

RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

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

Volume 39, Number 44

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

February 27, 2015



Fire Chief Walt Cox, Police Officer Rob Suchecki, resident Fred Brown and First Selectman Stan Soby (pictured from left) camped out on the Colchester town green last weekend to help raise awareness for the fuel bank and heating assistance.

## Men Brave Cold For a Cause

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

This past weekend was the coldest one yet for a Colchester event that's come to be known as "Freezin' for a Reason," and although the foursome had to shut down early, they may still meet their goal.

By Monday morning, the group had raised over \$6,000 for the Colchester Fuel Bank and donations were still coming in. Its goal was \$9,000.

First Selectman Stan Soby, Fire Chief Walt Cox, Police Officer Rob Suchecki and Fred Brown, a Colchester resident, camped out on the green beginning last Friday night and had to end on Saturday around 7 p.m.

Brown helped launch the now-annual event in 2010, when he, resident Jack Faski and then-First Selectman Gregg Schuster were "Three Men in a Tent."

Brown said this week awareness for the need for heat was clear, as people walked from their cars to the group's setup on the green, in temperatures that got as low as 13 degrees below zero.

"They came out and walked the 15 feet and experienced the cold and really appreciated what we were doing," Brown said.

The plan had been for the four to stay camped out on the green from Friday evening until Sunday morning – but Old Man Winter forced a change in plans.

"At 3 o'clock [Saturday afternoon], it started snowing and people understood about people

having to choose between heating their homes or taking medication," Brown said.

Brown said the group's tents were not prepared for -13 degrees and snow; therefore, hypothermia was a concern and the four packed up early.

"Having people drive out to give donations was getting sketchy," Suchecki said. "We were going to hunker down by the fire or sit in our vehicles, but we were soaked with wet snow."

"We had our usual fire going and spent extra amounts of time around it," Soby said. "There was freezing rain forecast for Saturday night and there was a concern as conditions deteriorated about sleeping in tents."

Suchecki said with the snow coming down Saturday afternoon, no one was coming to see them anyway so they shut down for safety's sake.

"Depending on whose thermometer you looked at, Saturday morning ranged from 10 to 14 below zero," Suchecki said.

Last year, the temperatures got as cold as zero degrees – and the four toughed it out.

"We were kind of proud of that," Brown said. But, he added, "This year was bone-chilling cold."

Suchecki said he didn't mind camping out in the cold at all, as it raises awareness for the fuel bank and the work the bank does.

"I'm fortunate to go home to a warm house," Suchecki said. "I don't have to decide between

See Men Brave Cold Page 2

## With Snow Budgets Maxed, Officials Eager for Spring

by Geeta Schrayter

The seemingly-endless snow and freezing temperatures that have been regular visitors of late aren't the most thoughtful guests; along with selfishly ruining schedules – and moods, depending on your feelings toward winter – the duo leaves behind quite the mess; one that's been taking a costly clean-up toll on the towns throughout *RiverEast*-land.

In Hebron, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said the town was about \$65-70,000 over its winter budget, with the cost of the most recent storm not yet calculated.

"It's the coldest February on record since the early-1900s," he explained, "and it's in the running for the third-snowiest, so they're long-duration storms, coming at nights and weekends, and that impacts the overtime and the amount of hours the guys have to spend."

Tierney added the colder the temperature, the more materials needed.

He explained the town uses a 10-year average to calculate how much to budget for the winter months, but the last two years, the town's gone over that amount.

"If this continues, we'll probably have to bump that number up," Tierney said, "but this town has always been very good at going back for a supplemental appropriation to pay for the costs."

He added, "I think these last two years have been banner years. I think it's not – I hope it's not – the norm."

Tierney concluded the supplemental appropriation would be calculated "once winter is finally done – which I hope is soon."

But over at the schools, superintendent Jeff Newton said, "We're still in decent shape."

"There's been some overtime obviously that we've required, because so many storms were on Sunday and Monday, but the wind has helped because it's cleared the roofs which has been good, and made minimal work that needs to be done up there," he stated.

At RHAM, however, Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski said some clearing of snow from the roofs at the middle and high schools has been required.

"We've had to have people on the roof-shoveling because we didn't know what was going to happen with rain predicted for over the weekend, so we had to take some precautions like that."

Siminski's snow removal budget for this year was \$20,000, and currently, he said about \$52,000 has been spent.

"And we've got probably another three and a half, four weeks to go before I think we're out of the woods."

He added, "We didn't have any choice but to expend those funds. We're in the process of looking where we are in other accounts and being able to reallocate that money for snowplowing."

But despite all the winter weather, Siminski said it was worth noting it looked as though no days would be taken away from April vacation. As per the school calendar, "if we use more than the allocated snow days by March 2 we start taking from April, but it looks like we'll make it."

Any snow days after March 2 will be added to the end of the school year.

\*\*\*

Over in Marlborough, First Selectwoman Catherine Gaudinski said, "I know we've gone over on the road materials in terms of salt supplies, and as of the last payroll, which was Feb. 14, we were at 63 percent of payroll that we used for the Public Works Department."

Gaudinski added, "That doesn't include any time that we've spent since that, so in terms of payroll at this time we're within the budget, but we're over on supplies."

Gaudinski said the town was also having some issues getting their salt orders filled.

"If we can't get the rest of our order that may be a problem if Mother Nature continues to send

us some white stuff and bad weather," she said.

Regarding any over-expenditures, Gaudinski explained, "We might be able to transfer money if funds are available to cover it. Otherwise we would have to request a transfer from the Board of Finance; there's not a plan to do that at this point in time but we're monitoring our budget closely."

Such is the case in Andover, where First Selectman Bob Burbank shared, "We're maxed out on salt." He added, "We went over a little bit already with sand, and right now the overtime is close. I haven't got the last figures in from the last couple of storms, but... if we have a few more storms we're probably going to be over."

But Burbank added, "Obviously, when you talk safety, we're not going to compromise. If we have to go over the budget on stuff like that it has to be done and basically it's an emergency situation."

If the costs were to go "way, way over – if, for example, we needed to spend another \$5,000 or more on salt or sand then we would have to go to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance for additional appropriations, but at this point we don't appear that we're going to be over that much," Burbank said.

See Snow Budgets Page 2

**Snow Budgets cont. from Front Page**

At Andover Elementary School, superintendent Andrew Maneggia said “at the present we’re on track. We seem to be alright.”

He added, “The concern obviously is the cold weather and the snowstorms that we’ve had have resulted in money being spent out of the overtime account for snow removal for the custodians to come out and remove snow, and the other concern is the cold weather which makes the furnaces run longer and consumes more heating oil.”

Maneggia said “at present time, we’re within our estimates and hopefully we’ll get a break in the weather soon. If it remains cold well into March and we have to get oil at the rate we’ve been getting it, we’ll likely exceed our budget.”

East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas shared similar thoughts.

Regarding snow maintenance she said, “We’re not actually over-expended at the moment.”

“We are managing at the moment, although we are anxious for winter to end,” Dugas said. “And certainly in terms of heating costs, the need to maintain running boilers over the weekend, with no shutdown time due to excessive cold has been an issue and that’s impacting us.”

On the town side, East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco shared, “We’re just a little bit shy of spending all of our budget for winter.”

He added, “We’ve got some additional reserve funds in other places, but for the most part we’re just about spent with what we spent last year and we’ve got the rest of February and March.”

But regarding whether or not the funds would be enough, Maniscalco said, “We’ve got to make it enough. We don’t really have a choice when it comes to dealing with snow; we’ve got to clear our roads.”

Maniscalco said there were some additional funds in the capital account that can be pulled from if needed, and shared about \$96,000 spent on overtime and a 20 percent rise in the price of salt were all driving the town’s winter costs.

As for Portland, the budget for winter maintenance hasn’t yet been expended and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said there’d be enough if it doesn’t snow any more.

“We still have some dollars remaining,” she

said. “Certainly we have expended quite a bit in terms of overtime and road materials but the snow budget still has some remaining dollars in it.”

Bransfield added, “If it doesn’t snow anymore we’ll be all set, but I don’t really know what will happen. As we proceed, we’ll know better.”

Bransfield said she felt “comfortable for at least the foreseeable future,” but if the account were to go over, she explained funds to cover the costs would be looked for in other accounts.

“But there’s no need right now,” she stated.

And in Colchester, First Selectman Stan Soby said, “It seems like every day we’re doing snow operations of some sort.” He added Public Works Director James Paggioli “did say we were beyond where we planned to be.”

Paggioli added, “Presently we’re over budget. You’re seeing above average snowfall for an entire season occurring within 30 days. That’s the biggest driver.”

He furthered snow removal is about public safety.

“You can’t stop,” he said. “It’s not like you can pick and choose which storms you want to respond to; you have to take care of them all.”

To help reconcile the account after the season ends, as with the other towns, Paggioli explained savings from other accounts would be transferred if available. In addition, he said the town had submitted an application for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) related to the blizzard at the end of January, which blanketed the town with two feet of snow.

“We haven’t received confirmation that’s going to occur yet but that’s also going to offset our costs,” Paggioli said.

And thinking optimistically, he added, “In the big picture spring is just around the corner. We’re talking really 22 more days to the first day of spring and historically, March has usually been either really good or really bad in the beginning.”

And it’s fair to assume most towns are hoping it’s the former; whether the winter budgets have been over-expended or are close to it, officials in the various *Rivereast* towns are eagerly waiting for spring’s arrival and a stop to the wintry visits.

**Men Brave Cold cont. from Front Page**

groceries or having oil. We can help fill a need with a minimal sacrifice on our part.”

“We never close out donations,” Soby said. “We do it to raise awareness for the need and to take care of peoples’ needs.”

Soby said this year that, although there has been some relief with the lower cost of oil, it’s been so cold that it’s still been very tough for people.

“In town the economic recovery has been uneven,” Soby said. “Some people haven’t recovered yet.”

Soby said a lot of people as well are not immune to needing help since, for some people, one paycheck could be the difference between needing help and not needing help.

“It’s all about the people,” Brown said.

Brown said that, when he began the event five years ago, he had just wanted to do something unique.

“I just remembered the cold and it’s New England,” Brown said. “I asked a few guys to join and we just decided to do something different to give back.”

Compared to this year, Brown said those first few years weren’t all that cold.

The group thanked a few local restaurants and individuals for food that was provided while they were out on the green, including Colchester Pizza, Peg’s Diner and Family Pizza. The group also thanked anyone that had wood delivered and those that gave words of encouragement.

“We did survive it,” Soby said. “We got lots of support from people coming by and making donations. We were well taken care of.”

The group said they didn’t mind participating in the event since it does raise awareness and much needed funds for the fuel bank.

“I have been employed by this town almost 25 years,” Suchecki said. “It’s been such a great community and it’s a pleasure to in some way give back.”

“It’s neighbors helping neighbors,” Soby said. “There’s been an incredible outpouring of support from the community.”

Soby said it’s really been about the community coming together to help their own.

“Every dollar that we raise is a dollar we wouldn’t have if we didn’t do it,” Soby said.

Freezin’ for a Reason is still accepting donations, Soby said, at Town Hall and at the United Bank on Linwood Avenue.

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First off, congratulations are in order to Joey Logano of Middletown, who won the Daytona 500 last weekend.

Logano, 24, has Portland roots – his dad Tom operated Logano Trucking in town, while his grandfather, Sal, was the longtime owner/operator of S. Logano Waste Removal. In fact, it was Sal who first brought Joey to the *Rivereast*’s attention years ago, when he was just starting out in the world of auto racing.

Joey’s racked up an impressive list of accomplishments since then, and has won a bunch of races – with the biggest coming in Daytona on Sunday.

With the win came a spate of national interviews, on everything ranging from ESPN to the *Today* show to the *Late Show with David Letterman*.

Logano stresses he’s quite proud of his Connecticut roots – and in return, we’re quite proud to call him one of our own.

\* \* \*

There is a handful of Christmas songs that get played on the radio every year that don’t have anything to do with Christmas – songs like “Winter Wonderland,” “Let It Snow!” and “Marshmallow World.” They receive airplay because Christmas occurs in the winter. Even though there’s a large chunk of the country that doesn’t see snow, traditionally speaking Christmas and winter scenes go hand in hand.

But every year I think it would be interesting if some enterprising radio station out there – as if there are any enterprising radio stations anymore – would admit songs like “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” aren’t holiday songs so much as seasonal ones, and would dare to give them some airplay past Dec. 25. In this part of the country anyway, it would work.

Especially this year. Because baby, it is cold outside.

This will of course come to no big shock to anyone who’s had reason to step outside recently. February has been brutally cold. And if it seems colder than usual – that’s because it is.

The normal average temperature for February is 28 degrees. But through this past Monday, the average temperature this February has been 16.2 degrees. If anything, that figure has dropped even further by the time you read this, as Tuesday brought some absurdly cold – difficult-to-believe cold – weather.

That puts this month well on pace to become the coldest month – not coldest February; coldest month period – on the Connecticut record books. The existing record is 16.5 degrees, set way back in February 1934. Barring an unforeseen warm-up after I wrote this Tuesday and before Saturday – and the weather forecasters Tuesday didn’t feel that was likely – this month is going to eclipse it.

So, there ya go. We all can say we lived through the coldest month in Connecticut history.

You’ll forgive me if I don’t jump up and down with celebration – although it might help keep me warm.

\* \* \*

Speaking of the cold, it’s hard to believe but in just over a week, daylight saving time will be here again. At 2 a.m. Sunday, March 8, we’ll jump our clocks ahead one hour.

I love having an extra hour of sunlight every day (yes yes, DST haters, I know I’m not really “gaining” light, as it’ll just be darker longer now in the morning, but I’m usually asleep during that time, so it’s like a bonus hour for me). But I’m still not quite used to it happening so early. It may still be sunny out at 5:30 or 6 p.m., but if it’s also 10 or 15 de-

grees out there, it doesn’t seem quite so glorious.

As most of us remember, “spring ahead” used to occur in, well, the spring. From 1987 until 2006, daylight saving time started the first weekend of April (and from 1976-86, it apparently occurred even later, the last weekend of April). Still a little chilly then? Sure. But often a good bit warmer than the first weekend of March is.

In 2007, daylight saving time was adjusted to where it is now, as per the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The change was to allow the Department of Energy time to conduct an energy conservation study. The study found that the extended period resulted in a 0.5 percent savings in electricity usage. Which might explain why Congress has opted to keep the extended daylight schedule going since then, even though by law, once the study ended (which it did in 2008), Congress could revert back to the old schedule if it wanted.

Like I said, I love the sun staying out later in the day. I’m just still not quite used to bright skies at 6 p.m. being accompanied by arctic temperatures. I’m sure I’ll get there someday, though.

And who knows – maybe when the calendar turns to March winter will decide to cut us some well-earned slack. Extended weather forecasts can be, to put it bluntly, a bunch of junk (just last Thursday, there was a potential blizzard heading for us for Wednesday. By Tuesday that had changed to *possibly* a coating of snow). But for what it’s worth, [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) – home of the 45-day forecast – is calling for temperatures in the 50s the first week of March.

Hey, the clocks will want it to be spring. Maybe the temperatures will too.

\* \* \*

From the “when life gives you lemons...” department: Up in Massachusetts, which has been hit much harder than we have when it comes to snow (they’ve seen more than 100 inches this winter), a local man has apparently decided there’s no business like snow business. (Sorry, I couldn’t resist.)

Kyle Waring of Manchester-by-the-Sea (which is located on Cape Ann, 20 miles north of Boston) is selling snow. While around here we’ve certainly seen enough of it, there are still plenty of places in this country where it hasn’t snowed a flake – and Waring wants to help those people out.

For \$89, Waring will ship, to anywhere in the country (except the northeast, a decision I fully support), a six-pound Styrofoam container of snow. Yes, real, pure, Boston-area snow. Waring ships it overnight, and according to his website, [ShipSnowYo.com](http://ShipSnowYo.com), it is guaranteed to arrive anywhere in the U.S. within 20 hours.

Even if the snow melts some along the way, Waring told [Boston.com](http://Boston.com) people could still get 10-15 snowballs out of the container.

When I first heard this story, the famous quote “There’s a sucker born every minute” sprang to mind. But then I got to thinking. As crazy a get-rich-quick scheme as it sounds, it’s actually an interesting concept. It’s a way for kids in, say, Arizona or Florida to experience something that perhaps they’ve only ever seen in the movies or on TV – and have never touched for themselves.

Obviously, the best way to experience snow is to go to a place where it has actually snowed. But if you can’t do that, Waring is helping to bring just a little bit of the snow to you. It’s a unique idea, sure – and a pretty neat one at that.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

# Sidewalk Problems Persist in Portland

by John Tyczkowski

As the town grapples with a snowier-than-usual winter, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield asked the Board of Selectmen last week to consider revising language to toughen up penalties for failing to shovel snow and ice from sidewalks.

“Rick (Kelsey) and our town crew do go out and clear sidewalks after a certain period of time. There is a cost to that, and we do bill owners,” Bransfield told the selectmen at their Feb. 18 meeting. “But we cannot lien unless it’s built into the ordinance. Given all the snow and ice, we need to update the ordinance with regard to liens, should we need to place them.

“Most people do comply, but there are the few that don’t, so we do need to look into this,” she added.

Bransfield said problems with clearing sidewalks on the north side of Route 66 and at crosswalks throughout town prompted her to consider revisiting and revising the language of the ordinance.

“I think owners are forgetting they need to clear the sidewalk area so people, especially children walking to schools, can get to those signals,” she said.

Bransfield named as her clearing priorities paths for students to walk to school, and the

intersection of routes 17A and 66 toward Tri-Town Foods.

“A lot of people still walk over to the grocery store, even in the winter,” she said.

The town requires sidewalks to be cleared within 12 hours after a snowfall by anyone who owns property which borders public sidewalks.

In addition, guidelines state owners must clear the full width of the sidewalk, salt or sand icy spots and remove snow from sidewalk corners and curb ramps. The town also encourages residents to help clear spots around fire hydrants and bus stops.

Also, residents can pick up sand and salt from the town for free at the Company No. 3 Firehouse, at the town transfer station and under the Arrigoni Bridge by the sewage treatment plant.

Though both 17A and 66 are state highways, it remains the town’s responsibility to hold property owners responsible for clearing sidewalks on those roads that abut their properties.

\* \* \*

Switching to a more general sidewalks discussion, Public Works Director Rick Kelsey gave the board a quick breakdown on the vital stats of its sidewalks, transitioning into a discussion about sidewalk repair.

“There’s approximately 15 miles of sidewalks in town, and about four miles of them are along state highways, 17A and 66,” he said.

In accordance with the board’s stated priority of providing safe routes to school, Kelsey said he estimated students across all grade levels used about seven miles of sidewalks for either walking to school or to the bus stop.

Marked on a map with concentric circles radiating out from the town’s public schools, streets students regularly use to walk to school include parts of High, Spring, East Main, Fairview and Waverly streets.

Kelsey said he looked at federal and state standards to come up with a working definition of an unsafe sidewalk, which was anything greater than a quarter of an inch vertical change between sidewalk panels, and any panels that were visibly cracked.

According to that guideline, Kelsey said he arbitrarily decided about a quarter of the school-use sidewalks, or about two of the seven miles students use, might need replacing.

However, Kelsey said that the actual number is probably more, and that inventorying the sidewalks in town “could be interesting.”

“It costs about \$250,000 for removal and replacement of a mile of sidewalks, at \$12 per

square foot,” he said. “So you’re looking at half a million dollars for about a quarter of that seven miles.”

While Kelsey reminded the selectmen that these numbers and figures were only estimates, he said they were very indicative of the actual cost to the town.

“The bottom line here is, if you’re going to get into a sidewalk improvement program that’s going to take you anywhere, it’s going to require significant dollars,” he said. “I proposed \$50,000 for sidewalk maintenance in this year’s budget, but that number should probably be more like \$500,000.”

Bransfield added how the town’s Complete Streets Group applied for funding from the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments that could be put toward town transportation improvements, which could include sidewalk repairs.

“We’re hopeful that we may be able to get some help from them,” she said. “We could get help in terms of more concretely identifying areas that need and don’t need improvement. We don’t have anything definitive on that, but it could help pay for assessments, which also take time and money.”

# Marlborough Selectmen Slice EDC Recommendation

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

At a special meeting last week, the Board of Selectmen agreed the Economic Development Commission is seeking too much money for the 2015-16 fiscal year – and said it will suggest the Board of Finance only give the EDC a small portion of that requested funding.

At the Feb. 24 meeting, the selectmen reviewed a \$22,000 request from the commission. The commission stated it wanted \$16,000 for a marketing study, \$4,500 for consultant services and \$1,500 for memberships and sponsorships.

“The last market study was in 2001,” selectman Dick Shea said. “I’m not smart enough about economic development to say you need a new study every ‘x’ years.”

Shea said he hadn’t heard of any businesses shying away from coming to town because it lacked an updated marketing study.

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski doubted whether jumping into a marketing study was the right idea before town officials even had a direction they wanted to go in in terms of economic development.

“We would need to give a person a direction [for a marketing study],” Gaudinski said. “But we have no direction. We need to look at the next steps.”

Gaudinski said just looking at the business opportunities around the business park – the as-yet undeveloped piece of land located near the corner of Route 66 and Jones Hollow Road – is

too narrow a field. Shea agreed.

“Don’t drop all eggs into the business park basket,” he said.

Selectman Denis Soucy asked what type of person would help the town find a direction for economic development.

“All of the boards have a different direction,” Gaudinski said. “We need to develop a common goal.”

Gaudinski mentioned Hebron’s 2013 market study, and said some of its findings – related to retail and potential viable opportunities to develop – apply to Marlborough, as the two towns are similar. Gaudinski encouraged residents to check out the Hebron study, which is on the Hebron Economic Development Commission website, located at [hebronct.com/edc.htm](http://hebronct.com/edc.htm).

The selectmen chose to suggest the Board of Finance give \$5,000 to the Economic Development Commission for professional services along with adjusting their dues and reducing office supplies. The selectmen also suggested that Director of Planning and Development Peter Hughes go to a meeting in March to discuss the business park’s history and invite WPCA chair Jack Murray and the commission.

\* \* \*

The selectmen also discussed Tuesday moving engineering costs for capital projects to the capital engineering line instead of having them in the general fund.

“We have been using the general fund to fund assets,” Gaudinski said.

So far in 2014-15, the town has spent \$88,794.59 – exceeding its original \$65,379.11 budget. Gaudinski said the town consistently has spikes in the line item.

“The water system has gone over budget with Connecticut Water withdrawing,” Gaudinski said, referring to the company pulling out of the town’s water system expansion project last April. “If we didn’t have that, we would be in budget this year.”

“We are closer this year to the original budget than most years,” Shea said.

Assistant treasurer Hayley Wagner said that, with so many state grants, the engineering costs should go into capital nonrecurring (CNR), instead of the general professional engineering budget.

“Those projects we foresee in the future should be as a capital asset in CNR rather than the general fund,” Wagner said.

“We wouldn’t have spikes in professional engineering,” Gaudinski said.

Wagner explained the general fund should be for day-to-day items only, along with emergency items such as the South Road Culvert repair.

“Design and engineering for things like [Small Town Economic Assistance Program] grants would then be in CNR, not the general

fund,” Gaudinski said.

Shea said he didn’t see a downside to that. Gaudinski also confirmed there would still be a contingency in the professional engineering line for emergencies.

\* \* \*

As far as filling in some of the placeholders in the current proposed town operations budget, Gaudinski said electricity is still unknown along with a few other items. The biggest one is the resident state trooper line. According to the budget proposed by Gov. Dannel Malloy, Gaudinski said, towns would need to pay 100 percent of their resident trooper’s salary and benefits.

“If we are funding 100 percent of the resident trooper then the resident trooper should be in town 100 percent of the time,” Gaudinski said. Currently, she said, the troopers can be called off to help with other emergencies and assignments outside of their town.

Gaudinski also clarified that this increase has been in the talks for years now at the state level. Currently the towns pay 83 percent of the resident trooper’s salary and benefits.

\* \* \*

The Board of Selectmen met Thursday to further discuss the town operations budget and will meet again Tuesday, March 3, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

# Hebron Schools Awarded Security Grant

by Geeta Schrayter

Hebron Public Schools was recently awarded a security grant from the state Department of Emergency Services for security upgrades at both the Gilead Hill and Hebron Elementary schools.

The \$177,099 award is a matching grant that will be used to purchase new digitally-enhanced cameras and install new security access. According to a Feb. 20 letter sent by Superintendent of Schools Jeff Newton, the upgrades are a must “given the importance of safety for our children, staff, and buildings.”

He added this week, “We’re excited about that [grant]. It’s going to be great. We’re going to be able to retrofit both buildings with new state-of-the-art camera systems.”

Newton explained there would be 30-40 cameras in both schools and new entry access with swipe badges. In addition, the camera system will link with the doors “so we can pinpoint who is entering and exiting the buildings.”

The total cost of the upgrades is \$284,000. Newton shared the remaining balance will be paid for with leftover funds from the 2013-14 fiscal year, which have been earmarked for the project.

Speaking on the importance of the project, Newton shared, “It’s definitely time to upgrade the systems at both schools. They’re very outdated – about 14 years old. So this is going to give us an opportunity to have some excellent security and surveillance throughout both buildings.”

Newton concluded in his letter, “In this ever-changing world, it is the highest priority to not only keep everyone safe, but to also do everything possible to make sure the school buildings remain a secure and nurturing environment for all.”

Installation is expected to be completed prior to June 30, with work taking place during second shift or over April vacation.

## Colchester Police News

2/17: Colchester Police said David Martin, 25, of 128 Broadway, was arrested and charged with two counts of failure to appear, sixth-degree larceny and fugitive arrest without warrant out of Virginia.

2/17: State Police said Michael Hiswoode, 46, of 90 Mansfield Hollow Rd., Mansfield, was arrested and charged with three counts of animal cruelty.

2/18: State Police said Joseph Hudock, 54, of 156 Kings Highway, Groton, was arrested and charged with failure to appear and viola-

tion of a protective order.

2/18: State Police said Justin Brady, 31, of 72 Fairfield St., New Haven, was arrested and charged with failure to appear and failure to respond to a payable violation.

2/19: State Police said Christopher Thompson, 25, of 49 Standish Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to grant right of way.

2/23: State Police said Justin Kneeland, 29, of 532 Clubhouse Rd., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

## East Hampton Police News

2/13: As a result of a lengthy alleged embezzlement investigation, Edyta Zyzdorf, 41 of 321 South Main St., Marlborough, was placed under arrest. Zyzdorf was charged with first-degree larceny, second-degree forgery and criminal impersonation, East Hampton Police said.

2/14: Andreas Guliani, 24, of 10 Farm Lane, Portland, was arrested and charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating without minimum insurance, operating while under suspension, failure to have illuminated tail lights, failure to respond and nine counts of

second-degree failure to appear, police said.

2/16: Rita Marie Peatie, 66, of 55 Wickham Rd., East Haddam, was arrested and charged with second-degree threatening, police said.

2/17: Brett Michnowicz, 20, of 165 Clark Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

2/19: Patrick O’Meara, 18, of 22 Spice Hill Drive, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, first-degree reckless endangerment and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

# Negotiations Continue on Field Maintenance Agreement in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Selectmen last week told Town Manager Andrew Tierney to continue working on a turf management agreement between the town and the RHAM school district.

The agreement that's currently in the works comes after numerous discussions relating to the state of the athletic fields at the schools. Last summer, a group of volunteers got together to clean up the fields, and since then, conversations have taken place regarding how to ensure the fields are properly maintained moving forward. Previously, people had said the district wasn't putting enough money toward field upkeep, and that the work was too much for the current staff to handle.

At a November RHAM Board of Education meeting, after various individuals expressed their support for outsourcing management of the fields to the Hebron Parks and Recreation department, the board authorized Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski to do just that.

Since then, negotiations have been taking place to hammer out the details of the agreement.

The selectmen "gave me permission to move forward," Tierney said this week. "It looks like we're progressing with that. [Parks and Recreation Director] Rich Calarco would be in charge of that plan to try to help and assist in keeping those fields in a safe and playable condition."

In a Feb. 12 letter to Tierney, Calarco said he was "pleased to report that we have completed negotiations with RHAM regarding our overseeing of the turf program."

However, at the meeting some concerns were expressed, including how to ensure RHAM would abide by the agreement and how to make certain there was enough communication between the parties involved and decisions are made regarding who's responsible for what.

As the agreement currently states, work for the 2015-16 season, which includes work both this spring and next, is expected to cost \$43,240. However, Calarco said this week, "This is a base

contract. There are times other things that aren't included may be needed like, for example, if they need special prep to get the fields ready for a game."

All of the costs are to be reimbursed by RHAM. Under the agreement, which would run through June 30, 2018, the cost "shall be paid to the town by the Region annually and upon termination of the agreement. [And] payment shall be made within 30 days of receipt of an invoice by the Region."

The agreement furthers Hebron will "perform exterior turf management and cultural practices" to the turfs at the schools which includes the five athletic fields at RHAM along with the areas of lawn surrounding the schools and parking areas.

Calarco reiterated this week the town wouldn't be doing day-to-day maintenance, which would be handled by RHAM staff, but turf management work including pest management, fertilizing, seeding, irrigation and aeration.

Speaking on the agreement overall, Calarco said it aligned with the goals of Parks and Recreation.

"Part of our mission from Parks and Recreation is to look at regional opportunities and working with other groups," he said, and mentioned the department already had an equipment agreement with Glastonbury as well as others. "Part of our goal is to do that – to work with other entities to get the max dollar for our community."

Calarco concluded some details were still being finalized, but the agreement was moving forward. He mentioned the selectmen unanimously voted to allow Parks and Recreation to advertise for a seasonal full-time park maintainer if the agreement is approved, and wrote in his letter, "This approach would enable the department to handle the RHAM extra assignments as well as town assignments."

"Obviously we need to start this before the

end of March if we're going to do it – if the snow ever melts," he added with a laugh. "Once we can find the fields then we'll be able to do it."

\* \* \*

Also at the meeting, the selectmen authorized the Hebron Board of Education to apply for a grant to install solar panels on the roof of Hebron Elementary School.

Tierney said this week, "I'm on board with it. It's another solar project that should offset some of the electrical costs at the school, so I'm always a big proponent of that."

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Newton explained this week the project was still in the beginning stages.

"Nothing is solidified at this point," he said. "The Board of Selectmen gave their 'ok' but [the project] needs to be worked through the Capital Improvement Policy committee and the Board of Finance, but given we've gotten approval for a new roof on Hebron Elementary this summer, it goes hand in hand with the opportunity to put on some solar panels."

The panels, he furthered, "would potentially give us some savings to the district after the pay off."

Those savings, he added, "could be upwards of \$40,000 a year if we purchase the panels so that's a big chunk of money we're looking at, but there's still some work that needs to be done."

\* \* \*

In addition, the board set the date for a town meeting as well as a public hearing.

The town meeting was set for March 5 to accept grant funds from the state Department of Education's Local Bridge Program to replace the Marjorie Circle bridge.

The grant is for \$359,749.68 which would be matched by \$391,450.32 from the town's Unassigned Fund Balance.

Tierney explained this week, "Due to the town charter and the amount of money the town would expend, this has to go to town meeting."

But it's a no brainer in my mind; just under 50 percent of the funding is through the state grant so it only makes sense to move forward."

Tierney added the bridge was "showing some real signs of fatigue" and explained "we are applying for the rest of the money needed outside of the [grant] through STEAP funds."

He said he hoped to hear back by April 1, and, if awarded, the project would be fully funded.

The town meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 5, at 7 p.m., in the Douglas Library Community Room.

\* \* \*

The selectmen also scheduled a public hearing for Thursday, March 19 to discuss applying for a Small Cities Grant and to garner citizen input.

According to the public hearing notice, the hearing's purpose "is to obtain citizen's views on the town's community development and housing needs and review and discuss specific project activities in the areas of housing, economic development or community facilities which could be part of the town's application for funding."

In addition, the hearing will give citizens "an opportunity to make their comments known on the program" and allow the opportunity to review and discuss the town's prior Small Cities projects.

The town is expected to apply for a \$300,000 grant for Housing Rehabilitation. If awarded, the town is also planning to create a revolving loan fund from the grant for a housing rehabilitation loan program.

This, Tierney explained, "is for residents in town who have emergencies – who need roof repair or something but just don't have the money."

It's "another avenue," he said, one that "gives them the opportunity to leverage some of that [money] and repay it at a different rate than if they took out a loan."

# Colchester Fire Department Strategic Plan in Standstill

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

During the Feb. 19 Board of Selectmen meeting, members of the town fire department expressed their frustrations after the Board of Finance turned down a special appropriation of approximately \$13,000 for the department's strategic plan.

Rob Tarlov, chairman of the Board of Finance, stated the board had denied the special appropriation because it would compromise the integrity of the budget process. This is because the item funding the fire department strategic plan was removed from the 2014-15 budget by then-First Selectman Gregg Schuster, and the budget was then approved by voters. To add the item back into the 2014-15 budget through special appropriation would compromise the process integrity, Tarlov said. Tarlov said at the time it was determined to be of importance, but not of urgency.

However, First Selectman Stan Soby said this time around it's a different administration and a different Board of Selectmen than the 2014-15 budget process. Soby went on to say this is a matter of urgency for the fire department and for the town to plan and have things in place. Soby added the town has a new financial plan-

ner, and needs to stop pushing things off.

Tarlov reiterated that it is budget time now, and now is the time when it needs to be put in. Tarlov said if the town can come up with another way to fund the strategic plan beside a special appropriation, the Board of Finance would be open to discussions.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle asked Fire Chief Walt Cox if the person he is recommending for the job can wait until next budget time. Cox was unsure as he had not yet had that conversation with the person.

Deputy Chief Don Lee stood up to voice his frustrations about the process.

"We spent hundreds of hours with no pay to work on the strategic plan," Lee said. "We try and move forward and be proactive and we come to a meeting to hear we aren't getting anything in the budget."

Lee said he feels "berated" and "held hostage" at town meetings, and then "someone in town takes a chainsaw and cuts the ladder." Lee went on to say that it "sends a message of 'you don't matter,' and it's getting difficult to maintain morale."

Lee, and many other volunteers, had been

working the past few years to gather together the information necessary for a strategic plan.

"We are the only town that is hammered on this," Lee said. "We argued extensively to keep it in the budget [last year,] it was taken out and now here we are."

Lee said that, following the urging of town officials, particularly the Board of Finance, the department had gone out and brought forth the documents needed to prepare a strategic plan.

"Now we are at the hour and could go right or left and we go left around the cul du sac and go back to ground zero," Lee said. "We won't be talking \$10,000. It will be more."

Lee said he was very frustrated and very disappointed along with the rest of the fire department.

"I'm afraid we're kicking the can down the road," Cox said.

In February 2014, the Board of Selectmen had received a report from the task force set up to come up with recommendations regarding bettering the department. That report stated the town and fire department negotiate a contract, simplifying the training process for volunteers,

that human resources and personnel become professionalized, and for a strategic plan to be reported within a year.

However, by March 28, 2014, the \$10,000 allocated in the 2014-15 proposed budget for the fire department's strategic plan had been cut.

Tarlov, in response to Lee and Cox, said the Board of Finance has never said no to anything because the fire department did not have a strategic plan.

"It wasn't the chief or the fire department that had it taken out," Tarlov said. "We've been asking [for the plan] and understand the importance of a strategic plan."

Tarlov went on to say that the Board of Finance stated during its Feb. 18 meeting that if the town is going to do the plan, it needs to stay in the budget this year.

"We're open to any ideas beside special appropriation to find the money," Tarlov said.

By the end of the Feb. 19 Board of Selectmen meeting, however, no decision was made, aside from possibly looking for funding in other places.

# Colchester to Lose Selectman, Tax Collector

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Town of Colchester will be saying goodbye to two elected officials in the coming weeks – selectman Bill Curran and tax collector Don Philips.

Curran resigned from the board at its Feb. 19 meeting, effective immediately. First Selectman Stan Soby said Wednesday that Curran had recently accepted a new job and found it to be quite time-consuming.

“He wanted to be able to do justice to both,” Soby said. “It’s a good thing for him, not such a good thing for us, but those are the things that happen.”

“If I can’t put my all into it, it’s time,” Curran said at last week’s meeting, stating he needed to “balance some things” in his life.

Curran joined the board last May, filling a vacancy that was created when Soby, a member of the selectmen, was tapped to replace departing First Selectman Gregg Schuster.

Before serving as selectman, Curran served on the Fire Department Task Force in 2013 and went on to fill a vacancy on the Board of Finance in July 2013 that had been vacated by Cathy Pompei. Curran served on the Board of Finance until November 2013, when he lost a bid for re-election. He then served on the Economic Development Commission at the start of 2014 until joining the selectmen in May.

“You’ve been a good person and really stepped up to the plate,” selectwoman Rosemary Coyle told Curran at the Feb. 19 meeting.

“I certainly appreciate Bill’s efforts and understand the concept of balance,” fellow selectman Kurt Frantzen said of Curran’s resignation.

Soby said this week the board will miss Curran’s analytical way of thinking, considering his background in business and lean processes.

Curran’s term runs until May, and the Board of Selectmen will now begin its process of filling the Republican seat in the meantime. Soby said this process includes putting out a notice to the town, accepting applications and interviewing interested candidates. The person selected must be a registered Republican.

Soby said that, although the Republican Town Committee will submit its recommendation, anyone is welcome to apply.

\*\*\*

Philips is also departing his position due to work-related reasons, as he was recently named the executive director of the Connecticut Bar Foundation. He won’t start in the role until April, so his last day as town tax collector will be April 2.

Philips has been tax collector in town since last May, following the resignation of former collector Tricia Coblentz.

“We were fortunate that Don had the experience and the ability to step up,” Soby said. “He’s done great things at the office.”

This is actually Philips’ second stint as town tax collector; he previously held the position from 1999-2001.

“In 1999, I had separated from my previous employer and had been looking for full-time work,” Philips said. “I had done collection work as an attorney.”

At the time, Philips said, he had been chairing the nominating committee for the upcoming election and knew the tax collector at the time was not seeking re-election and actually wanted to depart before July which is known as the busiest month for collections.

“As a party, we searched for two months and weren’t coming up with a candidate,” Philips said. “At that point I said ‘Well, I’ve done some enforcement work on debt and don’t know much about being a tax collector, but how can I pursue the acting tax collector position?’”

Philips was then brought in as acting tax collector until 2001, and returned to the role last year.

Longtime tax assessor John Chaponis worked with Philips during both his stints with the town.

“I was sad to see him leave 10 years ago, ecstatic to learn he was returning last year and now truly heartbroken to see him go,” Chaponis said.

Last year, Philips said, the town needed

someone to fill the tax collector position, and the selectmen asked him to come back to the role. At the time, he had been working for the lobbying firm Rome, Smith & Lutz, Inc. in Hartford, and the only thing he told the selectmen was maybe, and that he needed to finish the commitment for the legislative session. The Board of Selectmen interviewed Philips for the role last April and subsequently appointed him; his first day in office was May 17.

“I came back because there was a need to get someone in there and I had the experience,” Philips said. “I knew the town needed help.”

However, in the past three months, Philips had been a serious contender for the executive director position at the Connecticut Bar Foundation. He said it is truly a “dream job.”

“I mean it in every sense,” he said. “I can’t believe I’m going back. There are so many things going through my head including the excitement and challenge of going back to the legal community.”

Philips, who has a juris doctorate from the University of Connecticut School of Law, had worked as the director of public affairs and government relations for the Connecticut Bar Association in New Britain for 11 years, prior to joining Rome, Smith & Lutz.

Philips’ term as tax collector runs through November, and he said he had been preparing to run for election this fall when he heard about the open position at Connecticut Bar.

“I’ll be renewing a lot of friendships and networks that I’ve had for years in the legal community,” Philips said. “I am looking forward to helping the organization achieve its mission objectives.”

Currently Philips is hard at work ensuring that the tax collector office will be in the “best shape it can possibly be” when he leaves.

“We’re about to complete one big project,” Philips said of the Point-and-Pay system, which allows taxpayers to pay online and also via credit card or debit card in the office.

“We have been holding off with bringing the service online,” Philips said. “January is busy

and it wasn’t the best time to do it.”

Philips said the office now has the training and the system will go online early March. The town clerk will also be using the same equipment so they can receive credit and debit cards at the counter.

“It’s exciting in the sense that a lot of people have expressed to have the options to pay with these kinds of services and we are able to make it happen,” Philips said. “It’s one of the last things I do in the office, but one of the things that is very important.”

The Board of Selectmen will now be charged with hiring Philips’ replacement. While the board was insisting on a Democratic tax collector when Philips was hired last year – as Coblentz was a Democrat – Philips said he was unsure if that requirement would stand this time around.

“I’ve gotten the sense that they want to [get someone] as quickly as possible,” Philips said. “I’ve worked with Stan on a temporary transition so the public is well served.”

“Don is the ultimate professional; his knowledge, integrity, strong work ethic, leadership skills, and calm approach to solving difficult problems are true assets for any organization,” Chaponis said. “His departure will leave a void that will be difficult to fill.”

“It’s a great town and the people have been super,” Philips said. “It makes it easy to serve them. I’m going to miss that, but I am also looking forward to the new challenges that are facing me and returning to a community of people whom I have known for years.

“The mission of the Bar Foundation is to help clients and the population to gain access to justice by providing funding to direct legal providers,” Philips added. “It’s such an important role to be played and to be part of that will be extremely satisfying and challenging and I’m looking forward to both.”

\*\*\*

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be Thursday, March 5, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

## East Hampton Police Department Building Committee Proposed

by John Tyczkowski

Tuesday evening, the Town Council debated the specifics of setting up a police department building committee similar in scope and duties to the current high school building committee.

According to a draft resolution, the seven-member police department building committee would have the power to work with the department to determine what exactly the police need in a new building to be successful in their mission, and to work with an architect to select a building site and to create plans for the new building.

The draft resolution also specifies the composition of the committee should include members of the community “demonstrating knowledge of building, design, architecture, engineering and other related fields.”

Also specified are several ex-officio committee members that include the town manager and the police chief, or their representatives, and a member of the East Hampton Police Union.

Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. said he had some issues with the resolution. First, he objected to a passage that said the Town Council had “accepted and understood” the facilities committee report.

“We accepted the receipt of the report; we never accepted anything that had to do with the content, we never really talked about it as a council,” he said. “To have that in the resolution, I have some problems with that.”

Hintz also said the proposal for the committee’s wide latitude to design a new building was “too premature” because the town already had plenty of information to look into from the 2008 Friar Report and last year’s facilities report.

“This is basically turning over the entire control of the police department to seven members to say go pick a piece of land in town, fund it and turn over a new building,” he said. “The committee would basically be turning over everything before it and saying, ‘Let’s find a place and build a new building without examining the options we already have.’”

Hintz asked for a “month or two” to reex-

amine the proposal and clarify the language and role of the committee before “we create a committee that turns the entire project away from the council.”

Several other councilors objected to the idea of delaying the committee’s creation.

“It’s going to take a month or two just to create the committee and select the members; that’s not going to happen overnight,” councilor George Pfaffenbach said. “We need to keep this moving forward; it’s an ongoing process.”

“We’ve been talking about this for a year, it’s not a new idea and it’s not something we can put off any longer,” council chair Barbara Moore said. “We will actively work with this committee, and we need them to start working with the police department.”

Council vice chair Kevin Reich said another reason the committee’s creation should happen sooner rather than later is because the police department building committee should work closely with the Center School building subcommittee.

“Center School is going to be pivotal to any major building changes we do in this town, whether there’s a police department there or not,” he said. “I can’t see us holding back a month or two when we need to have these very important conversations.”

“But I agree with Mr. Hintz,” he added. “I think it’s incumbent on us to look at this resolution very carefully and propose any changes to the language so we can move forward.”

Councilor Patience Anderson said she liked “a lot of things” about the resolution, but still had some changes she wanted to see.

“I’m on board with the intent of this, but I have some hesitation with the scope of this whole committee,” she said. “Also, I agree with Mr. Hintz. I don’t think it changes the meaning at all to withdraw that sentence about the council approving the facilities recommendations.”

Anderson also said she’d like to see the committee’s duties be divided into two phases to spread things out over time.

“It might be more advantageous to take the

whole thing in bites, in measurable increments,” she said. “Then we can give them a timeline, and tell the committee ‘you have x amount of months to come up with this, and we’ll give you the funds for an architect.’”

Under Anderson’s proposal, Phase 1 would involve the committee securing funding, finding an architect, reviewing possible funding opportunities, designing a new police station, providing information to the public about its design, cost and size and recommending a course of action to the council.

Phase 2, once approved by the council, would involve the actual construction including selecting a site and a contractor, managing the project with quarterly updates to the town council and turning the finished building over to the town.

In addition, an alternate Phase 2 would involve the committee redoing the design process and presenting the council with another proposal.

The individual steps within these phases were listed in the proposal.

Councilor Phillip Visintainer cautioned site selection should go hand-in-hand with determining the department’s needs during the design phase.

“Site selection has a big bearing on programming needs,” councilor Phillip Visintainer. “Square footage, design and configuration of the building may be dependent on the site, and that could affect programming.”

Anderson agreed an architect should be involved with determining a building that fits the department’s programming needs.

Also, she said the 2008 Friar Report already clearly outlined the needs of the police department, and should be taken into consideration.

When Moore said the department’s needs might have changed since the report, Anderson agreed and said it was “a question of re-tweaking,” given changes over the intervening years.

“I’m just not in favor of totally reinventing the wheel,” she said.

Councilors agreed to have their revisions to

the proposal ready by March 5, in preparation for the second reading of the proposal at the March 10 town council meeting.

Councilor Mark Philhower was absent from the meeting.

\*\*\*

The council also welcomed the town’s new Parks and Recreation Department director, who began work this past Monday, and she happens to be a town resident.

Jamie Krajewski lives in town with her husband and children, and said she was “extremely excited” to start.

“I’m really excited to be here and to start, and I invite anyone to stop in and let me know your thoughts and what you guys are looking for in the future,” she said.

Previously, Krajewski worked as a recreation supervisor for the town of South Windsor for the past eight years.

“My main responsibility was managing the aquatics division there, the largest in New England, over a million gallons of water between three pools,” she said. “I also did a lot of programming for children’s camps, and all the adult programming as well.”

Before that, she worked as the aquatics director for the Boys and Girls Club in Waterbury. She’s also a member of the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, and co-chair of its aquatics committee, and a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association.

The position had been open since last July when the previous director, Ruth Checko, resigned after nine years to pursue a similar position in Avon.

“The parks and rec director is a very important position for our community,” Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said. “It’s one of the positions that has some of the most positive interactions with the community.”

\*\*\*

The Town Council’s next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 10, at 6:30 p.m., in the Town Hall meeting room.

# School Board Passes \$29.22 Million Budget in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

As part of a 45-minute meeting Monday evening, the Board of Education passed its 2015-16 budget proposal unanimously, and on the first vote.

The \$29,222,785 budget represents a 3.39 percent increase over last year's school board budget of \$28,265,097.

The board's approved budget is actually slightly higher than the request Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas initially brought earlier this month, which was \$29,172,093, and which represented a 3.209 percent increase over the approved 2014-15 school budget.

The increase over the superintendent's budget request is centered on three main areas.

The board decided to increase the substitute teacher pay rate by \$10, to \$85 per day, and to allocate \$15,000 to the superintendent's budget for redesigning and upgrading the school district's website.

The board also decided to establish summer school not just for high school students, but for students in kindergarten through third grade as well.

Initially, the board had only planned for summer school for high school students, but determined that adding in summer school "at both ends" would ultimately be more beneficial, board member Scott Minnick said.

"K-3 will be a little bit more complex with regard to programming and a little bit more expensive because of the staffing you need with children," he said. "But it's something that's vitally important to the children, and it'll piggyback nicely onto the recent implementation

of the full-day kindergarten."

In addition, Minnick said the K-3 summer school could help students those ages prepare for the "increased rigor" in instruction per new Common Core state standards.

Despite the overall budget being slightly higher than what Dugas originally requested, the board did make some reductions to her initial proposal, including the elimination of a new school resource officer program and cutting a new library media specialist proposed for Memorial School.

The school resource officer would have been a town police officer assigned to East Hampton High School for security, and the board of education and the town would have split the full-time \$116,087 cost, with the board of education paying the larger share.

However, the board decided that adding such a position would require more time for review and study.

"It's a great idea, but we decided it's something that needs more planning first, doing it now would be too last minute," Minnick said. "Part of our job for this year is to do a study, see what the needs are, what the costs are and to see how we could implement it in our district."

After the meeting, Board of Education Chairman Ken Barber elaborated on the challenges of creating the school resource officer position.

"There's an awful lot of plusses to having that position, but we didn't have enough time to develop the idea," he said. "We need to figure out how the position would be used, and

how it would work in conjunction with the high school security, then how you might bring that position down to the middle school and elementary schools."

Barber said the high school has one town employee serving as a security officer.

During discussion, board members underscored just how much of this year's budget costs were out of their control.

Board member Josh Piteo asked the superintendent how much of the costs built into the budget proposal came from having to be in compliance with unfunded state and federal mandates.

Dugas said she couldn't give an exact total of the money in the budget impacted by such mandates because they were so far-reaching throughout the budget.

"It's a challenge to put a specific dollar amount to it," she said. "We actually started to calculate that and it turned out a bit of almost every line item can be attributed to something unfunded."

However, when Piteo asked if the amount allocated for unfunded mandates in the school budget easily reached into the six-figure range, Dugas said "absolutely."

Some of these mandates included the implementation of state Common Core standards, school safety and security standards and professional development costs.

Dugas estimated that roughly 90 percent of the budget is "out of [the board's] hands," because that's the portion that consists of salaries, wages, benefits and the aforementioned

federal and state mandates.

"There's only about 10 percent that we have any flexibility with, which is not a large amount at all," she said. "Contractual obligations amount to about 80 percent, and then there are items such as transportation and tuition."

Minnick said this information directly affects residents in town.

"Even without knowing the exact numbers, people should know the effect that unfunded mandates have on our budgets," he said. "It's the burden of the taxpayers to make up the difference; it's unfair."

Piteo also asked why school budgets have kept increasing while enrollment in the district keeps decreasing.

Dugas again pinned the blame on costs of unfunded mandates, as well as staffing changes.

"Although you may have staffing numbers go down due to attrition or reduction in student numbers, we have [state] mandates that require us to look at repurposing those positions," she said. "We're required to look at how those positions might be used differently to address those mandates."

Next, the budget heads to the Board of Finance for review, consisting of both a budget meeting and a public hearing in March. From there, it will be routed to the Town Council before heading to a town meeting in late April or early May.

\* \* \*

The Board of Education's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 9, at 7 p.m. in the EHHS library.

## CREC Formally Given 30-Day Notice in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

The town has officially sent the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) a formal letter of dismissal for cause, terminating its contract to manage the \$51 million East Hampton High School renovation project.

The high school building committee voted unanimously at its Feb. 12 meeting to direct town manager Michael Maniscalco to draft and send the letter, in conjunction with town attorneys.

Allegations that CREC had failed to provide the state with the required paperwork on schedule, and that CREC had also failed to keep the committee informed of complications and changes to the project's renovation status, prompted the vote.

The three-page letter to CREC's executive director, Bruce E. Douglas, includes a full paragraph detailing East Hampton's claims against CREC.

The letter states, "CREC has consistently failed to perform its contractual duties and obligations in accordance with the applicable industry standards and has committed multiple material breaches of the parties' contract."

"Among other things, failing to provide reasonable, consistent and timely oversight of the overall project, failing to provide oversight for the design and budgeting process, failing to timely prepare and submit reports and meeting minutes, failing to oversee/coordinate and communicate the status of the state reimbursement process, and having excessive turnover/attrition in the staff assigned to the project," Maniscalco writes in the letter.

"As a result of CREC's multiple material breaches of its duties under the contract, the town has and will continue to suffer significant monetary damages including but not limited to the possible loss of state funding, increased project management costs and legal fees," the letter reads.

The letter is dated Feb. 18; under the terms of the contract, the period of notice is 30 days from the date of the letter.

In addition, the town has stopped payment to CREC for its services under the contract, and the letter states CREC is responsible for "all costs, expenses, attorney's fees, and possible loss of state funding incurred by the town" as a

result of the stated breaches of contract.

Also, under the contract, CREC is obligated to continue to work with the town to "ensure a smooth transition" of its project management duties to whoever the town selects as a replacement.

Finally, the letter states "the town reserves all rights, claims, causes of action, set-offs and counterclaims with respect to this matter and nothing stated herein shall be deemed a waiver or admission by the town of any kind."

A statement obtained from CREC's communications specialist Amanda Falcone said, "CREC provided East Hampton officials with all of the necessary and requested documents relating to the town's high school project. We are very disappointed in the town's decision."

"As stated in our contract with East Hampton, we will continue to work with the town as it transitions to a new project manager, and we intend to provide the best possible service until the end of our agreement," the statement read.

Also at its Feb. 12 meeting, the High School Building Committee established a two-member subcommittee to begin the process of finding a new project manager.

This week, committee vice chair Michele Barber updated the Town Council on developments since that meeting.

She said CREC had been working with them this week, and had been very cooperative.

"They didn't just get their letter and leave," Barber said. "They have been professional on that aspect of it."

Regarding the search process, she said the committee hopes to hire a new project manager with little or no gap in the project schedule.

Building committee chair Sharon Smith said there might be a one- or two-week gap, but at the same time the subcommittee and attorneys are "responding very quickly," and it could be a non-issue.

Barber said the committee is most concerned at this point with finding a qualified project manager to keep the project moving forward.

However, the square footage of the high school remains the main issue driving the change in renovation status, she said. On Tuesday, the state, as the committee had expected,

officially denied the project its renovate-as-new status.

Under state guidelines from the Department of Administrative Services, the high school must reduce its 118,000 square feet to less than 99,000 square feet to regain its classification.

However, doing so would be problematic since much of the extra square footage comes from empty space in the form of wide hallways and a large auditorium at the heart of the school.

"We looked at changing both the numerator and the denominator; the number of square feet in the building and the number of students," Barber said. "You can decrease the number of square feet or increase the number of students."

Barber said the conclusion was that the town simply wouldn't be able to cut anything from the project and leave it as a viable building.

"We still need to meet the programmatic needs of the project, that's the purpose of the renovation," she said.

The town stands to lose out on \$7 million in reimbursement funds if it cannot resolve this issue.

At the Feb. 12 meeting, SLAM Collaborative, the project's architectural firm, had presented a range of options to cut square feet or increase enrollment as a "necessary exercise," Barber said.

She said the option of busing additional students up to the high school was ultimately a question for the Board of Education, and "is probably not going to happen," so the committee instead focused its efforts on options to reduce square footage.

"We went through various scenarios, but truthfully, as expected, it's literally impossible to get down to the required number and still have the project be 'renovate-as-new,'" Barber said.

Paradoxically, if costs were cut out of the high school plans to meet the state's requirements for renovate-as-new projects and the budget approved at referendum, the high school project would not be eligible for renovate-as-new reimbursement anymore, Barber said.

"We could get down to that number, but then we wouldn't have renovated the vast majority of the building, which is also a requirement for renovate-as-new status," she said. "The project

would then be classified as (extensive alteration/roof replacement). We would not spend an extra dime, as we all said, but you also wouldn't get, as Mr. Hintz said last time, 'what the taxpayers thought they were going to get.'"

Barber added, though, that, if the project were kept as-is, "we can still apply again for renovate-as-new at any time between now and the final [project] audit, so while it's a 'no' now, it may not be a 'no' in the future."

The final project audit would take place after the renovation's completion, which could be five to seven years down the road, Smith said.

In the meantime, state Sen. Art Linares and state Rep. Melissa Ziobron have included East Hampton in a comprehensive education bill alongside language that would exempt the high school from DAS' reimbursement standards.

Barber said the legislative remedy is looking to become the town's most realistic option.

"That's what we've decided, and that's what the state is recommending to us as well," she said.

Since the bill is an omnibus bill which incorporates educational needs from towns all over the state, the legislative remedy is seen as a generally safe choice, Barber said.

However, the bill would not head to the General Assembly floor until May.

Barber also said the state has formed a committee to review the renovation status process, as there have been five other towns in the state which have had the same problem befall them.

"It's all been happening with buildings from the same era, the '50s and '60s, that all have the same features and are just too large," she said. "And it's all been happening with towns that are projected to have decreasing enrollment over the next eight years."

While Barber said this was "too little, too late," for East Hampton, it could ultimately help the rest of the state in the future.

"The state does have to look at this process, and review closely the figures that they're using to calculate renovation status," she said. "We may be the last town that's going through this, and there may be a fair amount of change coming down the line from DAS."

# RHAM School Board Eliminates Class Rank on Transcripts

by Geeta Schrayter

At Monday's Board of Education meeting, the RHAM board decided to stop reporting class rank on senior's transcripts – a possibility that was first presented to the board in February 2013, and was supported by a dozen individuals present during the meeting, as well as a group of students who submitted their support in writing.

RHAM student Harrison Pellerin read a letter he signed along with 50 other students during the public comment portion of the meeting.

In it, they wrote they were in favor of the elimination.

"In our own words, the current class ranking system harms us, the students, both in our current high school environment and in our forthcoming college application process," Pellerin read. "Rather than fostering academic creativity and potential, class rank incentivizes taking classes based on their weighted value, possibly limiting a student's exposure to new interests. Class rank has created an ultra-competitive environment that is fixated on the differences of decimal points. The unnecessary and unhealthy stresses created by this system do not correspond with the mission of the school."

Other supporters included Hebron resident Catherine Marx, who is the parent of two RHAM graduates with one currently still in the school.

"My children were in the top one and five percent of this school; however, I believe class rank should not be on the transcript" she said, adding she was "concerned with every child in this community."

Marx said there have been many changes since the proposal first came forward in 2013, and more schools had opted to go the same route.

"Not [no longer] ranking, but removing class rank from the transcripts will bring our practices more in line with competing schools and will give our kids a certain advantage when applying," Marx stated, concluding "it's time to vote in favor of the administration's proposal and give an advantage to our students."

Hebron resident Kathy Shea echoed Marx's thoughts and said she hoped the board would vote "and put it to rest finally."

Likewise, resident Suzanne Titterton said "I definitely also support eliminating class rank from the transcript."

Such a move, she added, "forces [college admissions counselors] to look at the body of the transcript." Titterton concluded the removal "takes away that additional arbitrary label that may or may not have any value to [the students]."

John Russo also supported the elimination and said, "I believe that it impairs our students from getting [college] acceptances" and merit scholarships. He said he was left wondering whether class rank had impacted his son who already graduated, and said he had two more children in the school and "I don't want them disadvantaged by this."

During a presentation from RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie following public comment, he said the reason for that first presentation in 2013 "was the same as it is today."

"What we discovered is that parents who were engaging with us and every college that we spoke to on this topic made it clear we were putting a number of our students, some more than others, at a disadvantage because of class rank," Leslie explained. "But they also said there was no detriment to *not* having class rank."

Leslie added back in 2013, the administration was noticing other schools moving in the same direction, and would have felt irresponsible if they didn't bring it to the board, "because we were seeing evidence of students being disadvantaged in terms of acceptances into school and their ability to pick up merit scholarships."

Leslie asked the board to "think to yourself if we did not report class rank, would I be able to convince you to *begin* to report it?" He added, "I believe I would be dead in the water after a few slides if I was asking you to do something that would disadvantage some of our students."

Leslie explained RHAM currently reports

class rank using a weighted grade point average (GPA), and ranking students discourages some of them from taking courses below Level 1 or Honors. This is because taking a lower level course would result in a grade with a lower weight, which could potentially decrease their ranking.

"If a student wants to expand their horizon and take a music course, even if they get an 'A,' their grade point average will drop because of weight," Leslie said, but he added if that student took a study hall instead, their grade point average would stay the same.

"So there's a concern over taking enrichment courses because there's a fear it might impact standing."

In addition, Leslie said students ranked below the top 10-20 students might be denied admission to colleges and scholarship awards, even though their GPAs are almost identical.

For example, using the most up-to-date data of RHAM seniors, Leslie reported there is a .45079 difference between the GPA of students ranked No. 1 and No. 10. Of the 46 seniors with a GPA of 4.0 or above, the difference between the student ranked No. 10 and the one ranked No. 46 is .5799.

Speaking on the benefits of no longer reporting class rank on the transcripts, Leslie reminded the board about a mom who spoke in 2013 supporting the elimination because her son wasn't eligible for a \$15,000 per year merit scholarship because of class rank. In her conversations with the school, Leslie said she was told he was disqualified because of class rank despite being qualified in all other areas.

"Everything we've received from colleges tells us [not reporting class rank] doesn't disadvantage any of the students, but there's clear evidence that it benefits – particularly those students who are out of the top 20 but are still high performing and eligible to admission in good schools," Leslie stated.

Leslie provided some statistics which supported what he'd said, explaining in his presentation "merit scholarships are often awarded

by colleges and universities based in part or entirely on GPA and rank, if rank is provided. If rank is not provided, scholarships are generally awarded based entirely on a student's GPA or on a student's GPA and additional factors, such as SAT/ACT scores, community service, and leadership."

A GPA of 3.5 and a ranking in the top 10 percent of the class is common merit scholarship criterion, he said, adding if the current RHAM seniors applied for a merit scholarship, 31 may be eligible. But if class rank isn't reported, he said, 109 students might be eligible.

Leslie added in recent years, the importance of class rank for the college admissions process has decreased.

"If we do report class rank, it's less likely to benefit [and] more like to hurt students."

Leslie's recommendation was to eliminate the current system of reporting and listing class rank on student transcripts beginning with the Class of 2016. However, a weighted GPA would continue to be included.

In addition, class rank would still be calculated and would be available should a student or parent wish to know. Furthermore, Leslie said if class rank was needed for a particular scholarship or admission to a certain school, a letter could be obtained from the guidance counselor containing that information.

Leslie added he was also recommending the school continue to select the valedictorian and salutatorian as graduation speakers "in order to continue the tradition of honoring our top scholars."

After the presentations had come to an end and the board was able to ask and receive answers to their questions, they voted to accept Leslie's recommendations. The motion passed by a vote of 9-0-1, with Kevin Williams abstaining.

\* \* \*

The next regular RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16, at 6:30 p.m., in the RHAM High School chorus room.

## Obituaries

### Portland

#### Douglas R. Dunham

Douglas R. Dunham, USAF Master Sergeant (Retired), 71, passed away at his home in Jupiter, Fla., Tuesday, Feb. 17. Doug was born Oct. 9, 1943, in Portland, to the late Alice and Lewis Dunham.

In 1961, Doug was sworn into the United States Air Force where he proudly and honorably served for 26 years with deployments to Korea, Vietnam and Germany. He then settled in his home state of Connecticut and opened the D & W (Doug and Wife) Service Station in East Hampton.

One day in 1986, tired of the snow, he came home and said "Let's move to Florida." "Okay," said his wife, Betty. They moved to Jupiter where he resided for the last 29 years, and opened Absolute Signs & Service in 1991, successful for over 20 years.

Doug was an active member of the Loyal Order of Moose, Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie 4267 in Jupiter, and the American Legion Post 271 in Tequesta. He loved fishing and playing poker.

Doug is survived by his dog Ruby, the love of his life; his loving wife of 41 years, Betty; four brothers; two sisters; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and two special godchildren.

He is predeceased by his parents Alice and Lewis Dunham; daughter, Patricia Dunham; and one special godchild.

There will be a celebration of life held at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 7, at Jupiter Loyal Order of Moose Lodge, 185 East Indiantown Rd., Jupiter, FL. Call 561-743-0202.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Furry Friends of Jupiter, 401 Maplewood Drive, Suite 10, Jupiter, FL 33458. Call 561-747-5311.

To share any memories or to express your condolences you may visit [taylorandmodeen.com](http://taylorandmodeen.com).

# Obituaries

## East Hampton

### Janet Wood

Janet Wood, 75, of Laurel Ridge in East Hampton, beloved wife of Norbert T. Wood, died comfortably and peacefully at home Thursday, Feb. 19, while in the expert care of Middlesex Hospital Hospice.

Janet was predeceased by her parents, Florence and Joseph Karnas.

Janet leaves two loving sons, Joseph Markland and wife Carol and their daughter Samantha of Trumbull, and Norbert M. Wood and Cecelia of California; a twin sister, Jody and a younger sister, Joyce and their families; Aunt Theresa, nephews, nieces and other extended family members.

Janet loved life: trips, cruises, skiing, decorating and cooking, especially cooking for family, friends and her fun-loving "setback" card group of women who nurtured each other. Oh, and the occasional trip to the casino.

A memorial of celebration will be held Sunday, March 15, at 1 p.m., at the Laurel Ridge Clubhouse in East Hampton.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions in Janet's name to Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

## East Hampton

### Guy Charles Dumas

Guy Charles Dumas, 70, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Linda (Reardon) Dumas died Wednesday Feb. 18th at his home surrounded by his family. Born Dec. 28, 1944, in Hartford he was the son of the late Raymond A. and Anna E. (Schweir) Dumas.

Guy had served his country in the Army National Guard. He was a longtime resident of East Hampton and had been employed as an Auto body Technician at Classic Auto in East Hampton since 1970.

Guy is survived by his wife, Linda; his daughter, Lisa Dumas; son-in-law, Keith Kuerzel; his brother, Scott Dumas of Claremont, N.H.; sisters, Joy Nicolay of Claremont, N.H. and Nina Grenfell of Fryeburg, Maine.

Guy's family would like to thank Dr. Robert Levy and his staff at Connecticut Oncology Group, Courtney from Middlesex Hospital Homecare and the nurses from Middlesex Hospital Infusion Department.

Funeral services will be private.

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

## Colchester

### Rose Daniels

Rose (Monarca) Daniels, 57, of Colchester, beloved wife of Howard, passed away Thursday, Feb. 19, surrounded by her loving family and beloved friend, Donna (Sanzone) Brown, after a long, valiant battle against cancer. Born Sept. 6, 1957 in Middletown, she was a daughter of the late Salvatore and Josephine (Branciforte) Monarca.

Early on, Rose worked for Pratt & Whitney and while her children were still young, she cared for others operating a day care in her home. She went on to work for the Colchester Board of Education. She was a former member and EMT for 10-plus years with the Colchester-Hayward VFD. In her spare time, she was an avid scrapbooker, but her greatest joy was found in her grandchildren.

In addition to her loving husband of 40 years, she leaves two sons and daughters-in-law, Tim and Allison of Colchester and Matt and Ashley of Norwich; five grandchildren, Kayla, Tyler, Addison, Lexie and Noah; two sisters, Phyllis Carta of Florida and Sandra Monarca of Norwich; two brothers, Salvatore "Butch" of Seymour and Carl (her twin) of Berlin; and numerous extended family members and friends. She was predeceased by her eldest brother, Joseph.

The family will receive guests from 1-4 p.m. Sunday, March 1, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A time of reflection and celebration of her life will be observed at 3:30 p.m. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Backus Cancer Center, 326 Washington St., Norwich, CT 06360, in recognition of the excellent care extended to Rose throughout her courageous fight.

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## East Hampton

### Lois Ann Curtis

In loving memory of Lois Ann Curtis, who died of cancer at age 51 Thursday, Feb. 19, at home in East Hampton. She was born July 20, 1963, in San Antonio, Texas.

She was preceded in death by her father, Sidney Hayden Curtis of Glastonbury, and her sister, Laura Kay Curtis of East Hampton.

Lois is survived by son Dillon D. Clapp of Terryville; brother Brian Richard Curtis of Tucson, Ariz.; sister Linda D Curtis-Troy of Shell Rock, Iowa; mother Denise E. Curtis of Waverly, Iowa; and special friend Russell Ordway of East Hampton.

Lois especially enjoyed her recent employment at Paul's and Sandy's in East Hampton.

Arrangements are at Abbey Crematorium in Rocky Hill. No services are scheduled at this time.

Memorials may be made to Masonicare Home Health and Hospice, 33 North Plains Industrial Rd., Wallingford, CT 06492, or to the Harry Gray Cancer Center in Hartford.

## Portland

### Elsie Gouin

Elsie (Kauffman) Gouin, 77, of Portland and Naples, Fla., beloved wife of Kenneth Gouin, died Friday, Feb. 13, in Naples, Fla. She was born Dec. 22, 1937, in Middletown, the daughter of the late Arthur and Melba (Fredman) Kauffman.

Prior to her retirement, Elsie worked at Elmcrest Health Care. Elsie and Ken later purchased and ran Portland Riverside Marina. She will always be remembered for putting in her long hours at the marina, either working or cooking for all her boating friends and family. Elsie enjoyed traveling with her husband and friends. She always looked forward to winters at their home in Naples. She was a communicant of Saint Mary Church in Portland and an active member of the VFW auxiliary in Naples.

In addition to her loving husband, she is survived by three sons and their wives, Mark and Karen Gouin of Portland, Wayne and JoAnn Gouin of Portland, Barre and Tara Gouin of Manchester; three grandchildren, Ashley Gouin of Georgia, Kellie Gouin of Vermont, Kaelynn Gouin of Manchester; four siblings, Arthur "Sonny" Kauffman of Florida, Lois Kauffman of Florida, Betty Smedick of Portland, Arlene Goodell of Portland; brothers- and sisters-in-law; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her brother, Merle Kauffman, and sisters, Mable Klick and Donna Delnegro.

Friends called Wednesday, Feb. 25, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. A funeral liturgy followed at St. Mary Church, Freestone Ave., Portland, at 11 a.m. Burial was in the Saint Mary Cemetery.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions to St. Mary Church Building Fund, 45 Freestone Ave., Portland CT 06480.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit [biegafuneralhome.com](http://biegafuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Slawomir Cholodecki

Slawomir Cholodecki, 51, of Colchester, passed away Thursday, Feb. 12. He was born Oct. 18, 1963, in Poland, to Helena (Stachowska) Cholodecka and the late Piotr Cholodecki.

Slawomir was currently a supervisor at Columbia Manufacturing Inc. in Columbia. He was a very well-read man and quite knowledgeable about a wide range of things. He loved a good joke and had a great sense of humor. He will be dearly missed by his family.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his children, Piotr Cholodecki of Storrs; Jakub Cholodecki of Cromwell; Victoria Cholodecki of Cromwell; his former wife, Danuta Cholodecki of Cromwell; his sister, Jadwiga Malek of Colchester; and his brother, Andrzej Cholodecki of Poland.

Besides his father, Slawomir was predeceased by his brother, Dariusz Cholodecki and his sister, Anna Cholodecki.

Family and friends gathered Monday, Feb. 23, at the South Green Memorial Home/Waszkewicz Funeral Home, 43 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church. Burial followed in New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester. His family received friends Sunday, Feb. 22, at the funeral home.

For online condolences, visit [carmonfuneralhome.com](http://carmonfuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Lillian M. Seigny-Melton

Lillian M. (Van Evelingen) Seigny-Melton, 81, of Norwich, died Friday, Feb. 20, in Apple Rehabilitation of Colchester. She is the loving wife of the late Normand Seigny and the late Buddy Melton. Born in Falmouth Cornwall, England, she was the daughter of the late William Van Evelingen and Hazel L. (Ozart) Van Evelingen.

Lillian worked as a CNA in nursing for Villa Maria Nursing Home. She enjoyed crocheting and knitting. She loved spending time with her dogs, "Monkey and Shadow." Above all, she loved taking care of people and spending quality time with her grandchildren.

Lillian is survived by her son, Steven A. Seigny of Florida, Gerald Seigny of Brooklyn, and Willard T. Seigny and his wife Kristen of Thompson; her daughter, Janet A. Seigny of Norwich; her brothers, Hendrick Van Evelingen, and Allan Humpage; nine grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

She is predeceased by her son, the late Donald N. Seigny.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with Lillian's family from 5-8 p.m. Sunday, March 1, with a service at 7 p.m., in the Gilman Funeral Home, 104 Church St., Putnam. Burial will take place in the spring in Munyan Cemetery, Putnam.

Memorial donations may be made to P.A.W.S., P.O. Box 248, Eastford, CT 06242, or to the Humane Society, 2100 L. Street N.W., Washington, DC 20037.

For memorial guestbook, visit [GilmanAndValade.com](http://GilmanAndValade.com).

## Marlborough

### Mildred F. Cooley

Mildred F. (Christensen) Cooley, 89, beloved wife of the late Harold G. Cooley, passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by her loving family. She was raised in East Hartford by Bill and Nellie (Winans) Demers.

Millie was a longtime resident of Marlborough. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She was gentle, kind and always available for advice or a shoulder to cry on. She will be most remembered for her kind nature and loving smile. She will be dearly missed by all who knew her.

Millie is survived by her three daughters, Sharon DeCarli and her husband Dean of Rockville, Diana Perkins and her husband Roger of Marlborough, Wendy Ogden and her husband Frank of East Hartford; her sister, Linda Stauch and her husband David of Feeding Hills, Mass.; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews and extended family members.

Millie was predeceased by her sister, Dorothy Rudin.

Friends and family gathered at Newkirk & Whitney Funeral Home, 318 Burnside Ave., East Hartford, Wednesday, Feb. 25, followed by a service at the funeral home. Burial followed in Hillside Cemetery.

Donations in Millie's name may be made to: Roy Pettengill Ambulance Association of Marlborough or Middlesex Hospital Hospice.

To leave an online condolence, visit [newkirkandwhitney.com](http://newkirkandwhitney.com).

## Colchester

### Virginia Guarnaccia

Virginia (Sherman) Guarnaccia, "Ginny", 74, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Wednesday morning, Feb. 25, at home, surrounded by her loving family. Born Nov. 26, 1940, in New London, she was a daughter of the late Willard and Dorothea (Raymond) Sherman.

A lifelong resident of Colchester, she was a 1958 graduate of Bacon Academy. On July 30, 1959, she married Philip J. Guarnaccia. After raising her family, Ginny worked for the Colchester Board of Education as a custodian for a number of years.

In addition to her loving husband of 55 years, she leaves three daughters, Kim Dalton of Delmar, N.Y., Donna Roberts (and her husband Danny) of Colchester and Gail Davenport (and her husband Rick) of St. Petersburg, Fla.; six grandchildren, Philip, Krystan, Caitlin, Emmett, Carly and Jenna; two great-grandchildren, Gavin and Tommy; her faithful companion, Buddy; her sister and brother-in-law, Elizabeth and Peter Falco of Colchester; and numerous extended family members and friends.

At her request, funeral services and burial will be private and at the convenience of the immediate family.

In recognition of all of their efforts, the family encourages that donations in her memory be made to Masonicare Home Health and Hospice, 339 Flanders Rd., Ste. 215, East Lyme, CT 06333.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Andover

### Alfred N. Vezina

Alfred N. Vezina, 74, of Columbia, formerly of Andover, died at Hartford Hospital Saturday, Feb. 21. Al was born Oct. 3, 1940, in South Royalton, Vt., to Napoleon and Ruth Priscilla (Burnett) Vezina.

He moved to Andover in 1957 and was a member of the first graduating class of RHAM High School in 1958 where he met his future wife Judy (Henry) Vezina, also of Andover. He served in the United States Navy from 1958 to 1962.

Al and Judy were married August 1962 and moved to Columbia in 1964. He worked as an electrician at Pratt & Whitney while attending UCONN, graduating with a degree in business and obtaining his CPA license in 1969. He worked as a CPA in both the public and private sector finishing his career as CFO at Semco in North Windham. He was a member of AICPA and CSCPA. He retired in 2005.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Judy (Henry) Vezina, his daughter Sharon (Vezina) Kandro and her husband Rob Kandro of Portland, his son Scott Vezina and his wife Felicia (Smith) Vezina of Columbia, and his four granddaughters whom he adored – Jenna Vezina, Regan Vezina, Adriana Kandro and Veronica Kandro.

In addition, he is survived by his sister Pauline (Vezina) Marin and Arthur Marin of South Royalton, Vt.

He is predeceased by his father Napoleon Vezina and mother Ruth Priscilla (Burnett) Vezina.

Al was passionate about his hobbies. He was a lifetime member of Red Sox nation before it was a "thing," memorably breaking his hand on the TV chair in 1978 because of Bucky "Bleeping" Dent. An avid UConn men's and women's basketball follower, he rarely missed a game. He annually made the best maple syrup around (a tradition carried over from his youth and learned from his dad). Above all else, he was an avid boater and fisherman. His grandchildren were raised "boaters" – first on Sold the Farm and finally on Olde Hatt (the 75th hull that Hatteras made).

A celebration of Al's life will be held at the Beckish Senior Center, 188 Connecticut 66, Columbia, on Saturday, March 21, beginning at 11 a.m., with a lunch and reception to follow. Family and friends of the Vezina and Kandro families are welcome.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Saxton B. Little Free Library, 319 CT-87, Columbia, CT in memory of Al. Graveside services will be held at the convenience of the family.

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

## Portland

### Wanda Woodward Ortisi

Wanda Woodward Ortisi, 85, of LeRoy, N.Y., Port Charlotte, Fla. and Portland, beloved wife, mother and grandmother, peacefully entered eternal rest Thursday, Feb. 18. Wanda was born Jan. 19, 1930, the daughter of the late Pearle Arthur and Laura May (Smith) Woodward.

Wanda grew up in Longmont, Colorado with her parents and her nine brothers and sisters. She will be remembered as the family matriarch and a tremendous cook. Her love and devotion as a wife, mother, grandmother, sister and aunt was unlike any other.

Wanda was predeceased by her devoted and loving husband of 60 years, Angelo W. Ortisi Sr., three brothers and three sisters.

Wanda leaves behind four siblings, Beulah (Bill) Bell, Warren (Connie) Woodward, James (Agnes) Woodward and Patricia (Charles) Wilson; her six children, Marsha K. (Dennis) Stevens, Daniel T. (Jayne) Smith, S. Michael (Carolyn) Ortisi, Patricia L. (Bernie) Heizman, Susan O. Smith, Angelo W. (Karen) Ortisi Jr.; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; and one great-great granddaughter.

Wanda and her late husband Angelo built a tremendous legacy and led their family by example. Wanda will be deeply missed by her entire family, but they take comfort in knowing that she has been reunited with the love of her life.

There will be a memorial Mass for Wanda at St. Mary's Church, Portland, Saturday, Feb. 28, at 5 p.m. A celebration of her life will be held Saturday, May 16, at 10 a.m., at St. Mary's Church, Portland. Funeral services to follow at the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

Wanda and her family were cared for by the Falcone Family Funeral Home. Your memories and condolences may be shared with Wanda's family at [falconefuneralhome.com](http://falconefuneralhome.com).