

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 39, Number 50

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

April 10, 2015



Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires... On Saturday, March 28, Smokey stopped by to visit the Cub Scouts of Pack 57 in East Hampton at their annual Blue & Gold banquet. Smokey spent time with the scout families to deliver his important message about preventing forest fires. Smokey's visit was coordinated with the help of the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection. For more information about the Cub Scouts, contact Chaz Allis at allisfamily@comcast.net. Louis Uliano, left, and Andrew Wagner are shown here with Smokey.

RHAM Increase Drops to 3.68 Percent

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After weeks of work including a public hearing and two meetings this week alone, the RHAM Board of Education voted to accept a proposed 2015-16 budget increase of 3.68 percent, down from the initially proposed 5.12 percent increase.

The approved proposal, which totals \$27,839,655, came after much discussion. Changes to the number started Monday, when the board decreased the proposed budget to 3.83 percent. Then, after a second meeting Wednesday night, that number was reduced to 3.68 percent.

During Monday's meeting, which was held after a public hearing where the budget was presented with the 5.12 percent increase, the board reduced that number by \$346,466, bringing the proposal to \$27,880,321.

Reductions to the RHAM budget were something various town officials had wanted to see since the RHAM board started their budget process; from the beginning, the number had been viewed as too high.

Marlborough First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski and Board of Finance Chairwoman Evelyn Godbout, for example, spoke during the public hearing Monday and pleaded with the board to keep the increase as low as possible.

When the board moved into their special budget workshop Monday, board member Amy D'Amaddio made the first motion, and asked to separate the School Resource Officer into a separate line on the referendum; the officer carries a price tag of \$100,000.

"We've spent a lot of time talking [about the

SRO]" D'Amaddio said, adding that given the request to keep the budget close to 3 percent - or even less - they "can't do everything."

"Rather than have the board fight it out, we should put it out to the people," D'Amaddio said.

"I'm not comfortable saying go forward and then yank it back," said Vice Chairman Kevin Williams. (The board had previously voted on - and approved - having an SRO at the schools.)

But member Thomas Tremont stressed the importance of the SRO.

"It isn't just a man in the building with a gun," Tremont said. "I expect the gentleman to be more in tune with the students and the students can go to that person with a problem."

Tremont emphasized the SRO position was not just a security guard; it's a person to "nip issues in the bud" and also protect the entire community within the school, including both students and staff.

"We find ourselves in an incredibly difficult budget," said Secretary Judy Benson-Clarke. "I'm in favor of the SRO, but applaud Amy's creativity. . . This is a pretty modest budget trying to balance mandates. Do we put it in the hands of the people, which is what is supposed to happen in a democracy?"

Members Carole Shea and Joe O'Connor supported the SRO position being in the budget, however, O'Connor said if it came down to textbooks or an SRO, it would be a tough decision.

The board then voted on D'Amaddio's mo-

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Newtown Mother Speaking at National Day of Prayer

by John Tyczkowski

Dec. 14, 2012 may have started like any other day, but by the time it came to an end, Jenny Hubbard's world was changed forever, her daughter Catherine Violet Hubbard was one of the 20 children who lost their lives during the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

But in the face of unspeakable tragedy, Hubbard said she's found comfort in, and drawn strength from, her faith.

"God has filled me and my family with a sense of peace... there's just no words that can describe the sense of joy he's brought into our family, my husband and my son," she said.

And that devotion and commitment will bring her from Newtown to the Church of St. Mary in Portland, where she'll speak at the church's National Day of Prayer ceremony Thursday, May 7.

Created by the U.S. Government in 1952, the National Day of Prayer is an annual observation "inviting people of all faiths to pray for the nation," according to the website nationaldayofprayer.org.

"The National Day of Prayer is a time for people to be considerate and to truly examine how they spend their time," she said. "It's a time

when God invites us to sit down personally with him and talk to him. That's huge!"

And Hubbard explained that's something she's learned to do more often since the loss of her daughter.

"Before Catherine died, I would rush through my prayers," she said. "But now I find that is precious - it's sacred time. I make a conscious effort to say, 'It is your day, dear Lord,' and I turn things over to him. And the National Day of Prayer is a time to extend an invitation to others to be still in the noise of this world."

Hubbard said Deacon Dana Garry, who served at the funeral Mass at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Newtown for eight of the children killed at Sandy Hook, invited her to speak at the church in town.

"I hope, if anything, I can show people that God is not evil, God is not angry, he is not punishing. He is definitely going to see everybody through whatever trials they have in their lives," she said. "He wants that for everybody."

"If there's a sense of hope and a sense of piece about turning to God, then, mission accomplished," she added.

Hubbard also said that what she'll be talking

about at the National Day of Prayer could help a wide range of people who have experienced a range of different tragedies in their lives.

"Whatever hurt or loss you're dealing with, the one constant is God's faith in us," she said. "He will see you through it. Put whatever label you want on it; God's got it all. It's not exclusive."

This is not Hubbard's first time speaking at a church, she explained. Since 2013, she's spoken at a Catholic conference in Pittsburgh, as well as several local parishes in Connecticut.

She's also the author of *A Mother's Faith*, which first appeared in the *Magnificat*, a monthly devotional magazine.

Hubbard said the impetus for that piece came out of finishing up the year teaching her CCD class at her parish, which Catherine had been a student in.

"I said, 'I'm coming back to teach,' and I'm glad I did it. I needed to finish up the year and make sure those kids understood God is real and loves them," she said.

Hubbard was asked to speak to the catechists, but due to a prior family commitment, she decided to write a piece instead, which became *A*

Mother's Faith.

"I was like, 'Wow!' It was just one of those things where you let it all go, everything is washed away and you can express your emotions completely," she said.

From the beginning, Hubbard shared it was her decision to become more active in her faith that helped her through the loss of her daughter.

"I know Catherine is in heaven. She is safe, she is home, she is where we all hope to be one day," she said. "I was filled with that peace early on."

She added, "Don't get me wrong, it has been very difficult, and two years of ups and downs and peaks and valleys, and learning what our new normal is. It hasn't been easy," she said. "But at the end of the day, God doesn't promise easy. We've just held very tight to that [faith] he is with us and he will make good come out of this."

In addition, Hubbard said God was someone she and her family could turn to when they weren't able to turn to each other.

"Going through this as a family, everyone

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RHAM Increase cont. from Front Page

tion to separate the SRO from the remainder of the budget and it passed 5-4. However, after a short recess, that motion was rescinded when Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney stated the action wasn't legal, because the amount on the referendum ballot has to reflect the complete budget. As a result, the cost of the SRO was placed back into the overall number.

The board then moved on to other cuts. They voted to recognize \$173,150 in savings from refinancing two of the bonds, which reduced the overall budget by that amount. However, some members of the board believed that amount should have been used for capital projects instead of keeping the operating costs down.

"We're kicking it down the road," member Michael Turner said. "We're not taking care of the longer-term needs of the building. Instead we're using the savings to offset the operating budget."

Member Rich Jacobson moved to amend the motion to instead focus the funds on resurfacing the track; however, that motion failed 4-5 and the original motion to use the \$173,150 for savings passed 7-2.

The budget was now at a 4.1 percent increase when the board turned its attention toward a set of recommended cuts from Superintendent Bob Siminski totaling \$167,461.

"I do support that motion," Shea said of accepting Siminski's recommended reductions. "Those in that group were in direct conversation with the departments. It's things they said they could live without and function well. I'd like to see a lower number, but that's a good start."

Jacobson again made a motion to amend the motion and put back into the budget \$2,745 of Latin/Greek workbooks and English textbooks. Jacobson said those are the most important things for students to be ready for testing.

That amendment to the motion passed 7-1.

Jacobson tried again to put back in \$19,000 for geometry textbooks; however, after O'Connor read an email from the teacher involved stating that the ones in more dire need of replacement were still in the budget, that motion failed 3-6 (but on Wednesday that \$19,000 was added back into the budget after all).

Chair Danny Holtsclaw attempted to keep the meeting moving forward, but Jacobson again wanted to amend the motion to reduce the budget by another \$10,600 by taking out money for a John Deere tractor. Holtsclaw tried

to explain the tractor was not in the set of recommended reductions the board was discussing, but Jacobson pushed through with the motion to amend. That motion passed.

Finally Jacobson added one more amendment to the motion to add back in \$2,000 worth of track uniforms into the budget. That motion also passed.

When all was said and done, the original motion actually stood at reducing the budget by \$173,316 – slightly more than what was originally proposed due to the various reductions and additions. That motion passed unanimously, bringing the total budget reductions for the night to \$346,466.

By 9:30 p.m. the board members appeared to be tiring; however, some of the members said they still weren't satisfied with the 3.83 percent overall increase. Feeling the pressure from the towns, Shea made a motion to accept a bottom line increase of 3.01 percent. Shea said if they set the bottom line, the board members could discuss where it would be taken out of at a later meeting, but it would give the towns their direction.

Siminski agreed he could bring a list of revised reductions to the next meeting that would total the 3.01 percent increase bottom line, but Jacobson began questioning where the funds would come from. Finally, Williams called for a privileged motion to adjourn at 10 p.m. without a final public comment. And so, the budget was left Monday night at a 3.83 percent increase with the 3.01 percent motion suspended until the next meeting.

That meeting took place Wednesday night, during which time the board made some additional cuts including \$18,940 in proposed funding for freshman sports; \$8,677 from reduced sixth assignments; an \$8,367 reduction from the amount needed for the School Resource Officer; and, because there would now be an SRO at the schools, an \$8,500 reduction from the amount needed for security services. The board also recognized additional anticipated revenue for community use of the schools' facilities.

And when all was said and done, the at times convoluted changes brought the proposed budget to \$27,839,655 for an increase of 3.68 percent, which will now head to a district meeting scheduled for May 4 at 6:30 p.m.

The next regular RHAM Board of Education budget meeting is April 20 at RHAM High School.

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was at their rock bottom; everyone was depleted," she said. "Expecting that my comfort would come from my husband was an unfair expectation; he was struggling too."

Hubbard said she learned the only way to make sense of losing Catherine was actually "to understand and have faith that you *can't* make sense of it."

"So where else can you turn, but to God? He's big enough to handle it," she said. "Without him, I can see how it could be a very dark, very long, very lonely journey."

"I had thought before Catherine died that I was a faithful person. But I had nowhere near scratched the surface," she said.

Hubbard said something as small as a friend "dropping by on a tough day with a potted plant" showed her God's grace in everyday life.

"It took losing Catherine and wiping away every preconceived notion of what God's grace is like to see that it's in the every day, simple things that we, as a society, often miss," she said. "It's not this parting of the clouds and a thunderous voice. It's in someone's smile, someone holding the door for you."

"That's how he shows us, and I'm nourished by it," she said.

Hubbard added she and her family chose not to focus on the three minutes that ended

Catherine's life.

"We've instead chosen to focus on the life that she lived. By choosing to focus on an evil act, we're pursuing the Devil's agenda; I don't want to be a part of that," she said.

Along those lines, Hubbard said she and her family do not talk about December 14, and they have not read the police reports or watched the news pieces on the Sandy Hook shooting.

"We refuse to allow an evil act to define our family," she said. "There were six years of joy and innocence that she shared with us. That's who she was."

Hubbard said prayer has "taken on a whole new dimension" in her life since the loss of Catherine.

"It's become the priority," she said. "And I don't think this is the end of my journey; you continue to grow in your faith until you're with the Lord, face to face."

She concluded, "I don't know where I'm headed in my relationship with him, but I know wherever he leads me, it's going to be amazing."

The Church of St. Mary is located at 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. The ceremony May 7 begins at 6:30 p.m.

Observations & Ruminations

by Geeta Schrayter

I hope everyone had a pleasant Easter. As we say in Ukrainian, Khrystos voskres (He is risen)! Typically, when my family gathers for the holidays, we stick to a tried-and-true menu that's been perfected over the years. Usually if my mother suggests we try a new dish or omit a favorite, there's some sort of uprising. But this year we had a small gathering, and everyone present was open to changing things up for our Easter Brunch.

We added eggs benedict at the request of my older brother, and I admit I was quite proud of the hollandaise sauce I whipped up considering it was my first attempt (you'd be proud, Martha). Then we tried a goat cheese quiche with a hash brown crust which was light and lovely – the perfect spring dish – along with gooey hot cross buns and some of our usual favorites. Dessert was similarly divine. My mom put together a chocolate torte with cherry compote and whipped cream, and a batch of lemon cupcakes. In other words, I definitely didn't leave the table hungry. Overall, most of the menu ended up being new this year and I can't say I minded it. I guess there's a reason people are always being urged to try new things.

Also different this year, my brother, my fiancé and I ventured to the movies after we finished eating. We went to a matinee showing of *Furious 7*, which also proved to be a good decision. As fans of the entire series, we'd been anxious to see the film and, like many others I'm sure, we wondered what would happen to Paul Walker's character in light of his sudden death in November 2013, while the film was still in production.

There had been some debate over whether or not his character Brian O'Conner should also meet his demise, and prior to seeing the movie I thought that was the route to take: after all, what else *could* they do? But as the movie got underway, I was surprised by how much I *didn't* want that to happen.

And after seeing it, and ***Spoiler Alert*** how they managed to delicately handle the situation and end the film *without* O'Conner being killed off, I was left satisfied and teary-eyed.

Due to the fact we literally grew along with the characters, the loss of Walker was acutely felt. It truly felt like we'd lost someone we knew, and to kill off O'Conner would have been like losing him a second time. The idea of his character "living on" was much better, and I give props to everyone who worked on the film.

The *Fast and the Furious* franchise is certainly not for everyone but for us, the series was something that had been a part of our lives from the beginning, and the characters sincerely felt like friends. The first couple of films in particular were also an example of art imitating life – albeit to the extreme.

Around the time the series got started, I often spent my summer weekends with my brother and friends sipping Friendly's Fribbles or eating Taco Bell on the Berlin Turnpike. "Coincidentally," there was a good chance you'd see some modified cars roll through the parking lot or catch a less-than-legal race while you sat there.

It was, in a very, very diluted way, a real life version of what took place on the big screen.

In addition, my best friend and I would also tag along when my brother would hang out at a speed shop in Hartford owned by some friends. That was the first place my fiancé and I crossed paths; he was also friends with the owners, and not only worked on and built cars there, but traveled to race tracks with them to push their cars to the limit.

But in those days, we didn't give each other the time of day. How things change...

Our wedding is just three weeks away. The thought fills me with butterflies and makes me want to jump for joy (who am I kidding – I've actually done so on more than one occasion).

Everything is basically set at this point, and so I'm left to count down the days, help with prep work, enjoy some pre-wedding fun and ultimately, say "I do" to my best friend.

When my fiancé and I first started planning our big day, our sights were set on a grandiose affair with all of our family and extended family, plenty of friends and friends of friends and so on. But it didn't take long for us to realize – partly due to how stressed I became – that bigger isn't always better and a more intimate event might be more our thing. After all, we've always been acutely aware that spending exorbitant amounts of money on the wedding doesn't guarantee a happy marriage.

According to weddingstats.com, the average cost of a wedding in 2014 was close to \$29,000. Some are much more than that of course, and we have a friend whose nuptials cost around \$70,000.

As for us, we set our sights on a price tag much lower, and I'm thrilled with the event we've planned. "Neither the size of your diamond, nor the extravagance of your wedding will make your marriage last. That takes something money cannot buy." I wish I knew who said this quote, because it's absolutely true.

From the beginning, my future husband and I agreed that happiness in a relationship isn't something to be determined by the number of gifts you give each other – particularly on Valentine's Day – or the size of the parties you throw. It's true of course, that how you act in public says something about your relationship, but the tofu and potatoes (I'm vegetarian) is built behind closed doors, away from status updates and filtered photographs and expectations to behave in a certain manner; the foundation is built brick by brick as two people share each joy and work through each struggle together.

To us, a wedding is supposed to focus on that, and the decision to continue building and repairing and expanding and maintaining that foundation for the rest of our lives, through good times and bad. But at some point, and thanks I'm sure to the \$48 billion wedding industry that focus has shifted for many couples. The day has become more about a party and whether or not the wedding is good enough to make it into a bridal magazine and less about a relationship and the – hopefully – lifelong journey as husband and wife that begins *after* the wedding.

And so, my fiancé and I are determined to have a lovely affair come May, one that we'll look back on fondly. But even more than the few hours that will make up our wedding we'll be looking forward to all that comes after, as we adventure through this life together.

We'll be working toward someday being able to be recognized as one of those couples who actually "made it" - like my grandparents did. They were married in 1942, had a *Leave it to Beaver*-like life and remained together until the end.

Also worth idolizing in my opinion, are celebrity pairs like Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, who managed to last despite the constant, glaring spotlights of fame. They seemed to know just what it takes to make a lasting marriage: Newman once said the secret was "both patience and affection," and Woodward was quoted as saying, "Sexiness wears thin after a while and beauty fades, but to be married to a man who makes you laugh every day – ah – now that's a real treat."

My fiancé and I are continually growing and learning, but I'm happy to say we've got some of all the above to get us going.

My thoughts lately basically revolve around the wedding and not much else (just ask my other half), so I'll conclude with a marital joke since it's no secret I like terrible puns: I'm hoping after our big day people will look back and say, "The wedding was so emotional, even the cake was in tiers..."

Communication Issues Aired Between Marlborough Boards

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Social media posts and an allegedly “aggressive” interaction between board members are the cause of some recent unrest between the Marlborough Board of Finance and the Board of Education.

A Facebook page titled “Wesley Skorski for Marlborough Board of Education” and an interaction between Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly and an unnamed Board of Finance member has led to letters being sent back and forth between the boards – letters in which each shares their side of the story, and requests respect from the other.

In the initial letter sent to the Board of Education from finance Chair Evelyn Godbout, she writes that the board found some of the posts on the Facebook page to be “disconcerting.”

On that page, a posting dated March 19 mentioned a Board of Finance meeting.

Godbout wrote, “It was disconcerting to read the information in the post,” which said at the Board of Finance meeting scheduled for that night the finance board was likely to “cut the [Marlborough Elementary School] budget to the bone, as in a 0 [percent increase] or maybe even negative.”

The post went on to wonder where those cuts would come from and concluded, “Roll back the full day kindergarten decision, roll back Spanish, cut staff? All three of those, in total, are about what they may cut. I’m in a little bit of shock. Don’t know else to say here.”

The letter said in other posts it was stated that the Board of Finance “will suggest where to cut and how much.”

But Godbout wrote the finance board has stated multiple times that they do not recommend what items to cut from their budget; they can decrease the bottom line, but the education board determines what to decrease to reach that number.

The letter also said there were some inaccuracies in the comments on the page, where it was written that the finance board had suggested cuts to specific areas in past years. But, she wrote, “The Board of Finance did not say where the requested increases should be reduced.”

And regarding the current year’s budget, the letter furthered, “No motions [to cut the education budget] were made at the time of these postings,” but “the Board of Finance was performing its due diligence by reviewing all of

the proposed budgets and their respective line items.”

The finance board stressed in the letter that the board must represent all citizens of Marlborough and that they strive to recommend a budget “that provides the services the community needs at a cost it can afford that will pass in a vote.”

“In years past, when the budget has not passed on the first vote, the MES ultimately suffered from additional reductions in order to pass a final budget,” the letter said. “It is always best if we can recommend a budget that can pass on the first vote.”

The finance board then requested “that information that is inaccurate not be published and disseminated” by members of the education board, since it “only serves to confuse and cause fear in the community.”

The letter concluded, “The Board of Education and the Board of Finance need to show respect for the members and opinions of each other’s boards.

* * *

In addition to the above, the letter sent to the Board of Education mentioned an issue between a finance board member and an education board member. The letter stated it was brought to the attention of the finance board that an education board member “was aggressive with a member of the Board of Finance after one of our meetings.”

“The Board of Finance member felt that there were strong words spoken and the demeanor seemed to be harsh and aggressive,” the letter said. “The member of the Board of Finance was accused of having a personal vendetta against the school and that is why they want to cut the school budget.”

The finance board stated in the letter that difficult decisions need to be made during budget season and tensions can run high.

“We want to exhibit behavior ourselves which is reflective of how we would want to teach the students of our town to act,” the letter said. “The Board of Education and the Board of Finance need to show respect for the members and opinions of each other’s boards.”

However during Tuesday night’s Board of Finance meeting, education board Chairwoman Ruth Kelly, who was one of the members involved, stood up during public comment to read

a personal statement regarding the aforementioned interaction.

“In response to the assertions in this letter that my behavior was aggressive and my words harsh, I feel the need to give my side of the incident,” Kelly said. “I did approach one of your members and thought the interaction was a conversation between two people. I did not respond during the public comment segment because I thought no good could come of airing my grievance with this one board member publicly.”

Kelly stated she had spoken to the finance board member when, at the end of the previous finance board meeting, the member called the town and RHAM budgets “lean,” but said the local Board of Education budget was not.

When Kelly asked the member what she meant by that, she went on to say \$300 was too much money for teacher supplies, mentioning as a teacher in Tolland she only received \$100. Kelly added the individual also said teachers should not have their own laptops.

But Kelly retorted that as a former teacher, she knew \$100 wasn’t enough, and laptops were necessary due to all the work and communication that takes place electronically.

Kelly said the response of the finance board member was that teachers in Tolland don’t have laptops unless they bought their own and added that high teacher salaries “do not [ensure] good teachers.”

“I said we would have to agree to disagree with that,” Kelly said. “At this point, I did say that it seemed to me that she seemed to have a personal agenda. The word ‘vendetta’ never came out of my mouth.”

Kelly said at this point the member threw her hands up in the air and said that the budget would need to get cut somewhere and Kelly turned and walked away.

“Every year during budget deliberations this member challenges where the Board of Education spends its money,” Kelly said. “The issue of teacher supplies comes up almost every year. This is not a one-time occurrence, thus my remark about a personal agenda.”

Kelly said at no time did she invade the finance member’s personal space, shake her fist at her, touch her or yell at her.

Kelly said she was extremely disappointed

that not one person from the finance board had the courtesy to contact her and get her perspective before sending the letter.

“I have always been a vocal supporter of the Board of Finance and appreciate the work you do” Kelly said, adding she understands this year has been a “very difficult year for budget construction as it will be for several years to come.”

And, similar to the Board of Finance letter, she concluded by saying, “It is my hope that the Board of Finance and the Board of Education can work with each other respectfully, understanding that our roles are different. We all want to do what is in the best interest of our town.”

* * *

On Wednesday, Skorski spoke to the *Riverast* about the Facebook posts and said, “I recognize it’s important for the board to work together and be respectful of each other. Regarding those specific comments that I made, I was emotionally charged after the meeting and felt it was important to inform people of some of the discussions that took place at that particular meeting.”

In addition, during Tuesday’s meeting of the Board of Finance, education board member Betty O’Brien spoke during public comment to say that although the finance board’s letter asked for respect between the boards, “unfortunately I don’t think this is what you have done when you wrote this letter.”

O’Brien said although – yes - Skorski posted some things, not one finance board member had spoken to him or the education board before writing the letter.

“Had you done so, I am confident that your concerns would have been respected,” O’Brien said.

She went on to state that “it is unfortunate that this may now appear to the public like the Board of Finance and the Board of Education are fighting... You are our friends and neighbors and we are all in this together. So please, let’s take a breath and move forward. We are one Marlborough and we should be all working together.”

* * *

But before “moving forward,” the Board of Education is set to discuss the issue during their next meeting.

Budget Stalls Pending RHAM Decision

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Marlborough Board of Finance was at a standstill this week, pending final budget cuts from the RHAM Board of Education.

Although the finance board met last Thursday and this past Tuesday, no new cuts or final budget numbers were decided. Rather, the board chose to wait for the final numbers to come in from RHAM – something that occurred Wednesday night, when the board voted to reduce the budget to 3.68 percent, down from 5.12 percent (a story on the RHAM budget appears on the cover of this week’s issue).

But the board discussed some potential reductions, including the possible elimination of a full-time resident state trooper – something that was brought up during their March 31 meeting.

And on Tuesday, a group of resident troopers came to the meeting to discuss their work and the importance their presence in the town.

Trooper Jeff Dunshee explained there are five

patrol troopers for the 12 towns Troop K covers, so without the resident troopers, coverage is greatly decreased. In addition, one of the biggest benefits of having resident troopers, he said, is that they come to know the town and the people, therefore executing their job in a more personal manner. It was stressed that the value of a resident trooper does not show in the numbers.

The troopers also explained they’re beneficial because the constables cannot do certain things such as performing in-depth investigations or handling felony or serious misdemeanor charges.

During Tuesday’s meeting, board member Ken Hjulstrom asked how the contract with the resident troopers works. He also wondered if the state doesn’t announce the towns have to handle 100 percent of the salaries and benefits of their troopers until June, if the town would be able to reduce a trooper at that time.

But First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski did not have the resident troopers’ contract on hand and said she could not confidently answer Hjulstrom’s questions during the meeting.

Hjulstrom also attempted to make a motion Tuesday to reduce the local Board of Education budget by \$50,000. Member Doug Knowlton supported the motion however the other members on the board still wanted to hear from RHAM and would not make a decision.

“It’s a balancing act,” Knowlton said. “There’s absolutely no way to take [from] the town and local Board of Education, with what we need in this town, to trim it to offset RHAM.”

He said the board needed to “keep what we need,” and shouldn’t try “to make up for the increase in RHAM” through cuts. “Let RHAM stand by itself,” he said.

Also at the meeting, assistant Treasurer

Hayley Wagner said with the \$57,500 in cuts from the capital budget the board made in March, the RHAM increase at 3.83 percent (which is where the RHAM budget stood as of Tuesday), and if they were to reduce the local Board of Education budget by \$100,000, the tax increase would be 4.81 percent.

That number’s down from the original 6.4 percent increase taxpayers would have seen had Marlborough’s proposed 2015-16 budget remained at \$23,272,399.

Currently, with the additional decreases RHAM made Wednesday, the proposed Marlborough budget stands at \$23,140,043 for an increase of 4 percent or \$909,918 over the 2014-15 approved budget.

* * *

The next Board of Finance meeting, where they were expected to make further cuts, was scheduled for Thursday after press time.

Marlborough Police News

3/31: State Police said John Michael Laferriere, 34, of 8 Grove St., Moosup, was arrested and charged with possession of narcotics, possession of narcotics with intent to sell, possession of less than half an ounce of cannabis, failure to display plates and operating with tinted windows without a tinting sticker. Police said Laferriere and a passenger, Kevin Miner, 37, of 1 Butterworth Ave., Plainfield, had 540 bags of heroin for sale. Police said Miner was arrested and charged with possession of narcotics and possession of narcotics with intent to sell.

4/1: State Police said Glenn Dobkin, 55,

of 17 Kensington Ln., Rocky Hill, was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order.

4/5: State Police said Michael Milligan, 64, of 6950 Manahoac Place, Gainesville, Virginia, was arrested and charged with threatening and disorderly conduct.

4/6: State Police said Darrell Kennedy, 42, of 26 Three Mile Rd., Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with three counts of third-degree burglary, one count of fourth-degree larceny and two counts of fifth-degree larceny in connection with three incidents at 51 Stage Harbor Rd. in the past two months.

East Hampton Police News

3/22: Alvaro Garcia-Rodriguez, 21, of 10 May St., Naugatuck was issued a ticket for violation of exhaust emissions standards, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. During the same incident, police said Sean Kellar, 20, of 320 Cherry St. Ext., Naugatuck was issued a ticket for possession of less than half ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, East Hampton police said.

Andover Police News

4/6: State Police said Susan Czaika, 54, of 445 Mile Hill Rd., Tolland, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

4/6: State Police said Deborah Conner, 52, of 323 Boston Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

Hebron Police News

4/3: State Police said Cory Burtchell, 38, of 203 East St., was arrested and charged with violation of probation.

4/5: State Police said Jorge Castro, 38, of 162 Wall St., was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a child and breach of peace.

4/5: State Police said Daniel Scribano, 24, of 36 Fieldstone Dr., Rocky Hill, was arrested and charged with DUI and improper turn.

Portland Business Named “Best Smoke Shop”

by John Tyczkowski

Vapor 9 on Main Street has been selected as one of the state’s top smoke shops by a CTNow reader vote.

The news came to owner Christine Mazzotta in late March, and before she knew it, she was on her way to a photoshoot for the honor.

“It was a complete surprise and something I didn’t expect,” she said. “We just got a phone call about it.”

The poll results will formally be released the last week of April, she said.

However, Mazzotta added the focus of the shop is not fame or recognition, but to help save peoples’ lives. Mazzotta, who lives in Berlin, explained she was a heavy smoker for over 25 years.

“[My husband and I] had lived in a ranch but then we moved to a three-story colonial home,” she said. “And at 40 years old, I found I was huffing and puffing to get upstairs.”

It was at that time she decided she needed to quit.

“I realized I was going to die from smoking and then I got really scared of death,” she said. “I got desperate to quit smoking.”

To try and kick the habit, Mazzotta decided to try vaping, which is an act that simulates smoking through the inhalation of vapor that’s been heated in a vaping device.

She started out on her own, buying her first device in Glastonbury. When that didn’t work for her, she started buying “boxfuls” of other vape equipment online and had them delivered to the house.

“There were like four boxes arriving every day,” she said.

And it’s because of that \$3,000 stockpile that her business came to be.

“It all started because I lied to my husband,” she quipped. “I told my husband ‘Don’t worry, it’s all a tax write-off, this is all research and development for my new store.’”

“Then I was like, ‘Oh God, I just totally lied to my husband,’ and then it just took on a life of its own from there,” she said.

Mazzotta said within a month of that day in January 2013 she had a 38-page business pro-

posal written up, and decided to find a business partner, because she had no experience in retail.

Portland native Alvin Black “fit the bill on every level, from financial to spiritual,” Mazzotta said, and she brought the idea to him.

“We had already worked together well for almost a decade, he was one of my clients from my property management business,” she said. “I figured we already had that mutual trust, and he knew how Type-A I am, especially with managing money.”

Black, who now lives in Utah, accepted, and Mazzotta began the process of applying for planning and zoning permits and securing the necessary permissions to found her business.

During that business planning stage, Mazzotta also managed to kick her smoking habit.

“By March 17, I had smoked my last cigarette,” she said.

At the end of November 2013, Mazzotta opened her first shop in Newington. Following that, she opened up Vapor 9 on Main Street in Portland in the beginning of November 2014. And that second store, she said, was fully funded by profits from the Newington store.

Mazzotta, a nationally certified rehabilitation counselor, mentioned she’s committed to her store being a vapor store, not a tobacco store.

“There’s nothing burning, there’s no carcinogens here,” she said.

People can buy vapors with or without nicotine depending on their preference, she added, and her goal remains to help smokers quit.

“I estimate that in 2014, we had 1,500 people who are solid ‘vapers,’ who used to be smokers,” she said. “About eight out of 10 people who walk through that door walk out non-smokers.”

She also said her hiring practices make it clear to employees that her main reason for opening both her shops is to help smokers quit.

“If someone doesn’t understand the nature of addiction, they have no business working here,” she said. “People forget that [smoking] is very addictive.”

Mazzotta stressed her and her employees’ job



Christine Mazzotta, owner of Vapor 9, stands with co-managers Tracy Johnson and Jen Piasecki inside their store, located on Main Street in Portland. Mazzotta said her goal is to help smokers quit cigarettes through vaping.

is to help people find their smoking trigger and to help them find ways to deal with that in terms of alternatives to cigarettes.

“It’s our job to help you find a mechanism that will get you through [your trigger] so you don’t pick up another cigarette,” she said. “Who cares what it is that keeps you away from buying a pack of cigarettes?”

“No matter how fancy our products get, that’s our mission statement: we want to help people improve the quality of their lives,” Mazzotta said. “We’ll never lose sight of that; that will always be our focus.”

Another way she does that is by letting customers try out vape flavors and devices in the store before they make a purchase, and helps them set up the vape device before they head out the door.

“People are spending \$10 on a pack of cigarettes, and we want to help people save money, not waste money,” Mazzotta said. “People aren’t going to want to try this if it’s a bigger financial commitment than cigarettes. For \$40 we want to give you something that has a good chance of working.”

She also said that her staff is fully equipped to help customers troubleshoot problems with their vape devices as well.

“We want you to succeed, we want you to not smoke another cigarette,” she said. “We’re here to help.”

Vapor 9 is located at 246 Main St., Portland and is open Monday-Friday, noon-8 p.m. and Saturday, noon-9 p.m. The store can be reached by calling 860-358-9992.

‘A Man of Faith and Dedication’ in Portland

by John Tyczkowski

Public servant, volunteer, Eucharistic minister, CCD teacher, baseball coach, father. These are just some of the many roles Chris Hetrick, who passed away March 27, at the age of 56, filled in Portland and among his family.

Hetrick, who lived in Portland for most of his life before moving to East Hampton in 2008, served on the Portland Board of Education for over a decade. He had been appointed to the board in July 1996 after a resignation left an open spot.

In 1999 he was elected chairman, a position he held until his resignation in July 2008.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, who worked with him while she served on the Board of Education, said Hetrick was “number one, dedicated to the development of children and their education in town.”

She added, “He was an outstanding chairman and did a tremendous amount of work at our schools. I always admired his work; he was a highly respected member of the board and was elected resoundingly three times.”

Bransfield furthered, “Leadership of the board is extremely important and Chris did a fabulous job for our town.”

During his tenure, Hetrick saw a number of changes in the district, including the 2001 high school renovation project and the search for and hiring of a new superintendent in 2005.

The renovation project involved building the Portland Secondary Schools complex, specifically adding the middle school onto the existing high school building. The project was completed in 2004.

Soon after that, Hetrick worked with the board to hire Sally Doyen as superintendent of schools following the departure of then-superintendent Joe Castagnola. Doyen spent nearly a decade at Portland Public Schools and retired from the district during the summer of 2014.

In 2008, Hetrick moved to East Hampton following his youngest child’s graduation from

Portland High School. In a ceremony at the time, he said there was “no bad blood,” but simply felt it was time to get “different energy” on the board.

“The board right now is in a good spot,” Hetrick said at the time. “I have had so much invested in the board that I wouldn’t leave if I didn’t think things were OK.”

Bransfield said Hetrick was “a man of faith and dedication to his family and to his community.”

“When someone asked for a volunteer, his was the first hand that went up. Also, on the board, under his leadership, the community flourished,” she said. “And he was always with his kids and his family – he was very dedicated to them.”

She concluded, “We’re extremely fond of him and extremely grateful to him.” Donna Finkelstein, who worked with Hetrick on the Board of Education and who served as the chair of the high school building committee, said Hetrick was “extremely committed” and “wonderful to work with.”

“He was willing to do a lot of the tasks that were associated with whatever initiative we happened to be working on,” she said. “He was a wonderful colleague and friend in all the years we worked together.”

Finkelstein served as chair of the Board of Education for over a decade before Hetrick was elected to the position.

“He was my successor,” she said. “And I couldn’t think of a better and more supportive person to chair the Board of Education.”

Finkelstein also said that despite the contentions that arose during the high school building committee process, Hetrick was always there to smooth things out.

“He was terrific about sharing information, explaining it and advocating for what the needs were,” she said. “He was great about building

consensus.”

Of his community service, Finkelstein said it was “just part of Chris’s generous spirit.”

“He felt that’s just what a person should do: give back to their community,” she said. “Even after he left Portland, he was interested in serving on the Board of Education in East Hampton.”

She added, “Chris was just a wonderful person who loved helping others, and he’s gone all too soon.”

In addition, Hetrick was “a respected member” of Portland’s Democratic Town Committee for many years, Finkelstein said.

“He worked very hard to make sure colleagues got elected and served well for their terms,” she said. “He was extremely supportive of anyone interested in becoming involved in politics.”

Kathy Richards, current Deputy First Selectwoman and chair of the Democratic Town Committee, was a member on the Board of Education with Hetrick. She said she could attest personally to Hetrick’s enthusiasm for helping others become involved in the community.

“He’s really the reason I got into town politics in the first place,” she said. “In 2000 he asked me if I wanted to join the Board of Education to fill a vacancy. I didn’t think I was ready for that but he was very convincing about it.”

“He really taught me a lot about politics in Portland,” she said.

Richards also said Hetrick was a good person who always had a smile on his face.

“He was very concerned about all the children in town, and he was a great father to his own children,” she said. “I really enjoyed working with him.”

Hetrick leaves his wife, Colleen, four children, ranging in ages from 25 to 34, and three grandchildren.

This week, Colleen said the two had been

married for 34 years, and that they had been together since high school.

She added her husband had been active in the family business, Aerix Rubber Products out of Portland, throughout his entire life.

“Chris’ grandfather started it, and he worked in quality control,” Colleen said. “His two brothers also worked at the shop.”

Speaking about her husband’s recent memorial service, Colleen said she was particularly struck by how many former members of the Portland Orioles showed up to the wake.

“Chris coached that team for years and enjoyed it so much, and it meant a lot to see that the kids, now in their 20s, remembered their coach,” she said. “One of the kids there even said, ‘It never really mattered if we won or not, he just wanted us to have fun and learn the game.’”

She also fondly recalled what her husband would do whenever it was time to vote every November.

“He used to love Election Day. He’d stand outside in the freezing cold with his coffee and take the day off from work,” Colleen said. “He loved chatting with people and enjoyed local politics so much. Voting to him was a very important thing.”

Colleen said he even ran for office in East Hampton, though he was new to the town, which she said she always found “very brave to do in a town you just moved to.”

But above all, she said her husband was a family man.

“Chris loved all the kids. He loved the little ones, and they were drawn to him too. He was so loving and fun to be around,” she said. “He was a wonderful person.”

And one who will surely be missed by all who knew him, but remembered for each of the roles he filled – and excelled at – throughout his 56 years.

Hebron Awarded \$391K STEAP Grant

by Geeta Schrayter

What Town Manager Andrew Tierney described as a “big win” for Hebron was announced Wednesday, when Governor Dannel P. Malloy shared the town was one of six in the state to receive Small Town Economic Assistance Grant (STEAP) money to help with capital improvement projects.

In Hebron, the \$391,000 that was awarded will be used for the replacement of the Marjorie Circle Bridge over Jeremy Brook.

According to the April 8 release from the governor’s office, “the bridge has served the town for over 50 years, but is in need of upgrades.”

“This project will restore a vital element of the area travel for a surrounding residential community, a group home, a church and access to the town hall complex,” the release explained. “The improved infrastructure will also provide better, safer access for emergency ve-

hicles to reach other parts of town that may be unreachable during high-volume traffic times in surrounding major intersections.”

Prior to the grant award, Tierney explained the town was going to be responsible for about half of the project cost. The rest, or \$359,749.68, is going to be funded from the Connecticut Department of Transportation Local Bridge Program, which, according to ct.gov, was created by the General Assembly in 1984 in “recognizing the difficulty that municipalities have” meeting the responsibility of caring for the construction and maintenance of more than 3,400 bridges and culverts on municipally maintained roads.

To cover the remaining portion of the project, which amounts to \$391,450.32, a supplemental appropriation was approved at a special meeting held March 5.

However, Tierney explained “now that we

were awarded the STEAP grant, the project will be fully funded” and the appropriated funds will return to the general fund balance.

“I’m ecstatic because that saves Hebron taxpayers a lot of money,” he stated. “I’m very pleased and happy with the governor and [the Office of Policy and Management] and Senator Cathy Osten and state Rep. Gayle Mulligan for all their hard work.”

Tierney said he was “very appreciative of the governor’s office for recognizing the need for this economic boost here in Hebron.”

Replacement of the bridge, he added, would take a couple of years. He explained the project was currently in the design phase, which would take about a year, followed by another year for the construction.

“This is a big, big win for Hebron,” he concluded.

* * *

Along with Hebron, grants were awarded to Bethany, Farmington, Greenwich, New Milford and Simsbury for projects ranging from the completion of a veterans memorial to the expansion of recreational space for seniors and the construction of a facility to house a non-profit.

“Delivering these grants today will improve the outlook for small towns across the state tomorrow,” Malloy stated in his release. “We are partnering with our smaller communities so that we can rebuild infrastructure, improve quality of life for residents across our state, and put Connecticut on a brighter path,” Malloy said in the release. “These grants will help towns grow, remain competitive, and have a lasting impact for years to come.”

East Hampton Town Council Approves Budget Proposal

by John Tyczkowski

Tuesday evening, the East Hampton town council voted 4-3 along party lines to approve the proposed \$41,706,395 budget for 2015-16.

Of that number, the Board of Education budget accounts for \$29.22 million, which represents a 3.39 percent increase over the current year budget. In addition, the general town government budget accounts for \$10.06 million, which represents an increase of 3.48 percent over the current year.

Overall, the \$41.71 million general budget represents a 3.53 percent increase over the current general budget. If approved as proposed, the mill rate would be set at 28.39, which would be an increase of 1.25 mills over the current rate.

But the approval comes after some changes were presented to the council; after a meeting last Wednesday, the Board of Finance decided unanimously to send a revised budget proposal to the town council for deliberation.

That revised package included a slight reduction in road repair funding, from \$500,000 for the coming year to \$375,000.

However, for comparison, the previous year’s allocated road repair budget amount was \$75,000.

Other changes to the budget stemmed from concrete numbers replacing estimated costs, town finance director Jeff Jylkka said, as well as the removal of Economic Development Commission funding due to the commission having what the Board of Finance deemed as “no effective advertising plan.”

Also, two major public works purchases: \$85,000 for a mason dump truck and \$180,000 for a trackless tractor, were removed under the board’s recommendation that they be financed rather than paid for in cash.

The Conservation Lake Commission was also slated to receive \$70,000 to create a nine-point plan mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency that would allow them to apply next year for a federal 319 grant for lake cleanup efforts, so named for the Clean Water Act section it’s associated with.

That plan would not only allow the town to apply for that grant in the future, Sabina Perkins of Northeast Aquatic Research said Tuesday, but would also allow the town to identify and propose fixes for the lake’s most salient problems in the mean time.

In addition, \$9,000 would go to the commission’s budget to continue routine lake monitoring efforts.

* * *

The budget passed Tuesday evening exactly as recommended by the Board of Finance, with no additional reductions as recommended that evening by councilor Ted Hintz, Jr.

One of Hintz’s proposed reductions was removing \$400,000 from the Board of Education budget, with \$100,000 of that to be transferred to a technology fund to upgrade district capabilities.

However, Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore said she would not vote for any budget that would include such a reduction.

“I don’t think I could ever saddle the Board of Education with a budget they couldn’t work with,” she said.

Vice Council Chairman Kevin Reich said he found this proposal, as well as the reductions to education budgets before it, to be “irresponsible,” and did not support it.

“Many of [those cuts] were made here, at this table, with no rhyme or reason. We just don’t want more than so many mills,” he said.

Several councilors also said another important reason to approve the budget as-is was that it had been passed by the Board of Finance unanimously.

After the budget passed, Moore praised the residents for getting out information on the budget.

“I really feel good about it this year, the amount of knowledge residents are displaying about the budget is encouraging. I think the best idea is to put to the voters what departments think is needed, and let the voters decide,” she said.

That statement echoed the sentiments of more than 10 residents who spoke earlier that evening during public comment, as well as statements made in over 20 emails and letters the council and town manager received before the meeting.

But during public comment, Board of Education Chairman Ken Barber called the town council’s discussion on proposed reductions an “interesting exercise” in American government.

“To watch this process here, whether other persons tried to superimpose their own decisions, their own judgments against their constituents and against the educated person that brought this budget forward...it’s disappointing,” he said in reference to Hintz suggested reductions.

However, Barber said he was pleased with the budget process overall.

“At the beginning of the budget process, the town council sent down a directive how they wanted to come forth, and every department gave [the council] exactly what they wanted,” he said. “And it made its way unanimously through the two boards it had to come through

Colchester Police News

3/30: Colchester Police said Sonny McGuinness, 25, of 5 Cobble Way, was arrested and charged with DUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and failure to meet insurance requirements.

3/30: State Police said Allan Carrasquillo, 22, of 7 Dartmouth St., Enfield, was arrested and charged with second-degree larceny, third-degree larceny, third-degree robbery, third-degree assault and second-degree unlawful restraint. In the same incident, police said Anysa McMahon, 19, of 26 Laperle Ave., Plainfield, was also arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny.

4/1: State Police said John Felciano, 49, of 39 Banner Rd., East Haddam, was arrested and charged with breach of peace, third-degree assault, intimidation based on bigotry/bias, conspiracy to commit breach of peace, conspiracy to commit third-degree assault, and conspiracy to commit intimidation based on bigotry/bias.

4/1: State Police said Mary Ann Wotton, 48, of 198 Towne House Rd., Norwich, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

4/2: State Police said Nathan Wolf, 20, of 913 Trumbull Highway, Lebanon, was transported to Windham Hospital with minor injuries after his car’s steering broke and he struck a tree stump on Windham Avenue.

4/2: State Police said Nicole Klusek, 24, of 67 Park Ave., was arrested and charged with

possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of narcotics.

4/2: State Police said Sean Carey, 22, of 43 Broadway, was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of narcotics.

4/4: State Police said they are investigating after they received a report of a larceny from Stop and Shop on Linwood Avenue. Police said store personnel observed a white male, white female and an infant child enter the store around 8:20 p.m. and take multiple cases of Red Bull and flee. Police said they are able to identify the suspects involved and the case is under investigation.

4/5: State Police said Jose Sanchez, 56, of 830 Capitol Ave., Hartford, was arrested and charged with DUI and too slow of speed.

4/5: State Police said Ashley Pare, 26, of 759 Middletown Rd., was arrested and charged with two counts of violation of probation.

4/6: State Police said Edyta Zyzdorz, 42, of 321 S. Main St., Marlborough, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

4/6: State Police said Kendra Miller-Craig, 22, of 236 Vergason Ave., Norwich, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

4/7: State Police said Sean Kelly, 23, of 51 Settlers Ln., was arrested and charged with DUI, making an improper turn and operating while using a handheld device.

Portland Selectmen Forward \$32.11 Million Budget

by John Tyczkowski

In a special meeting Tuesday evening, the Portland Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to accept the proposed \$32,117,109 town budget.

The town government budget was voted in at \$12,422,017, which represents a 0.9 percent increase over the current year’s budget, a decrease from the 1.37 percent increase initially presented by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

The Board of Education budget component stands at \$19,695,092, which is a 2.3 percent increase over the current budget; that number is also down slightly from the initial education budget request, which equated to a 2.5 percent increase.

Overall, this year’s total budget represents a 1.76 percent increase over the current year.

Between last week’s budget workshops and the meeting Tuesday, the selectmen trimmed \$63,310 from the general government bud-

get, \$55,000 of which came from fuel savings, Bransfield explained.

“The selectmen tweaked some various budgets, and we also found utility savings from the lower cost of gasoline and diesel fuel,” she said.

Portland is also switching insurance carriers from Anthem Blue Cross to ConnectiCare, which resulted in some savings.

Regarding the Board of Education budget, the selectmen reduced the total amount by \$87,000.

“The selectmen recommended various reductions totaling \$50,000” she said. “They also recommended an additional \$37,000 reduction due to gasoline and diesel savings.”

The proposed budget will now head to a public meeting May 4 at Portland High School, followed by a referendum on May 11 at the Waverly Center.

Obituaries

Colchester

Theresa Scott

Theresa Scott, 59, of Atlanta, Ga. and formerly Colchester, passed away March 31.

Born June 1, 1955, she was the daughter of the late Rebecca (Williams) Scott and Joseph Scott, also of Colchester, where she spent her formative years, graduating from Bacon Academy before attending the University of North Carolina for her bachelor's degree.

From an early age, Theresa engaged in community outreach. She contributed to Adopt A Soldier, underprivileged girls' ball and a local soup kitchen among other charities. She remained active with United Family Services and other service groups throughout her life.

Theresa earned her degree as a Registered Nurse from Mohegan College in Norwich. She then worked for Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, N.C. and Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London. She later earned her master's degree from Pfeiffer University in Charlotte. Theresa dedicated the bulk of her working life to the Philip Morris Company, earning recognition and awards as a 25-year employee. She retired in 2009 and relocated to Atlanta, Ga. After a short break, Theresa returned to nursing and ended her career at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, giving to others until the end.

Theresa made friends everywhere she lived, including lifelong friends Judith Levy and Gwen Fletcher, as well as friends from her years at Philip Morris, including Penny Bynum, Tamara Blow, Doris Jones and Aaron McKeithern. Her bright smile and soft-spoken loving endured her to all who knew her. She remained active and vibrant, traveling with her friends and social groups throughout the United States.

Theresa did not have children of her own; however, she lived with her sister, Betty Turner for several years, developing special relationships with her niece, Stacey and nephews Wayne and Jonathan. She continued these relationships throughout her life, playing the role of special aunt or "big sister." Through her relationship with Stacey, Theresa enjoyed many hours with their dog Ralpaella, who helped her with her fitness goals.

Besides these friends and family, Theresa leaves four siblings to mourn her passing: Ms. Betty Turner and Ms. Eileen Fletcher, both of Colchester, Ms. Kathy Scott of Atlanta, Ga. and Mr. Larry Scott of Miami, Fla. Four siblings preceded her death: Marion, Earl, Joseph, and Timothy Scott. Beloved family members, including other nieces and nephews, and a host of cousins and friends shared in her life and now mourn her passing. Theresa will be remembered with love and joy by us all. As her final act of generosity, she was able to give the gift of sight through cornea donation.

The family received guests Monday, April 6 at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester followed by a chapel service. Interment followed in the Scott family plot in Linwood Cemetery.

Colchester

Russell David Page

Russell David Page, 65, of Willimantic and formerly Colchester, passed away at home Wednesday, April 1, surrounded by his beloved family.

Born Sept. 19, 1949 in Hartford, he was a son of the late Wilford and Elizabeth (Chismark) Page.

He married Charlotte Williams on January 25, 1970. Soon after, the couple moved to Colchester where they lived and raised their family for more than 30 years before moving to Willimantic.

Russell retired several years ago after running a successful contracting business known as Page Asphalt Services.

He took great pride and meticulous care of his trucks, loved music sung by Elvis and most importantly, he was ever devoted to his wife, children and grandchildren. He will be remembered fondly for his saying to them, "I love you up to the moon!"

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his beloved wife of 45 years, Charlotte; four children and their spouses, Tammy and husband, Thomas Cooper of West Hartford, Dawn and husband, Paul Soucy of Colchester, Russell and wife, Holly Page of Westbrook and Gloria Page of Willimantic; 10 grandchildren; four great grandchildren and numerous extended family and friends. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a sister, Sandy Thorsenson and two brothers, Allen and Richard.

The family received guests Saturday, April 4 at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, followed by a memorial service that evening. A procession to Hillside Cemetery in East Hartford, where the committal services took place, occurred Tuesday, April 7.

Colchester

Todd Michael Higgins

Todd Michael Higgins, 40, of Ledyard and formerly of Colchester, beloved husband of Amanda (Carroll) Higgins, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, April 2, at Backus Hospital in Norwich.

Born in Hartford Jan. 20, 1975, he was a son of Joan (Fraleigh) Higgins of Colchester.

Todd was a 1994 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester and went on to study electrical engineering at New England Technical Institute.

He worked as a Merchandiser for the Nabisco Corp. in Glastonbury. In his spare time he loved to travel, work outside manicuring his yard and doing woodworking projects, that will be cherished by many for years to come.

His greatest love and devotion was for his family; his loving wife of nearly three years (but best friend since 2000), Amanda; his mother, Joan of Colchester; his brother, Chad and wife, Ellen-Bridget of Middletown; his mother and father-in-law, Janine and Everett Carroll of Colchester; his grandmother-in-law, Mary Lou Kasprzyk of Newington; his sisters-in-law, Alissa and John Onayiga of Glen Burnie, Md. and Alaina and James Batchelder of Montville; and numerous extended family member and friends.

The family received guests Tuesday, April 7 at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. The funeral and chapel service took place Wednesday, April 8, followed by interment in Linwood Cemetery.

In honor of Todd and his kind and generous nature, it is encouraged that all who loved him extend an act of kindness to another

Colchester

Frederick Rich Dart

Lt. Col. Frederick Rich Dart, U.S. Army (Ret.), 84, of Colchester, passed away at home in the company of family Wednesday, April 1.

Born February 13, 1931 in Potsdam, N.Y., he was a son of the late William and Ethel (Miles) Dart.

In his youth, he was active in Boy Scouting and had achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Following his graduation from Clarkson College (now Clarkson University) in Potsdam, N.Y. in 1954, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He proudly served tours in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars during his nearly 23 year career. As his family traveled the world along with him, he always made sure to find a church congregation to attend and participate actively with.

Before his retirement from the Army at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1977, he earned numerous honors, medals and citations, but was most proud of being presented a Bronze Star with a "V" for valor as well as an Oak Leaf Cluster.

Fred went on to work at Airflow Instrument Company in Glastonbury for over 15 years.

After his "second" retirement, he became quite proficient at woodworking, creating many cherished "Shaker" boxes and Adirondack chairs. A cold beer and hammock were icons of his summer days. He spun great stories of growing up in the "north country" of New York, from Sunday Rock to jumping off the bridge at Hannawa Falls. He also had a talent for baking, and his specialties of strawberry short cake, biscuits and homemade bread will be missed.

Most importantly, he was a great friend, husband, and dad who always found a way to support, love, and embrace family and friends.

He leaves to mourn his passing three children; Jennifer and husband, Phil Yuris of Moodus, Robin Dart of Florida, and son, Peter Dart and his partner, Martin Dzenis of Coventry; his current wife of nearly 15 years, Jenifer (Jewett) Latham Dart of Colchester; seven grandchildren, TJ, Hilary, Jeffrey, Corey, Fred, Dylan and Jasmine; and three great grandchildren (all of whom affectionately called him "Pop" or "Poppy" and certainly kept him busy and full of life and love); as well as two sisters, Carol Ames of Hannawa Falls, N.Y. and Katch Vivlamore of Dunnellon, Fla.; a special sister-in-law, Pat Travis of Gloversville N.Y.; a daughter-in-law, Karen Christianson of Columbia; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his first wife (and best friend) of 44 years, Jill (Travis) Dart, and their eldest son, Frederick, Jr. (both of whom passed away in 1998); as well as three brothers, Dick, Jack and Bill.

Per his wishes, services and burial will be private and Pop encouraged those who wish to make a contribution in his name to the charity of their choice.

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

East Hampton

Howard Charles Loos

Howard Charles Loos, 94, of East Hampton, husband of the late Edith (Angell) Loos, died Sunday, April 5 at Wadsworth Glenn in Middletown. Born Aug. 25, 1920 in East Hampton, he was the son of the late George and Emma (Klenerth) Loos.

Howard was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and proudly served his country in the Army in the I Company 10th Infantry 5th Division during WWII. Howard retired in 1984 from Standard Knapp in Portland where he had worked as a machinist.

He is survived by his daughter Christine Harris and her husband Donald of East Hampton; two granddaughters, Melissa and Sharon Harris; and numerous nieces, nephews and many, many friends.

He was predeceased by a brother George Loos and two sisters, Helen Birner and Josephine Esbright.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton Wednesday, April 8. The funeral procession took place Thursday, April 9th followed by a graveside service in White Birch Cemetery, East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the East Hampton Ambulance Assoc., P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424, the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, 5 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424, or the American Heart Assoc., P.O. Box 417005, Boston, MA 02241-7005.

To leave an online condolence visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Dorothy Mattegat Kalloz

Dorothy (Dottie) Mattegat Kalloz, 90, formerly of Fairfield, the beloved wife of the late Charles M. Kalloz, passed away peacefully Friday, March 27. Born in Bridgeport, she was a lifelong Fairfield resident prior to moving to East Hampton four years ago.

Dottie loved to travel, entertain and specialized in Hungarian cooking. She enjoyed crafting and sewing. In her early years, she sang with the Yankeemaid and the Harmonettes. She also enjoyed spending time with her family, laughing and playing games.

Dottie is survived by her loving and devoted daughter, Nancy Schempp and her husband, Robert of East Hampton; her three grandchildren, Patricia Williams and her husband Thomas of East Hampton, Dody Valk and her husband Thomas of Portland, and Suzan Kalloz of Derby; her brother, George Mattegat and his wife, Carol of Florida; five great-grandchildren, Katie, Heidi, Kelley, Ally and Amanda; her former daughter-in-law, Sheryl Tucker of Derby; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by her son, Charles W. Kalloz and her sister, Ada Bevans.

Funeral services were held under the direction of the Shaughnessey Banks Funeral Home, 50 Reef Rd. in Fairfield Center. To send an online condolence, visit shaughnesseybanks.com.

She will be forever in our hearts.

Dottie's family would also like to thank all of the staff at Chestelm, Dr. Raquel David, the staff at Middlesex Hospital and the Hospice unit for their love and care.

Marlborough

Angelo Lawrence Magri

Angelo Lawrence Magri of Titusville, Fla., formerly of Marlborough, passed away April 2. He was born in Hartford Nov. 22, 1953, son of Angelo Magri and the late Mary Magri of Marlborough. He was the beloved husband of the late Sharon Fuller Magri.

Angelo worked construction all of his life. He was a free spirit who loved traveling and visiting with family and friends. He had an avid love of everything Harley Davidson.

Angelo is survived by his son, Zachary Fuller and wife Julie and their children Spencer and Mayli of Colorado; his son, Peter Labreck; his brother Andrew Magri and wife Susan; his nephew Neiko Magri and niece Taylor Magri; his dear friend John Moore, along with many family and dear friends.

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, April 18 at the Green Leaf Café in Hebron at 2 p.m.



Andover

Grace B. Kukucka

Grace (Branch) Kukucka, 91, widow of Andrew Kukucka of Andover, passed away April 4, with great courage and dignity. Born in Southampton County, Virginia, on October 21, 1923, she was the daughter of Fenton and Lizzie Branch.

She is survived by her children: Dana Covell and her husband Larry of Manchester, Steve Kukucka of Hebron, and another son W. K. Kukucka. She was also predeceased by her son Andrew F. Kukucka, and her sister Rose.

"Grandma K" was dearly loved by her grandchildren: Kevin and Stacey Covell, Angela and Rich Majowicz, Kristin and Jack Spear, David Kukucka, Drew and Lauren Kukucka, Dana Kukucka, Michael Kukucka, Daniel Kukucka, Britney and Tim Reardon, and Julie Kukucka and her fiancé Duane Pearce. She delighted in her 14 great-grandchildren: Nolan, Ethan, Gavin, Ryan, Anna, Grace, Alex, Nathan, Mather, Tye, Ben, James, Kyleigh and Hunter. She is also survived by her sister-in-law Susan Lebejko, many loving nieces, nephews, neighbors, friends and her very special and spoiled feline companion "Pretty Kitty."

Grace was a Southern war bride, meeting and marrying Andy in Wakefield, VA in 1943 and moving "up north" in 1946. In 1949, they returned to Virginia to manage her parents' farm. While in Virginia, she applied her bookkeeping skills at People's Department Store while being a mom and a true farmer's wife. She was known for her Southern fried chicken and apple pie.

Moving back to Connecticut in 1961, she worked as a bookkeeper for Barker's Department Store until her retirement in 1978. She loved music and was a member of the Andover Congregational Church choir, never losing her distinctive Southern accent. Grace filled her yard with beautiful roses and peonies, while filling her home with love and support. Her pride, strength and dedication to her family will forever be remembered and cherished.

Calling hours are today, Friday, April 10 from 6-8 p.m. at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester. A public graveside burial service will be held at Townsend Cemetery, Andover at a date and time to be announced. In lieu of flowers, donations in Grace's name may be sent to the Andover Congregation Church, 359 Route 6, PO Box 55, Andover, CT 06232 or to the Andover Volunteer Fire Department, 11 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232.

To leave a message of condolence, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com

Amston

Thomas J. Sousa

Thomas J. Sousa, 89, of Jewett City, died at Hartford Hospital on Feb. 6. Born in New London on Jan. 18, 1926, he was the son of John and Isabell (Betancourt) Sousa.

Tom attended Chapman Tech, and had a long career as a carpenter, working at Electric Boat, Mitchell College, the Town of East Lyme, for various local builders, and as an independent self-employed contractor.

Tom was a Star Scout and Troop Bugler in the Boy Scouts. A talented trumpet player, he performed in several bands. While in high school during WWII Tom was in the State Guard, and he served during the late 1940's as a PFC in HHB, 238th AAA Gun Battalion, Connecticut Army National Guard.

A firefighter for many years, he held a gold retired badge from New London's W.B. Thomas Hose Company #3, and was a volunteer with Waterford's Oswegatchie Fire Department. A Knights of Columbus life member, Tom attained the level of 4th Degree, and was a past Grand Knight. He was also a Boy Scout leader, and a little league baseball coach and umpire.

Tom had an incredible work ethic and was proud of his Portuguese ancestry. He built a house in Waterford by hand, and remodeled many other houses. He took great pains to ensure that his work was always straight, plumb, and level. In his seventies he took a job in the maintenance department at Foxwoods, working there until the age of 83.

He was predeceased by his parents; his brother Norman Sousa; three wives, Marion Mosher Sousa, Anna Fratus Sousa and Nancy Gibson Sousa; and a son, Stephen K. Sousa.

Tom is survived by his son, Thomas J. Sousa, Jr.; daughter-in-law, Tammy Sousa; grandson, Thomas J. Sousa III; and granddaughter, Hannah Sousa all of Amston; and a daughter, Pamela Rook of Las Vegas.

Tom loved animals and supported many animal groups and shelters. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to an animal welfare charity.

Arrangements are being handled by Gagne-Piechowski Funeral Home. A private memorial service will be held at a future date with interment in Pachaug Cemetery.

Portland

George H. Gravel

George H. Gravel, 85, of Cromwell, formerly of Meriden and Portland, husband of Marion (Bordash) Gravel passed away Sunday April 5 at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late Joseph and Alice (Perron) Gravel.

Born on February 22, 1930 in Meriden, he lived there most of his life until recently living in both Portland and Cromwell. He worked as a draftsman designer for General Motors for 37 years until his retirement. He was a U.S. Air Force veteran having served during the Korean War and was an active member of the Franco American Club in Meriden.

Besides his wife, he leaves a daughter, Pamela Patton of Portland; sisters, Frances Giacco of Meriden and Gloria Williams of Avon; grandchildren, Michele and Justin Patton; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by a brother, Marcel Gravel who died during military service.

Funeral services were scheduled for today, Friday April 10, at 10 a.m. at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial with military honors will be in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Relatives and friends called at the funeral home on Thursday. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

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

East Hampton

Zema Arthur Yeager

Artie Yeager, 60, of East Hampton, beloved husband and best friend of wife Carol A. (Embleton) Yeager, passed away March 31 after a 7 year battle with COPD.



Artie was born in Hartford to Emelda Voisine Yeager and Zema Orestes Yeager on April 20, 1954. He was predeceased by both his parents and a brother, Charles Dwight Yeager.

Artie is survived by his brother David Hollis Yeager and his wife Pam Yeager of East Hampton. Artie had many friends and the most amazing memory for details about them.

Artie owned Arts Marina in East Hampton for several years and drove trucks for Jackson Corrugated for 20 plus years.

Artie and his wife knew each other in high school in East Hampton in the mid 1970's. One day in 2007 he saw Pam walking over the Middletown bridge and recognized her after 31 years. He contacted her on Classmates and the two have been together ever since; they married Nov. 7, 2009 and his wife says she's grateful for the short but sweet time they had together, and she misses him very much.

Artie's loves were boating, fishing and of course, riding his Harley. He was a good man. He requested there be no services but donations to the COPD foundation in his name would be a blessing to those who suffer as he did with this horrible disease.

Hebron

Diane Parsons

Diane Parsons, 68, peacefully passed away with her loved ones by her side, Sunday, April 5. She was born June 22, 1946 to the late Franklin & Grace (Gibbs) Heald; and was wife to Peter M. Parsons, who survives her.

Diane graduated from Stephens High School in Rumford, Maine in 1964; she worked as a food handler at RHAM High School, Hebron Middle School and Liberty Special Care Center in Colchester.

On Dec. 10, 1966, Diane married Peter M. Parsons in Rumford. They were married for 49 years and raised two children.

In addition to her husband, Diane is survived by her daughter, Katherine Foley of South Windsor; son, Peter Parsons of Glastonbury; sister, Carolyn Dupis of East Rumford, Maine; brother, Franklin Heald; and four grandchildren, Brendan and Kyle Foley and Taylor and Jordan Parsons.

A Graveside service will be held at Woodland Cemetery in Bethel, Maine at a later date. There will be no calling hours. The Belmont Funeral Home in Colchester has been entrusted with Diane's care.

Amston

Florence (Russell) Bjork

Florence (Russell) Bjork, 91, of Amston and formerly of Columbia, widow of the late Edward Warner Bjork, passed away on her 91st birthday, Tuesday, April 7.

She was born in Stafford Springs in 1924, daughter of the late John and Mae Russell.

Mrs. Bjork had worked as a spinner for Brand-Rex. Following her retirement, she owned and operated a doll hospital as well as an upholstery shop with her husband. In her spare time, she was an avid fisherwoman.

She is survived by her three children, Florence Fesik of No. Windham, Virginia LaForce of Woodstock Valley and Leo Edwards of No. Windham; five stepchildren, Marsha Bjork of Texas, Lynn Bjork of Hebron, Edward J. Bjork of Riverside, Calif., Richard Bjork of Woodbridge, Va., and Paul Bjork of Fla.; six grandchildren; seven great grandchildren; three great-great grandchildren; a sister, Margaret Marceau of So. Windham; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her loving husband, she was predeceased by two grandchildren, David Soto Jr. and Leo Edwards III; two sisters, Dorothy Rivard and Lillian Russell; and two brothers, John and William Russell.

Andover

Brian Joseph Dagenais

Brian Joseph Dagenais, 64, of Hartford, departed this world Monday, April 6 at the Hospital of Central Connecticut after a courageous fight with a chronic illness. Brian was born Feb. 28, 1951 and lived in various areas around Connecticut including Hartford, New Britain, Vernon, Andover, Groton, Norwich and East Hartford. He was the son of the late Marie (Guertin) Dagenais and Joseph Dagenais of Hartford.

After Brian graduated from Hartford High School in 1970, he served his country in the U.S. Army Reserves. Following his time in the Reserves, he was employed doing one of the things he loved most: being a bus driver for Connecticut Transit in his hometown of Hartford. After parting ways with Connecticut Transit, Brian earned his degree in Architecture from Porter and Chester. However, his love for driving found him at various companies across Connecticut in transportation.

Brian had a passion for so many things in life but none more so than music. He instilled this passion in both of his children. Brian was also an award winning and very talented singer, best known for his rendition of "Blood, Sweat and Tears," and "And When I Die." The depths of his soul truly came through in his amazing voice and it will live on in all that knew him. He loved The Beatles and infused the ethics of John Lennon into his life and into his children.

Brian was a beautifully unique individual who genuinely believed that peace and love could heal the world. Brian was notorious for his positive energy, the ability to make others laugh, his vibrant spirit, and his embracing and loving personality. He believed that we are all one and treated strangers as if they were his best friends. He believed that laughter could heal the soul and went out of his way to bring joy to all of those around him.

Brian is survived by his son, Brian "Buddy" Christopher Dagenais and his wife Lisa Dagenais of East Hartford; his daughter, Kristen Rose Dagenais and her husband Daniel "DJ" Dyer of Newington; his siblings, Joseph Lindor Dagenais and his wife Barbara Dagenais of Little River, S.C., Donald Joseph Dagenais of Royse City, Texas, and Debra Ann Dagenais of Vernon. He sadly leaves behind two grandchildren: Elly Rinoa and Zachary Vincent. He remained dear friends with his former wife, Pauline Meade, and her husband, James Meade, both who remained a great part of his life. He also leaves behind several beloved nieces and nephews.

Brian's family would like to extend a warm and heartfelt sincere thanks to the Hospital of Central Connecticut's CICU team as well as the staff at Aurora Senior Living for the excellent care they provided to Brian. Family and friends are invited to call tomorrow, Saturday, April 11 from 9:30-11 a.m. at the Newington Memorial Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington, followed by a funeral service at 11 a.m. He will be laid to rest privately.

To share a memory with his family, visit newingtonmemorial.com.

"And in the end, the love you take, is equal to the love you make." We love you Brian.

Portland

Faye Izetta (Lockhart) James

Faye Izetta (Lockhart) James, 94, of Middletown, wife of the late John E. James, passed away Tuesday, March 31 at Middlesex Hospital. Born in Gaffney, S.C., she was daughter of the late Robert and Lenore (Linden) Lockhart. Faye was also predeceased by sixteen brothers and sisters and her son, Marvin James.

Faye lived in Middletown for forty-eight years, moving from Portland. She was a member of New Bethel FBH Church in New Britain and was mother of the church and a former member of True Vine F.B.H. Church in Portland. She served as an usher at both churches. Faye was employed at Monsanto Company in Deep River for ten years, was also a housekeeper and helped raise children for various families in Portland and was instrumental in helping her daughter raise her three children. She was famously known as the "Pie Lady" specializing in sweet potato pie.

Faye loved her family dearly and always watched over them. She is survived by her daughter, Angela Muckle of Middletown; three grandchildren, Charles Muckle, Cheryl Rankins (Michael) and Terry Holley (Jerome); eight great-grandchildren, Andreesa, LaQuana, Chevar, Michaela, Angela, Cade, Logan and Corey; three great-great-grandchildren, Darius, Caleb, and Malerie and a host of nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, April 7 at Shiloh Christian Church, 693 Saybrook Rd., Middletown with the Rev. Mona McKenzie officiating. Burial followed in Pine Grove Cemetery. Family and friends called Tuesday morning at church. Doolittle Funeral Home is handling the arrangements.

To share memories or send condolences go to doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Colchester

Edward S. Misiaszek

Edward S. Misiaszek, 79, formerly of Norwich, died Sunday, April 5 at Harrington Court in Colchester. Born in Norwich Dec. 28, 1935 he was son of the late Edward L. and Emily (Borsa) Misiaszek.

Edward grew up in Norwich and was a graduate of the Norwich Free Academy and Bryant College in Rhode Island. He was a veteran of the Korean War having served with the United States Navy. After receiving an honorable discharge he returned to Norwich and began his career as an accountant with Joseph Riella & Company. He was a successful accountant for many years but his real passion was farming. He was involved with dairy farming for most of his life having owned a farm in North Stonington in the 1970's and later operating his own dairy farm in Ledyard during the 1980's.

He is survived by his children, David M. Misiaszek and wife Kamrawee of Gilman, and Cynthia Stoddard and husband David of Bozrah; three grandchildren, David D. Misiaszek, Nicholas Stoddard, and Mariah Stoddard; and several cousins.

The Woyasz & Son Funeral Home is in charge of private arrangements.