

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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Remembering Paige... The Paige Houston Memorial Golf Tournament will be held June 1 at Blackledge Country Club in Hebron. Proceeds go to three scholarships for graduating RHAM seniors. Paige, 17, died in a 2013 car crash. A longtime cheerleader, she's shown here at top with her friend Alicia Goode. Registration forms for the tournament are at [facebook.com/PaigeHoustonMemorialGolfTournament](https://www.facebook.com/PaigeHoustonMemorialGolfTournament).

Belltown Budget Cut, Referendum Set

by John Tyczkowski

Following last week's referendum rejection of a proposed \$41.71 million 2015-16 budget, the East Hampton Board of Finance met last Friday and the Town Council met on Monday, and in the end, \$282,374 in reductions were made.

The new budget proposal now sits at \$41.42 million, and will head to referendum Tuesday, June 2, following a May 26 town meeting. The spending package would be an increase of \$1.14 million, or 2.83 percent, over the current year's budget.

The Town Council voted 5-2 Monday – with Republican Patience Anderson joining the council's four Democrats – to the \$282,374 in cuts. The Board of Finance on Friday had voted 4-2, with Mary Ann Dostaler and Lori Wilcox opposed, to recommend the Town Council cut \$200,000, which they agreed to on Monday. The council on Monday then agreed to \$82,374 from the town government side of the budget.

The council spread the \$82,374 out among several areas, including Center School maintenance funds and the fire department vehicle maintenance funds.

The budget reductions resulted in a proposed mill rate of 28.13, an increase of 0.99 over the current rate. For a home assessed at \$200,000, that would result in an annual tax of \$5,626, or a monthly tax increase of less than \$20.

The \$282,374 in cuts almost matches the \$300,000 reduction amount councilor Ted Hintz Jr. had proposed at previous council meetings.

However, at Monday's meeting, Hintz had suggested a number of reductions to various town departments, in addition to the \$200,000 Board of Education cut, to bring the increase down to 0.77 mills.

One of these recommendations included cutting the half-year police officer position, which amounted to \$47,000.

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore cited reductions in town police numbers over time in her rebuttal of Hintz's proposal.

For example, during the 2006-07 year, East Hampton had 18 officers, Moore said. That number has declined over the intervening years to a low of 13.

Meanwhile, the town's population has hovered around the 12,000-person range.

"We're not overloaded with help," she said. "We have so few officers that we're almost leaving our town without coverage."

Councilor Mark Philhower responded to police effectiveness relating to increased spending by bringing up nearby Hebron.

"So what you're saying is that if you live in Hebron, you're going to die," he said. "Because they have far less police protection per person than we do."

Hebron participates in the state's resident state trooper program, with one trooper on duty in a town of over 9,500. The town also has a part-time police force, and is in the state police Troop K coverage area.

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RHAM Budget Reduced by \$68,880

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After its \$27.84 million budget proposal was shot down by voters last week, the RHAM Board of Education met Monday and trimmed \$68,880 from the spending plan – with the funds all coming in the form of health insurance savings.

The reduction brought the budget down to \$27.77 million, a 3.43 percent increase over the 2014-15 budget. The new spending plan will head back out to referendum in the three RHAM towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – Tuesday, May 26.

For Hebron, which is responsible for 55.83 percent of the budget, Monday's reduction resulted in a \$38,400 decrease, bringing Hebron's portion to \$15.50 million. For Marlborough, which is responsible for 29.65 percent, the cut amounted to a \$20,400 decrease, bringing its portion to \$8.23 million; and for Andover, responsible for 14.52 percent, Monday's trim amounted to a \$10,000 drop, bringing its RHAM share to \$4.03 million.

Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski proposed the reduction Monday following a

recent report from the district's insurance consultants confirming lower health insurance premiums than expected.

According to board chair Danny Holtsclaw, the teachers are also to be thanked, since they are contracted to contribute 19.5 percent of their insurance costs over the next three years.

"The \$68,880 reduction approved by the board would not be possible but for the tremendous cooperation received from the teachers during the recent contract negotiations," Holtsclaw said. "The board is truly grateful for their efforts to help limit the impact of what amounts to perpetual increases in health insurance costs."

RHAM participates in an insurance purchasing alliance with the towns and elementary school districts of Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

During Monday's meeting, Siminski informed the board that any further cuts will need to come from reductions in workforce or fewer class and extracurricular programs for students.

"I previously proposed some items for con-

sideration," Siminski said. "The board reviewed those and a few other items, and voted to reduce by the amount of the health insurance."

Siminski said the board considered other cuts, but ultimately felt "the budget is a good budget and addresses the needs of the district."

The board did consider the new initiative of the one-on-one technology for the eighth grade, but decided to leave it in the budget.

At this time, Siminski said he doesn't know what he'll suggest if the budget is defeated another time.

"I hope it passes," Siminski said. "When you look at it and step back, the per pupils for RHAM are below some of the elementary districts. RHAM has lived on a tight budget for a good number of years."

Board member Tom Tremont suggested during the meeting that cuts to the music program should be considered as a way of reducing the budget further.

"The board felt that Mr. Tremont's recommendation was considerable and would have devastating effects on the music program,"

Holtsclaw said. "The board did not support the proposed reduction by Mr. Tremont; however, it is a glaring indication of how excessively harsh any further cuts will be if the budget does not pass at the next referendum."

The board approved the budget being lowered by \$68,880 8-2.

"I wish we had a crystal ball and could accurately forecast whether or not the budget will pass, but we all know that this is not the case," Holtsclaw said. "The 8-2 vote by the board on Monday night is certainly an indication from the members that the 3.43 percent increase seems reasonable and necessary."

Holtsclaw said he trusts his fellow board members are speaking with their constituents and will vote accordingly.

"If it doesn't pass, any further cuts will be drastic and will include reductions in both staff and program offerings for students according to the superintendent," Holtsclaw said.

"I do not think this will play well with taxpayers," Marlborough Board of Finance mem-

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Belltown Budget cont. from Front Page

“Spending money on police and adding people doesn’t necessarily curb your problems,” Philhower also said, citing that Glastonbury’s drug problem was “far worse” than East Hampton’s, despite its larger police force and police spending.

For comparison, Glastonbury’s population is about 35,000, and its police force numbers over 50 officers.

Police Chief Sean Cox, who was in attendance, also responded to Hintz’s proposal, saying that the additional officer would be crucial to bringing back the department’s detective division, as well as for allowing the town to have a more robust DUI checkpoint program, traffic enforcement program and narcotics program.

Currently, Cox said he is the backup for the two officers who are on regular patrol each day. “I don’t think I was hired to spend a lot of time checking house alarms and things like that,” he said.

Other reductions included cutting \$40,000 for two new fire department off-road utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) and cutting a combined \$40,000 for repairs to bathrooms, ceilings and tile and Center School.

As a compromise, Hintz brought back his suggestion from an April meeting that the fire department run a raffle at Old Home Days this summer to help raise money for the UTVs.

Hintz’s plan would have at the same time restored the \$37,000 the Board of Finance cut from the fire department’s sinking fund for fire vehicle repairs.

“We’re going to have a lot of needs moving forward, and we have to think outside the box,” Hintz said. “I don’t agree with saying we’re going to move the town forward by spending everything.”

However, the council rejected Hintz’s plan 4-3 along party lines and then worked to create a replacement.

Councilor Patience Anderson aimed for a compromise on the budget that would allow for \$140,000 for the purchase of a trackless vehicle for the town. Discussed at previous Town Council meetings, the trackless vehicle would be able to use multiple attachments for various jobs, including snow removal and earth moving.

Anderson also advocated for the restoration of \$37,000 for fire vehicle repairs.

However, councilor Philip Visintainer, a former town fire chief for years, said the fire department had indicated they were able to function without that money, and should instead increase the department’s operating budget by \$16,000 instead.

Council vice chair Kevin Reich pushed for the inclusion of the \$40,000 to make repairs

for Center School, citing the fact that while the building may be repurposed for a town hall or other use, there was no concrete timeline set.

Philhower said given the uncertainty of the building’s future, the council should hold off on the \$40,000 and instead be ready to make an emergency appropriation at a later date if need be.

Reich accepted that offer, paving the way for the council to accept the compromise package.

Also, at the Friday special meeting, members from the Board of Finance clarified the specifics of the \$750,000 Technology Integration Initiative.

Though the board approved the proposal last month, no actual money was allocated to it. Funding by way of capital spending is contingent upon approval of both the town council and the finance board.

The approval of the Technology Integration Initiative does not affect the mill rate at all, and “that \$750,000 is not in the budget,” chairman Ted Turner said.

The Board of Education must now develop a plan for using that \$750,000 for technology upgrades in the school district before submitting it for approval.

After budget discussions Monday evening, Anderson brought up concerns over the fact that someone had placed what she called “bullying” notes in the boxes of five town employees, who were also residents, at East Hampton Middle School.

The note read, “Nobody’s job, including yours, is that secure, no matter how long you have worked here, nor how irreplaceable you think you are. Educators support education with a YES vote.”

“I think this is setting a very bad tone for the budget,” Anderson said, “and I’m very very concerned that we are practicing the art of bullying against our Board of Ed[ucation] workers,” Anderson said.

“This is not something that we can condone,” she added. “This is totally unacceptable. We don’t treat our residents and hard-working employees like this.”

Superintendent of Schools Diane Dugas, in attendance at the meeting, called the note “egregious in nature.”

“I couldn’t agree more, we’re appalled by it,” she told Anderson. “It is being addressed and is under full investigation.”

Dugas said Wednesday the investigation was indeed done, and the conclusion was that this “was an isolated issue that was related to a personnel matter, not related to any broader issue.”

RHAM Budget cont. from Front Page

ber Ken Hjulstorm said. “I know that most of the members of the Marlborough Board of Finance were looking for a significant reduction in the RHAM budget, perhaps to bring it down to at most a 3 percent increase.”

Hjulstrom said the Marlborough town budget vote was delayed in hopes there would be a significant reduction in the RHAM budget. (An additional article about the Marlborough budget is in this week’s *Rivereast*.)

“It appears as though the RHAM board was not listening when voters went to the polls on May 5th,” Hjulstrom said. “I hope we are not heading towards a repeat of the year when we had to go through a dozen referendums before we passed their budget.”

“Since the RHAM Board of Education had discussed a budget closer to 3 percent in its budget deliberations, it was hoped the board would bring back to the voters a budget closer to that number at a minimum,” Marlborough First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski said. “Next year’s tax increase for Marlborough’s residents is being driven largely by the RHAM budget and the levy the town will pay to RHAM.”

Marlborough Board of Finance Chairwoman

Evelyn Godbout said it will be interesting to see what happens.

“People voted that budget down,” Godbout said. “I think they were expecting to see something cut. I see health insurance went down, but that wasn’t really a cut.”

Godbout said people were asking for something to be cut and it wasn’t.

“I’m not sure if it will pass,” Godbout said.

Jeff Watt, chairman of the Hebron Board of Selectmen, said he hopes all of the cuts are enough. Hebron’s town and local education budget were greatly reduced after the budgets failed. (Those cuts can be read about in an additional article in this week’s *Rivereast*.)

“For the RHAM vote for Hebron, maybe voters are looking for more,” Watt said. “I’m willing to wait and see what voters will think on the 26th. The RHAM portion is the lowest reduced and that’s the largest part [Hebron voters] have to vote on.”

The next referendum is scheduled for Tuesday, May 26, in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough. The district meeting will be Friday, May 22, at 3 p.m., at the RHAM High School Media Center.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Being the editor, I wind up on bunches of mailing lists. I’m never exactly sure what’s going to float across my desk or land in my email inbox. But on Monday, I got what definitely was one of the strangest mailing I’ve ever received during my time here.

It was a postcard-sized piece of paper, and a campaign-style pin, urging me to become a breakfastarian.

A what?

“As breakfastarians, we believe in having breakfast anytime – especially for dinner,” read the slip of paper.

The paper – which featured at top a delicious-looking fried egg in the shape of a heart – further implored me to “help us gain more breakfast acceptance by sharing our message with the world.”

I was told to wear the campaign pin proudly, and to remember: “See the light. Breakfast at night.”

Ooooooooookay.

Now, when I was little, I did breakfast for dinner on occasion. And in college, coming home after a heavy night, uh, studying, sometimes an egg and cheese sandwich would really hit the spot. But, truth be told, it’s never been a favorite of mine. I mean, eggs and home fries and French toast are fantastic any time of day, don’t get me wrong, but something just doesn’t feel quite right to me about having them at night. I’m okay with it in early afternoon – on those occasional weekend days when you sleep in and then laze around and then before you know it, it’s noon and you haven’t eaten breakfast – but in my mind, breakfast is a meal to start your day, not to end it with.

But, to each their own. Who am I to stand in the way of a plate of huevos rancheros at 8 o’clock at night? So if you want to find out more about this movement, go to gobreakfastarian.org, or follow the movement on Twitter @Breakfastarians.

* * *

Many times over the years, dealing with police news, I’ve come across several incidents where a person is caught with drugs in their car, or an unlicensed weapon in their car, or some other sort of contraband item in their motor vehicle. Sometimes more than one such item. Often more than one such item. And, buried amid the charges, is a tiny little “speeding,” or “failure to obey stop sign,” or “having a defective taillight.” In other words, much like how the villains on *Scooby-Doo* would’ve gotten away with it if not for those meddling kids, the driver likely would’ve gotten away with whatever illegal activity was going on in their car if only they had obeyed that pesky little speed limit.

Now, I’m no criminal, but I would think that if I had something in my car I didn’t want police to discover, I’d do my best to not draw attention to myself. It just feels like common sense.

But.....maybe it’s not. I did a bit of a double take when reading the *Hartford Courant* Monday. It seems state police stopped a driver on I-84 near Exit 69, after the driver was spotted using a cell phone.

After pulling the car over, police noticed marijuana, packaging and drug paraphernalia inside. A police dog was called in and turned up – get this – 1,130 bags of heroin and some prescription pills. Two people inside the car were arrested on drug charges, including possession of narcotics.

Just amazing. These guys were transporting more than 1,000 bags of heroin, as well as some other drugs, and the driver feels *that* was the time to make a cell phone call? Something that’s quite clearly against the law in Connecticut?

Unbelievable.

* * *

See you next week.

Crash Closes Route 66 in Portland Tuesday Morning

by John Tyczkowski

Both east and west lanes of Route 66 between Route 17 and Grand View Terrace were closed for three hours after a crash early Tuesday morning.

A Mercury Mountaineer traveling westbound veered off the road into the center median around 5:08 a.m., at Moore Brothers near Sand Hill Road, Portland Police Sergeant Scott Cunningham said.

“The vehicle struck a utility pole, dropping wires across both lanes,” he said. “There were very minor injuries to the operator, and no injuries to the passenger.”

Patricia Niedzwiecki, 67, of New Britain, was charged with failure to stay in the established lane.

Cunningham said the police notified the state Department of Transportation shortly after 6 a.m., who assisted with posting detours for commuter traffic.

“They sent out notifications early on the electronic signs, and it worked well,” he said. “We didn’t have that heavy a traffic flow.”

Both lanes reopened around 9:20 a.m. after crews cleared the scene, Cunningham said.

Lifestar Accident in Hebron

On April 25, one person was airlifted by LifeStar to the Marlborough Clinic after an all-terrain vehicle accident on West Main Street at around 5 p.m. Troopers from Troop C in Tolland responded to the accident along with the Hebron Fire Department. The extent of the injuries and the person’s condition is unknown.

Woman Injured in Colchester Hit-and-Run

State Police said they are investigating after a car struck a woman on Farmwood Drive around 11:58 p.m. last Saturday, May 9.

The car did not stop, police said, and, as of Tuesday, has not been located.

The woman was transported to the Marlborough Clinic for minor injuries. Anyone with information can call Trooper Christopher Briganti at 860-465-5400.

\$10.83 Million Budget Off to Referendum in Andover

by John Tyczkowski

Taxpayers voted 34-11 last week to send a proposed 10.83 million 2015-16 budget to referendum.

The referendum will take place Tuesday, May 19, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., in the community room of Town Hall.

The proposed budget would be an increase of \$180,000, or 1.67 percent, over current year spending.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad said that a key component of the proposed budget is keeping taxes flat.

"This budget keeps the mill rate at 30.72, which is what we have now," she said, addressing the voting residents at the town meeting. "The Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have worked very carefully to use your tax dollars."

Over the past three budget years, the town has managed to actually lower the mill rate, Conrad said.

"It went from 30.80 to 30.77 to 30.72," she said. "We're pleased that we were able to forgo a mill rate increase this year despite our slight

increase in spending."

Some of that increase came from contracted raises, as well as a two percent raise for non-union elected town officials, Conrad said.

Voting residents approved that 2 percent raise at the meeting by a 27-16 paper ballot vote.

The proposed budget includes money for a 3.68 percent increase to the town's RHAM contribution. However, since that budget failed to pass, Conrad said RHAM has a procedure allowing the town to adapt the budget to a smaller increase.

"RHAM will adjust the levy once they come to a solid number," she said. "We won't over-pay."

In addition, the Board of Finance approved capital requests including \$13,000 for thermal imaging cameras for the fire department; \$45,000 to replace gutters and soffits on the library; \$7,000 for a new furnace for the public works building; \$12,000 to refurbish the Public Works Department's pickup truck; \$8,000 for a new wide-format printer; and \$33,145 for

the third year of a five-year lease to purchase for a town dump truck.

Still, overall capital expenditures decreased by \$3,806 from last year, Conrad said. That, combined with funds from the state and the 1 percent increase in the grand list, helped keep taxes flat.

Before voting, Joan Foran, a member of the Board of Assessment Appeals but who said she was speaking as an individual, wanted to know why a new roof for the Public Works garage wasn't included in the capital expenditures.

"The roof is in need of repair and it's degrading to the point where [the garage] is becoming a slum-like building," she said. "It's got visible gaping holes, the size of which a cow could fall through."

Selectwoman Cathy Desrosiers said a new roof would cost about \$80,000.

"[Public Works] indicated that we could forego that roof this year. They were going to patch it and save money to look at other projects," she said. "But it's not just the roof

issue. The equipment that they're getting now, it's higher [in height] due to the springs and suspensions, and they cannot get it in the building except into the middle of the building where the roof goes up."

"It's not just slapping \$80,000 worth of shingles on there; it's fixing the entire building," she said.

Desrosiers said Public Works had indicated to the board of selectmen that they "could get one more year or two" out of the roof by patching it, so there had no been capital request made.

Foran responded by commenting on the "deplorable" state of town facilities maintenance in general.

"The fact that there is not proper maintenance for town facilities will determine whether or not I pass this budget," she said.

After the meeting, Conrad said she was optimistic about the budget's chances at referendum.

"We didn't change the mill rate, so I don't see why it shouldn't pass," she said.

Marlborough Budget at Standstill

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

As of Wednesday evening, Marlborough's proposed budget is at a standstill.

The proposed \$23.08 million 2015-16 budget was to be voted on at town meeting Monday. However, at the meeting, with the fate of the RHAM schools budget still up in the air, Board of Finance Chairwoman Evelyn Godbout motioned to adjourn the proceedings until June 1 so the town can have a better feel for the regional schools budget.

The \$27.84 million RHAM schools budget was defeated at a tri-town referendum last week. Marlborough would have been responsible for \$8.25 million of that amount – a 5.92 percent increase over what it's currently paying for the regional high and middle school.

With RHAM being the largest single component of the Marlborough town budget, Godbout wanted to wait to see how RHAM shakes out before holding a vote. About two-thirds of the approximately 200 people in attendance at Monday's town meeting agreed with her, and voted to continue the vote to June 1.

While the Marlborough town meeting was going on, in Hebron the RHAM Board of Education met, and trimmed its budget by \$68,880, due to insurance savings, and sent the budget to a May 26 referendum. To Marlborough, that equals approximately \$20,400.

With the reduction, Marlborough's portion for RHAM now sits at \$8.23 million, a 5.65 percent over the current year.

The rest of the Marlborough town budget includes: \$4.68 million for town operations, a \$70,000, or 1.52 percent, increase over the current year; \$8.23 million for RHAM; \$7.40 million for the local Board of Education, a \$125,000, or 1.71 percent, increase; \$20,000 for contingency; \$212,880 for capital; and \$2.52 million for town debt. (Taxpayers vote separately for the \$212,880 for capital.)

Overall, the proposed budget is \$831,860, or 3.74 percent, more than current year spending. It calls for the mill rate to rise 1.44 mills, from 31.45 to 32.89. This would translate to a 4.6 percent tax increase.

The mill rate is used to determine residents'

taxes; a resident can determine their taxes by multiplying the mill rate by their total assessments. One mill is equal to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property and under the proposed mill rate of 32.89, a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$8,222.50 in taxes.

Technically, the budget that goes to the June 1 town meeting will still be the same \$23.08 million figure that went before voters on Monday. Before the budget vote occurs, there will need to be a separate vote to accept the savings from this week's RHAM reduction.

The Board of Finance met Wednesday to discuss RHAM's meeting on Monday – and expressed displeasure with the school board's \$68,880 reduction.

"It's not much of a change," Godbout said. "They cut nothing," adding that all the board did was realize savings.

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom noted the finance board, as is the case with the Hebron and Andover finance boards, has no control over the RHAM budget – but stressed

there is an option.

"We can't do anything about the number," he said. "We can vote not to support."

Hjulstrom predicted voters will again balk at the RHAM budget come May 26.

"I would be shocked if the RHAM referendum passes," he said.

Hjulstrom made a motion to not support the RHAM budget, and that was seconded by board member Susan Leser.

"It's important to be noted we are taking a stand," board member Doug Knowlton said.

"They are aware of Marlborough's position," board vice chair Cliff Denniss said of the RHAM school board. Denniss read from the RHAM board's minutes of Monday's meeting and noted where board members mentioned Marlborough and acknowledged that town officials wanted a smaller increase.

"I honestly don't know what they're thinking," Hjulstrom said of the regional school board.

The motion to not support the RHAM vote passed unanimously.

East Hampton Council Discusses Natural Gas Expansion

by John Tyczkowski

At its Tuesday evening meeting, councilors heard an update on the progress of the natural gas line expansion in town.

Kathy Richards, area manager for Henkels & McCoy, the contractor handling portions of the expansion in town, said work is proceeding well.

"We just started [Monday] on Phase 1, which runs from Route 66 in Cobalt to Route 16. We started at 16 and headed west," she said. "Everyone felt that would be best with the traffic to help people get used to us being in the road. We didn't want to start right at the light in Cobalt."

So far, the crews are averaging about 300 feet per day, Richards said.

Phase 3 is also underway, which runs on Skinner Street, Route 196, at Route 16, to the downtown area.

"That crew's working in a pretty tight area. They've been doing about 200 feet per day, but that should pick up now that we're away from the driveways," she said. "It'll be maybe 220 feet a day now."

Phase 2 of the expansion lies on Route 16 between the Phases 1 and 3, and hasn't yet been approved by the state, Richards said.

However, she said there should not be any concern about the project being completed before the heating season.

"I know I've heard some concerns, but there will be no problem with that," Richards said. "The nine-and-a-half miles will be installed before then, though necessarily by us; it's up to

CNG, who they give it to."

At the end of last year, the town approved an agreement with Connecticut Natural Gas to bring the fuel source to town buildings and commercial businesses, with the option to have residential customers near the mains opt in to the service as well.

* * *

At its regular meeting Tuesday evening, councilors discussed the creation of an online business directory for East Hampton.

Council vice chair Kevin Reich and councilor Patience Anderson were absent from the meeting.

Council chair Barbara Moore said she had looked at the town of Wethersfield's online business directory, which allows users to seek services from hundreds of local businesses.

"I thought that this would be a good thing to help people connect with their local businesses," she said.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco mentioned that the town's economic development commission had worked on a similar initiative several years prior, which had stalled by turnover on the group.

Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. expressed concern that the town would have to be careful to not endorse any businesses on such a directory.

Hintz mentioned how in the financial world, if he refers a customer to a service, and the service "does wrong" by the customer, he, as well as the service, is legally liable, and extended that analogy to the town as well.

"We'd have to put up a disclaimer stating we're not supporting any one business, especially with professional services," he said.

Maniscalco said a way around that would be to, instead of listing the businesses on a web page, link to a database based on the assessor's list of town businesses. That way, users could search for businesses themselves, removing the issue of liability.

Councilors also agreed every business in town should be listed, to give each equal search visibility.

* * *

Jim Carey, who served as the town's planning, zoning and building administrator in recent years and who has worked for the town since April 8, 1985, resigned effective May 1.

Councilor Mark Philhower, a close friend of his, read a proclamation, which the Town Council unanimously supported, commending Carey for his three decades of service with the town.

"Be it further resolved on behalf of our community, we extend to him our gratitude for his professional service rendered to the town of East Hampton, and may his retirement be a most rewarding and joyous life experience," Philhower read.

Carey began his career as a zoning enforcement building official, but was soon appointed as a fire inspector two years later. A year later, he "took on additional duties as planner and coordinator," and was promoted July 1, 1988, to his position of planning, zoning and building administrator.

Carey also received a lifetime achievement award from the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies in 2010, and was recognized by the Department of Construction services in 2011 for his "dedication to promoting building and fire safety in the state of Connecticut."

* * *

Maniscalco introduced the town's new public utilities administrator, Tim Smith.

Smith brings 38 years of experience in water, water reuse and wastewater to East Hampton, Maniscalco said. He had previously worked out west in private water districts and larger municipal districts such as Aurora, Colo., and Henderson, Nev.

In addition, Maniscalco said Smith had received several national awards regarding water and wastewater management.

Smith said a few words to the council at that time as well.

"I'm very happy to be here, you have a very beautiful community," he said. "And everyone keeps asking me 'Why'd you come to Connecticut?' I lived in the west my whole life, and when my wife came out here and visited, we fell in love. The rolling hills, the trees, being this close to the ocean. You guys have the best of all worlds."

Smith takes over the job from Vincent Susco.

* * *

The next Town Council meeting will take place Tuesday, May 26, at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room.

Former Portland Resident to Bike Cross-Country for Parkinson's

by John Tyczkowski

Henry Prescott has set out to bike a 3,500-mile route that most people would drive instead, or fly.

"I plan to grow a beard along the way," he said, referring to the 43-day ride. "Just like Forrest Gump."

But unlike Tom Hanks' character, who "just started runnin'" one day, Prescott will be biking cross-country to raise awareness for Parkinson's disease.

He kicks off the ride, titled "Cycle Sea to Sea for PD," today, May 16, in Seattle, Wash.

Prescott, a native of Portland and 2004 graduate of Xavier High School, moved to Boulder, Colo., later that year to attend college at the University of Colorado.

He stayed there and is currently attending the Metropolitan State University of Denver for his teaching license in physical education. And along the way, in 2011, he got involved with the local YMCA.

"I got introduced to a trainer and volunteer named Richard Pagel, who was working with people with Parkinson's," Prescott said. "At the time I was working with a bunch of populations through the Y, the elderly, kids, people with cerebral palsy.

"People with Parkinson's was one of the special populations I started working with," he continued. "I grew fond of these people because of their determination in the face of the disease."

Parkinson's disease is a degenerative disorder affecting the motor control component of the central nervous system. Later stages of the disease can involve cognitive problems as well as movement problems.

It's most common in people over the age of 50 but can occur in younger people as well, and mostly has no known cause, though for some people, it is genetically-caused.

Prescott said exercise is an extremely effective way of combating Parkinson's spread.

"In general, exercise is great because it releases a lot of neurotransmitters in the brain, the feel good chemicals; it's a natural antidepressant," he said. "For Parkinson's, through exercise, we can try to retrain the brain to work around the damaged neural pathways."

"It can delay some symptoms and improve movement patterns and cognition," he said.

The treatment idea is based upon the concept of neural plasticity, which holds that the brain can be trained for a new activity with enough repetition.

"It's like riding a bike or throwing a baseball, and requires a lot of effort and multiple attempts, but you can do it after a while," he said.

So far, Prescott has teamed up with a number of organizations to spread awareness through the ride, including the Boulder Valley YMCA, the Parkinson's Association of the Rockies, the Davis Phinney Foundation and GZ Sobol's Parkinson's Network, and raised \$26,000 for them so far.

"A lot of donations came from email blasts and fundraisers, like selling T-shirts," he said. "But we also have corporate sponsors too."

Whole Foods, Citywide Banks, University Bicycles and Colorado Legal Ethics are sponsoring the ride.

As to how Prescott settled on biking, he said he has the Davis Phinney Foundation to thank.

"Tom Casey did a cross-country ride for the foundation previously, so that gave me the idea," he said. "And I thought, since I really enjoy riding, it would be a good way to generate some interest."

And then once that was decided, Prescott said he took almost a year to contact support groups and get them on board with the idea.

"I also spent a lot of time planning the route and itinerary, creating a web site and business

cards, it's been an ongoing process," he said. "The cool thing is that it's all worth it and then some, we're raising this money and generating awareness."

The route Prescott will be biking will start in Seattle and end in Portland. Along the way, he'll go through Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.

"The American Cycle Association has a huge map database of different bike routes across the country," he said. "For this ride to be successful, I wanted a route that would make this a long ride so I could stop at multiple locations to talk with multiple Parkinson's support groups."

Specifically, Prescott plans to stop at a number of smaller support groups in mostly rural areas.

"I want to reach out to some of these support groups along the road that don't have the monetary resources or expertise we do in Boulder: giving them information, helping them learn what kinds of information and techniques are out there to help people every day," he said. "That's the big goal here."

Prescott said Boulder has been the perfect place for him to train for the event as well.

"They're really into biking out here," he said. "Also, there's Magnolia Road just outside of Boulder, which has a 3,000 vertical feet descent over five miles, with an 18 percent grade. Along with the higher elevation, it's an excellent place to train."

Even before biking, Prescott said his overall physical preparation began with cross conditioning in January to get into better general shape, followed by resistance training in February and phasing that into bike time in the spring.

Prescott aims to be in Portland on June 24.

Then, on Friday, June 26, there will be a 'welcome home' event at the Portland Fireman's Grounds.

That event will also double as a fundraiser for the Middlesex YMCA's youth campaign, he said.

"The Middlesex YMCA will also be doing a matching donating for what people donate to the ride," he said. "I wanted to create that local link, and to encourage people to donate to benefit both causes."

Selectman Ryan Curley, who's helping coordinate things in Portland, said he's known Prescott since they were both in elementary school.

"Also, we both went to Xavier and we both were Eagle Scouts. I've known Henry my whole life, and we've always been close friends," he said. "I couldn't be more proud of him. It's for a great cause; Parkinson's touches so many people throughout the country and throughout the world."

"I told him whatever he needs, I'm here to help," Curley added.

Prescott also said he wanted to thank his parents, who have lived in town for over 30 years.

"They've been so supportive," he said. "I'm also grateful my dad will be driving the support vehicle behind me the whole ride."

In addition, Prescott said he wants to make sure that family and friends who ride along with him will stay safe, and would like to finish the ride as well.

"It will be a tough ride, and there are no guarantees about finishing, riding day after day with little rest," he said. "But I relish the challenge."

Those interested in supporting the various Parkinson's foundations, tracking the ride's progress and viewing regular photo updates can visit cyclesea2sea4pd.org.

Portland Voters Pass \$32.12 Million Budget

by John Tyczkowski

Voters passed Portland's budget for next year Monday, in an uncontested referendum marked by a slight increase in voter turnout.

The \$32.12 million 2015-16 budget passed by a 324-165 tally. The spending plan represents an increase of 1.76 percent, or \$556,000, over the current year's budget.

The mill rate of 31.78 will now rise by .56 of a mill, to a total mill rate of 32.34 mills. For reference, a mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the mill rate, if a house is assessed at \$200,000, then taxes paid on it for the 2015-16 fiscal year would be \$6,468.

About 9 percent of Portland's 5,400 registered voters showed up at the polls Monday. While modest, that turnout rate is slightly higher than last year, when 7.68 percent of the electorate turned out, and 2013, when 8.26 percent showed. (It's still down, though, from 2010 and 2011, when about 12 percent turned out each year.)

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she was pleased that the budget passed on its first try.

"I'm glad to see that the people confirmed what the selectmen had unanimously approved back in April," she said. "And now we're ready to implement the new budget."

The general government budget stands at \$12.42 million, which represents a 0.9 percent increase over last year's town government budget. Important components of that budget include both public safety and public works, each with a proposed 2.28 percent increase in funding.

The Board of Education's budget component stands at \$19.70 million, a 2.3 percent increase over last year's amount. Some major categories driving the school budget are buildings and

equipment with a 67.77 percent increase, from \$124,000 to \$209,000, driven by technology hardware and software upgrades. Facilities repair and maintenance is also rising 24.23 percent in the school budget, from \$209,000 to \$259,000, due to repairs at Brownstone Intermediate School.

That's in addition to the usual increase categories of salaries, at 3.41 percent, and benefits, at 3.58 percent.

Looking forward, Bransfield said one of the foremost priorities would be the development of the Elmcrest property.

"While that's not technically reflected in the budget, the money the townspeople put toward the planning department, the building official, the fire marshal and public works is important for it," she said. "All of those departments are going to work together to help with that process."

Overall, though, Bransfield said of the budget, "There's not a whole lot of new things in there."

"We're looking to continue to provide good service in terms of public works, the library, parks and recreation and youth services," she added. "Passing this budget on the first try allows the town to continue to provide services and make sure there's not any interruptions."

Bransfield said "it was the will of those who voted to continue managing the town in the way we're currently doing it."

Bransfield also said she wanted to give credit to the Board of Selectmen for its work on the budget, as well as all the town boards involved, and finance director Tom Robinson for his professional guidance.

In addition, she said that funding across those departments, and others, would allow the town to complete its updated Plan of Conservation



Board of Selectmen member Carl Chudzik came out to vote Monday evening at the Waverly Center with his daughter Addie. The budget passed on the first try, by a 324-165 tally.

and Development on time by next March, implement the Air Line Trail, make the streets and sidewalks safer in town by working with the Complete Streets Group and make progress with Portland Town Park on Route 17.

Also, Bransfield said approval of the bud-

get, with its \$19.70 million allotment for the Board of Education, allows the town to "continue to make available quality education."

"Passing this budget allows us to try to make Portland a better place for those who live here, and for those who visit," she said.

Colchester Selectmen Interview Two More for Vacancy

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A newcomer to the political scene in town and a familiar face interviewed for the vacancy on the Board of Selectmen last Thursday, May 7.

John Reeve, a former Board of Education member, and Seth Breitmaier, a new resident of town, both came before the selectmen as the board looks to fill the seat of William Curran, who resigned in January.

There would have been a third person interviewed at the meeting, but Steven Schuster, withdrew his application for the vacancy after speaking with Reeve and Breitmaier.

“My main reason [for withdrawing] is that I’m looking for younger people to take a more active part in town government,” Schuster said this week. “When I put my application in, there were no other people who had applied, besides one previous candidate whom they had already interviewed.”

That candidate was Economic Development Commission member Andreas Bisbikos, who was interviewed April 16.

Schuster said he applied because he felt the board needed a full five members to be at its best – and also because he had a bit of a “guilty conscience” regarding the vacancy. Schuster’s son, Gregg Schuster, was the town’s first selectman from 2009 until last year, when he departed for a job with a township in Pennsylvania. Upon Schuster’s departure, selectman Stan Soby was tabbed to be first selectman, and Curran was then appointed to the Board of Selectmen.

At last Thursday’s meeting, “I saw that two other people had applied – one I knew and one I didn’t,” Schuster said. “I had the opportunity to talk in length with them prior to me being

interviewed and I withdrew my application.”

Schuster said he was confident that either Reeve or Breitmaier would serve well on the board.

The selectmen first called Reeve in to be interviewed. In 2013, Reeve opted not to run for re-election to the school board, citing time commitment issues with his family. However Reeve explained to the board that the “timing is better,” and he now understands the kind of workload it takes to be on a board.

Reeve stressed that some of his strengths include his ability to negotiate, interview, question and listen.

“With my experience on the Board of Education, I have been in union negotiations,” Reeve said. “I understand working with other boards and being collaborative.”

Reeve said that, when faced with a situation where others disagree with him, he would listen and try and understand where people are coming from.

“I’ll use my skills to overcome objections,” Reeve said. “I’ll maybe deflate the situation and have people think about it. I’ll vote about what’s best for them.”

Reeve also said he’s not afraid to ask questions.

“I can’t pretend to know everything; I can’t be embarrassed not to know something,” he said, and then quipped, “Being married 20 years, I know I’m not always right.”

And if he can’t come to an agreement with others, he won’t be afraid to stand his ground, and to vote against the other selectmen. But, he noted, “We’re still left as a team.”

Reeve said the town needs to find ways to increase the tax base and possibly look into high

tech industries, but also preserve the traditions in town.

Reeve also stressed compromise, combating misinformation and curiosity.

“My weakness is raising my hand too much,” Reeve said. “I’ve learned from that. I was naïve going to the Board of Education with what the workload meant.”

The other candidate was newcomer to town, Breitmaier. A former Navy member, Breitmaier works in Glastonbury and moved to Colchester two years ago. He said during his time in the Navy was when he developed his interest in government and how it works.

“This is my first opportunity for me to get involved,” Breitmaier said.

Although he hasn’t served on any town boards, Breitmaier said he has served on committees and understand how they work.

“Things come up that you wouldn’t expect there to be issues,” Breitmaier said. “Sometimes you have people on the opposite sides of the fence and you have to get them to sit down and listen to each other.”

With experience in project management, Breitmaier said he’s learned to look at things broadly. The three main issues he sees in town are bringing businesses in, the budget itself, and increasing the tax revenue.

Breitmaier, like Reeve, stressed being open to ideas and not being an expert in everything.

“You bring technical experts in to give real guidance,” Breitmaier said. “You need to be just to those impacted.”

In a situation with disagreement, Breitmaier said communication is key.

“You have to stay calm, have to listen and communicate,” Breitmaier said. “I may not be in alignment with everyone, but decisions have to be made.”

Breitmaier also stressed that people need to feel heard and that he will be open to input.

Breitmaier said his strength is being passionate about the job and having a pragmatic approach.

“My weakness is I’m 30 and have no real experience in this area,” Breitmaier said.

Soby said he is hopeful the board will make a decision on the vacancy during its next meeting.

“They are both very strong candidates,” Soby said of Reeve and Breitmaier. “They have good backgrounds, answered the questions well and are willing to work hard.”

Soby said Bisbikos is still in the mix for the appointment.

“We were hoping for a pool [of candidates],” Soby said. “It gives us an opportunity to make the best decision for the town.”

Even those that do not make the Board of Selectmen, Soby encourages them to volunteer on another board or commission.

“We would like to get their talent and willingness to help out somewhere,” Soby said.

Also at the meeting, the selectmen approved making the change to their hiring policy that will increase the margin for local vendors to be considered from 5 percent to 7.5 percent.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be Thursday, May 21, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

Kids Ready for Summer Camp in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Every summer, children in Colchester look forward to joining their old friends and making new ones at camp.

It’s a tradition the town’s recreation supervisor, Anita Pizzutiello, is fond of – and one, she reminds families, is coming up soon. Registration for camp is now available.

Pizzutiello said there have been some changes in the camp program specifically for Kindercampers. In addition to the camp’s morning Kindercamp program, Pizzutiello said the department has added an afternoon option for students going into kindergarten this fall. However this option excludes 3-year-old campers. It does apply to extended care before and after camp hours so potentially campers could attend from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. if needed. Another change is the new director for Kindercamp, Deana Dignoti-Stella.

“This is the best part of my job,” Pizzutiello said of camp. “The most important thing is to teach them socialization and how to make friends.”

Pizzutiello said all through camp, whether Kindercamp or day camp, everything is for a reason.

“There are purposes and meaning to projects,” Pizzutiello said. “We create an environment to nurture friendships.”

She continued that “camp provides opportunities for independence, teamwork and resilience which helps support the work parents and schools are doing the rest of the year.”

For Kindercampers, the goal is to step away from their parents and try new things. Pizzutiello gave the example of the large water slide and how the small kids are sometimes nervous and will go down with a counselor and

then by themselves.

“They’re proud of trying something new in a safe environment,” Pizzutiello said.

For Kindercampers, the ratio is eight campers to a counselor. For day camp, the ratio is 10 campers to a counselor.

“Sixty percent [of campers] come all eight weeks,” Pizzutiello said. “Some just come for a week.”

What really makes camp also unique, Pizzutiello said, is that no technology is allowed – and that includes cell phones.

“It’s just a place kids can go and forget about everything else going on and be kids,” Pizzutiello said. “Parents are thrilled we don’t allow [technology].”

Around 150 campers a day meet at the Recreation Complex under the pavilion to begin their day at camp. After being grouped by age and meeting their counselor, campers learning their group greeting, become a team, meet others, sing camp songs, do group activities and participate sometimes in an all camp activity. Before leaving for the day, each camper knows what he or she will be doing the following day.

“Nobody is bored,” Pizzutiello said.

Campers participate in arts and crafts, archery, water play, nature activities and more.

Along with the general activities, Pizzutiello said each week is a different theme which adds to the excitement.

“It’s the absolutely best experience for kids right here in town,” Pizzutiello said. “It’s definitely a great value.”

The price per week for a day camper is \$145 for residents. Non-residents can register, but there is an additional fee. People who work in Colchester, however, can get the resident fee, Pizzutiello said.



Campers from 2014 participated in “Pirate Week.” Shown here are the campers looking through spyglasses they made. Registration for this year’s summer camp is underway.

Camp runs from June 22 to Aug. 14 with no camp on July 3 for the holiday. Campers are registered per week.

Although early bird registration is over, parents can sign their children up until the day before camp which is June 21. There is no maximum amount of campers, Pizzutiello said, the camp just adds more staff as needed. Registration

is available online through Parks and Recreation at colchesterct.gov/rec and also by calling or stopping into the Parks and Recreation office in Town Hall. Pizzutiello can be reached at 860-537-7236 or by emailing apizzutiello@colchesterct.gov. Payment plans are available.

Scholarships are also available through Colchester Youth and Social Services.

Colchester School Board Releases Statement on Special Ed

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Education Tuesday read an official statement regarding the parent complaints about Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Kathy Shaughnessy – explaining board members are addressing the complaints but stressing that they need time before reaching any final decisions.

In the statement, the board outlined the current history of the complaints, which started in January when parents began coming forward and speaking of misconduct and illegal activity, stating that Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) were being changed without parents' consent, and stating Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs) were being incorrectly held.

After hearing the complaints, the board in March hired two people, Rosie Payne and Frank Stuart, on a part-time basis. Payne began assisting with PPTs and Stuart began conducting a review of the concerns that were raised.

Since the beginning of the investigation, Stuart said he has met with over 20 families, 14 of which signed the complaint letter from the parents and others who stepped forward on their own.

In the statement, the Board of Education said, "Mr. Stuart is following a board-established review protocol that includes analysis of: (i) the facts and circumstances of the parents' concerns (ii) the nature of the special education programs and services requested and/or being provided; and (iii) the legal and/or professional impro-

prieties alleged by the parents. Mr. Stuart is also receiving information from Director Shaughnessy and other district staff members, as appropriate, and providing all an opportunity to be heard."

Stuart is slated to present his final report including any findings and recommendations to the board no later than the end of the current school year in June.

The statement furthered that the board has "listened to all of these comments from the parents [made during public comments at school board meetings this year] and also has received written statements from many." However, the statement noted it is board policy to not engage in a dialogue with people during public comment, and as such, "board members have not responded to or questioned these comments."

The statement said that, due to student confidentiality, the district "is not permitted to make public any analysis or conclusions pertaining to an individual student's program." Shaughnessy, the statement added, is also not allowed to publicly comment on individual student matters.

However, the board stressed in its statement, "In no way should the board's relative silence be construed as the board taking a position on the comments being made."

Also, the statement said, some individuals

"appear to be advocating for the board to take immediate action and thereby short-circuit its review process" without first offering Shaughnessy and other staff members a chance to respond to the concerns raised.

The board wrote it has a "legal and ethical obligation" to provide Shaughnessy with due process for all concerns brought forward.

And the board made clear this will not be allowed to happen, as it "would violate due process rights of those involved and would be contrary to the values espoused in the district's strategic plan, which calls upon students, staff, parents and community to promote a positive school climate that fosters respect."

The board asked community members to understand a review process is in place that is designed to gather the information needed for informed decision-making.

Board members also took residents to task for "inflammatory and even vicious professional and personal attacks" that have been levied against Shaughnessy during board meetings as well as social media.

"These attacks include not only criticism of her administration of special education programs in the district, but personal attacks on her family members, including her late husband," the board wrote. "Individuals have also targeted Ms. Shaughnessy's daughter. The board denounces these attacks on Ms.

Shaughnessy and her family and asks all to model appropriate and respectful behavior."

In addition to the board's statement, Barbara Gilbert, director of teaching and learning, read a letter from the Colchester Association of School Administrators. The letter spoke to Shaughnessy's successes and mentioned that, on numerous occasions, parents have thanked Shaughnessy for her work.

"Ms. Shaughnessy's support and advocacy for children has been renowned throughout public schools in Connecticut," the letter stated. "We know this because parents have directly stated to many of us that they came to our district for our excellence in special education."

The letter stated Shaughnessy is "tireless in her pursuit of appropriate resources for students within and outside of special education and her dedication results in a commitment well beyond the hours administrators are required to work each day."

There was a special public comment portion in the meeting dealing exclusively with special education and the letters presented. However, no one spoke during it.

The next Board of Education meeting will be Tuesday, May 26, at 7 p.m. at William J. Johnston Middle School.

Colchester Finance Board Revises Budget

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

On the heels of last week's referendum rejections, the Board of Finance Monday brought out the scissors to the school and town government spending proposals, bringing them to a combined total of \$53.61 million.

The board cut \$250,016 from the budgets – \$150,000 from the Board of Education budget and \$100,016 from the town. The board also realized an additional \$22,300 in revenue.

With the cuts and additional revenue, the new mill rate would be 30.81, up from the current 30.57. This translates to a tax increase of 0.8 percent.

The mill rate is used to determine one's taxes; taxpayers can do so by multiplying the mill rate by their total assessments and then dividing by 1,000. One mill is equal to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property; thus, and under the proposed mill rate of 30.81, a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$7,702.50 in taxes.

With the cuts, the proposed town budget now sits at \$13.76 million. The reductions the finance board made Monday include: \$480 from the Lunch and Learn program through the Commission on Aging; \$4,000 from planning and code administration; \$1,150 for new memory cards for the town voting machines; \$1,000 from maintenance and electronics from the police department; \$11,425 from the highway department; \$5,600 from field maintenance; and \$12,344 from Youth and Social Services, which includes \$2,500 from the town's contribution to the Collaborative for Colchester's Children.

Other reductions include: \$4,727 from the library, which includes the two additional Sat-

urday hours during the school year; \$2,500 from Parks and Recreation for training; and \$5,800 from senior services which includes some funding for MySeniorCenter, a software data tracking program for the senior center. (Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov explained that, with MySeniorCenter, some funds were left in for the annual subscription to the program, and the center is working on funding for the remaining pieces of the program).

From the capital plan, \$25,000 came out of the budget and \$17,125 additional funds for the highway department for capital was reduced.

The town also saved \$8,865 by changing life insurance companies.

"We worked very hard in responding to peoples' concerns about the proposed increase and also what we heard through the development of the budget process and through the survey about areas of importance," First Selectman Stan Soby said. "We focused on maintaining core services and focusing in on some infrastructure items so we're maintaining facilities or systems and don't have a larger cost."

For the library for example, although the funds for the extended hours was taken out, a virtualization system for upgraded IT services stayed in.

"We're looking at the larger-value longer-term items," Soby said.

Another item not touched was the fire department's strategic plan consultant.

"Public safety was a key area of interest in the survey," Soby said.

All decisions, Soby said, were made with help from the department heads on what their priorities are and what they can work with.

"People worked together on these and really focused on doing the best possible job for the taxpayer," Soby said. "I hope that this movement will help some people say 'yes that's a budget that I can support.'"

With the new proposed mill rate of 30.81, Soby said for \$100,000 of property value, the increase to someone's taxes would be \$24 for the year or \$2 a month.

"I understand it's meaningful money for people, but we think it's reasonable for what we can do in term of service improvements," Soby said.

The education budget now totals \$39.85 million. The finance board can only control the Board of Education's bottom line. Therefore, the Board of Education met Tuesday and decided where the cuts would be.

One of the largest of the \$150,000 in reductions came from eliminating the new full-time Board Certified Behavior Analyst position. However, because the district currently contracts someone for one day a week, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu said they are making progress with the position by contracting for two days a week for \$60,000. The full-time position would have cost \$97,077.

Other reductions included: \$9,000 less for School Readiness; cutting a \$2,492 stipend for Bacon Academy for an elective representative; \$1,896 less for the Bacon Academy principal because the principal the school board recently hired, Matthew Peel, has less experience than what the school board had budgeted for; \$43,695 less for the capital reserve fund;

\$33,000 in savings from changing life insurance companies; \$8,000 reduced from electricity because of less usage; \$2,500 from Bacon Academy general supplies; \$700 from Colchester Elementary School for a projector; \$1,060 from William J. Johnston Middle School for repairs; another \$330 from WJJMS science supplies; \$150 less in dues and fees for WJJMS; \$6,160 from WJJMS for math curriculum textbooks, since the textbooks were purchased in 2014-15 instead; \$2,500 from software licensing; and \$1,500 in professional development for IT personnel.

The budget process is moving at "a rapid pace this time," Board of Education Chair Ron Goldstein said Tuesday – noting that the finance board made the cut on Monday, and the very next day, the school board.

Board members expressed some concern over eliminating the initiative for the full-time BCBA. However, by the end of the Board of Education meeting Tuesday, board members agreed the two contracted days wasn't as great as full-time, but it is still a step forward.

"We're not cutting existing services," Mathieu said. "To go to the next step would be a hardship for us."

The Board of Education passed the reductions unanimously Tuesday night.

The proposed town and school budgets now go to town meeting Tuesday, May 19, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. The budgets will head to referendum Thursday, May 28. Voting will take place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Revised Budget Sent to Referendum in Hebron

by Mike Thompson

Board of Finance members sharpened their pencils and went back to work last Thursday and crafted a new budget that, they hope, goes down more easily with the voters.

The finance board cut \$155,000 from the local Board of Education budget and \$75,000 from town government spending, and agreed to take \$110,000 from the town's fund balance, as it set about revising a proposed \$36.65 million 2015-16 budget that was shot down at referendum by a 586-482 tally two days earlier.

The referendum on the new \$36.38 million budget – an amount that reflects trimming the RHAM Board of Education made to its proposed budget Monday night – will head to referendum Tuesday, May 26.

The proposed budget now clocks in at \$621,000, or 1.74 percent, over current year spending.

The reductions leave the town government at \$8.89 million, a 2.54 percent, or \$220,000, increase over the current year – and they leave the local Board of Education budget at \$11.99 million, completely even with the school board's budget for the current year.

The Board of Finance also last Thursday agreed to take \$110,000 from the town's fund balance and put it into the revenue side of the budget, to pay for the 27th payroll. As Hebron pays its employees bi-weekly, every 11 years there winds up being an extra pay period in the year.

The finance board also last week became aware of an anticipated \$40,000 reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) due to this past winter's snowstorms, and the board agreed to put that in the revenue side of the 2015-16 budget as well.

Altogether, the spending cuts and the revenue additions made last week resulted in a

proposed mill rate of 36.00, a 0.25 mill increase from the current year. A mill is used to determine one's taxes, by multiplying the mill rate by their total assessments. One mill is equal to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property; thus, under the proposed mill rate of 36.00 and under the proposed mill rate of 32.89, a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$9,000 in taxes.

Speaking on the reductions made by his board, Board of Finance Chairman Mike Hazel said he was "hopeful" they're enough to get the budget passed. Hazel – who last week labeled the light turnout in the May 5 referendum an "embarrassment" – also suggested the reductions may send a message to those who didn't vote earlier.

"Hopefully this will be a little wake-up call to people who were maybe a little apathetic about voting," he said. "If you're passionate that we shouldn't have cut the budget, you should have had more people come out and vote."

Hazel predicted that a stepped-up turnout at the May 26 referendum "would likely get this passed."

Hazel also said this week he felt "the messaging from the voters was that any increase was not acceptable with the Board of Education." Not only is an enrollment decline projected for the next school year, some in town have also called for the school system to revise its administrative structure – including perhaps moving from a full-time superintendent to a part-time one.

As for whether the school board can weather the cut, Hazel said, "On an \$11.99 million budget, they should hopefully be able to find [\$155,000]."

While Board of Education Chairwoman

Maryanne Leichter said this week she "really felt we had put together a reasonable budget," she said she wasn't surprised by the Board of Finance's decision. "I had a sense it was going to come in" at a zero percent increase, she said.

"It was a really big cut, but they cut the town \$75,000," Leichter said. "We all have to make our cuts. Our constituents have spoken and said, hey, we have to do better, so we are."

Leichter said the board hadn't yet discussed places to cut to get to that \$155,000 – but said that, when it does, the choices it faces won't be easy.

"We'll probably have to make some very difficult decisions, I'm not going to kid on that," she said.

But Leichter was clear – she hopes the May 26 referendum does the trick.

"I'm hoping it will pass at zero percent," she said.

Like Leichter, Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt also wasn't surprised by the finance board's reductions.

"I had an indication it was going to be that amount because the voters really made a strong 'no' vote," Watt said, adding that the results of the additional advisory question on last week's ballot – in which 687 deemed the town budget too high to just 191 who deemed it too low – were "pretty clear."

While the selectmen won't make any final decisions on what to cut until after the May 26 referendum, Watt said the board would meet next Thursday, May 21, and discuss possible areas for reductions.

"Quite honestly, we cut everything pretty thin already," Watt said.

Watt praised the finance board for what it did on the revenue side of the budget, adding

in the \$110,000 from the fund balance and the \$40,000 anticipated FEMA reimbursement.

"They did the right thing to help out the taxpayers," Watt said.

Town Manager Andy Tierney said this week "the reason we felt comfortable" taking the \$110,000 from the fund balance is that the town recently received \$390,000 in Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant funds to help pay for bridge repair on Marjorie Circle. Tierney said the town had already budgeted that money for the repair before the STEAP award, so it put the money that had been budgeted into contingency.

Indeed, Watt said, "We have a very, very healthy fund balance."

To keep the 27th payroll issue from rearing its ugly head again in 11 years, Hazel this week suggested setting aside a small amount in the budget each year to act as "a payroll reserve in order to absorb this infrequent event," so that by the time the 11th year rolls around, the funds will already be there to cover the extra payroll.

However, Watt said the Board of Selectmen has directed Tierney to see if he could negotiate with town employees' unions – a process that may take up to a year – to see if the town can pay staff twice a month instead of biweekly. This would avoid the matter of the 27th payroll altogether.

Watt said he feels this may be a better solution because, if a tight year comes up, town officials may not necessarily want to set aside in the budget that one-eleventh for the payroll.

But, for the moment, all eyes aren't on 11 years from now. Rather, they're on 11 days from now – that May 26 referendum.

Voting will run from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St.

Cruz Denied Accelerated Rehabilitation in Hebron

by Mike Thompson

Published reports state former Hebron schools superintendent Eleanor Cruz's application for accelerated rehabilitation has been denied.

Accelerated rehabilitation is a special program available to nonviolent offenders who have been deemed unlikely to commit future crimes. If granted, the program could have eventually led to the dismissal of the charge against her.

Cruz, who was superintendent of Hebron schools from 2005-12, is facing a first-degree larceny charge, stemming from alleged misuse of funds during her time in town. Shortly after she left the district in December 2012 for a job as Plymouth schools chief, the Hebron Board of Education, prompted by concerns expressed by some staff members, investigated Cruz's spending habits, and alleged she received a number of unauthorized payments including money for insurance and gas reimbursements, and had also used the district's credit card to make unauthorized purchases amounting to around \$15,000.

The Hebron board hired a firm to conduct a forensic audit of the board's spending and alerted the state police to its findings. A lengthy investigation ensued – one that ultimately led to her arrest in August 2013.

Cruz was charged with first-degree larceny – a felony – for what the investigation determined to be \$6,286.36 in expenses that were personal in nature. After her arrest, the Plymouth school board placed her on paid administrative leave, and she eventually resigned.

After learning of Cruz's application for accelerated rehabilitation, the Hebron Board of Education met April 30 and voted 4-1 to send a letter to Rockville Superior Court formally objecting to Cruz's request. The letter – which stated the board was addressing the court partly "out of a sense of duty to the students and the taxpayers who were affected by these

crimes" – was read aloud during Cruz's hearing at the court last Friday, May 8, according to reports.

In the letter, Board of Education Chairwoman Maryanne Leichter writes, "The extent and nature of the financial crimes carried out by Ms. Cruz, together with her abuse of the trust placed in her by the board, the students, and the taxpayers, illustrate the serious nature of her offense."

Ultimately, the judge in the case agreed and denied Cruz's application, stating that "the nature of abuse of public trust" was too serious for the charges to be eventually dismissed, according to reports.

Speaking this week as to why the board wanted to send the letter to the court, Leichter said, "The board was concerned that the town had spent so much money bringing her forward to trial, and if she received" accelerated rehabilitation, she basically wouldn't have had any consequences for her actions.

"Wrong is wrong," Leichter added, "and we wanted to send that message loud and clear."

Cruz is next due in court June 19, but Leichter said the Board of Education "is not going to be involved anymore. We basically said what we've needed to say, and the judge agreed with us."

But Connolly, the lone board member to vote against sending the letter, said this week she felt the board has already spent more than \$65,000 in legal fees on this matter.

"I have faith in the justice system, and my main concern is that the money that was spent on legal fees could be used on textbooks and other items," she said.

If someone you trusted broke into your home and stole \$15,000 worth of items, "You would notify the authorities but you would not necessarily spend four times the amount [pursuing the case]," Connolly said. "That goes beyond justice."

Cruz's attorney John Gesmonde, did not return calls for comment.

East Hampton Police News

4/18: Jamie Suchoski, 18, of 66 Haddam Neck Rd., was issued a ticket for possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, East Hampton Police said.

4/24: John Pollard, 55, of 105 Falls Rd., Moodus, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle without insurance, defective windshield and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

4/24: Peter Ereshena Jr., 45, of 467 Moodus Rd., was issued a summons for failure to drive right and operating a motor vehicle under suspension.

4/25: Jessica A. Way, 32, of 100 Young St., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

4/27: Rae Dunn, 58, of 31 Jacobson Farms Rd., was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

4/29: Fernando Dossantos, 47, of 85 Linden St., No. 2, Everett, Mass., was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

4/29: Paul A Distefano, 52, of 64 West High St., was issued a summons for shoplifting,

(sixth-degree larceny), police said.

5/1: Richard Le, 20, of 809 Main St., Portland, was issued a summons for speeding and passing in a no-passing Zone, police said.

5/1: Glenn Meeker, 47, of 1271 Washington St., Middletown, was issued a summons for operating a vehicle with insufficient insurance, police said.

5/2: Aaron Bowser, 43, of 153 Hog Hill Rd., was arrested for driving under the influence and failure to drive right, police said.

5/4: David Yarlott, 38, of 1 Wild Rose Ct., Cromwell, was arrested pursuant to an active arrest warrant held by the East Hampton Police Department, and charged with criminal violation of a standing criminal protective order, police said.

5/6: James J. Ghezzi, 59, of 5 So. Main St., was issued a summons for speeding and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

5/6: Alexander P. Welcher, 21, of 480 Allen St., New Britain, turned himself in pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest stemming from an incident that occurred June 7, 2014. Welcher was charged with failure to respond, police said.

Colchester Police News

5/4: State Police said Phillip Taskey, 24, of 17 Cherokee Court, Cromwell, was arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny.

5/5: State Police said Vanessa Idelfonso, 26, of 16 Woods Dr., Norwich, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny and illegal use of a credit card.

5/5: State Police said Lisa Karvoski-Grasso, 48, of 438 Lebanon Ave., was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

5/6: State Police said Gerald Young, 79, of 127 Brush Hill Rd., Lyme, was arrested and

charged with failure to verify address as a sex offender.

5/7: State Police said Ryan Richardson, 21, of 39 Phelps Rd., Marlborough, was arrested and charged with fourth-degree larceny and illegal use of a credit card.

5/10: State Police said they are investigating after two signs were tampered with outside Abundant Life Church on Standish Road. Police said a speed limit sign and a Church of Abundant Life sign were pulled out of the ground. Anyone with information can call Trooper Christopher Briganti at 860-465-5400.

Andover Police News

5/7: State Police said Scott Brown, 49, of 340 Tolland Rd., Manchester, was arrested and charged with DUI, driving in improper lane, and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

5/9: State Police said they are investigating after a car was broken into and items were stolen at Long Hill Park between 4 and 9 p.m. Anyone with information can call Trooper Stephen Krause at 860-465-5400.

Obituaries

Colchester

Margaret "Marge" Curtis

Margaret "Marge" Curtis, 95, of Frederick, Md., and formerly of North Westchester, widow of the late Arthur W. Curtis, passed away in her residence at Homewood at Frederick on Sunday, April 26. Born June 23, 1919, in Hartford, she was a daughter of the late Henry and Mary (Zelanski) Hille.



Margaret was raised in Hartford and was a 1933 graduate of Saint Peter's Parish School and a 1937 graduate of Hartford Public High School. On Oct. 13, 1942, she wed Arthur at St. Mary Church in South Coventry, sharing 62 years of marriage before he passed away June 13, 2005.

She was active in town affairs in Colchester through her involvement with American Red Cross blood drives, as a member of the Republican Women's Club, as a Founding Member of the Ponemah Club of Westchester, and through her service on the Cragin Memorial Library Board of Trustees. Margaret was also a member of the Colchester, Marlborough and Barefoot Bay (Fla.) Artists Guilds, and a Life Member of the Isabella McCosh Society at Princeton University. Margaret attended both St. John Fisher Parish in Marlborough and St. Andrew Parish in Colchester, where she was a parishioner before moving to Maryland in 2009. As well, during her years in North Westchester, she and Arthur were active with the Westchester Congregational Church. In her spare time, she enjoyed painting, playing the organ, gardening, needlework of all types, and cooking.

Most importantly, she was ever devoted to and proud of her family, the family homestead that Arthur built, and the home and lives they created together. Even after her move to Frederick, her love for her home in North Westchester never diminished. She will be greatly missed.

She is survived by five children and their spouses, Arthur W. Curtis, III, of Bellaire, Mich., Malcolm and Suzanne Curtis of Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J., Owen and Lela Curtis of Alexandria, Va., Margaret and Edward Cornely of Frederick, Md., and Jonathan Curtis and Thomas Cunningham of Raleigh, N.C.; seven grandchildren (and their spouses), Drew, Toby and Annie Curtis, Adam (partner, Jodi Arata) and Lara Curtis, and Kieran Cornely (Tanya) and Meghan Cornely Hansen (Scott); four great-grandchildren, Quinn, Olivia, Sean, and Grady Cornely; a brother and sister-in-law, Robert and Barbara Hille of Heath, Texas, and Cynthia Curtis of Cheboygan, Mich.; beloved nieces and nephews; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by two siblings and their spouses, George and Edna Hille and Connie (Hille) and Robert Speicher.

Calling hours will be from 6-8 p.m. Friday, June 12, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 13, directly at St. Andrew Roman Catholic Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will follow in the Ponemah Cemetery, River Road, No. Westchester.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks you to consider donations in her memory to one of the following: Friends of Cragin Memorial Library, P.O. Box 68, Colchester, CT 06415, Homewood at Crumland Farms Benevolent Fund (Frederick, MD <http://homewood.com/foundation>), or Saint Peter Church Bell Fund (106 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Joseph Harold Pride

Joseph Harold Pride, 70, of Colchester, passed away Thursday, May 7, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. He was born on Dec. 10, 1944 in Portland, Maine.

A funeral home service was held Thursday, May 14, at Church and Allen Funeral Home, 136 Sachem St., Norwich.

Portland

Peter F. Zaborowski

Peter F. Zaborowski, 75, of Portland, husband of the late Jean T. Zaborowski passed away Saturday, May 9, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late Frank and Anna (Kitchilinski) Zaborowski.

Born Dec. 3, 1939, in Meriden, he lived in Portland for the last 42 years. He worked as a machinist at Standard Knapp for many years until his retirement. He was very active in Portland Town activities/politics, the Portland Food Bank, member of the Mattabassett Camping Association, and enjoyed fishing, woodworking, camping and gardening.

He is survived by his sons, Steven Zaborowski of Hope Valley, R.I., and George Stevenson Jr. of Portland; daughters, Christine Lazerow of Pepperell, Mass., Laura Graham of Moodus, and Lisa Covington of Meriden; a brother, Francis Zaborowski of West Bath, Maine; a sister, Elizabeth Aitken of Meriden; eight grandchildren, Alyssa Homstead and Hannah Lazerow, Rachel and Ryan Graham, James and Leah Covington, Rachel O'Connor and Emily Stevenson; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by a brother, Paul Zaborowski.

Funeral services will be held today, May 15, with a Mass at 10 a.m. at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial will be in Trinity Cemetery, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice 28 Crescent St Middletown, CT 06457.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net. He will remain in our hearts forever.

Colchester

Joann Cordova

Joann Cordova, 58, of Colchester went home to be with the Lord, surrounded by her loving family, to which she was truly devoted.

Joann endured a long and courageous battle with cancer, she was an inspiration to all who knew her through the faith and courage she demonstrated throughout her long struggle.

Joann is survived by her two sons, David Cordova Jr. and his wife Jessica and Michael Cordova and his fiancée Dina Cardella; her two grandchildren, Austin and MaKenzie Cordova; her four sisters, Dottie Sweet and her husband Ed, Judy Arcari, Nancy Abell and her husband Bob, Carol Beckers; a brother, Robert Butler; her father's wife, Gladys Butler; and aunt Pauline Butler; as well as several nieces and nephews and her church family from Abundant Life in Colchester.

Joann was predeceased by her parents, Irene and Alonzo Butler; her husband, David Cordova Sr.; and a grandson, Dylan Cordova.

Family and friends may call at the Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St., Rocky Hill, CT 06067 today, May 15, from 6-8 p.m. A funeral service will be held at Abundant Life in Colchester Saturday, May 16, at 9 a.m. Everyone attending the service is asked to meet directly at the church. Burial will immediately follow at the Rose Hill Memorial Park in Rocky Hill.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make a donation in Joann's name to the North Pavilion 11, Nursing Staff, Smilow Cancer Center, 35 Park St., New Haven, CT 06519.

East Hampton

Gary James Cook

Gary James Cook, 53, of Plainfield, formerly of East Hampton, died Sunday, May 10, at Hartford Hospital. Born Oct. 19, 1961, in Woonsocket, R.I., he was the son of the late James H. and Shirley A. (Boisvert) Cook Jr.

Gary had lived in East Hampton for most of his life before moving to Plainfield two years ago. He had worked at Connecticut Yankee Nuclear Power Plant for many years and then in construction.

Gary is survived by his loving daughter, Katelyn Cook of Plainfield; his partner, Jessica Cramer of Plainfield; his two sisters, Janice Lavoie and Cynthia McDonald, both of Massachusetts; and several nieces and a nephew.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Thursday, May 14. A graveside service will be held in the Cook family Cemetery 2035 Mendon Rd. Woonsocket, R.I., today, May 15, at noon.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Louise Whaley

Louise (Fargo) Whaley, 72 of Middletown, formerly of Portland, wife of the late George B. Whaley III, passed away Monday, May 11, at Middlesex Hospital. She was the daughter of the late Clarence and Marion (Mecteau) Fargo.

Born June 11, 1942, in Hartford, she lived in Portland and East Hampton until moving to Middletown 15 years ago. She worked as a home health aide for Middlesex Hospital for many years. She was also a member of the Church of St. Mary in Portland.

She leaves her sons, William Whaley of Cromwell and Stephen Whaley and his wife, Lynda of Ledyard; a sister, Dorothy Horan of Wesley Chapel, Fla.; grandchildren, Ryan and Cassie Whaley; nieces, Danielle and Nicole and nephew, Michael; and several cousins.

Funeral services were held Thursday, May 14, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday morning, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

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

East Hampton

Donna Jean Dickenson

Donna Jean "Peaches" Dickenson, 61, of East Hampton and Willimantic, died Sunday, May 10, at her sister's home in Willimantic, where she was cared for during the last stages of her illness. Born Nov. 20, 1953, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Robert and Mary (Cole) Dickenson.

Donna had worked at the Travelers Insurance Company before her illness. Donna was raised in East Hampton and had also worked in the Marlborough American Legion for many years.

She is survived by her three brothers, Patrick Dickenson of Florida, William Dickenson and his partner Liz of East Hampton, Robert Dickenson and his partner Jessica of Middletown; two sisters, Debbie Bouchard and her husband Ed of Willimantic, Donita Dickenson of Hartford; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, May 16, at 10 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Friends may call from 9 a.m. until the time of the service. Burial will follow in the family plot, where Donna will be buried with her mother and father.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Thomas Valk Sr.

Thomas Valk Sr., 68, of Portland, husband of Candy (Binnington) Valk, passed away Monday, May 11, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late Henry and Catherine Valk.

Born Sept. 27, 1946, in Middletown, he lived in Portland for all of his life. He was an union electrician for many years until his retirement. He was a member of the IBEW Local 35, the Middletown Elks Lodge 771, the Rev Masters Auto Club and was involved with Portland Dukes Football and Cub Scouting in Portland in his younger years.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Thomas Valk Jr. and his wife Dody, a daughter, Lisa (Alicia) Currier and her husband Scott, all of Portland; brothers Robert Valk of Tolland and Timothy Valk of Warwick, R.I.; six grandchildren who he enjoyed spending time with, Bree, Brenna, Thomas, and Tess Currier, Heidi and Amanda Valk. He also leaves behind his aunts Gert Gagnon and Theresa Sinkiewicz and his uncle Jack Valk, and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

The family wishes to thank the staff and volunteers at Middlesex Hospital Hospice for their outstanding care.

Services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 or made to a charity of the donor's choice.

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

Colchester

Edward S. Laput Jr.

Edward S. Laput Jr., 72, of Colchester, husband of Bonnie Bombaci Laput for over 49 years, passed away Sunday, May 10. He was born April 13, 1943, in Meriden, to the late Edward S. and Eileen (Hinman) Laput. He graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School and attended Ward's School of Electronics and the University of Hartford.

Ed worked for Algonquin Gas Transmission Company /Duke Energy for 26 years and retired as an area superintendent. He was also a member of the Call Before You Dig Board of Directors.

Ed was a loving husband and an amazing father. His family was always his first priority. He coached Colchester Little League and Pony League baseball for 11 years and he was an assistant scoutmaster for 11 years.

His interest in genealogy brought him to the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown, where he became a volunteer and a member of the Board of Trustees. His passion became the cemetery project known as the Ed Laput Collection; an effort to document and photograph every headstone in every cemetery in the State of Connecticut. Ed's goal for the project was to help other people, and his happiness came from knowing that his efforts preserved history and made it easier for relatives to locate their ancestors' final resting places. With the help of Gene Gumbs and a group of dedicated volunteers, over 975 cemeteries have been completed.

He is survived by a son, Steven Laput and his wife Charlotte of Southington, and a daughter, Nicole Laput Sblendorio and her husband Sam of Haddam. He leaves his sisters, Frederica Zalewski and Denise Laput of Middletown; a niece, Michelle Pallotti of Suffield; and special friends Kathleen Didato Kovel, William Kovel and Louis LaPila.

The funeral was held Wednesday, May 13, from the Coughlin-Lastrina Funeral Home, 491 High St., Middletown, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Pius X Church that morning. Burial was in the family plot in St. Sebastian Cemetery, Middlefield. Friends called at the funeral home Tuesday, May 12.

Memorial contributions may be made in Ed's name to the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, 383 Main Ave., 5th Floor, Norwalk, CT 06851 or the Godfrey Memorial Library, 134 Newfield St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Marlborough

Christine Lescoe

Christine (Driscoll) Lescoe, 89, of Simsbury, beloved wife of the late Roger P. Lescoe, died Thursday, May 7, at Marlborough Health Care Center.

She was born Feb. 16, 1926, in Jewett City, and had lived in Bloomfield prior to moving to Simsbury 50 years ago. She was a graduate of Forsythe School of Dental Hygiene where she received her associate's degree.

Mrs. Lescoe was dental hygienist in the Simsbury Public School System prior to her retirement. Christine was a member of St. Mary's Church and Women's Auxiliary, the Hopmeadow Country Club and volunteered at the Second Chance Thrift Shop. She enjoyed golf, gourmet cooking and playing bridge. She is survived by her three sons, David Lescoe of Boston, James Lescoe of Raleigh, N.C., and Robert Lescoe and his wife Elizabeth of East Hampton; her brother, John P. Driscoll of Willimantic; her sister, Rosemary Einstman of Nashville, Tenn.; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her daughter, Mary Kay Lescoe.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, May 12, at St. Mary's Church, 942 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury. Burial followed in the Simsbury Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Mary's Church, P.O. Box 575, Simsbury, CT 06070.

Visit Christine's "Book of Memories" at vincentfuneralhome.com for online condolences.

More Obituaries on Following Page

Hebron

Richard D. Gale



Richard D. Gale, formerly of Hebron and Endicott, N.Y., passed away of natural causes at the age of 93 Friday, Feb. 27, surrounded by his family.

Dick (as he was known by his many friends) was born in Providence, R.I., to Frank Henry and Janet (Goulburn) Gale in 1921 and was recently predeceased by his wife of 67 years, Eleanor F. (Baxter) Gale. Dick was the proud father of his children, Janet, Mary, David, George and proud grandfather of his grandsons.

Dick and Eleanor met while both were serving in the Navy during World War II and were lifetime members of the American Legion. Their joint interest led them to be active participants in the local and Dunkeswell, England preservation of B-24s in which Dick flew over 60 missions as a crew member of Fleet Air Wing 7. Dick attended the University of Rhode Island and after returning from war completed his bachelor's degree at Clark University in Massachusetts. With his young family he moved to NH to attend Plymouth University where he received a master's degree in education.

Dick Gale began his lifelong career in education by first teaching in and administering one-room school houses in Milton and Deerfield, N.H.; then serving as school principal while he and Eleanor raised their young family of four in Hebron; followed by a move to Endicott, N.Y., where he served as principal and later as an assistant to the superintendent until his retirement.

Continuously throughout his life, Dick stayed abreast of national and international trends in education; presenting at state and national conferences; contributing to journal articles; leading workshops on leadership; and teaching summers at Hampton Institute in Norfolk, Va., and Washington State College. Dick Gale was an early contributor to a book and to the movement supporting the educational theory of teacher rotation, which provided students and teachers with multi-year experiences in the same classroom; he was a consummate advocate for young children and followed all the critical renewed interest in early childhood education; and maintained a strong perspective on what "learning" means – given his near 100-year experience.

After living a continuously active, productive and engaged lifetime, Dick Gale will long be remembered by his family members and friends for his love of outdoor adventures; the White Mountains; for completing the Long Trail with his son; for solo hiking; climbing Mount Rainer; and his long history of enjoying a good round of tennis with colleagues and friends. Dick not only enjoyed collecting tennis rackets but was drawn to their history as a member of the Tennis Collectors of America and had continued interest in the Draper Maynard Tennis Museum in Plymouth, N.H. Dick will be remembered by his children and friends for stories of his glorious high school days spent at Northfield Mount Hermon School in Northfield, Mass.

Dick Gale will also be remembered for his enthusiasm for life, engagement with community issues, and lifetime interest in the education of young children; for long lists of "things to do" and for always planning ahead.

Dick Gale's celebration of life was held in New Hampshire, where he was buried alongside his wife, Eleanor Gale.

Portland

Sandra Frazier

Sandra (Kean) Frazier, 73, of Middletown, died Wednesday, May 6, at Midstate Medical Center. She was born in Portland, daughter of Santina (Faila) Kean and the late Donald Kean Sr. Prior to her retirement, Sandra was a cook for over 35 years at Pizza Palace and also Southside.

Sandra is survived by her daughters, Karen Donegan and her husband Tom of Cheshire, Katherine Fillmore and her husband Don of Middletown; her brother, Gary Kean of Middlebury; seven grandchildren, Jessica Martin of Cheshire, James Martin Jr. of Middletown, Daniel Fillmore of Cromwell, Alexandra Fillmore of Middletown, Brittany Cavallaro of Naugatuck and Ashley Donegan of Cheshire; two great-grandchildren, Anthony Martin and Joey Cavallaro V; her companion, William Campbell of Cromwell; and friend of 38 years, Laura Rocha.

She was predeceased by her brother, Donald Kean Jr.

A funeral service was held Monday, May 11, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Friends called Monday prior to the service, at Biega Funeral Home.

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

Colchester

Eva May August



Eva May August, 91, of Colchester, widow of the late Walter J. August, passed away Friday afternoon, May 8, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Nov. 23, 1923, in Wethersfield, she was a daughter of the late Austin and Hattie May (Boyce) Harlow.

Mrs. August had worked as a clerk for Aetna for many years before her retirement. She was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester and a longtime member of the Ladies' Guild. In her spare time, she enjoyed gardening, fishing and playing baseball.

She leaves two children, Patricia Hagan and her husband, Robert of Colchester and Walter A. August and his wife Lori of Manchester; two grandsons, John Hagan of Hamden and Brian Hagan and his wife, Kimberly of Colchester; two great grandchildren, Madeline and Liam Hagan; two sisters, Lucy Shorey of Decatur, Ill., and Harriet Gagnon of Lyman, S.C.; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her loving husband of 40 years, who died in 1986, she was predeceased by six siblings.

The family received guests Monday, May 11, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, May 12, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will be private in the New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, CT Chapter, 2075 Silas Deane Hwy., Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Rita J. Bourque

Rita J. Bourque, 95, of Colchester, formerly of Glastonbury, passed away peacefully Wednesday, May 13. Rita was born in New Bedford, Mass., June 1, 1919, a daughter of the late Felix and Amanda Belanger. She was the beloved wife of the late Arthur J. Bourque.

Rita was a loving and devoted wife, mother and grandmother who adored her family. She enjoyed fishing, camping, crocheting, and was a member of the snowshoe club. She was always happiest spending time with family and friends.

Rita will be dearly missed by her family: son Ronald Bourque and his wife Francine of Lebanon, and the light of her life, her cherished granddaughter Tessa Stowe and her husband David of Glastonbury; sister Georgette Belanger; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents and her husband, Rita is predeceased by her siblings, Adelard, Ernest and Roseanna Belanger.

Friends and family are invited to attend a period of visitation today, May 15, from 5-7 p.m., at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury. Services will begin at the funeral home at 9 a.m. Saturday, May 16, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m. in St. Paul Church, 2577 Main St., Glastonbury. Entombment will follow in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield.

To leave an online condolence, visit glastonburyfuneral.com.

Hebron

Sister Mary Ann DeFrancesco

Sister Mary Ann DeFrancesco (Dominica Marie) of the Sisters of Mercy, former pastoral associate at Church of the Holy Family in Hebron, died unexpectedly Monday, May 11, at her home in Madison. Born in Hartford Dec. 21, 1939, of the late Dominic and Theresa (Daverson) DeFrancesco and raised in New Britain, Sister "Dee" entered the Sisters of Mercy on Sept. 2, 1957 and professed her vows on June 26, 1960.

After receiving her B.A. degree from Diocesan Teachers College, Madison, Sister taught for 16 years in several parish elementary schools throughout the Hartford Archdiocese prior to transitioning into the ministries of Retreat and Spiritual Direction. She did advance studies at Holy Name College, Calif., and received master's degrees in both English and Pastoral ministry from St. Joseph College now University of St. Joseph in preparation.

During her last two decades in ministry, Sister Dee became spiritual director at various centers: Blessing Place in Louisiana, Francis House of Prayer New Jersey, Emmaus Spiritual Life Center, Uncasville, and Mercy Center at Madison. Before retirement she served as pastoral associate at Church of the Holy Family, Hebron, and ministered tirelessly in Pastoral Care for Hospice in Southeastern Connecticut.

In retirement, Sister Dee volunteered countless hours of ministry to her Sisters in residence at St. Mary Home. Known to all as "Dee," Sister was of that same informal, welcoming, comfortable and comforting disposition. Everyone who crossed Dee's path was greeted with kind and encouraging words, giving of herself tirelessly in service to others. Love of Mercy Center and its environs, naturally drew Dee outdoors, to work the garden soil, to harvest its yield, to contemplate, to read and to practice her special gift, painting with acrylics. She abounded in creative talent, was attentive to both family and friends, planning fun adventures, joyful ways to keep them close. Universally esteemed and loved by her sisters in Community, Dee will be sorely missed.

Sister Mary Ann is survived by her brothers Francis and husband Leon O'Hart, Michael and his wife Claire DeFrancesco, nephew Joseph, niece Andrea, several close cousins, and her community of the Sisters of Mercy, especially Sisters Mary Daly and Ann McGovern with whom she lived.

A Mass of Resurrection will be celebrated Monday, May 18, at 6 p.m., at St. Mary Home, 2021 Albany Ave., West Hartford. Burial will take place Tuesday, May 19, at 9 a.m., in St. Mary Cemetery.

Those wishing to make a donation in Sister's memory are asked to consider Sisters of Mercy, 55 E. Cedar St. Newington, CT 06111.

Sheehan-Hilborn-Breen Funeral Home, West Hartford has care of the arrangements. Online condolences may be made at SheehanHilbornBreen.com.