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Former East Hampton resident Anthony Garofalo entered Middletown Superior Court Tuesday, where he plead guilty to first-degree manslaughter and tampering with evidence in connection with the 2012 murder of East Hampton resident Jini Barnum.

Man Pleads Guilty in East Hampton Killing

by Geeta Schrayter

On Tuesday, former East Hampton resident Anthony Garofalo pled guilty to first-degree manslaughter, stemming from the 2012 murder of East Hampton resident Jini Barnum.

Garofalo, 40, was arrested in January 2013 in connection with the case, and charged with murder, first-degree strangulation, and tampering with physical evidence. However, on Tuesday he pled guilty to the lesser charges of first-degree manslaughter and tampering with physical evidence. He pled guilty under the Alford Doctrine, meaning he does not admit guilt but accepts the state likely has enough evidence to get a conviction.

Garofalo faces 20-25 years in prison; he will be sentenced in June.

The charges stem from the death of Barnum, 30, who disappeared July 28, 2012. She was reported missing by Garofalo the following day; at the time, Garofalo alleged that Barnum left the apartment the two shared after an argument, and never returned.

After searching for Barnum for six weeks, East Hampton Police deemed her disappearance related to a criminal act, and proceeded with an investigation; her body was eventually located in early September, when a woman

walking her dog on Windham Road in Glastonbury – a remote area near the Meshomasic State Forest – came across a partially buried body. The state medical examiner determined that the body was that of Barnum, and that the cause of death was traumatic asphyxiation, or strangulation.

The following February, Garofalo was arrested in connection with the murder. At the time, he was already in jail, due to a parole violation stemming from his conviction in a 2001 incident where he kidnapped and sexually assaulted a deaf woman in Hartford. He served eight years in prison, and was released on parole in 2010.

At Middletown Superior Court Tuesday, prosecutor Russell Zentner went over the case, while Garofalo stood nearby in an orange jumpsuit surrounded by marshals. His feet were shackled and his hands were clasped behind his back. He remained emotionless as Zentner walked Judge David Gold through the details of what had happened.

Zentner mentioned when Garofalo was brought back to the Department of Corrections in January 2013, his possessions were seized

See Man Pleads Guilty Page 2

Chilly Maple Fest Draws Smaller Crowd

by Geeta Schrayter

It seems winter has held on for as long as possible this year, and last weekend that included more snow Saturday, and chilly winds Sunday. But even with Old Man Winter still trying to make a scene, the 25th annual Hebron Maple Festival – which had been postponed a week due to the amount of snow in town – took place.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said Tuesday festival attendance was down this year, which he attributed “to weather more than the postponement. It snowed Saturday to about noon, an extra inch and a half, and that kept people inside.”

However, “I think people did come out in the afternoon,” he said.

Then Tierney mentioned it was “cold and windy Sunday.”

He said he’d been told attendance at the Hebron Lions pancake breakfast was down, as were hamburger sales by the American Legion.

But even with the cold and the wind, people could still be found mulling around town Sunday, enjoying all the festival had to offer.

In the center of town, there was the annual quilt show by the Hebron Historical Society to be found, where visitors got to admire both old and new quilts and cast a vote for their favorite; then, right outside the Old Town Hall where the quilts were displayed, visitors could purchase some frosty Maple Milk.

Over at the nearby fire house, tours of fire apparatus were taking place, an extraction demonstration could be seen, and sugar on snow

was there to enjoy.

Meanwhile, a trip to Ted’s IGA meant the farm tractor show and parade; and a stop at Something Simple Café for an item off their Maple Fest menu – like a maple latte – provided the opportunity to purchase blue bird and bat houses made by the Senior Friends of Hebron.

There were also plenty of treats to enjoy, from maple cannoli and maple and chocolate covered pretzels, to kettle corn and s’mores, barbecue, burgers, hot dogs and fried dough.

And once all the events in the center had been enjoyed, a quick drive to Country Carpenters provided the chance to watch blacksmiths hand-forged items, see woodworking demonstrations and learn about old-fashioned candle making, among other things.

Fred Brehant is a third-generation blacksmith who was busy making small steel hooks Sunday, while talking about the process. The steel he worked with was heated and cooled multiple times as he performed each step: he’d draw out, or lengthen the piece of steel, then upset it, or make one end thicker. He’d flatten the thicker end and punch a hole in it to create a place where the hook could be attached to something. Then he’d bend the other end and give it a decorative curl at the tip, and then heat and twist the center to give it a decorative flare.

The fire, he shared, is kept around 2,000 degrees, and if it gets far beyond that, he explained the metal could burn.

“The term ‘too many irons in the fire’ comes from blacksmithing,” he stated. “If there are too



Despite the chilly weather Sunday, individuals took to the center of Hebron to enjoy the offerings of the 25th annual Hebron Maple Festival which included exhibits, demonstrations and plenty of maple- and non-maple related fare.

many in, you could burn one up because you’re not paying attention.”

Along with the above, no trip to the Maple Festival would be complete without a stop to one – if not all – of the participating sugar houses.

Over at Wenzel’s Sugar House on Sunday,

along with maple pudding cake and the Farmer’s Cow, Ron Wenzel could be found talking to a room full of people while he kept the fire in his evaporator stoked and watched the sap he was boiling. Steam filled the air, and all around was the sweet smell of syrup.

See Maple Fest Page 2

Man Pleads Guilty cont. from Page 9

and obtained by the East Hampton Police Department. Among those possessions was a key that was found to open the gate leading into the area where Barnum’s body was discovered.

In addition, Zentner said another resident of the building Garofalo lived in heard thumping sounds on the outside stairs on July 12, 2012, and said a shovel had been found in his pick-up truck.

Zentner also mentioned a friend of Garofalo’s had told the East Hampton Police Department that Garofalo had written him a letter asking if he could say he saw Barnum and she said she wasn’t coming back.

And on July 31, Zentner said Garofalo’s cell phone was found to be “pinging a tower” one half mile from where the body was located.

Furthermore, while Garofalo was in jail, Zentner said he had a cellmate from September through November 2012 who gave a sworn statement saying Garofalo had admitted to him that he’d killed Barnum.

Other details Zentner mentioned include sneakers found at Garofalo’s apartment which were supposed to be the same shoes Barnum had left in – along with her wallet.

These details were elaborated in the affidavit, which stated a female friend of Barnum and Garofalo’s met with Garofalo two days after Barnum’s disappearance and accompanied him back to his apartment. While she was there, she said she saw a black square woman’s wallet on the counter in the kitchen, which she found out later from a search party that Barnum was supposed to be carrying with her when she went missing.

That same wallet was later found in the Salmon River, and the woman who had reported seeing the wallet in Garofalo’s apartment confirmed it was the same one.

“Suffice it to say, the state had a rather strong case against Garofalo,” Zentner stated.

Garofalo plead guilty under the Alford Doctrine, which Judge Gold explained to him as meaning “you don’t agree with all the things the state says, or even the charges, but you know the subsequent risk that you could be found guilty at a trial and you would have been exposed to a greater sentence.”

He added, “So to avail yourself of the agreed sentence of 20-25 years instead of a possibly greater sentence” he pleaded guilty.

Gold summarized some of the evidence against Garofalo – which Zentner had also shared – and said “the state contends it can prove your guilt without a doubt.”

Gold told Garofalo his decision was “irrevocable,” and asked him a series of questions to ensure he had entered the plea of his own free will. He also made sure Garofalo understood exactly what his plea meant, including waiving his right to a trial, giving up the right to testify and giving up the right to mental claims.

“Do you still wish to enter your plea?” Gold asked after he had concluded, to which Garofalo responded, “Yes, your honor.”

* * *

Zentner added Tuesday he had a conference call with Barnum’s mother and stepfather, and they were in agreement with the proposal. He said they also indicated they’d like to be present for the sentencing, which is scheduled for June 16.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

“Yard Goats baseball rocks. These Goats rock.”

Doesn’t have quite the same ring to it, doesn’t it?

Yard Goats were the talk of the state for a day or two last week, as it was announced the new AA baseball team in Hartford has been given the name the Hartford Yard Goats.

How did this come to be? A list of 6,000 potential names, submitted by the public, whittled down to a Top 10, and then a Top Five. Other names in the Top Five were River Hogs, Hedgehogs, Whirlybirds and Praying Mantis.

Last Wednesday it was announced: the public had spoken, and they had chosen the Yard Goats. (So I suppose if you’re not happy with the name you’ve got no one to blame but yourself; I’m expecting a crush of “Don’t blame me; I voted for Whirlybirds” bumper stickers in 2016.)

Of the names in the top five, I guess Yard Goats works the best. I get “Hedgehogs” was meant to honor Hartford’s insurance past (as opposed to Sega Genesis’ video game past), but that just makes me think of hedge funds, which have something of a negative connotation these days. And Praying Mantis – look, we’ve got to think of the mascot here, folks. How do you get a mascot out of a mantis? Plus: the female praying mantis eats the head of the male during mating. Not family-friendly! (Although it would make for some interesting between-innings entertainment.)

The name “yard goat” also works as an entry in the “you learn something new every day” category. Judging from the sheer number of times it was uttered on social media last week, I suspect a great number of people – including yours truly – had no idea what a yard goat was. No, it’s not a domesticated goat you keep outside because frankly you’re tired of him eating all your drapes. It’s an old railroad term; the name was given to locomotives that stay in railroad yards, moving cars from track to track and basically keeping things in order. The name is meant to honor Hartford’s railroad past.

Still, I greatly suspect the mascot for the team will be something resembling an actual goat and not a locomotive; my first clue was the presence of goats at the press conference last week unveiling the new name. (Incidentally, the goats on display last week belonged to none other than East Hampton’s own Mary Krogh. Reporter John Tyczkowski has a story about the goats’ moment in the sun in this week’s *Rivereast*.)

Most people I know were, frankly, rather appalled by the new name. And social media lit up like a Christmas tree; the *Hartford Courant* ran a story collecting the responses on Twitter from some higher-profile names around the state. Local sports broadcaster Joe D’Ambrosio wrote – with palpable disgust – “Yard Goats. The flipping Yard Goats,” while fellow broadcaster Kevin Nathan cleverly wrote that he “can’t wait to say ‘former Yard Goat....’” (It’s true; this is a professional baseball team, after all. It’s quite possible future Hall of Famers will have stints with the Yard Goats in their past), and one of my favorites

came from *Sports Illustrated*: “A minor league baseball team just named itself the Yard Goats. Voluntarily.”

But perhaps the best response on Twitter last Wednesday came from New Britain mayor Erin Stewart, who offered a simple “LOL” when the news was made public. Childish? Perhaps. But Stewart has every reason to be annoyed by everything this baseball team does. After all, it was Rock Cats ownership that, for more than a year, secretly negotiated a new stadium with the city of Hartford. Stewart, mayor of the city the Rock Cats (and before them, the New Britain Red Sox) had called home for more than 30 years, was very much kept in the dark. The whole thing was a sad mess, which ended with New Britain being stabbed in the back.

So I can’t blame Stewart for publicly “LOL”-ing at the new name. In fact, after what the team did to her and her city, I’d say she took the high road.

And here’s as good a spot as any to say that I liked the Rock Cats name. In fact, now that the team is a Colorado Rockies affiliate, the name makes more sense than ever. I get why Hartford wants to change the name, though. After the ugly way the team’s relationship with New Britain ended, I can see team officials wanting a fresh start.

That fresh start just happened to be the name “Yard Goat.”

And on NBC Connecticut news last Wednesday night, I believe it was anchorman Gerry Brooks who made a very valid point. Whether people loved the new name or hated it, they were definitely talking about it. If you were near a TV, newspaper, Facebook page or Twitter feed last Wednesday, chances are you heard what the name of Hartford’s new minor league baseball team is. It amounted to a barrage of free publicity for a team that won’t even see a pitch thrown in Hartford until 2016.

So perhaps the people behind the team are crazy like a fox....or should I say, like a goat.

* * *

As we all know, Ma Nature dealt us a cruel blow last Friday – the first day of spring – as she dumped multiple inches of snow on the state courtesy of a weather system that frustratingly lingered into Saturday morning.

In my town of Manchester, I’d guess we got about four inches or so – and most of that was gone by the time Sunday rolled around, thanks to some slightly milder temperatures and that warm March sun poking its head out, if only briefly.

But there was still enough snow for people to be creative. I laughed out loud early Sunday afternoon, as I drove past a snowman built at the edge of a home’s front yard. The snowman was leaning over slightly, with its thumb sticking out toward the road, resembling a hitchhiker. Frosty was also holding a sign, which simply read “Florida.”

Yes, even the snowmen want a warmer climate. I think the vast majority of the state probably feels enough is enough. It’s spring. The snow needs to end.

Hopefully, after last Friday, it has.

* * *

See you next week.



Fred Brehant III (left) and his father, Fred Brehant Jr., were at the Maple Festival last weekend showing visitors the craft of blacksmithing. Brehant III said this week he learned the craft from his father, who in turn learned from his father, who was Hebron’s town blacksmith in the early 1900’s.

Maple Fest cont. from Front Page

“It’s a labor of love,” he said of the process, before adding he was a fan of all grades of syrup, depending on what it’s being used for.

“I like the lighter syrup for pancakes and the darker for cooking,” he stated, adding he was a big fan of his wife’s baked beans, which he tops with warm syrup (the beans are made with it too).

“Heat [the maple syrup] and you will never

have it cold again,” he stated. “Try it tonight, try it tomorrow – just try it.”

And for those who needed some syrup before they could try said heating, there was plenty to purchase and take home, ensuring the sweet memories of last weekend’s festival could be evoked each breakfast – or whenever the syrup is used.

Tensions High in Marlborough Over Full-Day K Funding

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Tensions rose regarding the price of full-day kindergarten during the local Board of Education's presentation of its proposed budget at last week's Board of Finance meeting.

At the special meeting, held March 19, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz presented the proposed \$7,483,267 budget for the 2015-16 school year. The spending package would be a \$211,682, or 2.91 percent, increase over the current year budget – and includes an additional two full-time teachers and an additional 0.8 hours for a paraprofessional.

Those staffing additions are due to the new full-day kindergarten program on tap for the 2015-16 year. Overall, the cost of the full-day kindergarten program is pegged at \$368,735, up from \$228,046 for the half-day program this year. This means the full-day kindergarten program accounts for \$140,689 of the \$211,682 proposed increase in the budget.

No decisions were made at the meeting, but Evelyn Godbout, chairwoman of the Board of Finance, criticized the school board for not discussing full-day kindergarten with her board before putting it in the budget.

"You did a lot of [community] outreach which I commend you for, but I'm disappointed that the Board of Education did not come to the Board of Finance about full-day kindergarten," Godbout said.

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom said that if full-day kindergarten weren't in the budget, "it would have been a one percent increase," and he agreed with Godbout's reservations. "I'm also concerned that the Board of Finance wasn't involved in a significant financial decision," he said.

Sklarz said the school board spent a lot of time deliberating the decision of adding full-day kindergarten. Also – while stressing the board didn't go for full-day kindergarten simply because other towns are doing it – Sklarz did point out 162 of the 166 school districts in

the state that cover kindergarten have full-day kindergarten for the 2015-16 year.

Still, some finance board members remained unconvinced.

"I've seen our kids excel without full-day kindergarten," Hjulstrom said, and noted that two of the school board members who voted against adding full-day kindergarten were former teachers. (The board passed full-day kindergarten last October, by a 6-2 vote.)

Finance board member Susan Leser told the school board it could add full-day kindergarten if it wanted to – but it shouldn't ask the town to pay for it. It should find other ways in its budget to absorb the cost.

"We aren't going to fund your decision," Leser said.

Other questions about the local Board of Education budget included its proposed use of the \$50,000 REAP (Rural Education Achievement Program) grant, as well as maintenance of Marlborough Elementary School.

"You're buying tech [with the REAP grant], but also an \$11,000 afterschool program," finance board vice chairman Cliff Denniss said. "David [Sklarz], you always have said [you should spend] one-time revenue on one-time purchase. I'm questioning that \$11,000."

Denniss wondered whether more of that \$50,000 should have been spent on technology.

"The money is used to help kids who need more support and resources," Sklarz said. "We're piloting it. We will see the results if we need [the program]."

Sklarz said the program has been targeted at kids who are struggling "just a bit" to help them catch up. After the district received the REAP grant, administration decided not to wait on piloting the program, since the school officials knew they had a need.

Hjulstrom then asked Sklarz if the school had a long-term maintenance plan for the building.

"The Board of Ed and the Board of Selectmen need to have a significant conversation," Sklarz said. "I've assumed responsibility and use MECCA [Marlborough Elementary Child Care Association] funds."

Sklarz said there is a need to develop a routine maintenance plan.

"I'm in the education business, not the maintenance business," Sklarz said.

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski, who was present at the meeting, said maintenance is one of the focuses of the Capital Non-Recurring Committee.

"They're not at the point of roofs, but anything over \$25,000 is under the town's capital projects," Gaudinski said. "That's the group's job. Under \$25,000, it's under the Board of Ed."

The Board of Finance then discussed the overall town budget, which is currently proposed to be \$23,272,399, a \$1,042,274, or 4.69 percent, increase over current year spending.

The budget features the mill rate rising from 31.45 mills to 33.46, an increase that would mean a 6.40 percent tax hike. One mill, Gaudinski had explained previously, equals \$695,529.

One of the key factors driving the budget increase is the town's portion of the RHAM schools budget, which is slated to rise \$547,079 over Marlborough's current RHAM portion, from \$7,793,370 in the current year to \$8,340,449 in 2015-16. This increase is partially due to Marlborough's levy – or the percentage of the RHAM budget it is responsible for – rising from 29.03 percent to 29.65 percent. (The levy is determined based on the hometowns of the students enrolled at the RHAM schools; for example, Hebron kids make up the greatest number of students, so the town will be responsible for 55.83 percent of the RHAM 2015-16 budget.)

"Obviously 6.4 percent is too high," Leser said. "We need to figure out what kind of increase voters can support."

"The 6.4 is not going to fly," Board of Finance member Doug Knowlton said. "It's going to get shot down. If RHAM stays and everything else is flat, then that will be voted down."

Knowlton said the local board has some good arguments for its budget. As for RHAM, he said, "the likelihood is that the RHAM budget will be reduced, but I don't know if it'll be reduced enough," Knowlton said.

While boards of finance in Marlborough, Hebron and Andover can make suggestions about the RHAM budget, they have no control over the spending plan's bottom line. Still, as Godbout noted, "there have been times [in the past] that the Board of Finance has not supported the RHAM budget."

Knowlton, meanwhile, expressed his frustration over how relatively little the Board of Finance has control over. Town spending is the only arena in which the finance board can make any line item revisions.

"We need to look at what we have control over versus influenced," Knowlton said. "Seventy percent is Boards of Education and 30 percent is the town. What are we saying? We'll plow every other storm [to save money]?"

Leser, meanwhile, forebodingly suggested there is no light at the end of the tunnel when it comes to the budget – at least not anytime soon.

"The hardest years are not behind us," Leser said.

The Board of Finance met with representatives from the RHAM Board of Education last night, after press time, and will next meet Tuesday, March 31, and Thursday, April 2, at 7 p.m. both nights, at Marlborough Elementary School, to further discuss the town budget.

Three Honored for Showing 'Spirit of Portland'

by John Tyczkowski

Despite a snowy and cold start to the weekend, the weather cleared up for the seventh annual Ralph Paley Spirit of Portland Award reception Sunday.

More than 80 people showed up to the Waverly Center that afternoon to honor Diane Burgess, Carlotta Lord and Antonio 'Buddy' Hernandez. The three were chosen for their years of dedication to the town.

"It's all about recognizing the people who don't expect, or go looking for, recognition for what they do for the town," Waverly Center director and event organizer Mary Flood said of the award, named in honor of the late Ralph 'Mickey' Paley.

Town residents nominated each of the honorees, who will never know just who wrote these words in their favor.

For example, Hernandez was described by a nominator as "a man with a big heart that is always open to help others in mind," and another described Lord as someone "who is always looking out for others."

Burgess, a 40-year resident, was nominated for her work with town youth.

"I teach at the First Church Nursery School and have been there for 25 years," she said. "I've also been very involved in the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts over the years."

Burgess is also involved with First Congregational Church in "many activities there," such as the choir, director of the Vacation Bible School, a member of the church council and the Women's Fellowship, to name a few roles.

"It's really rewarding to see all the nursery school children grow up over time and become the citizens of the future," Burgess said.

Lord was honored for her work providing grocery coupons to military families on bases all over the world, as well as her education advocacy in town and her work with the Bears on a Journey program where local volunteers make bears for cancer patients. She's lived in Portland for 20 years.

"It's a never-ending process," she said of the

couponing, which she said involves working with five or six other volunteers for hours at a time. "But it's very rewarding, and it has taken off."

Lord said she wasn't expecting the nomination, as she's only been "very active" at the Waverly Center since January 2012.

"But then again, I do spend half my life here," she added, laughing. "Some days I get here at 10 or 9:30 and I'm here until 5. Sometimes, Mary [Flood] leaves and tells me just to slam the door when I leave, because she's going home before me."

Hernandez, a 43-year volunteer firefighter in Portland who reached the rank of captain, was honored for his service in that capacity as well as for reactivating the St. Mary Church Knights of Columbus chapter.

"I was also an EMT for 26 years. I brought 18 people back from the dead, with either CPR or defibrillation," he said. "And I also delivered two babies."

Hernandez has lived in town for 58 years, and characterizes himself as "pretty involved" in his church.

"I was treasurer, Grand Knight and I'm District Deputy now," he said of his seven years of active services with the Knights of Columbus. "And I'm also a faithful navigator at the church."

The Spirit of Portland Award focuses on volunteers in town who don't seek out recognition – which Paley's widow Sara remarked perfectly describes her husband.

"He was anonymous; he didn't want any credit. He used to do so much for the people in town, and half of them didn't even know he was doing it," she said. "I was married to him for 59 years and I was one lucky lady."

She related one story about Ralph at he and his brother's business in town, Paley Brothers Hay and Shavings, to show how he embodied this.

"If he'd see this person drive up that he knew didn't have two nickels to rub together, he'd go in the barn and break a few bales," Paley said.



Three Portland residents were honored Sunday at Portland's 2015 Ralph Paley Spirit of Portland award ceremony. Held at the Waverly Center, residents blind-nominate honorees for the award who "exemplify the spirit of Portland through their selflessness." Shown here, left to right, are Diane Burgess, Antonio 'Buddy' Hernandez and Carlotta Lord who were honored this year.

"They'd come in and say 'Oh I really need a few bales of hay for my horse, how much is it?' And then [Ralph] would say, 'Well you know, there are a few broken bales in the barn, why don't you just take it?'"

"This was his way," she said.

Though the award had already been in existence for a few years, after Paley passed away in October 2011, Flood came up with the idea of renaming it to honor him.

Paley's daughters, Lori McDermott and Sharon Fleischmann, and their families, now underwrite the award each year, in memory of Ralph.

"They thought [naming the award after Ralph] was perfect, just absolutely perfect," Paley said.

The ceremony began honoring three recipi-

ents, instead of one, when the award took the Paley name in time for the March 2012 awards.

Flood said she came up with the idea for the first award ceremony when she continually saw "the same people doing the work that do the work for everything."

"They've done their best, quietly and without fanfare," she said. "I decided they needed to be recognized because they're not the ones who go looking for recognition."

Flood said she anticipates continuing the award for quite some time.

"We haven't run out of people yet, so that ought to tell you something," she said.

Volunteers from both the Bears on a Journey program of the Portland Senior Center and from the confirmation class from St. Mary's Church helped out at the event.

Happy 220th Birthday to Sylvester Gildersleeve

by John Tyczkowski

Sylvester Gildersleeve's influence on the town of Portland is easily apparent from a cursory examination of the town: Gildersleeve Elementary School, the Gildersleeve Education Fund and even the section of town called Gildersleeve, to name a few things.

He also founded the town's first fire company, in Gildersleeve, which at the time was its own thriving place with a post office, its own general store and, of course, the main section of the S. Gildersleeve & Sons Shipyards, where Petzold's Marine Center stands today.

There's even Gildersleeve Island, across the river from the fairgrounds. And the 1787 house of Philip Gildersleeve, where Sylvester was born on February 25, 1795, still stands on Indian Hill Avenue in the heart of Gildersleeve.

"The Gildersleeves left an indelible mark on Portland," Rick Gildersleeve, Sylvester's great-great grandson, who lives in town, said. "Sylvester in particular was a prominent business man, a prominent philanthropist and he was very civic-minded. He was devoted to the town."

As Sylvester said in his memoirs from 1875, "the family of Gildersleeve had the reputation of being strictly honest, and reliable, in all business transactions."

He proved that true, Rick said, as Sylvester proved to be a shrewd businessman.

"He was very business-savvy," Rick said. "He diversified his businesses so had always had something to fall back on."

A case in point: Sylvester ran the shipyards that carried brownstone from the quarries, which he also had a stake in, to cities such as Boston, New York and Providence.

However, Sylvester also was very hands-on with his work, Rick said. In fact, his first shipbuilding job, near the end of the War of 1812, involved a journey on foot and in wagons to Sackets Harbor, N.Y., on the shores of Lake

Ontario. That was also when he was newly married.

And when the project in New York was canceled due to the end of the war, Sylvester simply returned home and decided to find other work.

"In the summer I took land of the farmers to plant with potatoes on shares, working for them by day work, and in the winter I shipped fire wood by the cord at meadows," Sylvester wrote in his memoirs. "When the shipbuilding began to revive I worked at many points on the Connecticut River, sometimes in New York City."

It was 1821, when Sylvester accepted a contract from General Seth Overton to build two sloops, launched from Stevenson's Wharf off Indian Hill Avenue, which marked the beginning of the Gildersleeve shipbuilding legacy in Portland.

By the 1840s, after years of building ships, Sylvester had started to buy up shipyards and skilled labor in Portland to consolidate into his business. An interesting addendum to that involved the decision of Captain Henry Churchill, the man whom he worked for at that time, to double Sylvester's rent to use the shipyard.

"I made up my mind what I should do if I could," Sylvester wrote. "That was to buy the Lewis Shipyard as I thought I could. The next day after I arrived home [from New York] I had a deed from Mr. Lewis of his shipyard."

Soon after, Sylvester joined forces with his son Henry in 1842 and renamed the business the S. Gildersleeve & Son Shipyards. The company produced schooners, sloops, brigs, barks and other ships, powered by both steam and sail, for private interests and for the United States Navy during the Civil War.

On of the most famous naval vessels from that period was the steam-powered gunboat *U.S.S. Cayuga*. She participated in the blockade of the Confederacy and in some battles off the coasts of Louisiana and Texas.

In a historical footnote, a Confederate raider burned the ship named after Sylvester himself, the *S. Gildersleeve*, near the beginning of the war. However, Sylvester wrote in his memoirs "after all, they paid her owner something very fair," and indicated no resentment, though he said the vessel was the pride of the shipyards.

After the war, the business, which expanded to include Henry's son, Oliver, built a number of freighters used for shipping to ports such as Charleston, S.C., and Galveston, Texas. And throughout all that time, Sylvester had been shipping brownstone from the quarries, which he had been affiliated with since the 1840s.

To sell supplies to workers and to outfit the ships he built, Sylvester set up the Gildersleeve General Store off of Main Street, which is now Portland Floor & Wall Covering. Sylvester also founded a wagon factory and a mattress factory as well.

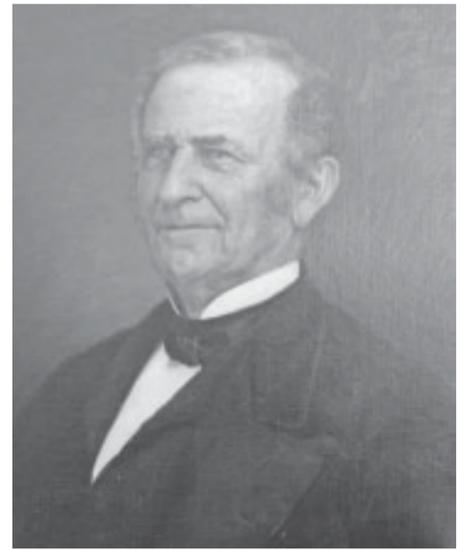
In addition, he became president of the town's first bank, the First National Bank of Portland, in 1865, which dealt solely with commercial businesses. Sylvester also was involved in creating the town's first savings bank, the Freestone Savings Bank of Portland, located in the same building.

That building no longer stands, but was located on Main Street.

Also, in 1876 townspeople were, as Sylvester wrote, "want of a better and more convenient school house," due to a fire which burned the former school there. So, Sylvester said he would fund the construction of a school with a public hall on the second floor, as well as the creation of Gildersleeve High School.

In addition, Sylvester founded the first fire company in town, which included a horse-drawn fire apparatus.

He also contributed \$6,000 around that time to finish Trinity Episcopal Church on Main



Sylvester Gildersleeve

Street, of which he was an active member. The church was completed in 1882.

Finally, he also put in a steeple clock at the First Congregational Church.

"When he saw a need, he would take care of it," Rick said. "He felt very strongly about his community."

Of his continual business enterprises, Rick said he thought Sylvester was "very ambitious" and that he "loved to stay busy," even after he retired.

"He was also trying to help that part of town; he was trying to create jobs," Rick said. "I can't say it enough: he was very community-minded."

The Gildersleeve & Sons Shipyards continued to produce vessels after Sylvester's death in 1886, up until its 358th and final ship in 1932.

Colchester Ice Cream Truck Owner Bounces Back After Fire

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Momma Shanks Ice Cream Truck will once again roll through the streets of the Chatham Health District this spring, after a fire put the beloved business of Diana Cruickshanks on hold.

Cruickshanks, who lives in Norwich, began her ice cream truck business in 2010 after she purchased a pale pink ice cream truck. After getting the hang of things, she began covering the entire Chatham Health District which includes the Rivereast towns of Colchester, Marlborough, Hebron, East Hampton and Portland.

"I loved how little kids look at the ice cream truck going by," Cruickshanks said. "I love kids and being with kids and seeing the joy on their faces when they hear my music."

But last September, Cruickshanks' enjoyment was put on hold when she lost everything in a fire at her Norwich home. The truck's freezers, which were hooked up to the house, caught fire and set the building ablaze.

Cruickshanks was in New Hampshire at the time, and someone else had been driving her truck for her.

"I was driving for five hours in my boyfriend's car [to get] home," Cruickshanks said of the night of the fire, Sept. 19. "I lost my mom a little while ago and I felt her presence in that car. That was the only reason why I was so strong."

However when Cruickshanks reached the home it was still smoking, and that proved too much to handle.

"I dropped down on the ground," Cruickshanks said. "The things that bothered me the most were losing my mom's pictures and her fur coat given to her by my dad."

Yet despite that initial upset, Cruickshanks didn't let the loss keep her down. She said she could have been one of those people who crumbled after such an event, but she rose to the occasion.

"In one day, I got a job at Dunkin Donuts at Mohegan Sun," Cruickshanks said. "When it all happened, Red Cross gave me three days in a hotel. All of my friends bought me rooms so I stayed there a month and a half."

But after her hotel stay, things got rough for Cruickshanks.

"I stayed in a homeless shelter which was horrible, then a crazy lady's home," she said. "My boyfriend said he had had enough [having her in those situations] and I stayed with him."

Two weeks after the fire, the ladies Cruickshanks worked with at Mohegan Sun threw her a benefit. The benefit raised \$1,400 which Cruickshanks said was a "beautiful amount to help me live," but it only went so far.

"You really know who your friends are and you see that," Cruickshanks said. "Everyone gave me clothes, blankets, sheets, and dishes." Her friend Theresa Henderson, meanwhile, "brought me to Walmart and got me makeup and a flat iron."

Months later, Cruickshanks was able to start thinking about her business, and found a new ice cream truck for \$5,000, which was the only money her insurance would pay out after she lost her previous truck, worth \$10,000.

But there's a problem with the truck: it's white instead of pink. Although it has a higher top so Cruickshanks won't have to bend down inside, she misses her previous truck.

"That's me," Cruickshanks said of the pink. "People love seeing that pink truck."

Painting a vehicle as large as an ice cream truck can get expensive, and currently Cruickshanks hasn't been able to afford a paint job. She said if anyone can do it out of the "good of their heart," she can pay \$1,000 to have it painted.

"Diana loves this community and the community loves her, as she is otherwise known as 'Momma Shanks Ice Cream,' owner of the unforgettable pink ice cream truck," said Diane Peck of Colchester. "What started out as our family being one of her regular customers on her ice cream route has turned into much more than that, our family has truly grown to love and care about this woman."

Although she is moving forward and starting anew, Cruickshanks said the past still sometimes haunts her.

"I go by [the house] sometimes and there's a flood of emotions," she said. "It was the only place that would let me have the truck."

The winter, she said, was very hard. Cruickshanks had lapsed on her homeowners insurance and was choosing between food and paying her bills.



Diana Cruickshanks – a.k.a., Momma Shanks – first bought her ice cream truck in 2010; however, she lost everything at a fire at her home in Norwich last September. She is pictured here selling ice cream to children.

"There are days I'll cry," Cruickshanks said. "But now I'm strong. I cherish every day and God has a purpose."

And Cruickshanks said she's found there's a reason for everything.

"God gives you everything you can handle," she said. "Maybe this was to get me closer to my daughter and cousins."

Cruickshanks said her relationship with her daughter had been strained prior to the fire and she hadn't spoken to her cousins since her mother's death.

"I was divorced and I was living a new life," she said. "I bought my house for \$16,000 in cash. Not many people can say that."

Another loss, Cruickshanks said while tearing up, was that her cat was saved from the fire, but passed away not long after because of cancer caused by the blaze.

"That was heartbreaking," she said.

"Her story is unbelievably sad, yet by no

means does she sit around feeling sorry for herself," Peck said. "She somehow continues to maintain the most amazing positive attitude for the world to see, even though I know she is devastated inside."

Now Cruickshanks is continuing to push forward with her new truck and hopes to be playing her music again by mid-April. She carries Good Humor, Blue Bunny and Popsicle brand ice cream along with candy.

"She wants more than anything to rebuild her business, a business which she loves and is proud of," Peck said.

Cruickshanks' truck will be at the Hebron Harvest Day and she'll be working with Hebron Parks and Recreation to attend some of their camps.

Momma Shanks Ice Cream Truck can be booked for parties, banquets, picnics, weddings and other events. She can be reached at 860-608-4046 or at dianacruickshanks@yahoo.com.

Colchester Teen Invents App to Help Hearing-Impaired

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

At only age 14, Eli Mathieu of Colchester has created an app to aid the hearing-impaired not only with learning, but with “hearing” emergency signals such as smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Mathieu, when he was a third-grader, began inventing through the Invention Convention at Jack Jackter Intermediate School – and he never stopped.

Specializing in safety and assisted technology, Mathieu, now a student at Talcott Mountain Academy in Avon, found a niche in the inventing world ranging from headphones which control volumes at safe levels to his new app, Listen 4 Me, which aids people who are hearing-impaired.

“I saw how many people were killed in fires or had hearing damage from headphones,” Mathieu said. “I want to prevent that.”

Mathieu said there is “definitely a lack of technology available for the hearing-impaired,” so he’s transitioning slowly from safety inventions to more assisted technology.

The first invention Mathieu created as a third-grader was called iHear, a set of headphones that controlled the volume to a safe level.

“I was listening to my iPod and my parents kept checking the volume on my headphones,” Mathieu said.

Mathieu made a set of iHear headphones, and actually began applying for a patent while going on to the state level for Invention Convention. After that year, Mathieu designed exit path lighting that could wirelessly communicate to exit locations and turn lights on, then invented First Exit, which was a battery powered ceiling mounted fire extinguisher. He went on to invent the Husky Hat, which was a redesign of the classic hard hat that added ventilation holes, a built-in light and first aid kit; and Notify, the precursor to his current app, which helped deaf, children or the elderly wake up to smoke alarms.

After Notify, Listen 4 Me began growing and Mathieu founded his company, EM1 LLC.

“The notification side of the app records a sound, knows the sound and will text the chosen contact and call 911 when it hears it,” Mathieu said. “It uses a frequency analyzer to

detect the sound of a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector.”

“If you’re hearing-impaired, you can’t hear the sound so it detects it for you,” David Mathieu, Eli’s father, said. “A parent or spouse can get the text and can call 911 as well.”

Eli Mathieu explained the app will call 911 if the notification isn’t canceled in five minutes. Otherwise the user can tap call 911 or cancel.

The second part of the app is the learning side of it. Using a headset with a microphone and camera equipped on the non-hearing-impaired person, such as a teacher, the hearing-impaired person’s iPad would receive the captions of the words over an image of the person’s lips. This would help with word recognition and lip reading.

The idea for the app, Mathieu said, came up when he had a friend in kindergarten who had a hearing disability and used hearing aids.

“It became a problem for her to learn, especially if there was no expensive technology in the room or no one to [communicate in sign language],” Mathieu said. “I want to have the hearing impaired have equal grounds to us and hear different things.”

When Mathieu began inventing, he didn’t know any programming. As a third-grader, he started using Scratch, which is a common beginner’s programming tool. He then ventured into MIT App Inventor and learned Java programming through a class at IDtech at Wesleyan University in Middletown.

“He reached out to others for assistance,” David Mathieu said. “I encouraged him to reach out and ask questions. You can’t do everything yourself.”

On March 18, Mathieu took the app to the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford to test out what the students and teachers thought of the product.

“The kids were enthusiastic about it,” Mathieu said. “I presented to the middle-schoolers and the high-schoolers. The high-schoolers want to help participate in studies for the app.”

“The kids were completely enamored by using their phone to enhance their ability to



Eli Mathieu, 14, of Colchester (right), presented his app Listen4Me to students at the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford March 18. The app helps hearing-impaired individuals in emergency situations and also with learning. Pictured with him is Bob Nitko, a teacher at the school.

interact with other people,” David Mathieu said. “It’s some way of helping them communicate to people who can’t sign.”

Mathieu learned while at the school that many of the students will graduate high school with only a second- or third-grade reading level.

“It’s difficult to learn to read without the sounds spoken,” Mathieu said. “I want to improve upon that.”

In many college classes, Mathieu said, the professor doesn’t know how to use sign language, and therefore there is even more of a disconnect.

David Mathieu said his son is “doing well at bringing out what’s in his heart.”

Right now, the app is available on the Google Play store for Android devices, and Mathieu hopes it will soon be approved on the Apple store for iOS.

“I haven’t been pushing it yet since it’s in beta testing,” Mathieu said. “I’ll go back in May [to the school] and test out the new version of the app.”

Mathieu has a patent application in for Listen4Me on his algorithm used to determine sounds.

“There’s different wave patterns for smoke and carbon monoxide detectors,” Mathieu explained. “What you hear is actually three beats.”

David Mathieu explained that manufacturers are required to use a specific sound with the three beats and a 3,200 H frequency for smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

“I hope he continues down the path of creating cool stuff,” David Mathieu said about his son.

Listen4Me can be found on the Google Play store and also at listen4me.com.

Colchester Board of Education Holds Special Ed Law Meeting

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Education, along with the public in attendance, got a crash course in special education law Tuesday night, in response to the parent concerns brought up at the March 10 school board meeting.

“It’s very important to have this meeting because we don’t know all about special education law,” board chair Ron Goldstein said.

At that March 10 meeting, several parents voiced their complaints about the actions of special education director Katherine Shaughnessy – specifically her treatment of students and parents, and her handling of PPTs (planning and placement teams) and IEPs (individual education plans).

Alyce Alfano, an attorney for Shipman and Goodwin, presented the basics of special education law Tuesday. Alfano’s background included representing parents of special education students against boards of education, then working as a neutral party at the state Department of Education and now as an attorney with Shipman and Goodwin.

Alfano first defined IDEA (the Individuals with Disability Education Act), which mandates that students be provided with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to meet their special education needs in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The IEP is the hallmark of IDEA, Alfano said, and is the “written vehicle in which special education is provided.”

Alfano explained that meetings of PPTs must be held once a year; however, a parent can ask for a PPT whenever they would like one.

“The IEP must be tailored to specific individual needs of the child and confer meaningful benefits,” Alfano said.

Alfano described how parents have “safeguards” in which parents can exercise their right to be heard.

“Services must be reasonably calculated to enable the child to receive educational benefit,” Alfano said. “It does not mean, though, that you can maximize services. The district must provide a basic floor of opportunities.”

Alfano said confusion sets in regarding what a break in procedure is.

“If the children’s right to FAPE was impeded, there are deprivations of educational benefit or

it significantly impeded a parents’ right to participate in educational decision-making, there could be a problem in procedure,” Alfano said.

Alfano explained how IEP development is a team sport and there are required members including the parent, the child (if appropriate), the regular education teacher of the child, the special education teacher of the child, an administrator from the district, relevant service providers, a representative from a private agency or out of district placement (if applies), a transition agency representative (if applies) and anyone invited by the parent with knowledge of the child.

“Sometimes parents can feel the PPT is unbalanced,” Alfano said of the last person that can be involved meaning parents can have someone else on “their” side.

A parent has to receive notice of a PPT five days before the meeting and that can only be waived by a parent, Alfano said. When a change occurs a parent disagrees with, “the law does not say because you verbally disagreed that the IEP will not be implemented,” Alfano said. “You file for due process.”

“There is confusion by parents that I said at the PPT I didn’t like it and they did it anyway,” Alfano said. “Parents get a copy of the IEP in five days. Meeting minutes aren’t required.”

Although a parent cannot dictate how the minutes are written, Alfano said a parent’s statement that they disagree can be attached to the IEP.

In the special education world, Alfano explained, due process is a form that files your complaint to the state Department of Education for them to investigate. When this form is filed, it stops the IEP from going forward which Alfano said can be a “powerful tool.”

After filing for due process, mediation may be held to try and resolve the situation without going to a full due process hearing which would cost money with attorneys. This mediation, Alfano said, is free of charge.

Alfano said the school system is allowed to bring a draft of the IEP going into a PPT meeting.

“It can be frustrating for parents,” Alfano said. “Team members should come in with an

open mind, not a blank mind. What is a problem is pre-determination.”

This pre-determination can be school members saying no matter what the parents say during a PPT, this is what we’re going to do, Alfano explained.

Also considered at a PPT is any outside information including outside evaluations.

“It doesn’t mean you have to agree [with the information],” Alfano said. “You have the rights to do and get independent evaluations. The district cannot blow it off.”

In the case of timing for a PPT if parents cannot meet, Alfano said it’s possible to convene a short, 10-minute meeting on the phone and agree to reconvene to stay within the necessary year date for holding a PPT.

“Parents must be afforded the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the PPT process,” Alfano said.

Although Alfano stated a PPT may be conducted without a parent if the board is unable to secure parental attendance and it documents its attempts.

Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu then walked through the current progress of the board’s investigation into the parent concerns. He said there are two temporary assistants working in the special education department: Rosie Payne, who is chairing PPTs and helping office staff, and who can be reached at 860-537-3103 or rpayne@colchesterct.org; and Frank Stuart, who is looking into the parent concerns directly, and can be reached at 860-537-7269 or fstuart@colchesterct.org.

Alfano then reviewed the review protocol the district is following to look into the concerns. After parent complaints are submitted to Stuart, he will be meeting with parents, gathering information about the concerns, meeting with school staff and reviewing appropriate records. Stuart will then be keeping Mathieu informed and listening and working to help resolve the issue. If a legal question comes up, Alfano will be asked. Stuart will be working with parents and the district to resolve the issues and at the end of his time, he will be making recommen-

dations to the board on ways to improve special education in the district and submit a full report.

While they weren’t allowed to comment on the presentation Tuesday, members of the public were allowed to ask questions. (There will be a period for more general public comment at the next Board of Education meeting, which will be held Tuesday, April 7, at 7 p.m., at William J. Johnston Middle School.)

One audience member asked the process for the district identifying children with special needs.

“It’s the obligation of the school system to find children with any type of disability,” Alfano said. “Then evaluate the child in every possible area of disability.”

Alfano explained that a child is referred to be evaluated by a teacher, the school system or the parent. If the student does not qualify for special education and the parents disagree, there are legal avenues to dispute.

Another audience member asked on what grounds a child could be exited from special education services.

“The goals being mastered in one year do not determine exiting,” Alfano said. “There is an evaluation to determine if the deficits still exist.”

School board member Mike Egan asked Alfano what the process is after the PPT with how the IEP is formed.

“After the PPT, everyone goes back to their offices and the person rereads their notes, prints, and sends the IEP off to parents,” Alfano said. “If there’s issues, the parent has the right to send a note back. You don’t have to sign off on an IEP to be valid.”

Alfano backed up her earlier comment that an IEP can be implemented 10 days after its creation at a PPT and only filing for due process stops the implementation.

“If the relationship allows, discuss the disagreement with the chair of the PPT,” Alfano said. “Put it in writing and submit it. Ask for another PPT. If that’s not successful, then write a state complaint and go to mediation.”

East Hampton Council Approves Action on Center School

by John Tyczkowski

The Town Council gave a unanimous go-ahead for the creation of a Center School Facility request for proposals Tuesday evening.

The RFP would be to hire a firm to assess Center School's feasibility for use as a town hall that could possibly include any combination of Board of Education offices, a police station, Homeland Security-mandated space for the town's emergency headquarters, Chatham Health District offices and the Judge of Probate court.

The Chatham Health District's East Hampton office is currently located at the cross of Route 66 and Route 16, and the probate court is located in Marlborough.

The RFP also calls for the firm to assess the feasibility of moving fourth and fifth grade students to Memorial School, in the case of converting Center School.

Also included would be an examination of the use of the property at 195 West High Street for the police department, and an assessment of the cost to keep Center School running in its current capacity.

In a workshop before the Town Council meeting, Board of Education chair Ken Barber filled in the council on the details of what moving fourth and fifth graders to Memorial School could entail.

Chiefly, the move would necessitate the creation of a new wing on the school as well as an upgrade to the cafeteria to serve the additional students.

"Depending on how reimbursement shapes out, reasonably, the cost to the town could be [\$8-9 million]," Barber said.

But he said the ultimate cost would also depend on what the town might decide to spend regarding associated programmatic needs.

"Memorial School's size would rise to 800-

900 kids. That's a serious-sized school," he said. "The library is very small right now; it has to be developed for programming. It's the same with the gym."

"That all becomes an issue. It's not just adding on a wing," Barber said.

Also, Barber said that the public schools had already engaged in communications with other districts who could accept Center School students at their schools in order to move the four-year timeline along.

"We could be accommodated if it was a necessary expedient on behalf of the town," he said. "We have been exploring many options, but we'd rather not see that."

Regarding converting Center School into town offices, Barber said it could be "a turnkey operation."

"It's a municipal use to a municipal use. We've called all around the state at the top levels and we've talked to a ton of other municipalities who have done this," he said. "It's all determined on how much you want to spend on it. Everyone has been saying 'there's no major renovations needed, unless you want to do them.'"

During public comment after the workshop, two citizens who attended the workshop took diametrically opposed viewpoints on the matter of the health and probate offices.

Mary Ann Dostaler said she objected to the RFP's priority of examining the relocation of the Chatham Health and probate court offices to town.

"Both of those functions have been regionalized. It is not East Hampton's decision alone," she said. "To be spending the consultants on looking at those two departments before we even know if there's any interest regionally in moving them from their current locations...it's

flawed."

But Melissa Engel disagreed with Dostaler that the town would have a problem relocating probate and Chatham Health offices.

"The other towns didn't have room nor were they interested in housing health or probate," she said. "If we have a facility that can house them I don't think it'll be a problem."

In terms of the timeline, the RFP would be put out on Monday, March 30 and would close on Monday, April 13. Interviews of selected firms would occur during the week of April 20. The selected firm would begin work in May, with a flexible date to present a report to the town in late June or early July.

Also at the meeting, the Town Council voted 6-1 to create a Police Department Building Committee to "design, build and/or renovate a police facility." The council resolved last month that finding a new police station was its top infrastructure priority.

Councilor Ted Hintz, Jr. was the lone dissenting vote. At a Feb. 27 council meeting on the resolution, Hintz had voiced his concern over the wide latitude of the resolution that he said could result in "creating a committee that turns the entire project away from the council."

The committee will look at assessing the feasibility of converting the building at 195 West High Street into a police station, moving the police department into Center School, converting the entire current town hall into a full police station, or pursuing a fourth, undefined option, according to the council's resolution.

This committee would also communicate with the firm selected to study Center School on the option of putting the police department in that building.

The October 2014 Town Facilities Commit-

tee report recommended the 195 West High Street option, and the Town Council and Board of Education have been discussing Center School options over the past few months.

The council has also discussed the town hall option, though the building's future is uncertain. CL&P/Eversource has offered to buy the building and property from the town for \$1 million.

The resolution specifies the composition of the seven-member 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.

The committee would work with the police chief on the programmatic needs of the police department, as well as with an architect to select a building site and create building plans.

Finally, should the project go to referendum and pass, the committee would select a contractor and construction manager, and oversee the project's budget. If not, the town could authorize the committee to undertake the project again to prepare for another referendum.

"This will create something that will be a benefit to our town," council chair Barbara Moore said. "I think this will be a great project."

Look for a feature piece in an upcoming *Rivereast* on Hugo DeSarro, proclaimed East Hampton's Poet Laureate at this week's Town Council meeting.

The next town council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 31 at 6:30 p.m. in the town hall meeting room.

East Hampton Goats Have Day in the Spotlight

by John Tyczkowski

The Hartford Yard Goats have an East Hampton connection in Mary and Ted Krogh, owners of Circle K Farm Animal Attractions.

Two of the Kroghs' goats, Fancypants and Little Girl, were featured last week at the official press conference in Hartford unveiling the new name of what is now known as the New Britain Rock Cats, the AA affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. The team is set to play one more season in New Britain, and then relocate to Hartford, and a new stadium, for 2016.

That team will be known as the Yard Goats, as per the results of a fan vote. While the term is used to mean locomotives used to shuffle cars from track to track in rail yards, it was actual goats – not trains – on display at last Wednesday's press conference.

And the Kroghs were thrilled their goats were the ones chosen for the big reveal.

Ted said it was largely their goats' calmness and people-friendliness that got them tapped for the press conference.

"All these other [goat farms] were saying, 'What are you, crazy? There's that big bang when you set off the confetti, and that goat's going to go nuts and start knocking kids over; we ain't taking the liability,'" he said. "And then we said, 'It won't affect our goats.'"

Sure enough, when the time came and the confetti burst out and covered the stage, the goats stood obediently amidst the loud cheering, looking non-plussed, the Kroghs said.

"Everyone told us they were surprised by how calm and friendly our goats were," Mary said.

Fancypants in particular been in the center of chaos before: he acted in the 2014 Lifetime movie *Wishin' and Hopin'*. The movie, based on Norwich native Wally Lamb's novel of the same name, was largely filmed in Norwich and Willimantic.

"He was on set for the movie for [a] scene where everything was kabooming and banging and kids are running all over," Ted said. "And he was just like 'oh, okay.'"

Another of the Kroghs' goats, Baba, also performed in the movie.

Little Girl is also no stranger to crowds and noise, having been involved in an off-Broad-

way production of *Lamb of God* on Long Island.

"Little Girl had to walk up 20 steps to the top (of the set)," Mary said. "And the whole time she was surrounded by people: singers and dancers. One hundred people singing is very loud. But she was an angel."

The Kroghs also provided the lamb, Star, for that production, as well as another goat, Chili.

Mary said Circle K Farm has over 70 animals on average, consisting of adult and baby goats, sheep, ponies, a donkey and a camel.

The Kroghs have brought their animals to lend flavor to various events all over the state and the region, from stage and film productions to agricultural fairs to even corporate events.

Ted said he and his wife got started in the animal attractions business over 30 years ago, when a friend and park worker they knew in Hartford asked them if they would be interested in doing pony rides and petting zoos in the city.

"Before we knew it we were doing fairs too, and it just kept going up and up and up from there," he said.

For example, the farm's donkey serves as a mascot for Herrera Tequila in New Haven, and often appears at events for Geronimo Tequila Bar and Southwest Grill in the same city. The Kroghs have also brought goats to Masonicare in Wallingford for the residents there.

Mary said she wanted to make clear that she and her husband treat their animals very well, and that they "train them with love" and treat them like people.

"Last month, we were offered four jobs, and we turned them all down," she said. "We refused to do them because the weather was not conducive to bringing the animals out. Our animals' health and welfare are number one."

Ted said that's also reflected in how the Kroghs strictly separate work from play, as they don't allow events at the farm, which is the animals' "chill-out area."

"It's like with people; they need their own space," he said. "They know they can relax and no one's going to bother them."

Mary said they set up a mini-chill zone at all their petting zoo pens at fairs as well.



East Hampton's own Fancypants and Little Girl were the goats of the hour in Hartford last Wednesday, when the new name of Hartford's AA baseball team was revealed. Photo by Defining Studios, Hartford.

In terms of having a continuing relationship with the Yard Goats after the press conference, Mary said it was "too early to tell."

"Are we going to be used? We would love to be, but it's just too premature at this point," she said. "They're not quite ready for a relationship yet."

Both said they thought they would pursue it further toward the end of the season, as they felt management might not want to alienate the Rock Cats' fan base during the team's final season in New Britain by over-promoting Hartford.

"They're gonna need a person in a Yard Goat suit to run up and down the stands, they're gonna need designs and colors, they'll be doing a lot," Ted said. "We're hoping that they can get a hold of us again and we can be part of it."

And while the "Yard Goats" name has drawn decidedly mixed reviews in both news and social media over the past week, Ted said the name simply isn't his biggest focus.

"Everyone's talking about the name, but it's really about your win-loss record, and about how you promote it," he said. "A name is meaningless if you do not properly manage the team and promote the team."

Mary said she actually expected 'Hedgehogs' to win over the fans, but was pleased with the final vote.

"I think [Yard Goats] is a great name. I think they'll get real creative with it, and it'll bring more to going to a game because I'm sure they're going to have goats there," she said. "If little kids get sick of watching the game, Ma and Pa can bring them over to the goats."

East Hampton Board Adopts New School Calendar

by John Tyczkowski

The Board of Education spent a good chunk of its first meeting of spring Monday talking about snow – specifically, its impact on the school calendar.

The school board unanimously adopted a 2015-16 school calendar – but with a change in the number of snow days. Instead of the proposed seven snow days, board members decided to vote in a calendar with six built-in snow days, to keep the last day of school a Friday.

“The seventh snow day [would force school to end on] a Monday,” board member Bill Marshall said. “I would recommend six, so we could end school on a Friday. The last day of school affects high school kids who starting summer jobs, or have plans to get off to college and start semesters early.”

“I know seven days is traditional, but a lot of students have their commitments tied to that last day being on a Friday,” Marshall added. “Coming back for one day shoots the whole week.”

In lieu of tacking on more days in June, additional snow days beyond six could come out of April vacation, or out of professional development days, Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas said.

“We also have to remember to look at it year by year,” Dugas said. “This was an exceptional

winter this year.”

(So far this school year, the school system has used six school days – which is all it has built into calendar. Any additional cancellations this year would be made up during April vacation.)

Dugas also adding days to the colder months of the year was preferable to extending the school year further into June.

“Our buildings factor into this,” she said. If we go into a really heated period in June, our buildings aren’t appropriately conditioned for that.”

“We can heat our buildings but we can’t cool them,” quipped board member Scott Minnick.

The 2015-16 school calendar approved Monday may be the last calendar the school board has direct control over, at least for the foreseeable future. Dugas reiterated that the town would not be able to opt out of a new regional calendar, set to go into effect for the 2016-2017 school year.

“It’s a legislative mandate, and as a board we have the right to approve or disprove, but we cannot opt out,” she said.

The regional calendar would serve East Hampton and several other area towns, such as East Haddam, New London, Guilford, Madi-

son and Norwich.

Dugas also listed the exact requirements the regional calendar would mandate when it goes into effect. These included a minimum of 180 instructional days, a uniform start date before Labor Day, uniform December and April vacation weeks and uniform professional development days for teachers, one of which would need to be Election Day.

The rationalization effort comes from the General Assembly’s Commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies (the MORE Commission). Increased cost savings is a primary goal, as is increased teacher collaboration across school districts, Dugas said.

* * *

Also Monday, two students from Center School gave the board a presentation on the school’s band instrument program.

Fifth-graders Brendan Oakley, who plays trumpet, and Liam Sheeley, who plays percussion, showcased several aspects of the program, which begins in third grade.

Students are introduced to various woodwinds, brass and percussion instruments during third grade in what’s called a “petting zoo.”

By fourth grade, students learn the current playing techniques for their instrument of

choice, as well as how to read music. This culminates in an end-of-the-year showcase, with the fifth grade band and chorus, for parents in May.

In fifth grade, the complexity of the music performed increases, and students are expected to practice on their own weekly, and keep practice logs.

But with that increased responsibility comes increased opportunity, and fifth graders play in two public concerts that year, as well as concerts and Center and Memorial schools and an optional recital.

Also, each year there’s also what Oakley called a “special treat” for the fifth grade band students.

“This year, it was the Governor’s Foot Guard Band,” he said. “Other years, it has been the Marlborough Exchange, or even a practice with the high school band.”

Lois Sprague, also on hand at the meeting, teaches general music as well as the band program at Center School. She said 67 students comprise the Center School band program.

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 27, at 7 p.m., in the East Hampton High School library.

Hebron Senior Center Celebrates 25 Years

by Geeta Schrayter

There were plenty of well wishes, reminiscing, refreshments and entertainment to be found Wednesday afternoon, during the 25th anniversary celebrations for the Russell Mercier Senior Center.

The event kicked off with a ribbon-cutting commemorating the 25 years the center has been open. Then, those who were present enjoyed a performance by the Sunshine Singers, directed by Rich Marzi, before a number of people spoke about the center.

“What a wonderful senior center we have here in Hebron,” said Town Manager Andrew Tierney. “And what a wonderful job I have being the Town Manager here and I want to thank each and every one of you for your support over the years and your support of the senior center.”

Tierney added, “We’re very fortunate - and the seniors in this community are very fortunate.”

State Sen. Cathy Osten was present with an official citation from the general assembly that “offers its sincerest congratulations to the Russell Mercier Senior Center in recognition of your 25th anniversary in providing quality programs and services to seniors in Hebron,” she read. “We join staff and volunteers in celebrating this milestone and look forward to many more years of dedicated public service.”

Osten added, “It’s really an honor to be here. The program here in Hebron, bar none, is one of the best in the state,” she said. “I have been so lucky to get to represent Hebron and see what a great community you have.”

Former state Rep. Pam Sawyer was also present to share a few words.

She said surrounding towns were “rather jealous” of the senior center in Hebron.

“I look around other towns and I know that this not only has a 25-year history, but a life and vibrancy that draws seniors of all ages – and others – to come and perform, and [programs] range from exercise, to art, to pool, as well as a lot of literary stuff; it’s just vibrant,” Sawyer said, adding, “I can tell you a couple towns next door are rather jealous and would love to replicate what you have.”

Afterwards, Susan Cromie, who was the senior center’s director from 1995-2005, shared some of her warm memories.

“I am so happy to be back in this place,” she said. “It holds so many fond memories for me, and some of the faces I see out there are just so

dear to both Laurie [McMorrow who was the outreach coordinator] and I.”

Cromie went on to talk about the “10 colorful years” she spent with the center.

“My job was much more than an occupation – it was so, so much more,” Cromie said. “These folks were so special. They stole my heart and they became family. I watched as other seniors got to know each other and welcomed new folks and looked forward to the next time to get together.”

Cromie said she saw “friendships blossom, smiles and laughter everywhere, and hugs were the gateway pass.”

The senior center, she furthered, is “a gem in our community.”

“It’s a vital lifeline for our elders on so many levels I haven’t even touched on. It’s important we all continue to support this; to keep it alive, and most importantly to cherish our elders, respect their wisdom and listen to their needs,” she stated. “Although time brings many changes, demands and limitations, the basic human needs of the senior population remain. This center provides a haven, or home, and a second family. And with that, all the resources, caring and help needed to ensure the later years of life are a little more golden.”

Other speakers Wednesday included Betsy Ritter, the Commissioner of the State Department on Aging; Rob Warner, the town’s former first selectman; and former town manager Robert Lee.

Ritter said the town had “a lovely, lovely senior center.”

“I couldn’t be happier to know you’re celebrating the 25th anniversary. What a wonderful, wonderful occasion,” she stated, adding, “I’d like anything to know that we could just kind of clone you a little bit to make sure everybody in Connecticut – every senior – has [access] to a center as lovely as this one.”

Warner, meanwhile, talked about the history of the center. He said when he was elected, on his very first day as first selectman, Russell Mercier, who the center is named for, was waiting by his office.

“I invited him in and Russ sat down,” Warner said, “and almost the first words out of his mouth were ‘we need a senior center.’”

At the time, Warner said the town had an \$800,000 federal grant for a senior center, but the town was about the lose it because one of the stipulations of the grant was that another senior project take place in conjunction with



Plenty of individuals instrumental in the creation and success of the Russell Mercier Senior Center gathered Wednesday to celebrate the center’s 25th Anniversary. Shown here, from left, at the commemorative ribbon cutting are: former Senior Center Director Susan Cromie, state Senator Cathy Osten, Chairperson of the Hebron Commission on Aging Laura Bennett, Commissioner of the State Department on Aging Betsy Ritter, former selectwoman Elaine Zavistoski, current director Sharon Gerrard, former state Rep. Pamela Sawyer, former town manager Robert Lee, current town manager Andy Tierney, and selectwomen Gail Richmond.

the center, and the town wasn’t sure what to do.

And so, first Warner got a grant extension, and then he began the process of finding a solution, which showed itself when he spoke to resident Roderic McCorrison who said he had a piece of land he’d be willing to sell to the town to use for the center. And when it came to the second project, he brought up the possibility of building some senior housing.

While it took some work, Warner said eventually that’s exactly what fell into place, and groundbreaking for the center took place in September 1989. The center was completed after he left office, “but I was there when they had the dedication and I was so pleased because I knew that our seniors needed such a home.”

“It was something I was proud to be able to do and I’m glad eternally every time I come here and I look at what we’ve done,” he said.

Likewise, Lee, who came into office after Warner, said he was “proud” to have been a

part of the process.

“I have a lot of good memories of this building,” he said. “It’s good to be back. It’s good to see a lot of friendly faces. I’m proud to be a part of the development and operation that made the facility what it is today.”

On Thursday, program coordinator Gina Duensing said, “The anniversary was amazing. It was so great to see everyone from the past to the present come together for such a special event. The senior center has grown so much over the years, everyone is just like family. The smiles that were on everyone’s faces yesterday were just so great.”

And those smiles were definitely apparent Wednesday when, after the well-wishes and reminiscing, everyone present socialized, had refreshments and listened to music by the Glastonbury Ukulele Band, ensuring the celebration was yet another memorable event in the history of a building that has provided enjoyment to seniors for the last 25 years.

Hebron Selectmen Approve Proposed Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Selectmen Tuesday voted to approve the proposed town government budget for 2015-16, and forward it to the Board of Finance for review.

The town government budget clocks in at \$8,976,923, for an increase of \$310,486 over the current year's budget, or 3.22 percent. This is a decrease from the initial proposal of Town Manager Andrew Tierney, which amounted to \$9,146,216.

Decreases that dropped the amount include the removal of \$100,000 for a School Resource Officer at RHAM (an expenditure that was to be reimbursed) because the position wasn't ready to be instated at the school.

There was also a \$20,000 decrease for costs for an EMS responder. Tierney explained this week the town had funded half of the EMS program last year and thought the second year was going to cost \$45,000 but that amount was found to be too high and was reduced accordingly. A \$1,530 reduction was also made to a requested increase for the EMS responder FICA/Medicare account.

In addition, there were some reductions made in the contribution to CIP: \$16,500 in funds for a generator was removed due to the fact one was donated from Oak Hill after they purchased a larger one needed at Camp Hemlocks. Another \$12,378 was also removed from CIP for the 13-14 lease payment on a fire truck that was offset from some leftover funds. And lastly, a \$5,683 reduction came in after the completion of the salt shed for the Department of Public Works approved in 2014-15 came in under budget.

Other decreases include a \$5,900 cut from State Trooper Services; \$7,500 from Debt Services from reducing the computer lease/purchase; \$3,500 from Capital Outlay what was for the library to add security cameras; \$2,200 from the requested increase in funds for the Economic Development Coordinator; and \$104 from subscriptions for newspapers.

A few small increases also took place since Tierney's first presentation: \$1,860 for the 27th payroll of the fire marshal ("We get paid bi-weekly and that doesn't add up to the calendar days, so every 11th year we get another pay period," Tierney said earlier this month), \$500 for library marketing and \$142 in FICA/Medicare.

In total, the difference from Tierney's initial presentation and the budget approved by the selectmen is \$169,293.

On Tuesday, the selectmen commented on how difficult it had been to find anywhere to cut.

"When I looked at this budget, I said, 'This is a really good budget,'" shared selectman Brian O'Connell. "It's a lean budget. And I almost feel that we have to make reductions just because you get used to having to do that, but even before touching it I think it was a great budget."

Selectman Dan Larson said he echoed those thoughts.

"I was thinking today I want to praise you all again for a great budget. But at the same time, it makes it so hard for us to find stuff to cut!" he laughed.

"This is a much better process than in the past," added selectman Mark Stuart, "where we get a 'wish list' budget and have to make sub-

stantial cuts."

He furthered the town was "not in that situation now," and was "financially, very strong."

"We are in a good financial position," Stuart stated. "If only we could get the state to run as well as us!"

The selectmen approved the proposed budget unanimously, after which Larson added "I think it's a fair budget and I hope that the Board of Finance agrees and is able to pass those numbers to the next phase."

"The budget is where it needs to be," Stuart added.

* * *

Also approved Tuesday was the CIP budget of \$731,291 which includes, for the public works department, \$253,346 for road resurfacing and road improvements and \$95,000 for a large dump truck with a plow that replaces an older truck; for the Board of Education, \$130,124 for roof replacement at Hebron Elementary School for the portions of roof over the 1947 and 1988 wings; for the Fire Department, \$76,370 for a lease payment, \$40,000 for a command vehicle, and \$33,719 to repave the Company #1 parking lot and repair the building foundation.

In addition, \$52,000 is included for a mason dump truck for Parks and Recreation which replaces an older truck; \$10,000 is included for carpet replacement at the Douglas Library; \$15,600 is included to replace a Dial-A-Ride vehicle at the senior center (for which there are matching funds from a grant); and \$25,132 is included to relocate the Emergency Operations Center to the town hall.

Board of Selectman Chairman Jeff Watt said the CIP account was "pretty close to what it was last year," and he thanked staff for being able to find some creative ways to pay for CIP projects.

Larson also said the CIP budget was at a "good, fair number" that was "definitely workable."

However, he added, "I just don't want to lose focus on some of the things that we may need coming down the pipe: big ticket items. And we're going to need money to accomplish them."

While he, like Watt, mentioned projects had been taken care of by "thinking outside the box," he said. "I'm just not sure how many more rabbits we can keep pulling out year after year - the big hat's gotta be starting to get empty."

Stuart had similar thoughts, calling the CIP budget "thin."

"We haven't had any substantial increases to the CIP plan for many years and it goes to your point Dan. We continue to defer investments to our infrastructure, and we're seeing constraints from the state in terms of being able to fund and I think that's an area of concern."

But for now, the CIP budget stands, at \$731,291: the selectmen voted unanimously to approve it.

* * *

Now that the selectmen have approved the proposed budget, the numbers head over to the Board of Finance for review, and ultimately concludes with a public hearing, which is scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, at 7 p.m., in the RHAM High School auditorium.

Response to Grieving Father's Request a 'Small Victory' in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

The state Department of Transportation this week made changes to the traffic light at the intersection of routes 66 and 316 in Hebron. The changes come in response to concern from the father of a 22-year-old Bolton man who died in a car crash at the intersection last month.

Christopher M. Passera of Colchester wrote to Gov. Dannel P. Malloy Feb. 27, asking that he look into the maintenance of sightlines during the winter months, as well as the light at the intersection where the accident occurred Feb. 22. Up until this week, the light had operated as a flashing caution light during the overnight hours.

On Tuesday, however, the light was changed so that it became fully-operational – and would remain so year-round.

Still, Passera said Wednesday the change was a "small victory." He expressed disappointment at the response time from the state, and also upset that his requests were denied to have sightline maintenance improved, and for the remaining flashing lights in town to be changed as well.

"It did take the state 17 days after my son passed to look at the snowbanks," he said Wednesday, adding by that time some of the snow had already melted "so they said nothing needed to be done."

Passera furthered this response time was "unacceptable in my eyes," and conversely, he said "the Town of Hebron had an emergency meeting within two days, and within three [days]

Town Manager [Andrew] Tierney and I had a rough draft with what we wanted to say to the state, and that was for all the lights to be working 24/7 in winter."

In the letter Passera is referencing, which is dated Feb. 25, Tierney wrote to the State Traffic Commission that Passera "is requesting that the traffic lights [in town] continuously function throughout the night during the winter months."

Tierney added, "Upon investigation, one of the contributing factors to this unfortunate accident was the fact that the snowbanks were so high that the sightline was impaired. It is also believed if these lights were functioning at the time of this accident, this death may have been prevented."

Passera's son, also named Christopher, died Feb. 22 after the 2010 Honda Fit he was driving south on Wall Street collided with a box truck traveling west on Main Street.

Police said that, at around 4:30 a.m., both vehicles approached the intersection around the same time, and Passera drove into the path of the truck, which struck the car on its left side.

Passera was transported to Windham Hospital where he was pronounced dead; his passenger, 22-year-old Sarah Guay of East Hartford, sustained non-life threatening injuries.

In the letter the elder Passera sent to the governor, he wrote the snowbanks "are so high that most cars cannot see over or around them." In addition, he made reference to the light at the

intersection "not working 24/7."

Both Passera's letter and the letter sent by Tierney received a response.

Charles S. Harlow, DOT Traffic Engineering Division Chief, responded to Passera in a March 20 letter, and wrote "the Department's Office of Maintenance field reviewed the snow banks at the intersection on the date of March 6 and determined that no additional snow removal measures were needed."

He added the light at the intersection of routes 66 and 316 "met the department's guidelines for a programmed flashing operation," which is based on traffic volumes, intersection sight distances, crash data, input from the town and intersection geometry, but the DOT decided to make the requested change.

Harlow wrote, "The department will coordinate with the town to pursue the removal of the flashing operation. This would be in effect year-round for technical reasons and for consistency to meet driver expectancy. Please be assured that the department strives to maintain safe roadways to the extent possible for motorists on the state highway system."

Sunny D. Ezete, Transportation Supervising Engineer with the DOT Division of Traffic Engineering, responded to Tierney's letter four days later.

In it, he likewise mentioned the decision to remove the overnight flashing operation at routes 66 and 316, but he said it was also agreed that the remaining lights in town "should re-

tain overnight programmed flashing operation..."

Speaking on those results, Tierney said this week he thought it was "a good thing."

"I was able to get the DOT to work within a rather short timeframe to get the one in question turned over in about a month's time, so I think that was a good effort on everybody's part to get it done so quickly," he stated.

However, he added Passera's larger aim to have the other lights in town – and possibly the state – switched over from the flashing operation, was beyond him.

"That's something bigger than me," Tierney stated, adding, "To have a blanket request is much, much harder" to achieve.

Tierney said the remaining lights and intersections would need to be examined "on an individual basis. There's some emotions coming from [Passera's] side which is totally understandable, but the DOT has to take into consideration all factors."

Even so, Passera said he wasn't done working for change.

"I'm not finished," he said. "I can't be."

"This is a safety issue and there could have been other accidents," Passera said. "There wasn't thank God, but God forbid someone else lost a life."

"There's nothing I can do for my son at this point," he added, "but we can protect other families from living this nightmare."

East Hampton Man with Gun Allegedly Threatens Contractors

by John Tyczkowski

A local man was arrested on multiple charges last week after police said he threatened with a gun two electrical contractors who were on his property working for Eversource Energy, police said.

On Wednesday, March 18, at around 11:19 p.m., police received a complaint from two private contractors, who had arrived at the 501 Moodus Rd. home of Jeremy Hackling, 44, to restore electrical service.

According to the police report, the contractors said a visibly intoxicated Hackling approached them and told them he had a gun, and said he wanted them to leave his property.

After the contractors left, they said they saw Hackling holding a rifle and a flashlight, and heard three or four shots as they continued further past the property, but were unsure if the shots were fired in their direction, the report said.

Officers responded to the property and took

Hackling into custody, who failed to follow verbal directions at the scene, police said. Police said though he was not armed when taken into custody, they found a loaded Springfield M1A rifle, the civilian version of the military M14 rifle, at the scene, and seized it as evidence.

Police charged Hackling with threatening, interfering with an officer, criminal use of a firearm, criminal possession of a firearm, possession of a large capacity magazine, second-degree breach of peace, unlawful discharge of a firearm, carrying a firearm while under the influence of liquor or drugs and first-degree reckless endangerment.

This is not Hackling's first run-in with the law. According to police, he has a disorderly conduct conviction from 2005, a drunk driving conviction from 2003, two convictions of driving under a suspended license, in 2004 and 2010, and a violation of probation conviction from 2010.

State Police Investigates Homicide in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

State Police Thursday were investigating a homicide reported at the corner of Cato Corner Road and Pine Street.

While the identity of the homicide victim was not released Thursday, police described her as a white female, 25-35 years old with dark hair that had been dyed red. She has multiple facial piercings, police said, a tattoo on her left bicep that reads "Jayden" and one on her right bicep that reads "Nicole," with a butterfly tattoo underneath the name "Nicole."

Troopers responded to the scene shortly after 5 p.m. Wednesday. According to Connecticut State Police Trooper Kelly Grant, troopers conducted a search of the immediate area for other potential victims, and none were found. The investigation seemed to focus on a nearby creek.

Detectives from the Eastern District Major Crime Unit (EDMC) also responded, and took

over the investigation. The area of Pine Street and Pinebrook Road were closed Wednesday evening.

"As I understand it there is no danger to the general public," First Selectman Stan Soby said. "The investigation continues through the state police."

Grant reported that the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner also responded and will assist in the investigation. The office will conduct a post-mortem examination to determine cause of death.

Anyone with any information regarding the identity of the female victim, or any information or potential information, regarding this homicide is asked to contact Eastern District Major Crime at 860-896-3230 or the Connecticut State Police Message Center, 24 hours a day, at 860-685-8190. All calls will be kept confidential.

Downed Power Lines Force Route 17 Closure in Portland

by John Tyczkowski

A short stretch of Route 17 near Cox Road was closed off for roughly 24 hours last week from Wednesday afternoon into Thursday afternoon.

Portland Police Sgt. Scott Cunningham said the power lines and utility pole that were downed constituted the major damage from high winds on March 18.

"We must've had a big wind shear come through; we had several branches come down in town," he said. "But at Cox Road, the tree that came down was heavy enough to put enough weight on the power lines to snap the pole."

The pole fell over and live power lines were directly blocking the intersection of Cox Road and Route 17, Cunningham said.

"Lieutenant Milardo responded and closed down the road immediately, and we notified

all of the appropriate agencies: Eversource, Frontier and Comcast," he said. "It just happened that particular pole holds a number of lines for multiple companies."

While Cunningham said those companies were busy responding to calls in other towns, they still responded promptly and the road reopened late Thursday afternoon.

"It was the biggest incident in town," he said. "We had smaller outages but Eversource cleaned them up pretty quick."

And cleaning up other branches that fell went smoothly, Cunningham said. By way of example, also on Wednesday afternoon branch fell down on Route 66 near St. Clements Castle. It closed one lane of traffic, but that blockage was removed within 15 minutes, he said.

East Hampton Police News

3/12: A 14-year-old juvenile was issued a summons for third-degree burglary and third-degree larceny, third-degree criminal mischief and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, East Hampton Police said.

3/13: Ryan Kochuk, 23, of 118 Chestnut Hill Rd., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

3/16: Richard A. Doll, 36, of 20 Glenview Dr., Cromwell, turned himself in pursuant to an outstanding warrant for his arrest, police said, and was charged with violation of a pro-

tective order, police said.

3/16: A 16-year-old juvenile of Andover was issued a summons for DUI, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and violating passenger restrictions, police said.

3/17: Justin Piteo, 54, of 9 West High St., was arrested pursuant to an active arrest warrant, police said, and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

3/18: Paul Kissinger, 56, of 203 East St., Hebron, turned himself in pursuant to an active arrest warrant, police said, and was charged with violation of a restraining order, police said.

Woman Flips Car on Route 6 in Andover

A Willimantic woman was transported to the hospital Sunday for non-life threatening injuries after she flipped her car on Route 6, State Police said.

According to police, Karla Dominguez-Cruz, 29, of 74 McDermott Ave., Willimantic, was traveling westbound on Route 6 near Bunker Hill Road March 22 when she drove onto the right shoulder and struck two metal highway signs.

Police said her car then struck an embankment, went airborne and hit several trees before landing upside down.

Dominguez-Cruz was transported by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital with non-life threatening injuries, police said.

Colchester Police News

3/17: State Police said Marie Hughes, 50, of 101 South Rd., Marlborough, was arrested and charged with DUI, speeding and failure to drive in a proper lane.

3/17: State Police said Jeremy Moore, 29, of 91 Prospect St., Norwich, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

3/18: State Police said Adam Olczyk, 21, of 43 Standish Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI, stop sign violation, use of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than half an ounce of cannabis.

3/20: State Police said Clifton Graichen, 53, of 23 Hayward Ave., was arrested and charged with criminal trespass and breach of peace.

Marlborough Police News

3/19: State Police said Tracy Vincek, 54, of 10 Quinn Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI.

3/22: State Police said Andre Parrish, 35, of 113 Martin St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with DUI, reckless driving, operating without an ignition interlocking device and improper use of a turnaround.

3/22: State Police said Alex Negron, 31, of 185 Cheshire St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with DUI and speeding.

Hebron Police News

3/19: State Police said Morgan Zeiler, 20, of 80 Wellswood Rd., was arrested and charged with operating under suspension, possession of less than half an ounce of cannabis, possession of drug paraphernalia with intent to use cannabis, stop sign violation and failure to grant right of way.

3/20: State Police said Brian Kisner, 29, of 91 Reidy Hill Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

3/21: State Police said Jose Valesca-Morales, 33, of 32 Parish Hill Rd., Windham, was arrested and charged with DUI, operating under suspension and improper parking.

Obituaries

East Hampton

William F. Briggs Memorial Service

William Frederick Briggs, Jr., 85, of East Hampton, CT and Sarasota, FL, formerly of South Glastonbury, passed away on Sunday, December 21, 2014 in Sarasota, FL. Born in Waterbury on July 5, 1929, he was the son of the late William F. Briggs and Dorothy (Porteous) Briggs.



A memorial service celebrating his life will be held on Saturday, March 28, at 11 a.m. at Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main Street, Marlborough. A reception will follow in the church hall.

Bill grew up in Middletown, CT and married his high school sweetheart Barbara White, his beloved wife of 57 years. He proudly served as a lieutenant (jg) in the US Navy during the Korean War. In the late 1950s, Bill moved to South Glastonbury, where he raised his family.

He was the president and co-owner of Valley Oil Co. in Portland, CT, a highly successful family business for over 85 years, servicing customers throughout the state. Bill truly cherished all of the summers spent with his family at his cottage on Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton, CT.

Bill was an avid golfer and a charter member of the Glastonbury Hills Country Club where he was the Senior Club Champion several times. He golfed for many years in the celebrity pro-am of the Greater Hartford Open where he played with many celebrities including Johnny Miller, Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, and Arnold Palmer. He was very proud of the fact that he had five holes in one in his lifetime.

Another of his passions was fishing. He had numerous "prize catches." Bill also loved following sports. Whether they won or lost, his love of the Red Sox, the Hartford Whalers, and the UConn men's and women's basketball teams was unwavering.

He is survived by his brother, Robert Briggs of Haddam; his daughters, Cynthia Thierfeld and her husband Jeffrey of Portland, Cathleen Glynn and her husband John of Marlborough, Carolyn Aubin and her husband David of Hebron; and his son William of Middletown. He is also survived by his ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren, who were the loves of his life, and his many nieces and nephews. Bill's close friend, Hilda Siderman, held a special place in his heart.

Along with his parents, Bill was predeceased by his son, Charles and his wife, Barbara. His sister-in-law, Marilyn Baillargeon, passed earlier this year.

A private burial was held at Pine Grove Cemetery in Middletown.

East Hampton

Frederick A. Nelson

Frederick A. Nelson, 80, of Smithfield Avenue, died Tuesday, March 24, in Day Kimball Hospital. He was the loving husband of Lucille J. (Beausoleil) Nelson for 55 years. Born in East Hampton, he was the son of the late William and Lillian (Moard) Nelson.

Mr. Nelson worked in maintenance department for Ellis Technical High School and for Putnam Herzl. He enjoyed traveling, bowling and watching the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots. Always very social, he loved being around family and friends. He will be missed by his two cats, Sasha and Sadie. "Mr. Book It" has booked his last journey.

In addition to his wife, Fred is survived by his son, David Nelson and his wife Patricia of Putnam; his sisters, Jean Johnson of Putnam, and Joan Belanceau of Putnam; his grandchildren, Jennifer Nelson, Michael Nelson and Matthew Mayo.

He was predeceased by his five brothers, Francis, John, Donald, Robert and Ronald Nelson.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with Fred's family from 5-8 p.m. today, March 27, in the Gilman Funeral Home, 104 Church St., Putnam. A gathering will begin in the funeral home at 9 a.m. Saturday, March 28, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m. in St. Mary Church of the Visitation, 218 Providence St., Putnam.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Mary Church. For a memorial guestbook, visit GilmanAndValade.com.

Colchester

Barbara Ella Smith-Clark

Barbara Ella (Standish) Smith-Clark, 95, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 18, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester. Born Sept. 14, 1919, in Norwich, she was a daughter of the late Charles and Ethel (Webster) Standish.



Barbara was widowed by her two spouses, Stephen A. Smith, to whom she was married from 1942-80, and later, Roland "Bud" Clark from 1988-97. Alongside both of them, she was active with the Colchester-Hayward Vol. Fire Co. and was a charter member of the Ladies' Auxiliary.

Barbara was a talented seamstress and dressmaker, which she truly enjoyed as both a career and hobby.

She leaves her son, Stephen and wife, Patricia Smith of Colchester; two grandchildren, Tracy and husband, Donald McKenzie of Colchester and Andrew and wife, Stacy Smith of Manchester; six great-grandchildren, Kaleigh, Nicholas, Rylee, Olivia, Emma and Lexi; a sister, Betty Jean Bruce of Oregon; a sister-in-law, Minnette Nelkin Standish of Colchester; Bud's children, Frosty, Terence and Candice (and their families); and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents and husbands, she was predeceased by four siblings, Arthur, Donald and wife, Barbara, Myles and wife Bunny, and Gladys and husband, Harold Ladegard.

The family would like to extend their deepest gratitude to the staff at Harrington Court for making Barbara so comfortable during her time there.

The family received guests Monday, March 23, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service was held Tuesday, March 24. Burial followed in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Company Auxiliary, 18-54 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthy-funeralhome.com.

East Hampton

Mary DiStefano

Mary (Walton) DiStefano, 95, formerly of East Hampton, widow of the late Angelo DiStefano, passed away Sunday, March 1, in Ohio, where she resided with her son Angelo and his wife Debbie.

She was the daughter of the late Harry D. Walton and Cora (Robinson) DiStefano.

She was predeceased by her son Frank DiStefano of Maine; three grandchildren: Michael DiStefano, Mark DiStefano and Jaqueline Abdo, all of Ohio; and her brothers Harry, Frederick and Robert Walton and her sister Esther Williams, all of East Hampton.

Mary is survived by her son Angelo DiStefano of Ohio, grandchildren Frank and Joseph DiStefano of Maine, and Angela DiStefano of Ohio as well as two sisters: Hazel Lumb of Florida and Alberta Hyland of East Hampton. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews, and great-grandchildren.

Funeral services are private.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to a charity of your choice.

Portland

Dora Fielding Fuller

Dora Fielding Fuller, 88, of Greystone Retirement of Portland, passed away peacefully Tuesday, March 12, at the Middlesex Hospice facility. She was born in Barnsley, Yorkshire England.

She was predeceased by her husband, Clifford L. Fuller; her parents, Phoebe and Harold Fielding of England; two daughters, Jean Graichen and Patricia Bair; grandson, Robert Bair; two sisters, Betty Fielding and Margaret Fielding; a brother, Harold Fielding.

She is survived by two sisters, Jean and Patricia; a brother John, of England; her daughters, June Sylvester and husband Thomas of Durham; Betty Siencienski and husband Ernest of Middletown. She leaves several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews and her two special great-great-grandchildren Tristan Bair and Lillie Rivera.

A burial service will be held Saturday, May 2, at 10 a.m., in the Pine Grove Cemetery, South Main St. Middletown. Following the burial, there will be a memorial service and luncheon at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 100 Berlin Rd., Cromwell.

East Hampton

Donald Ochankowski Jr.

It is with great sorrow we announce the passing of Donald Joseph Ochankowski Jr., our beloved son and nephew. He was the owner of Cobalt Package store for many years and for a short time the owner of Route 66 Package store.



Donald passed Saturday, March 21, at Autumn Lake in New Britain. He was born in France in 1960, the son of Rose Fuoco Anderson of East Hampton and Donald Ochankowski Sr. of Florida.

He was very close with his mom and he had a very special lifelong bond with his uncle Walter Ochankowski of New Britain. He also leaves his stepfather, Leonard Anderson of East Hampton; his brother, Eric Donais of East Hampton; sister, Cindy Ochankowski of Cromwell; sister, Sheri Naud of Alaska; special friends Paul Boulanger of East Hampton and Mike Peszynski of Newburyport, Mass. He also leaves many other aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Don had a great sense of humor, loved going to the beach, making and refinishing wood furniture, flea markets, interacting with his many customers, and loved his family's six dogs. He also had a daughter. He will be greatly missed by his family and many friends.

No services are scheduled at this time. We are planning a celebration of his life for early summer, and will post the date in the *Rivereast* at a future date.

Colchester

Florence Shedroff

Florence Niedelman Shedroff, 101, widow of David Shedroff, of Williamsport, Md., and formerly of Colchester and Bayside, N.Y., passed away Friday, March 20, at Homewood's Health Care Center in Williamsport.



She is survived by her daughter, Alma Cooper of Falling Waters, W.Va.; two granddaughters, Marcia Cooper of New York City and Roslyn McGrath of Marquette, Mich.; grandsons-in-law, Preston Gumberich and Kevin McGrath; and nephews from the Shedroff and Niedelman families.

Florence was born Feb. 28, 1914, in the Lower East Side of Manhattan and was raised in the Bronx and at her family's summer home in Colchester. She graduated from NYU with a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism, and in 1935 married David Shedroff from Colchester, who was also a teacher and principal of the Colchester Elementary School.

Florence was actively involved in the Colchester community in the 1940s. She worked on the Ration Board, was elected to the position of town clerk and also wrote a column on Colchester news for *The Norwich Bulletin*.

In 1949, she and her family moved to Bayside, N.Y., where she held administrative positions in publishing for many years. She retired in 1984 and continued to live in Bayside until moving in 2008 to Homewood's Assisted Living facility in Williamsport, Md.

Florence enjoyed traveling and pursuing her hobbies of knitting and sewing. Almost until the time that she passed away, she was still reading *The Washington Post* every day.

Graveside services for Florence were observed Tuesday, March 24, at the Ahavath Achim Cemetery, Taintor Hill Road, Colchester, with Rabbi Kenneth Alter officiating.

May her memory be for a blessing.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

Colchester

Robert C. Benson

Robert C. Benson, of South Daytona, Fla., formerly of Colchester and Manchester, died of natural causes at age 87 in Port Orange, Fla., Thursday, March 19. He was the loving husband of the late Evva "Duff" Bridget (Ritson) Benson, formerly of Bloomfield. Bob was born in Hartford Jan. 28, 1928, to Carl E. Benson I and Edith Lindskog.

Bob grew up in West Hartford, graduating from Hall High School in 1947. He served in the U.S. Army from 1948 to 1952 as an electronics/communications instructor, attaining sergeant rank. He was an avid amateur radio operator with call letters WIHAC, who communicated with fellow HAMS in over 100 countries. He was employed by IBM as a systems/installation engineer from 1953 until his retirement in 1990.

Bob was baptized at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Hartford. He was a communicant of Trinity Lutheran Church in New Smyrna Beach, Fla., from 1990 until his death, and was previously a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Manchester. He was an active Royal Arch Mason, through Friendship/Tuscan Lodge in Manchester, and Pythagoras Chapter, East Hartford. He was Master of Friendship/Tuscan Lodge for multiple terms and was deeply respected by his Worshipful Brothers. He was also a member of Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. He was a former member of Scandia Lodge of Vasa in America.

Bob was a licensed builder who built his own summer home at Lake Hayward in Colchester, and generously helped friends and family improve their homes. He was also an enthusiastic sailor. As an accomplished musician, he played the piano, the accordion, and the ukulele; he had a marvelous singing voice and loved to sing with his children. He created a veritable fleet of beautifully detailed, highly-functioning handmade balsa wood model airplanes, which his children now cherish.

He leaves four children, Ann Benson Frost and husband Gary Frost, Port Orange, Fla., Linnea Benson McGurk and husband Peter McGurk, Randolph, Mass., Eric Robert Benson and wife Virginia Benson, St. Mary's, Ga., and Carl E. Benson II of Wolcott. He also leaves grandchildren Meryl Glassman, Ariel Glassman, Michael McGurk, Daniel McGurk, and Robert Benson II, Kristi Lynn, Kaitlyn, Samantha, and Jocelyn Jacovino; one great-grandson, John (Jack) Robert Farland. He is also survived by two sisters, Constance Benson Bentley of Windsor Locks and Virginia Benson Wilkinson of Bradenton, Fla. He is remembered by in-laws Sally Yuska of Newington and Jim and Joanne Ritson of Bloomfield, and by dozens of nieces, nephews and cousins.

Memorial services will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 485 Turnbull Bay Rd., New Smyrna Beach, Fla., Saturday, March 28, at 1 p.m., followed by a reception with light refreshments, and at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 60 Church St., Manchester, Saturday, April 11, at noon, followed by a luncheon reception.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Bob's memory to Shriners' Hospitals for Children, Office of Development, 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or at shrinershospitalsforchildren.org.

Portland

Hugh Muir

Hugh "Scotty" Muir, 81, of Higganum, beloved husband of Elizabeth (Sutherland) Muir, died Friday, March 20, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation. Hugh was born in Scotland, the son of the late John and Alexanderina (McKay) Muir.

Prior to his retirement, Hugh worked as a carpenter with Stanadyne Corporation. He was a member of First Church of Christ in Middletown.

Besides his wife, Hugh is survived by two daughters, Lorraine Muir of Higganum, Grace Muir of Meriden; four brothers, Alistair Muir, Donald Muir, Neil Muir, all of Scotland; William "Ian" Muir of Cromwell; three sisters, Janet Brunten, Elizabeth Strongberg, Marwyn Webster, all of Scotland; a granddaughter, Sierra Peele of Meriden; and many nieces and nephews, including his godson, Alexander Muir.

Hugh's family would like to thank all the staff at Portland Care and Rehabilitation for their care, compassion and kindness, shown to him through the years.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, March 25, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Friends called Tuesday, March 24, from 6-8 p.m., at Biega Funeral Home. Burial will be held at Pine Grove Cemetery.

Those who wish may make memorial contributions to Hugh's Alzheimer's team, "The Unforgettables," Alzheimer's Association Connecticut, 200 Executive Blvd., Suite 4B, Southington, CT 06489.

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

More Obituaries on Following Page

Colchester

Anna J. Dombrowski

A lifelong resident of Norwich until six years ago, Anna Dombrowski peacefully passed away at Harrington Court in Colchester Tuesday, March 17. The daughter of Kazimierz and Carolina Suplicki, Anna was born Sept. 17, 1920. A child of the Depression, Anna left school after grade eight to help her family.

Before her marriage of 60 years to Henry J. Dombrowski, who predeceased her in September 2001, Anna worked at Werman's Shoe. Eventually she returned to the workplace as a retail salesperson in the Lincoln Store, in Steinbeck's and in H.A. Buckner in the Norwichtown Mall.

Anna is survived by three children, Barbara of Norwich; Henry F. (Phyllis Ott) of Madison, Wis.; and Jane (Mrs. Ken) Deremiah of Preston. The joys of her later years were her two grandchildren, Elizabeth (Mrs. Justin) Breslin of Willmington, Del., and Nicholas (Lindsay) Deremiah of Lincroft, N.J.; and her three great-grandchildren, Colin and Cara Breslin and Charlotte Deremiah. The iPad kept them very close to her over the past few years. Anna is also survived by her brother, John Suplicki of Plainfield, and her sister, Josephine Lynick of Uncasville.

She was predeceased by five siblings, Walter, Stella, Joseph, Edward, and Stanley Suplicki as well as by her sister Frances Cierzewski. She also leaves numerous nieces and nephews, as well as two special people, Dolores and Mary Kubicki.

Anna loved the outdoors and walking the roads of East Great Plains with her neighbors and friends. Our family wishes to thank all those dear ones who over the years, visited her, sent cards for all occasions and brought goodies, flowers and balloons. We are especially grateful to the staff at Harrington Court who loved her, who made her part of the special family that daily caregivers and residents become over time. Also, many thanks to Vitas Hospice Care who made Anna comfortable for the final few weeks.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Otis Library, 261 Main St., Norwich, CT 06360 or Shriners Hospitals for Children, Processing Center, P.O. Box 1510, Ranson, WV 25438-4510. Family and friends visited Labenski Funeral Home, 107 Boswell Ave., Norwich, Friday, March 20. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at St. Joseph Church, 120 Cliff St., Norwich, Saturday, March 21. Burial immediately followed at St. Joseph Cemetery, Boswell Avenue, Norwich.

Visit labenskiFuneralHome.com to leave an online condolence for the Dombrowski family.

Colchester

Mania Lejfer

Mania (Goldapel) Lejfer, 89, of Manalapan, N.J., formerly of Colchester, passed away Thursday, March 19. She was the widow of Berl Lejfer.

A Holocaust survivor, she was born in Krylow, Poland, the daughter of the late David and Chaya (Einhorn) Goldapel. She was a member of Congregation Ahavath Achim of Colchester.

She leaves three sons and their wives, David and Cheryl Lejfer of Simsbury, Jefferey and Michele Lejfer of Manalapan, N.J., Sidney and Nancy Lejfer of Newton, Mass., grandchildren Mara and her husband Ori Yacobi, Ari, Lawrence, Brian, Hannah, Benjamin, Samuel and Pauline Lejfer; and great-grandchildren Erez, Maya and Ethan Yacobi. She also leaves her sister, Bella Rosenberg of Merrick, N.Y., and Jenya Szajntop of Melbourne, Australia, and many loving nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Sunday, March 22, in the sanctuary of Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester, with Rabbi Kenneth Alter officiating. Interment will follow in the Congregation Ahavath Achim Cemetery, Colchester. Shiva was observed Monday, March 23, through Wednesday, March 25, at the home of Sid and Nancy Lejfer in Newton, Mass., and Monday, March 23, through Friday, March 27, at the home of Jefferey and Michele Lejfer in Manalapan, N.J.

Contributions can be made to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington DC 20024 or Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

Arrangements are entrusted to Weinstein Mortuary, Hartford. For further information, directions, or to sign the guestbook for Mania, visit weinsteinmortuary.com/funerals.cfm.

Colchester

Beatrice Jaffe Schulman

Beatrice Jaffe Schulman, 98, daughter of the late Nathan and Mary Jaffe of Lebanon, passed away Friday, March 20.

Beatrice was predeceased by her beloved husband, George Schulman, and their infant son, Mark Allen, as well as sisters Molly, Lena and Hannah, and brother Milton.

Beatrice is survived by her loving son, Myron Schulman and his wife, Shelley; her grandchildren and their families, Jason Schulman and his wife, Kim; Michael Schulman and his wife, Rebecca, and their son, Noah; and Jonathan Schulman and his wife, Jamie, and their two sons, Parker and Tristan. She is also survived by her sister and dearest friend, Marian Major; nephew, Alan Major; nephew Mel Sandler and his wife, Leni, and their family; and nephew Irwin Sandler and his wife, Linda, and their family.

Grandma Bea, as she was tenderly called, was a kind and gentle woman who was cherished by all who knew her. She had a very sweet demeanor and her most important priority was to provide a warm, nurturing home life for her beloved husband and son.

Grandma Bea especially enjoyed reminiscing about her happy memories of the family farm in Lebanon, the treasured honor of being made valedictorian of her high school class at Bacon Academy in Colchester, playing a fun game of Casino, baking delicious treats and preparing special favorites for those she loved, and, most especially, watching her three adored grandsons grow up next door to her over a 20-year span of time. She was never too busy or too tired to attend to their wants or needs.

The family wishes to express their heartfelt gratitude to the staff of Hebrew HealthCare for the extraordinary care and kindness provided over the past seven and a half years. We extend special thanks to Helen Steiner, Kathy Small, RN, and Beatrice's three primary caregivers, Yvette Acosta, Michelle Thomas and Stephane Cleary. We are also grateful to the staff of Hebrew Health Hospice for providing comfort and support during her final days.

A graveside funeral service for Beatrice was held Sunday, March 22, at the Beth Hillel Synagogue Cemetery, Wolcott Road, East Granby. The memorial period began at the home of Myron & Shelley Schulman, immediately following Sunday's service, and continued through Tuesday, March 24.

The family requests, in lieu of flowers, that memorial donations be made in Beatrice's name to Hebrew HealthCare, Attn: Development, 1 Abrahms Blvd., West Hartford, CT, 06117. It can be reached by phone at 860-523-3994.

Colchester

Vivian L. Sneddon

Vivian L. (Lehmann-Aasen) Sneddon, 93, of Harrington Court Rehabilitation Center, Colchester, went to be with the Lord Wednesday, March 25.

She married William Sneddon Sr. Sept. 26, 1998, at the Valley Lutheran Church in Los Lunas, N.M.; he predeceased her in 2011. Virgil Lehmann predeceased her in 1989 after 37 years of marriage.

Vivian was born Feb. 19, 1922, on a farm near Roslyn, S.D., daughter of the late Julius and Ragna Sophie Almlie Aasen. She graduated from high school in 1942 in Dell Rapids, S.D. She attended Nettleton Business College in Sioux Falls, S.D. She was employed by the Indian Bureau for eight a half years in South and North Dakota, Nonappropriated Funds in Argentina, Newfoundland, and Air Defense Command in Colorado Springs, Colo. Vivian lived in Los Alamos, N.M., for 17 years upon retirement and moved to a small acreage near Belen, N.M. She moved to Oakdale in 1998. She was a member of the St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Gales Ferry.

Vivian is survived by a step-daughter and son-in-law, Sharon and Andy Moody of Oakdale; a stepdaughter, Joyce Womble of Florida; a stepson and daughter-in-law, Ronald and Maribeth Sneddon of Warwick, R.I.; a sister and brother-in-law, Jeanette and Richard Aus; a brother, Irwin Aasen and J.J. Aasen of California. She has 13 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews who were all very special to her.

Vivian was predeceased by two brothers, Lloyd and Floyd, and three sisters Frances, Ruby and Betty.

Funeral services will be held today, March 27, at 1 p.m., at St. Luke Church, 1830 Route 12, Gales Ferry, with burial immediately following at Maplewood Cemetery. Visitation will be held at the church from noon until the time of service.

The family would like to thank all of those at Harrington Court for their wonderful care.

To leave an online condolence, visit churchandallen.com.

Haddam Neck

Nancy B. Snow

Nancy B. Snow (Brownie) passed away peacefully Sunday, March 15, at Wadsworth Glen in Middletown. She was born Dec. 8, 1924, in New York City, the daughter of Dr. K. Otto Schlechtweg and Ruth (Hussey) Schlechtweg.

She grew up in New Canaan and summered at West Hill Lake, New Hartford, where she met her future husband, Chester A. Snow Jr.

After graduating from New York University (NYU), Brownie taught Kindergarten in New Canaan and at the American School of the Deaf. She resided in Middletown for many years, before moving to Haddam Neck, South Carolina and Middlefield.

An animal lover as a teenager, Brownie frequently rode her horse on trails formed during the construction of the Merritt Parkway. In later years, she was quite devoted to her dogs. Brownie was a classical music lover who regularly attended Broadway shows which led her to help with Junior Matinee theatrical presentations and sing with the Middlesex Chorale.

She is survived by her son, Bradford Snow, his wife Cynthia Snow, granddaughter Kimberly Snow; brother and sister-in-law, Walton and Sherrie Schlechtweg; her sister-in-law and her husband, Nancy and Ronald Compton; as well as several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her ex-husband, Chester A. Snow Jr., and her longtime companion, Franklin Brown.

Memorial services and burial will be private. The family wishes to thank the staff at Wadsworth Glen for Brownie's care.

Marlborough

Fred M. Mergendahl

Fred M. Mergendahl, 73, of Rochester, N.H., formerly of Marlborough, died Sunday, March 22, at Frisbie Memorial Hospital, after a sudden illness. He was born Aug. 30, 1941, in Saugerties, N.Y., son of the late Frederick and Anna (Rusnak) Mergendahl.

He was a graduate of Penn Hills Senior High School of Penn Hills, Pa., and Carnegie Mellon University with a degree in mechanical engineering, but most enjoyed his career in experimental engineering projects and manufacturing management. He worked at Pratt & Whitney for 36 years in Hartford, West Palm Beach, Fla., and No. Berwick, Maine.

He has resided in Rochester, N.H., for 19 years, previously living in Sanford, Maine and Marlborough. He was an active member of Trinity Anglican Church in Rochester and the NRA. He enjoyed traveling, shooting, country music, reading historical books, any kind of puzzles, teaching gun safety and flying, as he had his private pilots license.

Fred enjoyed volunteering at St. Charles Home for Children. He was willing to lend a helping hand to anyone. He enjoyed spending time with family, all his grandchildren and his many special friends. He was a very special person who will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

Members of his family include his wife of 19 years, Eleanor (Belanger) Mergendahl; daughters, Amy Kane and husband Tom of Limington, Maine, Beth Mergendahl of South Windsor; grandchildren, Matthew and Ethan Kane, Nicholas LeBel, Noah and Joshua Pearson; stepdaughters, Kimberly Beardsworth and husband Frank of Dover, N.H., Kristen King and husband Daniel of Providence, R.I., Kendra Ward of Strafford, N.H.; step-grandchildren Heather and Christopher Beardsworth, Matthew and Charlotte King, Timothy and Kailey Ward and one great-granddaughter, Chloe Cabral; his sister, Gail Mergendahl of Boone, N.C., and nieces Jill, Kim, Sarah and Carly.

He was predeceased in death by a brother Richard.

There will be no visiting hours. A memorial Mass will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 28, at Trinity Anglican Church, Rochester Hill Road, Rochester, N.H. Burial will be in Holy Rosary Cemetery, Rochester, N.H., in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Trinity Anglican Church, P.O. Box 1078, Rochester, NH 03866; All Saints Church, 124 Hall St., Concord, NH 03301 or the American Heart Association.

Arrangements are under the care of the R.M. Edgerly & Son Funeral Home, 86 South Main St., Rochester, NH. To sign the online guestbook, go to edgerlyfh.com or find the funeral home on Facebook.

Portland

Dorothy Weibust

Dorothy (Eastman) Weibust, 95, of Simsbury, formerly of Portland, died Wednesday, March 18, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Mrs. Weibust was born Sept. 22, 1919, in North Providence, R.I., the daughter of the late Estelle (Farrar) Eastman and Arthur Eastman of Worcester, Mass.

She was a graduate of Commerce High School, Worcester, Mass., and Worcester State Teachers College of Worcester, Mass. She taught school in South Lancaster, Mass., before moving to Portland with her husband when he got out of the Coast Guard. They moved to Simsbury in 1954, where she lived in the same house for 59 years. She moved to the McLean Home in September 2013.

She received the Simsbury Citizen of the Year award in 1972, for her 15 years of dedication to the senior citizens of the town. She also was a babysitter "par excellence" for 12 years. Many of the now-grown "children" have stayed in touch with her to the present. Everyone with whom she came in contact knew her to be a sweet, kind, gentle lady.

She is survived by her son Richard of Florida; two grandchildren, Eric Weibust of Boston and Kristin Weibust of Burlington, Vt.; and her sister, Jean E. Whatmore of Vero Beach, Fla. She is also survived by several beloved nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a son, Stephen Weibust, and two sisters, Madaline Eastman and Marion Healy.

The family wants to thank Companions and Homemakers and the kind people at the McLean Home for their wonderful care of Dot during the last few years, especially Ivarine Thompson, and her support system of friends, Rose Sottile, Laurie Robinson, Steve and Barbara Lee, Andrea McGarry, Jane Preskenis, Donna Paige, her nieces Debbie Pankonin and Lisa Whatmore and her cousin Julie Verney and her husband Guy.

Graveside services will be held at Hillside Cemetery in Townsend, Mass., with her nephew, Rev. Gil Healy of North Conway, N.H., officiating, at a date to be determined.

Contributions in her memory may be made to The Humane Society and the Shriners Hospital in Boston.

Services will be provided by Anderson Funeral Home, Townsend, Mass.