the DPH has been clear that teaching is not allowed, but said the rule is unfairly applied to health districts as opposed to independent health departments.

State law governing health district directors – who serve multiple jurisdictions – goes beyond the availability requirements for a full-time municipal health director in a single city or town, according to a letter to the Chatham Health District from Public Health Branch Chief Ellen Blaschinski.

Blaschinski’s letter says the “entire time” language means a health district director may not “engage in any other employment or work.”

On the other hand, statute applying to full-time municipal directors only specifically precludes them from “engaging in private practice.”

There are 20 health districts in Connecticut covering between two and 20 towns each, according to the DPH website. There are 33 full-time municipal health departments.

Mitchell said the prohibition will have a negative effect on public health education in the state by removing 20 qualified and experienced health district directors from the knowledge pool.

“In order to educate the public, you also want an educated work force,” he said.

In his biography on the Goodwin College website, Mitchell showed a commitment to making the study of public health more accessible in higher education. “I am concerned that the field of environmental health has not made the path for those interested in the field to get in,” he wrote. “To the degree I can, I would like to change that.”

Mitchell said he’s considering applying for the permanent position of health director position – and if he needs to stop teaching, he’ll do that. “I’ll do what’s required for the district,” he said.

In the meantime, Mitchell said he’s working to understand and address the concerns of all the towns in the district and to fill a sanitarian position vacated in November that has created a lag in food service inspections.

Changes in the health district aren’t limited to its director. The Board of Health will also see new leadership in January. Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney has put his name in for the position of chairman.

“Transparency is one of the major tools that’s

going to help going forward,” Tierney said.

One key priority would be working closely with Mitchell to make sure there are no lapses in service among the member towns.

The acknowledgement of concerns about service levels comes as some of those towns – like Haddam and Colchester – consider leaving the district.

Colchester First Selectman Art Shilosky said his town’s exit isn’t imminent – but is an option to be considered.

“We need to be serviced better than we have been,” he said. “We’re not getting the commitment that was given to us when we signed on.”

He cited a lag in restaurant and septic system inspections and the lack of a regular presence in town by public health district staff.

“Right now they’re shorthanded so they can’t be here when they’re required to be,” Shilosky said. “It’s eventually getting done, but I think it needs to be done quicker.”

KX Officially Closing Down

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

As of June 30, 2016, the regional dispatch center Colchester Emergency Communications LLC, commonly known as KX, will officially disband.

The KX Board of Directors voted Dec. 15 to dissolve, after the vast majority of its member towns indicated they wouldn’t renew their contracts when they expire next June.

KX is located in a small room at the state police Troop K barracks in Colchester. The company handles fire and ambulance dispatch services for Colchester, Marlborough, East Hampton, Haddam Neck, Bozrah, East Haddam and Salem. It also handles East Hampton’s police dispatch, and provides dispatch services for Middlesex Memorial Hospital paramedics within the northern portion of Middlesex County and its northern service area.

Hebron had also been a member town, but in 2013 departed for Tolland County Emergency Communications. When Hebron left, KX lost \$100,000 in annual revenue. To make up for that lost revenue, the company started to take money from its capital reserves. The KX Board of Directors also sought to consolidate with another company, to save money.

KX was set to consolidate with Montville, but the deal began to fall apart this past April, when dispatch workers voted to be represented by a union and negotiations began. Montville officially called off the consolidation in June.

In July, another KX member town, Lebanon, announced it would leave – and in fact paid an early termination fee to depart immediately, and not wait until the end of its contract next June. This proved particularly painful for KX, as the 2015-16 budget had already been approved. The company was forced to, yet again, dip into its capital reserves to balance the budget.

Fewer towns doesn’t mean KX saves money. KX Board of Directors member Doug Knowlton has explained that, regardless of how many towns KX services, the costs are the same since the organization needs two dispatchers on each shift. Fewer towns in KX means fewer people to divide the cost by.

And once Lebanon split, other member towns started to tell KX they too would be leaving when their contract expired. This left KX with no choice but to consider dissolving the company.

And that’s ultimately what they decided Dec. 15. The board is still working out the details of the dissolution plan; the plan is expected to be finalized before the board’s annual meeting Jan. 26.

Towns had until Dec. 31 to notify KX they were not renewing the dispatch contract. Colchester, Bozrah, Salem, East Haddam, East Hampton and Marlborough all have formally notified KX they plan to do so. Knowlton said Haddam Neck has informally indicated it too will leave, though it has yet to provide formal notice. (He said Haddam Neck, as it is part of Haddam, also is covered by Valley Shore Emergency Communications – so Haddam Neck officials may have simply forgotten about the formal notification.)

While KX is done, where all of the *Riverast*

towns are going is not so clear. Stan Soby, a Colchester selectman and member of the Chatham Health District Board of Health, said he is committed to making sure the health district meets the needs of people who live in Colchester.

“We want to see if we can solve any concerns people may have and help move the district forward,” Soby said.

According to Soby, the starting point involves conversations between Shilosky and the new leadership to clarify expectations, available resources and turnaround time for certain functions.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield expressed optimism that new leadership at the district and board level, combined with what she described as a pledge by the state public health department to assist in any way they can, will strengthen the health district going forward.

“That’s integral and key, that the regional district work hand-in-hand with the state Department of Public Health,” Bransfield said.

towns are going is not so clear.

East Hampton is expected to join Glastonbury for its dispatch operations; Marlborough was also expected to follow suit, but town officials indicated Tuesday that might not happen.

“I’m not familiar enough with the situation to be comfortable that due diligence was done,” Marlborough First Selectwoman Amy Traversa said at Tuesday’s meeting of the town’s Board of Selectmen. “We’re exploring all of the options before making a decision.”

Traversa said she and Knowlton – who is also on the Marlborough Board of Finance – attended a meeting last week with Glastonbury and East Hampton police and fire officials, and she was pushed for a commitment from Marlborough. When she asked Glastonbury about what it would cost Marlborough to move its dispatch to Glastonbury, Traversa said she only received rough estimates. Those estimates included approximately \$350,000 for capital infrastructure needs and between \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year for operating costs.

By comparison, Marlborough was paying KX \$54,889 for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Knowlton said if Marlborough and East Hampton joined Glastonbury, it would have enough towns to qualify as a regional dispatch center, and thus receive state funding. But if Marlborough doesn’t go through, that state funding wouldn’t happen.

The bottom line is, KX closing is “happening and now we have a short window of opportunity to see what our other alternatives are,” Traversa said. “When someone dials 911 on July 1, there better be someone there.”

So, the selectmen voted to put out a request for proposals (RFP), to see what other dispatch centers Marlborough could join.

East Hampton Town Manager Mike Maniscalco said he did not think Marlborough is making a wise decision.

“I think [Marlborough] is putting residents in a concerning situation,” Maniscalco said. “Thankfully, I’m not in charge of Marlborough.”

It’s not yet clear how much going to Glastonbury will cost East Hampton. However, Maniscalco said the situation is different than Marlborough because East Hampton would be bringing along its police as well. (Troop K handles Marlborough police.)

“It does limit our possibilities,” Maniscalco said of the police department. “Police department dispatching is very different and requires more training and certifications.”

Colchester, meanwhile, is joining Quinebaug Valley Emergency Communications (QV) – a move that is expected to save the town money.

Currently with KX, the town is paying \$108,732. But, under its new five-year agreement with QV, Colchester will pay \$27,752 – a savings of \$80,980. A representative from QV confirmed to the selectmen everything can be ready for when KX ends June 30.

Maguire Still Vice First Selectman – Not Town Treasurer in Andover

by Geeta Schrayter

Selectman Jeff Maguire may have said at the November Board of Selectmen meeting that he'd be stepping down from his leadership role on the board, in order to focus on his role as acting town treasurer – but in the days following that meeting it was actually the treasurer's role Maguire gave up instead, due to the two positions being incompatible according to state statute.

Maguire was elected to the Board of Selectmen this past May, and currently serves as the vice first selectman. In September, the board voted to appoint him temporary town treasurer.

Maguire is a certified public accountant and explained at that meeting he was looking to become temporary treasurer to help the town through the annual audit, set up some accounting procedures and straighten out some of the town's financials until a bookkeeper was hired.

Maguire said this week when he brought up resigning from the vice first selectman role in November, he did so "simply because I thought it was in the town's best interest; I'm more valuable in a financial role than in the vice first selectman role, which in reality is a ceremonial position. So at that meeting, that was my intention."

However, Maguire's dual role was a non-starter, according to state statute. Connecticut

State Statute 9-210 bars town selectmen from concurrently serving as the town clerk, town treasurer or town tax collector.

Maguire explained about two weeks after the November meeting he was told by the Democratic Town Committee that the board was in violation of the above statute and in response, "I immediately sent out an email to all the selectmen that I would be effectively resigning as treasurer as of that day."

Maguire added prior to his initial suggestion that he become temporary treasurer, he asked First Selectman Bob Burbank to find out whether or not it was acceptable for him to act in both roles.

"I asked Bob to get an opinion from our town attorney whether it was statutorily acceptable for me to be vice first selectman and also treasurer" Maguire said, adding prior to his appointment Burbank "had stated that he got that opinion and it was acceptable."

But Burbank said Wednesday, "I was never specifically asked for a legal opinion and I wasn't really thinking there was a statute about it. I knew there was a conflict of interest and I did bring it up at the September [selectmen] meeting and I also stated as vice first selectman, he stepped in as first selectman [if needed] and then you really lose those checks and bal-

ances."

At the September meeting, Burbank said, "The only problem that I have with it is that we have already been told that it doesn't give enough checks and balances and we're going to be written up by the auditor and probably have to answer to [the Office of Policy and Management]."

On Wednesday, Burbank furthered, "I knew from the auditor standpoint that would be a conflict of interest. It was a misunderstanding; [Maguire] was under the opinion he asked for a legal opinion, and I checked my email and he said 'opinion.'"

And so, Burbank choose to reach out to OPM since they're the "overseers of all the financials anyway" but didn't receive a response prior to Maguire's appointment. He added, "We were in a little bit of a difficult situation at that point because both the treasurer and bookkeeper had left as of July 1 and of course we needed somebody who knew what they were doing to make sure that our bills were paid and that our payroll was taken care of."

And Maguire fit the bill.

Since he's no longer serving in both capacities, according to the state there is nothing written in terms of any sort of penalty to the town.

Indeed, according to William Plummer, local government and policy manager with OPM, nothing is laid out in terms of a penalty for an individual who *is* serving on two incompatible boards.

Plummer explained Wednesday, "I looked over that particular section of the statute and also ones dealing with the selectmen in Chapter 91 and one dealing with the town treasurer [and] as with many of these statutes, they're silent on any penalties or anything of that nature."

Plummer added under the section dealing with treasurers, there's a provision of removal if there's alleged misconduct, willful neglect of duty or incompetence, but he added with a laugh, "The person [Maguire] resigned anyway."

Plummer furthered that, as Burbank had alluded to, "The next audit report may have a finding like an internal control issue or regarding segregation of duties, but there's nothing I could find" regarding a specific penalty.

* * *

A new bookkeeper started work in the town last week, and Burbank said "I think the treasurer is going to be a topic at the next selectmen's meeting" which is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 12.

Gilead Hill Water Safe Again

by Geeta Schrayter

All's clear with the water at Gilead Hill School, following treatment that occurred after traces of bacteria were found in the well system.

Water testing conducted at the end of November indicated there were traces of Coliform bacteria in the well system at the elementary school – and, after a second round of testing was conducted Nov. 24, that presence was confirmed.

Use of the water at GHS for consumption ceased as a result; Poland Springs coolers replaced school water fountains, which were taped over with signs that read "out of use," and students were encouraged to come to school with a personal bottle of water.

After receiving approval from the Department of Public Health the school's licensed water contractor, Hungerfords Water, began treating the system Dec. 1 through a chlorination process.

After allowing the chlorine to sit in the system for several days to treat the bacteria, the chlorine was purged from the lines, after which a follow-up water sample was taken for testing.

And it's the results of that testing – which Schools' Superintendent Tim Van Tassel said came back Monday, Dec. 21 – that cleared the school's water for consumption once more.

"The water is clear," Van Tassel said Tuesday. "We were notified on Monday morning that we were successful in treating the bac-

teria."

He added the bacteria was treated "just one time around" this time; in September, traces of Coliform bacteria were found in the well system at Hebron Elementary School that also halted consumption of the school's water – and two rounds of treatment were required before the water sample at that school came back clear.

At the time, Van Tassel explained Coliform is naturally-occurring bacteria and said "there could be any number of reasons as to why the bacteria showed up in the system and that's why we regularly test our water. We have a wonderful testing system to make sure the water is safe for consumption."

And, to improve the water systems at the school moving forward, the Board of Education approved the purchase and installation of two Pro30UV water disinfectant systems to be used at the two schools. The ultraviolet system for Hebron Elementary School was approved in November and is being installed this week; the board approved a system for Gilead Hill School at its December meeting which Van Tassel said will be installed once it arrives in four to six weeks.

Van Tassel added the systems "should mitigate the bacteria" and cost approximately \$7,500 each. The money for the purchases came in the form of a funds transfer from the certified staff account.

East Hampton Police News

12/9: Richard Swartz, 28, of 77 West St., Chester, was issued a summons for breach of peace and third-degree criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said.

12/11: Robin L. Glennon, 49, of 85 No. Main St., was issued a summons for shoplifting (sixth-degree larceny), police said.

12/13: Alan James Kromish Jr., 49, of 115 Falls Rd., Moodus, was arrested and charged with violating a restraining order, police said.

12/13: Robert John Filippone Jr., 69, of 54 Waterview Circle, was arrested and charged with violating a protective order, police said.

12/18: Jaipaul Sukhai, 38, of 459 Glastonbury Tpke., Portland, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, police said.

Two Injured After Marlborough Crash

State Police said Ronald Uricchio, 66, and Jane Uricchio, 61, both of 6 Oak St., were transported to the Marlborough Clinic for minor injuries Dec. 20 after a two-car accident on Route 2 near exit 12 at 3 p.m.

Police said Ronald Uricchio had been driving a Chevy Avalanche when he crossed over the median into the westbound lanes, hitting another car. The driver and the passenger of the other car were uninjured, police said.

Ronald Uricchio was issued an infraction for failure to drive in the proper lane.

Colchester Police News

12/15: State Police said Nora Mahoney, 30, of 29 Anton Rd., Mansfield, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

12/21: Colchester Police are investigating after a burglary at a home on Balaban Road at 8:15 a.m. Police said a basement door was kicked in and the person inside the home spooked the suspect, causing the suspect to flee on foot. Police reported the suspect is about six feet tall and was wearing dark clothing and a mask at the time of the incident. Nothing was reported missing from the residence.

For more information, call Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

Andover Man Found Bleeding

State Police are investigating after they found a man bleeding in the roadway on Long Hill Road while under the influence of a controlled substance Dec. 14.

Police reported they found the man at 4:47 p.m. and he was transported to Hartford Hospital for his injuries. Upon investigation, police said it was determined the man caused a disturbance at a home on Long Hill Road and charges are pending.

Marlborough Police News

12/17: State Police said Michael Zup, 50, of 28 Olde Hall Rd., Hebron, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

Car Crashes Injure Four in Colchester

A pair of car crashes last week sent four to the hospital, state police said.

Shortly after 5:30 p.m. Dec. 14, police said, Martha Urbano, 76, of 124 Deepwood Rd., Lebanon, was turning her Buick Lacrosse from Mill Street onto Lebanon Avenue when she struck a Nissan Altima being driven by John Bailey, 27, of Colchester Commons, who had been coming down Lebanon, police said.

The Nissan was pushed off the road after impact and hit a tree, police said.

Bailey and his passenger, Rachel Groves, 26, of 195 Fitchville Rd., Bozrah, each sustained minor injuries in the crash, as did Urbano, police said. All three were transported to Marlborough Clinic.

Five days later, on Dec. 19, a Ford Taurus being driven by Frank Catuccio, 78, of 342 Lakeside Blvd., Waterbury, was rear-ended on Route 2, near exit 16, shortly after 4 p.m., by a Pontiac Sunfire being driven by Rachel Mackinnon, 20, of 43 Chatham Hollow Rd., Portland.

Catuccio's passenger, Lynn Catuccio, 62, also of 342 Lakeside Blvd., Waterbury, was transported to Marlborough Clinic for a report of neck pain following the crash, police said.

Mackinnon told police she had been fixing her sunglasses and didn't notice traffic had slowed down. She was issued an infraction for following too closely, police said.

Obituaries

Portland

Jon Barlow

Jon Barlow, on Tuesday, Dec. 15, at the age of 73, died at the Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center in Portland, after a long battle with Parkinson's disease and prostate cancer.

Jon was born in Plattsburgh, N.Y., to Malcolm and Sybil Barlow, and grew up in West Virginia, where his father was an engineer for Bethlehem Steel. Jon did both his undergraduate and graduate studies in music at Cornell University and came to Wesleyan University in Middletown as a pianist and musicologist in 1966. He would teach at Wesleyan for the next 33 years.

On Sept. 26, 1970, Jon married his wife Muriel and together they had two children. In 1982 he took a two-year sabbatical from Wesleyan to teach at the International School Moshi in Moshi, Tanzania. He spent the last seven years of his life under the loving care of the staff at the Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center, where he passed away.

Jon was a devoted father who spent long hours researching the genealogy of his family, as well as a Civil War buff and lifelong baseball fan, first of the Pittsburgh Pirates and later of the Boston Red Sox. Teaching, however, was Jon's greatest passion, and he remained close to many of his students years after they graduated.

Jon is survived by his wife, Muriel; his son, Nathanael Barlow, and his wife, Debra; his daughter, Rachael Barlow, and her husband Elliot Levesque; his grandchildren, Annabelle and Clara Barlow; his foster daughter, Lisa Baughman-Howard, and her children, Kyle and Kurt; his cousin, Cheryl Zeiner; and his sister-in-law, Janice Hintz.

Per Jon's wishes, services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to make a donation in his memory can do so to Middlesex Hospital, Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Colchester

Carmella Rice

Carmella "Cami" Rice, 53, of Colchester, went home to the arms of a loving God Thursday, Dec. 17.

She leaves her mother and father, Beverly (Brose) O'Donal and Clifton D. O'Donal of Colchester; four sons (and their wives), Jason (Casey) Rice of Sandy, Utah, Patrick (Amy)



Rice of Warsaw, Ind., Aaron (Kristen) Rice of LaPlata, Md., and Jeremy Rice (and fiancée, Emily Keller) of Frederick, Md.; four grandchildren, Adilyn and Ronan Rice (children of Jason and Casey) and Aysen and Natalie Rice (children of Aaron and Kristen); her brother (and sister-in-law), Lawrence (Gocia) Bologna of Upper Saddle River, N.J.; five stepsiblings, Melissa O'Donal of Colchester, Jenna O'Donal of Cranston, R.I., Clifton O'Donal Jr. of Windsor, John O'Donal (and wife Mary) of Norwich, and Kimberly Bouchard of Manchester; and numerous nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

Cami loved to travel, so her 20+-year career as a flight attendant for American Airlines was a perfect fit for her. She cherished animals, especially her cats, and was an avid reader and writer; even working on a book to publish at the time of her passing. Most importantly, she was ever devoted to her family and had the ability to find the best in everyone that she met.

May Cami live on in the hearts of all that she touched.

The family received guests Tuesday, Dec. 22, before a chapel service that evening at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the CT Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111 or to the Brain and Behavior Research Foundations, 90 Park Ave., 16th Fl., New York, NY 10016.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Stephen L. Gates

Stephen L. Gates, 59, of Portland, formerly of East Hampton and Cromwell, passed away peacefully, after a courageous battle with cancer, Tuesday, Dec. 15. He was the son of the late Carol Sylvia (Smith) and Lawrence (Duke) Gates.

Steven leaves behind his fiancée of 23 years, Denise Toth, stepchildren Brenda Toth and Robert Toth and grandson Dillon Varrocchio; five siblings, Gayle Anderson and James Colson, William Gates, Lawrence Gates, Sylvia (Sue) Gates, Kimberly and Dennis Roy; his aunts Deborah and (Kerry) Schunk, and Judith and (George) Hartke, plus two nieces and six nephews.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, Dec. 28, with Pastor David Thorngate at the Veterans of Foreign Wars, 20 N. Maple St., East Hampton, followed by a celebration of Stephen's life.

Courant

Colchester

Daniel S. McElroy

Daniel S. McElroy, 58, of Robinson, Ill., formerly of Colchester, passed away peacefully while surrounded by family and close friends Friday, Dec. 4, at Good Samaritan Hospital in Vincennes, Ind. Daniel was born in Sweetsburg, Quebec, Canada Sept. 12, 1957.

The devoted husband, father, grandfather, and son leaves behind his wife, Deena McElroy; his parents, Terry and Shirley McElroy; his sons, Quintin and Duncan McElroy; his daughter, Hailey Charpentier; a son-in-law, Jason Charpentier; his younger siblings, David, Debbie, and Derek McElroy; his granddaughters, Lauren and Lindsey Charpentier; his so-called "bastard sons," best friends of his sons, Drew Spade and Jordan Waggoner; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends. He was preceded in death by his maternal and paternal grandparents.

Raised in Connecticut, Daniel was a member of one of the first classes of the Vernon Police Explorers. He developed a blue-collar work ethic and never passed up an opportunity to work hard or have fun. Later, he worked as head of security for Purdy Corp., then as a garage foreman at Eastern Bus Lines in Bolton and The Arrow Line in East Hartford and Waterford. He married his wife, Deena, in 1986 and moved to Colchester in 1993. Dan and Deena then moved to rural Illinois in 1999. Daniel's parents still live in Vernon.

"Crabby Dan" was a dreamer; his never-ending pursuit of happiness was rivaled only by his pursuit of delivering the perfect quip at the right time to catch even the wittiest of his friends off guard. Dan was a committed family man. Despite the wear and tear of working nights for many years to provide for his family, Dan always seemed to be a bit quicker, stronger and a lot smarter than his sons – a true mark of a father. Never passing up an opportunity to embarrass them with his latest pair of brightly-colored shoes, discussing the intricacies of "beard envy" over his Merlin-like beard or reaffirming his love for his wife with a goofy dance to the latest Top 40 song, Daniel was really seldom crabby or grumpy, despite what his nickname may imply. He was full of the highest zest for life, and never passed up an opportunity to push those around him to be better than they thought they could be.

Though he may have gone in what felt like an instant, his memory and passion for life will live on for years with the people who knew and loved him.

A private service was held for family.

Arrangements were made by Goodwine Funeral Homes of Robinson, Ill.

Courant

Colchester

Ronald Y. Guimond

Ronald Y. Guimond, 71, of Manchester, beloved husband of Catherine (Gish) Guimond, passed away Sunday, Dec. 20, at home surrounded by his family. Ronald was born in Edmundston, New Brunswick, Canada, to the late Nelson and Anne (Hebert) Guimond.

At the age of 17, Ronald moved from Canada to Hartford. He lived in East Hartford and Colchester before he settled in Manchester, where he spent the last 22 years. He was a parishioner of Saint Bartholomew Church.

Ronald had a strong love for his family; Christmas and Thanksgiving were among his favorite holidays to get together with everyone. He was a great handyman, often working on various electrical, plumbing, and carpentry projects. Ronald loved to travel, go freshwater fishing, and would enjoy skiing in the colder months.

Ronald leaves his devoted wife of 48 years, Catherine, and Belgium Sheepdog, Lady; his son Richard Guimond and his wife Susonn of Arkansas; his daughter Deborah Guimond of East Hartford; his brothers René Guimond and his wife Lucille of South Windsor, Gilles Guimond and his wife Germaine of East Hartford, John Paul Guimond of Michigan; his sisters Annette Grenier and her husband Joe of Vernon, Louise Hann and her husband Frank of Ellington; his grandson Gabriel Luc Guimond; and many uncles, aunts, nieces, and nephews. Besides his parents Ronald was predeceased by his brothers Roger, Robert, and Dorice Guimond.

Calling hours will be held Sunday, Dec. 27, at Samsel & Carmon Funeral Home, 419 Buckland Rd., South Windsor, from 2-5 p.m. A memorial Mass of Christian Burial will take place Monday, Dec. 28, directly at Saint Bartholomew Church, 45 Ludlow Rd., Manchester, CT at 10 a.m., with burial to follow at Saint Mary's Cemetery, East Hartford.

Memorial donations in Ronald's name may be made to Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven Office of Development Yale-New Haven Hospital PO Box 1849 New Haven, CT 06508-9979.

For online condolences and directions, visit CarmonFuneralHome.com.