

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 40, Number 36

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

January 8, 2016



Court of Honor... Colchester Boy Scout Troop 109 held its Winter Court of Honor Dec. 22, for scouts that achieved rank advancement and scouts who completed merit badges. Among the honorees was Matthew Lattman, who earned First Class rank for demonstrating skills that make it possible to live in the outdoors for weeks rather than hours. Matthew is shown here with his dad Charlie Lattman (right) and scoutmaster Jeff Tassmer.

Fatal Overdoses Prompt Community Response

by Elizabeth Regan

Three suspected heroin overdoses within a seven-hour span over the New Year's holiday in East Hampton have renewed efforts within the community to fight an epidemic of opioid dependency sweeping the region, state and country.

The weekend overdoses left two dead.

The first fatal overdose was reported at approximately 9 p.m. on New Year's Eve, according to an East Hampton Police Department press release. Officers responding to the North Main Street address found a 37-year-old woman unconscious and a 30-year-old man in what police described as an "altered mental status." The woman was pronounced dead at the scene; the man was treated at Middlesex Hospital and released.

The second death was pronounced on Main Street after officers responded at approximately 2:30 a.m. on New Year's Day, police said. The victim was a 30-year-old man.

There was evidence at both scenes of heroin overdose, according to police – but there was no indication that the incidents were related or that the heroin came from the same source.

Chief Sean Cox said police did not find any connection between the East Hampton cases and the lethal strain of heroin that contributed to multiple fatalities in western Massachusetts during the same timeframe.

State Rep. Melissa Ziobron, a Republican representing East Hampton, East Haddam and part of Colchester, started working within days of the fatal overdoses to organize a community forum on drug abuse. She said the Feb. 19 panel discussion will include Cox and a representative from the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, among others.

Ziobron, who co-sponsored legislation to reduce the accessibility of prescription painkillers and to make the overdose antidote naloxone more readily available, said she had already been planning to address the issue locally but decided to act fast in the wake of the two deaths.

She said the growing problem requires a "kitchen sink" approach that will need to include community stakeholders ranging from the drug and alcohol prevention council to the police department to businesses.

"I'm not looking to blame parents. I'm not looking to blame addicts," Ziobron said. "What I'm looking to do is create a conversation on a topic that quite frankly no one wants to talk about."

East Hampton Local Prevention Council Against Substance Abuse Chairwoman Irene Kuck said the discussion will be a good starting point.

"I think a big part of the problem is secrecy,

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Early Childhood Center Educates the 'Whole Child'

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Hebron's youngest residents don't have to travel very far to be part of a quality preschool education. In fact, such an opportunity can be found in town, at the Hebron Early Childhood Center at Gilead Hill School.

Made up of two half-day and two full-day sessions – including one funded with grant money awarded from the state Department of Education School Readiness Program – the Gilead Hill preschool program is a point of pride for those involved, particularly since it received national accreditation last year from the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Gilead Hill School Principal Eric Brody shared, "Staff worked extremely hard to get that accreditation, and it says a lot about the quality of the program."

Chris Lapsis, who teaches the full-day school readiness session, added while private preschool programs tend to seek NAEYC accreditation as their "gold stamp," when it comes to public preschools it's less common.

"It's the exception not the rule," Brody explained.

And in order to garner that "gold stamp," Lapsis said the program went through a three-year process involving a self-evaluation, an application and a self-assessment, meeting candidacy requirements, and the required criteria during a site visit.

"We did very well," Lapsis stated. "Our scores were extremely high and we don't like to brag about it but we are very proud of our scores and the work that we did – and the work that everyone did."

The Hebron Early Childhood Center met all of the requirements and criteria, and the program received 97 percent for each of the two site visits and 100 percent for nine of 10 program standards including relationships, teaching, assessment, health, families, community relationships and physical environment.

"It's a long process and we were rewarded with the accreditation," Brody added. "And again, I think it really speaks to the quality of the program that we have – that seal of approval."

And the philosophy of this "quality program," available to children in town turning 3 years old prior to Dec. 31 of the enrolled school year, is learning through play.

"There's a philosophy that a lot of the learning is derived through play," Brody stated. "On the surface it looks kind of just like kids playing and having fun but there really is a very, very specific plan to the development of the centers and to the types of skills and things that the teachers are looking to get from the students."

The program follows Connecticut's Early Learning and Development Standards, and

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Preschool teacher Rachel Thayer (right) looks on with paraprofessional Marilyn Riftow (left) as the children in Thayer's morning preschool class at the Hebron Early Childhood Center participate in circle time. Thayer's class is one of four – two half-day and two full-day – preschool sessions offered through the center.

Fatal Overdoses cont. from Front Page

shame, and that it's not treated as a disease; that addiction is something bad and therefore you try to sweep it under the rug," Kuck said.

She said the volunteer substance abuse prevention organization, which was revived about 10 years ago after falling to the wayside, is again facing dwindling membership. There are about six active members.

The group receives grant funding through the Middletown Substance Abuse Action Council to sponsor speaking engagements on topics such as marijuana, awareness events surrounding alcohol and drunk driving, and initiatives to promote healthy choices among children through partnerships with the school system and Epoch Arts, a local nonprofit.

But when it comes to heroin, Kuck said "we really have not addressed that much as a community and even as a local prevention council."

The group had worked with East Hampton police to hold prescription drug take-back events as a way to remove unused, expired or unwanted drugs from circulation, but stopped when a change in federal law made it more difficult to dispose of the drugs.

"We definitely need some new faces and new ideas and energy," she said.

Cox reiterated the need for a holistic approach to address an issue that extends beyond law enforcement. A truly collaborative approach must include education about drug use and the resources available to help, he said.

He said the 15-member department, which used to have a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program before funding fell through, is hard-pressed to focus on prevention. According to Cox, officers must first attend to responsibilities like traffic enforcement and their role as first responders in medical emergencies.

"We're doing everything we can with the limited resources we have, realizing we're an exclusively uniformed patrol service. Much of our preventative measures come from traffic stops," Cox said.

He said he's been tasked by the East Hampton Town Council with examining options for increased drug enforcement, including access to the Connecticut State Police Statewide Narcotics Task Force and the possible use of a police canine, to be submitted as part of his budget proposal for the 2016-17 municipal budget.

"I've reached out to some area agencies to see what they are doing and to see what the associated costs are with that. At the end of the day, we have to look at [whether it will] fit within our budgetary restrictions," he said.

The most recent full-year statistics from the chief medical examiner's office reveal 325 fatal heroin-related overdoses in 2014. Deaths in which heroin played a part are projected to reach 387 when 2015 numbers are released in the coming months.

In East Hampton, there were three deadly overdoses involving heroin in 2014, according to the chief medical examiner's office. The deaths occurred among one woman and two men ranging in age from 29 to 44.

There was one fatal heroin-related overdose in 2013 and one in 2012. The victims were men, aged 32 and 45.

While last year's numbers are incomplete, the chief medical examiner's office released the numbers of accidental drug overdoses from

January through the end of June. There were no heroin overdoses in East Hampton during the first half of the year, though there were two fatal overdoses involving other opioids.

Opioids are a class of drugs for pain relief that includes heroin as well as morphine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, and codeine. Experts cite the overprescription of opioids as one of the drivers behind heroin addiction.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found a four-fold increase in the sale of such prescription drugs between 1999 and 2010.

But prescriptions can be hard to get once patients become addicted — and they're expensive. Heroin is often more readily available and less costly.

From 2001 to 2013, there was a five-fold increase in the total number of heroin overdoses, according to the CDC.

In 2015, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy signed a law — the same one co-sponsored by Ziobron — to make naloxone, the overdose antidote commonly known as Narcan, available by prescription at licensed pharmacies. That means anyone who is concerned about the overdose risk of a loved one can carry the antidote and use it on that person, if necessary, to immediately reverse the effects of opiate-based narcotics.

Dora B. Sciro, commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, said at the bill-signing, held in New London last summer, that expanding access to naloxone is a significant step forward.

"This really matters because family and friends are on the front lines of first responders, and now the antidote will be more widely available to them," Sciro said.

Prior legislation to grant civil and criminal liability protection to those who administer naloxone in good faith opened the door for all first responders, not just paramedics, to administer the antidote in 2014. By the end of October, the same month the law went into effect, all Connecticut State Police troopers were carrying intranasal naloxone kits.

Cox said police officers in the East Hampton department have been trained to use naloxone and should be carrying it within the next few weeks.

He said he did not believe naloxone was used in any of the weekend's overdoses.

"More likely than not, there was evidence that the person had already passed away," he said.

Naloxone has been in use by paramedics at Middlesex Hospital since 1987. The drug was used to revive seven overdose patients in East Hampton in 2015, according to a hospital spokeswoman. That's a marked decrease from 2014, when it was used on 20 patients.

Naloxone was used 12 times in 2013 and 15 times in both 2012 and 2011.

New state law also addresses overprescription of opioids by requiring health practitioners who are prescribing more than a 72-hour supply to check the patient's history to see if he or she has received the opiates from other prescribers.

The East Hampton community forum on opioids will be held Friday, Feb. 19, at 6:30 p.m., in the library at East Hampton Middle School, 19 Childs Rd. The next meeting of the East Hampton Local Prevention Council Against Substance Abuse will be Wednesday, Jan. 27, from 3-4 p.m., at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St.

Center Educates cont. from Front Page

Lapsis said there are "about 150 things we're looking at and incorporating into our day."

He added, "So really the focus here is play, but also educating the whole child. That is really what's important."

Elaborating on that play-through-learning, Lapsis explained what some of the different activities set up in his class the week before winter break taught the children. At one center candy canes were being made out of pipe cleaners and colored beads — which taught the kids about ABA patterns.

Some kids were making Christmas trees out of handprints, which Lapsis said taught them about subtraction to make the correct shape: starting with four handprints, taking one away to make three etc.

In another area children were writing letters to Santa, and, Lapsis said, "instead of saying 'okay, tell me what you want to write and I'll write it' or 'you're going to spell these words'" the kids are allowed to write independently — which Lapsis admitted often results in scribbles.

"But they're writing," Lapsis said. "And often times we don't see that anymore because we're so focused on 'here, write your name' or 'spell this word' and this is really a developmental step — that's writing to them. They're writing messages."

Proving his point, one of the writers came up to Lapsis a minute later to show him her letter.

"What does it say?" he asked.

"I love you Santa!" she replied, beaming at her page of scribbles.

Lindsay London, who started teaching one of the preschool sessions this year, also elaborated on some of the different centers (the kids are often asked individually which center they'd like to go to, allowing them to follow their in-

terests). For instance, the block center helps with developing pre-math skills, spatial awareness and numbers sense; the dramatic play center allows for cooperative play, teamwork, and the chance for children to make sense of some of the different roles they see, such as parent and teacher.

"Pretty much every center develops fine motor skills, and of course they all contribute to creative development as well" she said, adding "every center contributes to the holistic growth of the children."

Speaking on the program as a whole, London stated, "It's an amazing program. ... It just has such a positive impact on the children. And now that I've been in this program I don't want my daughter to go anywhere else. Nowhere else could match up in my mind, so that just kind of speaks to the program. These kids are getting huge advantages for kindergarten readiness."

Brody concluded, "This is a great program we have here. We really want to try to get as many kids as we can to come and take part."

"These are our future students and we want to make sure we're developing a program that's going to not only appeal to their needs, but also keep our kids here...we want a really rich, diverse program that's going to keep our Hebron kids here in Hebron. So then we can get them into the schools and parents will say 'wow, these really are great schools!' and looking district-wide, we really do have a lot to offer."

To learn more about the Hebron Early Childhood Center including the application process, go to hebron.k12.ct.us and select "Gilead Hill" under "Schools," then "PreK." An open house on the program will also be held Wednesday, Feb. 24, from 6-7:30 p.m., at Gilead Hill School, 580 Gilead St.

New Conservation and Development Plan Released in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

The Planning and Zoning Commission has released its proposed vision for preserving the town's "community spirit" over the next 10 years while enhancing the ways in which people live and do business.

The 2016-2026 Plan of Conservation and Development awaits final approval by the commission following a public hearing scheduled for March 3. The draft is available on the town website, portlandct.org, and at the town hall.

At approximately 120 pages, the two-part document is an update – by the zoning commission, town staff and Avon-based planning and consulting firm Planimetrics – of a plan adopted in 2006. Planimetrics consulted on the 2006 version as well.

State law requires each municipality to submit a plan detailing its goals for land use, from residential and recreational to commercial and industrial. The plan must be revised every 10 years in order for the town to qualify for discretionary state funding sources, such as the Small Town Economic Assistance Program.

The new plan was informed by compliments and criticisms put forth by some of the town's 9,508 residents. The overall population is dominated by those age 55 and older, according to the report, and the demographic trend is projected to continue for at least the next 20 or 30 years.

A group of residents at a community meeting guided by Planimetrics President Glenn Chalder last spring said they were "proud" of the town's waterfront sites, the village center and community hubs like the schools and library. When asked what elements of town they were "sorry" about, they cited the current appearance of the Riverfront, the Elmcrest campus and the town's industrial areas.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the revised plan reinforces progress already being made.

"Those are all things that we are working on," Bransfield said. "I think the commission and our consultants and all of the input they got from townspeople make it an excellent living document that accurately reflects many of the things we're trying to do."

In addition to addressing issues mentioned most often with pride and regret by residents during the community forum, the plan directs the zoning commission to take a close look at the industrial zone at the foot of the Arrigoni Bridge as a way to encourage "appropriate and compatible" development - including the possible extension of water and sewer services to the area.

The plan also recommends the addition of a Portland presence to the 50-mile Air Line Trail that slices through eastern Connecticut. A plan in the works for several years to extend the recreational trail from East Hampton into Portland was recently bolstered by a proposed agreement between energy provider Eversource and the town. The agreement, which Bransfield said is expected to be signed on Jan. 20, licenses a 2.5-mile portion of the old rail line to the town as part of the trail system popular with walkers, joggers and bicyclists.

Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Bruce Tyler said the Plan of Conservation and Development is not only a statutory requirement, but an important tool for long-range planning. As a 15-year member of the commission, and chairman for two, he said the plan has served as a guide to ensure the commission's decisions are consistent with the prescribed goals.

Tyler said the revised plan differs from the last iteration because it is divided into two parts: a strategy section and an implementation section.

The strategic element outlines policies and action items.

The implementation element is a simple table of all of those policies and action items combined with the specific boards, commissions and entities best suited to carry out each one.

For example, an infrastructure policy identified in the plan involves adding bike lanes to all state roads in town. The implementation element takes the plan a step further by identifying the Portland Department of Public Works as the appropriate department to make it happen with support from the Connecticut Department of Transportation and advocates from the local Complete Streets Group.

Chalder, who has consulted on conservation and development plans in numerous municipalities throughout Connecticut, said making the distinction between strategy and implementation has helped communities follow through on the details once the big picture was established.

He likened planning and conservation plans to New Year's resolutions – "you make them, but come around to March and maybe you don't remember them," he said.

The implementation element is a working document to keep each identified policy front and center while allowing the associated action items to be checked off or expanded over time.

Statute dictates strategies and policies contained in the Plan of Conservation and Development cannot be changed without a 65-day public review period - but action items in the implementation section comprise a working

document not subject to the same requirement, according to Chalder and Tyler.

"While the Strategic Element may remain unchanged over the anticipated 10-year timeframe of the POCD, the Implementation Element should be regularly updated to reflect new action items and/or policies in order to help accomplish POCD strategies," Tyler wrote in the plan's introduction.

The document also calls for the creation of a specific committee charged with implementing the plan.

Elwin Guild, a leader with the local advocacy group known as the Elmcrest Campus Advisory Committee, applauded the process and its results as a way to enhance community engagement.

Guild said he appreciated an emphasis on the development of the Elmcrest property – a large parcel of land at the corner of Main and Marlborough streets – as a "critical, priority plan element." And because traffic management improvements are essential for economic development around the old hospital campus, he also called attention to separate infrastructure policies governing improvements to the overall roadway network.

According to Bransfield, the conservation and development plan cost approximately \$20,000. An additional \$5,000 was taken out of the operating budget for the implementation element.

"I do hope that people take a chance to review it. It's very important and it does provide a very good plan for us going forward," Bransfield said. "It is a community document. If everyone is in agreement with it, we're going to be able to get a lot done for the town."

Historic Colchester Car Dealership Close to Sale

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A long-shuttered iconic business in the center of town may be officially sold soon – and may turn into a pharmacy and restaurant.

The Jack's Chevrolet property – also known as Colchester Chevrolet – at 120 South Main St. is in the heart of the town's historic district and has sat empty for years after the car dealership closed suddenly in June 2009.

The 1.85-acre lot is appraised through the town at \$978,400.

The dealership operated in town for over 70 years and was built in 1937 by Jack Lazinsk. Lazinsk owned the property until his death in 1976 when his widow took over control of the business.

"It just was always there," Arthur Liverant of the Colchester Historical Society said. "It was a car dealership before the time where there were large dealerships."

Jack's Chevrolet sits among some of the most historic buildings in town – an area Liverant calls the "centerpiece" of Colchester. The building counts as its neighbors the newly-restored firehouse, Old Bacon Academy (which was built in 1803), Day Hall (which was built in 1858), the ancient cemetery, and Colchester Federated Church.

"That makes a truly historic part of the town and I believe most citizens of the town would like to maintain the New England flavor of a historic town," Liverant said.

In 1988, Frank "Skip" Collins purchased the dealership and operated it until his death in 2004. Phillip Price then purchased the property, and renamed it Colchester Chevrolet. Price was running the business when it closed in June 2009.

General Motors officials told the *Rivereast* at the time that the decision to close the business came from lagging sales and poor performance.

At the time of its closing, town officials said they had hoped the property would be filled again quickly. However, with the Great Recession hurting its chances of another owner or a developer coming in, the building sat vacant. Since then, the building has been a shadow of its former self, dark and rundown. It also survived a fire set in its basement in May 2014 by multiple juveniles.

"It's an eyesore now," Liverant said. "[A sale] will certainly improve upon it."

The current owner is listed as Camryn Realty of East Lyme whose manager is Price. When the *Rivereast* contacted Price this week, he said the pending sale is still confidential and he "cannot comment at this time."

When asked about the potential sale, First Selectman Art Shilosky also said it is "in the process" and that he "cannot discuss anything further until it's settled."

However, Shilosky did say it was "common knowledge" developers seek to put a pharmacy and a restaurant at the site.

Any development of the property will have to go in front of the Historic District Commission for approval, assistant town planner Randy Benson said, since the location is in the district.

Ellen Sharon, chair of the Historic District Commission, said the commission welcomes a new development in place of the vacant building currently there.

"The current building which is not helpful to the historic district [could] be replaced with



The former Jack's Chevrolet property at 120 South Main St. has been vacant since the dealership's closing in June 2009. It may soon be sold – and replaced by a pharmacy and restaurant.

something that is architecturally compatible with the historic district," Sharon said. "The commission looks forward to working with the owners."

Liverant agreed with Sharon, saying he hopes the architects and builders will be "sympathetic" to the importance of how the center of town looks.

"Even though it will no longer be a dealer-

ship, I hope the builder and architects realize how important is it to the center of Colchester and how it sends a message to visitors and people coming into Colchester," Liverant said. "It is important our town leaders and the builder and planners work together to create an architectural design that is complementary and significant to the town of Colchester because it will be there for a long time."

Elliott Properties Foreclosed Upon in Marlborough

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The ownership of five properties in town – including the Marlborough Tavern Green plaza – is attorney Robert Elliott's no more, after a foreclosure ruling late last month.

However, Elliott has a month to come up with \$7.5 million, in which case he'll be able to reclaim ownership.

As of Jan. 1, the five properties – which include plazas at 3-5 East Hampton Rd. (the Marlborough Tavern Green plaza) and 1, 3, 5 and 7 South Main St., a commercial building at 32 East Hampton Rd. and two homes on South Main Street. – are owned by Chelsea Groton Bank. Elliott had taken out a \$6,960,000 mortgage on properties from the bank in December 2013.

Foreclosure proceedings began last June. According to court records, a motion for a strict foreclosure was granted by Judge Antonio Robaina Dec. 21. A strict foreclosure means that the bank owns the properties until Elliott has paid the bank the amount of the note in full. A time limit, called a law day, was set by

Robaina when he granted the motion for a strict foreclosure. This means Elliott has until Feb. 9 – the law day that was set – to pay the debt in full or lose the right to reclaim the properties. The total amount of debt Elliott owes is listed at \$7,557,628, which includes interest and fees.

This meant that as of Jan. 1, the properties transitioned owners to the bank along with the rents from the current tenants. If Elliott cannot repay the bank by Feb. 9, the properties officially become the bank's properties. Then – because it was a strict foreclosure – the bank can forego the auction process and can sell the properties.

Part of the agreement the bank and Elliott agreed upon is that Elliott can stay rent-free at his law office location at 7 South Main St. for a year.

Elliott did not return calls for comment for this story.

Elliott originally purchased 3-5 East Hampton Rd. in January 1995 for \$825,000. The land

which totals 6.28 acres has three buildings on it, including two strips of shops, Taylor'd Touch, and the once – and possibly future – Marlborough Tavern. Its current assessed value is \$2,696,800 according to town records.

The historic Marlborough Tavern, located at the corner of Route 66 (East Hampton Road) and North Main Street, has seen its share of issues in recent years. The restaurant closed its doors in 2011, and two brothers, Marc and Scott Digoalbo, had planned to reopen the eatery – called the New Marlborough Tavern – in December 2013. But renovation work stalled, and the dreamed-about opening never materialized.

Scott Digoalbo told the *Rivereast* in the summer of 2014 renovations were only 15 to 20 percent complete – and were Elliott's responsibility.

Elliott purchased 32 East Hampton Rd. in November of 1995 for \$640,910. The plot includes 2.47 acres and has one building. Businesses located there include Village Green Pizza

and Marlborough Martial Arts. Its current assessed value, according to town records, is \$737,800.

Town records do not list a sale price or date for the plaza at 1, 3, 5 and 7 South Main St., but the property is currently assessed at \$2,241,500 and includes 2.98 acres and four buildings. Businesses included at the plaza include Dunkin' Donuts, China Sea, Subway, Country Roads Wine and Spirits, Carson Real Estate, and Smart Computer Repair among others.

The two South Main Street homes Elliott purchased in December 2012 and March 2013, respectively. The first was purchased for \$400,000 and is currently assessed at \$192,500, while the second was purchased for \$235,000 and is currently assessed at \$174,200. Both are single-family homes.

It is not clear when Elliott stopped making payments on his mortgage to the Chelsea Groton Bank.

Marlborough Receiving Bids for Dispatch Services

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Selectmen will open bids for the town's fire and emergency management dispatch services next week.

At the board's meeting this past Tuesday, First Selectwoman Amy Traversa stated the request for proposals (RFP) has been out since New Year's Day. Traversa said along with being put out to statewide websites, the RFP was given to seven locations that may have interest in submitting a bid. The town is receiving bids through next Tuesday, at which point town officials will open them.

For the past 40 years, Colchester Emergency Communications LLC, commonly known as KX, has handled the town's dispatch services for fire and EMS. However, KX – which services multiple area municipalities, including the *Rivereast* towns of East Hampton and Colchester – is dissolving as of June 30, after the majority of its member towns announced they would not renew their contracts, which expire on that date.

The end of KX was not a complete surprise, as the organization has had financial problems since former member town Hebron left in 2013. A consolidation plan with Montville's dispatch operations fell through last June, so, in order to

continue operating KX, Doug Knowlton, a member of the KX Board of Directors member and also chairman of the Marlborough Board of Finance, said the towns, had they all stayed with KX, would have each seen a 28 percent budget increase.

For Marlborough, that would have meant an increase of \$15,300, bringing the town's total to approximately \$70,000. And that amount could've been even higher had any of the other member towns departed, as the overall operating budget for KX would've remained the same – there just would've been fewer towns to split it, thus increasing everybody's share.

By the time Amy Traversa took over from former first selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski last November, there was already a plan in place to have Marlborough join with Glastonbury Police for its dispatch operations.

However, that plan may not happen. Traversa and Knowlton met with Glastonbury officials last month, and were told Marlborough would be expected to pay approximately \$350,000 for capital infrastructure (all of the dispatch equipment Marlborough currently uses is owned by KX), and would also pay between \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year in

operating costs.

Marlborough officials balked at this steep increase from what the town currently pays – and the Board of Selectmen agreed to put out an RFP, to see what other options Marlborough has for services.

Simply put, Traversa said, joining Glastonbury, at those prices, "was not a responsible thing to do."

"We're looking at value and quality," Traversa said. "What are we getting for our money? We were looking at a Lamborghini when we need a good-quality, mid-sized sedan." * * *

Also at Tuesday's selectmen meeting, the board approved a request from the Cemetery Committee to expand its membership to five members and one alternate member. This would be an increase of one full member and one alternate from the current four-member committee.

With just four members, and no alternates, Traversa said it has been difficult for the committee – which has come under fire from residents in recent months due to groundwork at the town cemeteries – to regularly field a quorum.

Traversa said she is accepting letters of interest in the committee from potential members, and there have been no decisions on who will be appointed yet. * * *

Traversa also announced at the meeting she is working to standardize board and commission agendas and minutes at Town Hall.

"Some committees have no public comments, some only at the end, some only at the beginning and others at both the beginning and the end," Traversa said.

She said she's a proponent for open discussion and would rather hear concerns at a meeting than let the concerns "simmer and boil over."

Traversa said she is also going to look at the board and commission minutes to see where the town could standardize the format. * * *

The selectmen announced there will be a meeting of the boards of selectmen, education and finance Thursday, Jan. 28, at 6 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School media center, to discuss facility needs for the school. The next regularly-scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

Former Marlborough Moose Lodge Sold

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The former Moose Lodge property at 303 South Main St. has a new owner at last, after Gary Crump of Moodus purchased the property for \$250,000 last month.

The 19.5-acre lot includes a one-story former lodge building, a pavilion, and two fields, one soccer and one baseball that are smaller than regulation fields. The property has been vacant since Moose Lodge 1631 disbanded in August 2014.

Although lodge members were reluctant to speak about the closing, sources at the time indicated it may have been caused by the lodge not having enough members to fill all of the officer positions.

A source told the *Rivereast* in August 2014 that when a chapter disbands, Moose International is responsible for selling the property. That fall, 303 South Main St. was put up for sale with an asking price of \$425,000.

In 2012, the property was assessed at \$235,810, and was appraised at \$338,300. The building was constructed in 1955 and is 5,225 square feet. Nine acres of the property are wetlands and the land is currently zoned DRE, for recreational use only.

Before the lodge disbanded, the town leased the two fields. Originally the town had held a public forum about the property with the hopes of securing it. Residents suggested the property be used for more fields, a dog park, or passive activities for adults.

Peter Hughes, the town's director of planning and development, told the *Rivereast* last May the asking price was down to \$346,000.

Hughes also told the *Rivereast* last May that the town had made two offers for the lodge. While the town did not disclose the value of the bids, Hughes said the land was worth between \$175,000 and \$200,000 – and that that was the basis of the offers.

After both were rejected, the town was done making offers.

And so the property remained available until Crump put an offer in last month, and the sale closed.

Although it's unclear what Crump plans to do with the property, he was pleased with his purchase.

"To me, it's a great investment," Crump said Wednesday.

East Hampton Police News

12/7: After a brief investigation into a two-car accident on Middle Haddam Road at the School House Lane intersection, Peter Ereshena Jr., 46, of 467 Moodus Rd., was issued a summons for reckless driving, operating while suspended, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and failure to obey a control signal, East Hampton Police said.

12/18: Omar Morales-Gracia, 63, of 31 Cobalt Rd., was issued a summons for operating while under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

12/18: A 17-year-old juvenile of East Hampton was issued a summons for two counts of third-degree sexual assault, police said.

Colchester Police News

12/24: State Police said Enock Kazibwe, 20, of 106 Bulkeley Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

12/25: Colchester Police said Brian Korenkiewicz, 33, of 49 Loomis Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI, speeding and failure to drive right.

12/28: Colchester Police said Patrick Gannon, 53, of 2 Barberry Ln., Moodus, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

12/30: State Police said Thomas Fitzgerald, 55, of 241 Massapeag Rd., Uncasville, was arrested and charged with DUI, failure to drive right and improper turn.

12/19: Patrick Burbank, 25, of 4 Wangonk Tr., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to carry license and improper display of marker plate, police said.

12/21: Marisa Lynn Hagggett, 23, of 3724 Kilaue Ave., Honolulu, Hawaii, was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for her arrest. Hagggett was arrested and charged with second-degree threatening and second-degree harassment; the charges stemmed from an incident that occurred last September, police said.

12/24: Karen Gagnon, 49, of 105 Westchester Rd., Colchester was issued a summons for shoplifting (fifth-degree larceny),

12/30: State Police said Steven Borg, 21, of 23 Heritage Brook Dr., East Haddam, was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana.

1/2: State Police said Charmayne Brown, 27, of 3 Rau St., Vernon, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

1/3: State Police said Virginia Martin, 47, of 147 South Main St., was arrested and charged with criminal mischief.

1/3: State Police said Margarita Robida, 26, of 81 Sarah Baker Rd., East Haddam, was arrested and charged with failure to appear and fourth-degree larceny.

Meet the New East Hampton Schools Superintendent

by Elizabeth Regan

The past week was a marathon for new East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith, as he got up to speed on a district in flux.

Smith stepped into an ongoing high school renovation, a lawsuit pitting the Board of Education against the town, and discussions about the possibility of moving fourth and fifth grade students out of Center School so town offices can move in.

Then there's the district budget proposal he must submit to the Board of Education within the month.

"The budget's due in three weeks," Smith said. "There's a lot of scrambling around just to make sure there's no lapse anywhere – because the budget doesn't wait for you. You learn very quickly."

Conveniently, Smith has endurance. He's an avid runner with six marathons to his credit; he's training for his seventh this April in Boston.

"I love to run and keep in shape that way," he said. "When I run, I am always thinking about school. I never listen to music when I'm running. It's relaxing to me, but it's also great thinking time."

Smith brings six years of experience as a school district chief executive officer, having served as the superintendent in Bolton from 2009 to 2012, and then in Griswold from 2012 to the very end of 2015.

The West Hartford resident cited a much shorter commute as a benefit of the transition. Cutting travel time by half means he will have more time to spend at the school and at community events, both on evenings and weekends.

"I had a wonderful relationship with Griswold and part of me was torn about leaving," he said. "But I really feel I've landed in a place I can grow and I think I can help the schools grow."

Smith is the second superintendent since Judith Golden retired in June 2012 after six years of service. Diane Dugas started in July 2013 and separated from the district on June 20, 2015.

Retired administrator Mark Winzler served as interim superintendent during both periods of vacancy. Winzler and Smith share the title of former Bolton superintendent, with Smith succeeding Winzler upon his retirement.

The high school renovation also harkens back to Smith's first leadership post in Bolton, where he oversaw a similar project. That's when he learned first-hand that a new facility brings with it the opportunity for an upgrade to the entire educational approach.

"It kind of gives you the chance to sit down with people and say 'Okay, we've just finished this beautiful building. What's our vision for education for the future?'" he said. "If you spend all this money on a project, you just don't want to necessarily do the exact same thing you did in the old building."

East Hampton Board of Education Chairman Kenneth Barber praised Smith's experience and reputation.

"We're absolutely delighted we were able to attract a candidate of his caliber to be our superintendent," Barber said. He described Smith as the personification of the desired qualities expressed by students, parents, school staff and members of the wider community in a series of surveys and focus groups conducted last year.

"Paul is an inspiring, approachable, fair, collaborative leader with the ability to engage and work with everyone in a manner exemplified by honesty and integrity," Barber said in a press release when Smith's hiring was announced at the end of October. "Though several of the candidates the board interviewed were well-qualified and could have provided strong leadership

for the district, Paul Smith impressed the board as an exceptional fit, and he was selected unanimously."

Good communication is one of the key skills demanded by East Hampton residents during last year's focus groups, and one he said he honed in Griswold. That's where it took five referendums to pass the 2014-15 education budget. The lessons he learned help him get the next education budget passed in one try.

For Smith, good communication is synonymous with transparency. It's about putting all the information out there in a way that's easy to understand. It means sitting down with everyone – from voters who have kids in the system to those who don't – so they know what they're voting on.

"It doesn't matter what town you're in, everybody's watching dollars very carefully," Smith said. "It's not just the schools that need money. The town needs money to do roads and the capital projects and everything like that. So the lesson for me as I present the budget is to make sure that everybody has access to any information they need."

He has instituted an open door policy that includes coffee on certain Friday mornings. An invitation for this week's opportunity was included in his first weekly email update to the school community: "The coffee, cream, and cups/lids are paid for by the superintendent – no taxpayer dollars are used for the coffee, so come by and enjoy!"

Smith said he wouldn't want anyone to interpret the availability of free coffee as an indication the district has extra money to spend.

"The coffee is on me, because that's how important I think communication is," he said. "I really just want to get people in."

Taxpayer concerns were voiced recently by those like councilman Ted Hintz Jr., who has



Paul Smith

publicly decried the recent lawsuit against the town by the Board of Education as a waste of money.

The lawsuit seeks to clarify who has the authority to appoint members to the school board.

"I find it absolutely absurd that they have that kind of extra money and quite frankly I think we need to very much address this in the budget season," Hintz said at a December Town Council meeting.

Smith distanced himself from the details of the legal wrangling he walked into.

"The whole history, the who-started-what, the who-feels-they've-been-treated-unfairly, is a little bit before my time," he said.

But he did not shy away from his concern for the students: "I would hate to see us feel like it's okay to punish the kids because there were disagreements among the adults."



State police took this photo of the suspect off of a surveillance camera at Village Green Pizza after the pizzeria was robbed at gunpoint Dec. 29.

Marlborough Village Pizza Held Up at Gunpoint

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

There was "no monkey business" allowed when a suspect held up the Village Green Pizza at gunpoint Dec. 29, demanding money.

State police are searching for a white male after the incident at 32 East Hampton Rd. around 8:30 p.m. Police reported the man entered the restaurant displaying a black semiautomatic handgun and demanded the employees hand over all of the money in the cash register. Witnesses reported he told employees "no monkey business," and to stay back.

The employees complied, placing an undisclosed amount of money in a plastic bag with a yellow smiley face on it. The suspect then left and got into a dark-colored, possibly green, later

model Honda or Toyota and headed east toward Route 2, police said. No injuries were reported.

Police said the suspect is a white male with green eyes, approximately six feet tall with a stocky build. At the time of the robbery, he was dressed in a black hooded sweatshirt, black sweatpants, a black neoprene facemask and wearing black mechanic-type gloves with white writing on the back.

Police reported they believe the man was alone and the Eastern District Major Crime Unit is investigating.

Anyone with information can call Detective Frank Cuoco at Troop K at 860-465-5400 or text 'TIP711' to 236748. All calls and texts are kept confidential.

Marlborough Police News

12/23: State Police said Breanne Cooper, 34, of 49 Avalon Ln., was arrested and charged with criminal mischief and disorderly conduct.

12/24: State Police said Brandon Sharpe, 28, of 96 Clark Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with DUI and improper parking.

12/27: State Police said Rhonda McBride, 40, of 263 Spring St. Ext., Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with DUI.

Andover Police News

12/27: State Police said Wesley Clark, 59, of 254 Bear Swamp Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI.

H shade box

Two Injured in Hebron Crash

State police reported two people were injured following a two-car crash on Main Street last week.

The crash occurred Dec. 27 at around 11:30 a.m., police said. Police reported Kimberly Taylor, 48, of 87 Chestnut Hill Rd., was driving a Honda Accord south on Route 66 when she was struck by a Honda Civic driven by Wilmarie Rodriguez, 18, of 76 Hampton Court, Newington.

Police reported Rodriguez had been traveling north when she crossed the center line and struck Taylor's car. Taylor and Rodriguez's passenger, a 17-year-old from Wethersfield, were transported to the Marlborough Clinic with minor injuries.

Two Injured in Back-to-Back Crashes

A Plainfield woman and her passenger were injured in an early-morning crash on New Year's Day after side-swiping a car in Colchester and crashing into a utility pole in East Hampton 20 minutes later, state police said.

Irlanda Molina, 47, of 58 1st St., Plainfield, and her passenger, Julio Herrera Padilla, 39, of 88 Williams St., New London, were transported to the Marlborough Clinic for minor injuries after the crashes.

At 4:26 a.m., police said, Molina was driving a Nissan Altima on Route 2 west near Exit 18 when she side-swiped a Honda Civic and drove off. The driver of the Honda was ok. Twenty minutes later at 4:47 a.m., Molina was on Route 16 in East Hampton when she hit a utility pole, police said.

Molina was arrested and charged with evading responsibility, failure to carry a license and failure to maintain lane.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Way to go, Dee!

I had my family cheering that last week, as we watched our recording of the Dec. 25 episode of *Jeopardy!* – the one that featured Amston resident Dee Daigle as one of the contestants.

For Christmas this year, I flew down to Alabama, where my parents are now located. *Jeopardy!* down there comes on at an odd time – 3:30 in the afternoon. That, combined with the fact that it was Christmas Day and nobody in the house was watching TV anyway, meant we DVR-d it to watch it at a later date. (Turns out, I found out, my parents DVR the show every day, as they're typically out and about in the afternoons. They then watch it in the evening, after dinner – which, let's face it, is when *Jeopardy!* should air anyway.)

I had told my family Dee was going to be on *Jeopardy!* It was exciting; it's always exciting anyway whenever a contestant is from Connecticut. Now here was one from one of the towns that the *Rivereast* covers. That was pretty cool. (And I have to admit, it was a little surreal to hear announcer Johnny Gilbert, in his player introductions at the start of the show, say “a substitute teacher from Hebron, Connecticut: Dee Daigle.” I imagine, of course, it was much more surreal for Dee herself.)

As I settled in to watch the episode, I had no clue how Dee was going to do. She was careful not to disclose a single hint about how she did to reporter Geeta Sandberg when she interviewed Dee for the paper a few weeks back. All I knew was she had an entertaining story to share with host Alex Trebek during the little in-game interview section that airs in the middle of the first round. (And it was an entertaining story; it turns out Dee does a terrific impression of the Wicked Witch from *The Wizard of Oz*.)

As for the game itself, Dee did quite well. For example, in the first round of play, she performed quite nicely in a category asking contestants to complete the title of a *Simpsons* episode (which, by the way, is one of those categories I can only dream I get if ever I wind up on *Jeopardy!*). They weren't particularly easy questions either; I was particularly impressed when Dee got the \$1,000 answer correct. The clue was “‘Bonfire of’ these aquatic mammals” and Dee knew right away the episode title: “Bonfire of the Manatees.”

At the end of the first round, Dee was in second place, but only \$400 off the lead. But in the “Double Jeopardy” round, one of the contestants – returning champion Markus Kolic – got on a nice roll. Buoyed by nailing both of the Daily Doubles, Markus really started to pull away from Dee and fellow contestant Emily Poole. It looked like it was not going to be Dee's day (well, as much as appearing as a contestant on a nationally-televised hit game show could count as “not your day”).

But the game was in for a thrilling finish.

The “Double Jeopardy” round was down to its last seconds, and Markus had more than

double the money of either Dee or Emily – meaning there would be no way he could be caught in “Final Jeopardy.” However, Dee got the very last question of the round correct – putting her at \$10,000, to Markus' \$19,000. Dee still had quite a gap to close, but she was still mathematically alive heading into “Final Jeopardy.”

The category was “Playwrights.” And the answer was: “He wrote the line ‘Our home has been nothing but a playroom.’” The standard “think music” played – which, incidentally, is based on a lullaby show creator Merv Griffin wrote for his son to help him get to sleep – and then the questions were revealed.

As Emily finished the game in third place, Alex started with her. She wrote, “Who is Albee?” Incorrect. Emily wagered \$8,799, leaving her with just \$1.

Over to Dee. She responded “Who is Ibsen?” And she was right! The play the line was from, Alex revealed, is *A Doll's House*. Dee bet \$9,001, bringing her total to \$19,001 – \$1 ahead of Markus.

So she had the lead – but if Markus were correct, and bet anything more than a buck, he'd win for the second straight day.

However, Markus guessed “Eugene O'Neill.” He bet \$1,001, dropping him to \$17,999 – and making Amston's own Dee Daigle the new champion!

As any sports fan will tell you, sometimes not being mathematically eliminated is all you need. It was in Dee's case. It was a thrilling finish, and I was very happy for her.

I was eager to see the next episode, to see if Dee could continue her reign. Unfortunately, Mother Nature had other ideas. As some of you may have read or seen on the news, Christmas and the days surrounding it were rather stormy down in Alabama, and the power went out at my parents' house multiple times – taking the satellite dish with it. This meant Dee's second episode, the Dec. 28 installment, only existed on the DVR in bits and pieces. We were able to watch a little bit of the episode, but not the finish of it.

Things were up and running for the Dec. 29 show – and I was sad to see from the contestants in that episode that Dee obviously didn't win Dec. 28. I did online research when I got home, though, and saw she still fared pretty well; she finished in second place, collecting another \$2,000, to bring her two-day *Jeopardy!* total to \$21,001. Not bad for a short trip to California.

Dee was nothing but positive in her interview with Geeta a few weeks back. It sounded like she had the time of her life taping the show. It was something she'd wanted to do for a long time, and she finally was selected to do it. And she won!

The show's been on for decades, but “I won on *Jeopardy!*” is still something a relatively small number of people can say. Now Dee Daigle is one of them. Congratulations, Dee!

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Bruce I. Formhals

Bruce I. Formhals, 74, of East Hampton, widow of Rose Marie (Trottier) Formhals, died Wednesday, Dec. 23, at Middlesex Hospital, with his family by his side. Born May 24, 1941 in North Adams, Mass., he was the son of the late George and Florence (Peltier) Formhals.

Bruce was a graduate of Drury High School in North Adams, Mass., and Montgomery College in Maryland and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Air Force from 1959 until 1966, and was a member of the Civil Air Patrol while in high school.

Bruce had a career as an engineer, having worked for Vectrol, Inc of Maryland, GTE Government Systems for 23 years, co-owner, Rose's Doll House, Walt Disney Company in Florida, Nichols Bus Service of East Hampton, Serra & Assoc. of East Hampton and Hermell Products in the special projects division.

Bruce was a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers and the Electronic Industries Assoc. He was also a member of the East Hampton Rotary Club and the B.P.O. Elks. Bruce was also a member of the Rhode Island Philatelic Society, past president, American Philatelic Society and Bureau Issues Assoc.

He is survived by his children, Bruce I. Formhals Jr. of South Carolina, Catherine Upham and husband Albert of South Carolina, Kelley Matzek-Cook and husband James Cook of East Hampton; grandchildren Sonya, Sara, Alexander, Jessica, Albert, Joshua, Stephanie, Kaitlyn, Hannah, Emma; and great-grandchildren David, Matthew, Zachary, Olivia, Austin and Carson.

He was predeceased by his half-brother, Mark Formhals, in 1994.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, Dec. 29. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Wednesday, Dec. 30, in St. Elizabeth Church in North Adams, Mass. Burial followed in Southview Cemetery in North Adams, Mass.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the charity of the donor's choice.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Elaine M. Primmer

Elaine M. Primmer of Portland beloved wife of the late Bernard D. Primmer, passed away Thursday, Dec. 24, surrounded by her loving family at Brookdale Buckingham in Glastonbury. She was the daughter of the late Angelo and Teresa (Vannelli) Sauro.



Born in Providence, R.I., she lived in Portland for the last 60 years and worked as a personal secretary prior to becoming a full-time mom. In later years, she worked part-time as a pharmaceutical tech and worked retail at Bunces in Middletown. She volunteered for the American Cancer Society, Middlesex Hospital and the Portland Food Bank. She enjoyed playing the electric organ, gardening and crossword puzzles. Her greatest joys were cooking for family, family vacations, and she enjoyed dancing with Barney at German and Polish clubs with their circle of friends.

She is survived by her children, Jeanne and Dennis Levesque of East Hartford, Daniel and Shanelle Primmer of Higganum, Patricia and Brian Lovato of Weehawken, N.J., and Bonnie and William Weir of East Hampton; a sister, Phyllis DePasquale of Rhode Island; grandchildren, Christine, Jason, Scott, Timothy, Kevin, Ashley and Mallory; great-grandchildren, Kaiden, Avery, Maddox, Nathaniel, Connor, Austin and Leah; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her siblings, Mary Hobson, Sally Plourde, Lee Oliver and Alfred Sauro.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Dec. 30, at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Wednesday, before the service, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Church of St. Mary 51 Freestone Ave Portland, CT 06480.

The family would like to thank the Brookdale Buckingham family for their love, support and care.

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

Marlborough

Robert L. Jackson

Robert L. Jackson, beloved husband of Margaret, passed away at his home in Marlborough Thursday, Dec. 24. He was born Aug. 2, 1930, to the late Lawrence and Helen (Beckwith) Jackson and was predeceased by a sibling, Everett Miller.

Robert served in the U.S. Army as a member of the 984th Engineer Company from 1951-54, during the Korean War, repairing gas engines. One of his proudest moments was when he was honored with the Connecticut Wartime Veterans Service Medal this past September. While he enjoyed tinkering with the engines of the boats he drove on the Connecticut River, and those of the airplanes he flew out of Goodspeed Airport in East Haddam, his true passion, cultivated by his experiences in the Korean War, was repairing automobile engines.

In 1957, Robert and his father started L.H. Jackson & Son, Incorporated in Portland which became the first Volvo dealership in Connecticut. After retiring, Robert became a full time volunteer. He spent many years working with the New England Air Museum. Additionally, he volunteered with the Food Bank of Marlborough. This November, Robert was re-elected to a position he cared deeply for on the Marlborough Zoning Board of Appeals.

In addition to Margaret, he leaves his children Karen (Michael) Asetta, Kristen Jackson, Laura (Guy) Patrick, and Lynnae (Patrick) Smith and his wife's children Daniel (Karen) Carter, and Tami (Dave) Sarra-Romejko. He will be fondly remembered by his grandchildren Aleta, Keira, Samuel, MacKinnon, Ellen, Gwen, Conor, Colm, Lisa, Elena, Nicole, Jason and Danielle, as well as his three great-grandchildren, all of whom will miss conversations with him that usually revolved around his favorite topic, cars. He was devoted to his dogs, Bonnie, Ean and Cleo who were his constant companions.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made online to the New England Air Museum, the Food Bank of Marlborough, or the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

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

Portland

Michael Francis Norton Jr.

Michael Francis Norton Jr., 57, of Portland, husband of Karen (Rider) Norton passed away Thursday, Dec. 24, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late Michael F. Sr. and Patricia (McGonagle) Norton.



Born on April 30, 1958, in South Boston, Mass., he grew up in Canton, Mass., and has lived in Portland for the last 21 years. Prior to retiring from King Electric he had a 35 year career in sales. Mike worked in various roles of sales management at Brand Rex, The Kerite Co. and Tyco International. He traveled nationwide and made many close friends along the way.

Mike enjoyed weekends at the family cottage and the recreational life of Old Saybrook. Mike was passionate about Boston sports, known for his big bear hugs, generous spirit and love of dogs. He was the best storyteller and an amazing family man.

Besides his wife Karen, he leaves his daughters, Caroline Danna and husband, Bryan of Middletown and Olivia Norton of Portland; a brother, Daniel Norton of Wrentham, Mass.; and several nieces and nephews. In addition, Mike leaves his sister and brother-in-law, Beth and Tim Rogers of Middlefield and his mother-in-law, Alice Rider of Portland.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Jan. 2, with a Mass at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center, 536 Saybrook Rd., Middletown, CT 06457, or to Middlesex Hospital Hospice 28 Crescent St Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Hebron

Mark Andrew Warner

Mark Andrew Warner, 51, lifelong resident of Hebron, passed away peacefully on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, surrounded by his loving family and friends. He was born April 16, 1964, to Alden Warner of Hebron and the late Barbara (Jaycox) Warner.



In addition to his father, he leaves his wife and cherished best friend of 31 years, Deborah (Balesano) Warner; daughter, Danielle Cilley and her husband, Andrew (with whom Mark had become close sidekicks over the years); daughter, Nicolette Warner; granddaughter, Isabelle Marie Warner (the light of his life); four siblings (and their spouses), Scott (Joan) Warner, Bonnie (Bill) Ducharme, Gale (Brian) Doyle and Alison (Mike) Doherty; beloved mother-in-law, Sandra (William) DeCambra; and numerous nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends whom he loved and that loved him dearly.

He was predeceased by his loyal canine companion, Jessie.

Mark had a strong and meticulous work ethic in all that he ever did. He enjoyed working with his hands, whether it be in many facets of construction, to farming, to establishing, owning and operating his own business, Warner Farms Lawncare along with his daughter, Danielle. Although he did like to work, he also found time for fun as well, especially spending time outdoors; be it hunting, fishing, boating or riding his ATV and/or snowmobile all in due season. Whenever he could, he liked to steal away to spend time relaxing in Norton, Vt., and cooking for his family and friends on the grill.

Mark also had strong ties to the community and was proud to be a charter member of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 95 as well as the Antique Tractor Pullers Association.

Most importantly, Mark always gave of himself and was so many things to so many - his kind heart and gentle way will be missed by all whose lives he touched.

The family received guests Saturday, Jan. 2, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, before a chapel service that afternoon. A reception followed the service at the Colchester Fish & Game Club on Old Amston Road (off of Route 85). Burial in the Gilead Cemetery will be private and at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made online at gofundme.com/tcgaetz44.

Colchester

Evans E. Griffin

Evans E. Griffin of Colchester died peacefully in Middletown Monday, Dec. 21, at the age of 89.

Evans is survived by his children, Gary, Bruce, Deborah, Edward, Steven, David; his grandchildren, Gary, Jr., Sean, Justin, Sarah, Heather, Cassie, Ryan, Jessica and Hailey; and eight great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Shirley.

Evans was born March 5, 1926 in Hartford to Evans E. Griffin and Augusta I.M. Brown. He was training to be a flight engineer on a B24 in the Army Air Corps during World War II. After the war, he graduated from Hillyer College in 1950 and worked for many years at Pratt & Whitney as an air foil designer.

Public viewing hours and a service were held Saturday, Dec. 26, at Belmont Funeral Home in Colchester. Burial, with military honors, will immediately follow at Maplewood Cemetery in Norwich with a reception after.

Portland

Thomas J. DeBari

Thomas J. DeBari, 46, of Portland, died suddenly Friday, Jan. 1.

Tom was a longtime resident of Portland and was the son of the late Jerome DeBari and the late Lora (DeBari) Romine. He was educated in Portland schools, completed his GED and trained as a stonemason.

He is survived by a son, Thomas; a daughter, Taylor; his brother, Fran DeBari and his wife, Jennifer and their son, Colin. He also leaves many aunts, uncles, and cousins in the DeBari and Pierce families, as well as Amy Martin and her children.

Graveside services will be held today, Jan. 8, at 11 a.m., at the Swedish Cemetery, William Street, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

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

Amston

Gloria Romaine Bell

Gloria Romaine (White) Bell, 92, of Amston, widow of the late John M. Bell, passed away peacefully at her son's home Tuesday, Dec. 29. Born Nov. 22, 1923, in New York City, she was the daughter of the late Arthur and Gladys (Baxter) White.



She and her beloved husband had met while attending church in New York City and moved to Hebron shortly after their marriage in 1945 to raise their family. Together they shared 48 years of marriage before he predeceased her in 1993.

Mrs. Bell had worked for Arbor Acres for many years and forged many friendships there. She also worked at the RHAM cafeteria where she enjoyed the students and her co-workers.

She was a 60+-year member and deacon emeritus of the First Congregational Church of Hebron, where she prepared and served communion for over 25 years before joining the faith community at Gilead Congregational Church.

Gloria had been a volunteer with the Hebron Food Bank and Meals on Wheels and enjoyed knitting and crocheting in her spare time. She loved her many drives through the countryside, getting lost on back roads, trips to Vermont and New Hampshire, shopping, cruises and her monthly breakfasts with her Arbor Acres friends.

She was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother; her family will miss her greatly.

She leaves two sons, John Bell and his partner Anthony Maganello of Tolland, William Bell and his wife Susan of Hebron (with whom she made her home); two daughters, Laura Vieu and her husband, Wayne of Vernon and Lesley Bell-Yockachonis of Colchester; her daughter-in-law, Lori Bell of Las Vegas, Nev.; her cousin, Jane Geiser of Willowick, Ohio; 15 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by her eldest son, Bruce; and her son-in-law, Robert Yockachonis.

A memorial service celebrating her life will be observed at 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 10, directly at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St. (Rte. 85), Hebron, with the Rev. Denise Esslinger officiating. There are no calling hours and burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Gilead Congregational Church.

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

Portland

Allen I. Cohen

Allen I. Cohen, 86, of Portland, husband of Alice (Cadieux) Cohen, passed away Saturday, Jan. 2, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation. He was the son of the late Meyer and Lillian (Saker) Cohen.



Allen was born Jan. 24, 1929, in Chelsea, Mass., and lived in Portland for the past 40 years. He proudly served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. Allen held degrees from the University of Bridgeport, the University of Connecticut and Yale University, and he had a long career in the mental health field as a social worker and hospital administrator.

Besides his wife, Alice, he leaves his sons, Jeffrey of Hebron, Jonathan and David of Portland, his daughter, Suzanne Fickett of Portland, sister, Selma Metz of New Jersey; eight grandchildren, Benjamin, Sarah, Steven, Olivia, Michelle, Brian, Allen and Christopher; and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by a sister, Paula Reiman.

At his request, services and burial will be private and will include full military honors.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Alzheimer's Association CT Chapter, 2075 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

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

Colchester

William Moletich

William Moletich, 93, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 29, at Apple Rehab. He was born in New York Sept. 30, 1922, to the late John and Anna (Masharinec) Moletich.

Bill is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Dorothy "Dot" (Siboroski) Moletich of Colchester, to whom he was united in marriage Nov. 17, 1973, at St. Andrew's Church. Other surviving family members include step-granddaughters Stacy Houle of Connecticut and husband Nate, Kallie Moar of Massachusetts and husband Chris; great-granddaughter, Jayden Moar of Massachusetts; sister-in-law Lillian and niece Pam of Florida; and numerous other nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his stepson Thomas W. Evans and brothers Mike, George, and John.

Bill was a graduate of Vinal Tech in Middletown and he proudly served in the U.S. Navy. Bill worked as a turbine operator at Pratt & Whitney for 25 years and was commander of the Colchester VFW for 30 years. He loved going out to restaurants with his wife, Dot, and helped organize the Colchester's Memorial Day parades.

Visitation will be held Saturday, Jan. 9, from 9-10:30 a.m., at Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St., Colchester, with a memorial service at 10:30. Burial will immediately follow at Linwood Cemetery with military honors.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to St. Andrews Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, or to the charity of your choice.



Marlborough

Robert Caisse Sr.

Robert (Ed) Caisse Sr., 93, of Glastonbury, formerly of Marlborough, husband to Dorothy (Lamonde) Caisse, died Saturday, Jan. 2, at Glastonbury Health Care Center. Born March 22, 1922, in Willimantic, he had lived in Marlborough many years moving to the Herbert T. Clark House in Glastonbury three years ago.

Prior to his retirement, he was a gun inspector for Colt Firearms. Ed was an Army veteran spending three years in the World War II European Campaign. He was also a pack leader for the Marlborough Boy Scouts Explorers, a member of the Knights of Columbus, VFW, and an American Legion district commander.

Besides his wife of 73 years, he is survived by his children and their spouses, Carole and Larry White of Levant, Maine, Robert E. Jr. and Diane Caisse of Glastonbury; three grandchildren, Eric Caisse, Erika and Kai Anderson; and two great-grandchildren, Karis Nicole and Emmy Bes.

He was predeceased by two brothers and five sisters.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 9, at noon, at St. Paul Church, 2577 Main St., Glastonbury. Burial with military honors will be Monday, Jan. 11, at 11 a.m., at the Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Wounded Warriors Project, P.O. Box 75816, Topeka, KN 66675-8516.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.



Colchester

Diane M. Fedus

Diane M. Fedus, 71, of Colchester, went home to her loving Savior Tuesday, Jan. 5. Born Aug. 4, 1944, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Steven and Alice (Sklarsky) Fedus.

Early on, Diane had worked along with her family at their restaurants, the Chestnut Lodge in Colchester as well as the Yantic River Inn in Norwich. She went on to train as a CNA and worked for many years as a vendor for the Connecticut DMR (now DDS) helping two individuals live at home rather than in institutions.

A woman of great faith and compassion, she has been a member of the Colchester Assembly of God (Abundant Life Church). Her ministries there include hospitality, prayer chain, missions committee, greeting card mission, evangelism, and visitation. She had a passion for missions and supported many missionaries around the world. Diane has been an early organizer of the Connecticut Chapter of "NOW," working for the rights of women. In her spare time, she loved organic gardening at home before her health started to decline.

She leaves her brother, Stephen Fedus (and wife, Lee); niece, Christy Fedus (and husband, Sergio); two nephews, Eric Fedus (and wife, Teresa) and Daniel Fedus; as well as all those who gave of themselves as caregivers to Diane, especially Elizabeth, Marie, Rita, Sharon and other members of the church as well as the Colchester Hayward Vol. Fire Company.

A Memorial Service will be observed at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 9, directly at Abundant Life Church, 85 Skinner Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Church or to the Colchester Hayward Vol. Fire Co., 18-54 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

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



Portland

Jennifer Lynn Hall

Jennifer Lynn Hall of Portland passed away peacefully at home with her family and friends by her side Saturday, Dec. 26. "Jenny" was born in Fort Wayne, Ind., on Sept. 26, 1972, to David and Kristina Hall, and lived in Indiana until her adult life.

Jennifer was predeceased by her mother, Kristina Hall and is survived by her father, David Hall and his life companion, Pat. Jennifer is also survived by her brother Nick Hall and his wife, Jennifer Phillips Hall.

Jenny had resided in Portland for the past 15 years and leaves behind her best friend and loving boyfriend, Paul Sienkiewicz and his family. Jenny's warm and friendly smile will be missed dearly by many close friends here in Portland as well as in Indiana. Jennifer also leaves behind her adored cats, Socks, Jinx and Spyder. Jenny was an artist who painted, sketched, sewed and made jewelry from beads and shells and also loved flowers and hummingbirds. She loved to visit the ocean.

Jennifer received a donor kidney in 1993, after suffering from lupus and over 2 years on dialysis. Due to complications from her anti-rejection medication, Jenny was diagnosed with cancer and endured almost 10 years of tests, surgeries, radiation and chemotherapy before losing her courageous battle. Jenny never complained and never let it show how much pain she was in.

Jenny was loved by all who met her. Her quick wit and sense of humor will be missed by all who knew her.

A memorial service will be held at the Hockemeyer & Miller Funeral Home in Fort Wayne, Ind., on Saturday, Jan. 9. A memorial service will be planned and announced at a later date in Portland.



Colchester

Timothy Francis Cronin

Timothy Francis Cronin, 72, of Colchester, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 30. Born Oct. 3, 1943, in Derby, he was the last surviving child of the late Timothy Joseph and Marion (Jorgenson) Cronin.

Mr. Cronin had worked for the State of Connecticut in many capacities before his retirement.

He leaves his loving wife of 48 years, Adele (Wolcin) Cronin; two children, Brian Cronin of Colchester, Janet Burton and Kevin of So. Glastonbury; and many extended family members.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by two stepsons, Mark and Edward Crofut.

A memorial liturgy will be celebrated 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 16, at Holy Rosary Church, 10 Fr. Salemi Dr., Ansonia.

Those who wish may make contributions in his memory to the ASPCA (aspca.org/secure/memorial).

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

East Hampton

David G. Hass

David G. Hass, 78, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Barbara (Post) Hass, died Sunday, Jan. 3, at Middlesex Hospital. Born March 14, 1937, in Meriden, he was the son of the late Alfred and Dorris (Gardner) Hass.

David had served in the National Guard and had worked as an insurance agent for T.S. Brown Insurance Agency. He was a member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in East Haddam where he was a lay reader.

David joined the Masons in 1959 and was a member of the Anchor Lodge 112 in East Hampton. He was a member of the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department and was a former member of the board of Youth and Family Services in East Hampton. David was a Life member of the Square Dance Foundation of New England, the Caller Lab NECCA, and the Connecticut Callers Assoc.

Besides his wife of 55 years, Barbara, he is survived by sons Stephen Hass and wife Katie of East Haddam, Scott Hass of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; daughter Deb McKinney and husband Jim of East Hampton; foster son Scott Brown of Southington; brother Gary Hass of East Hampton; three grandchildren, Erin and Matthew McKinney and Oliver Hass.

He was predeceased by a brother, Bruce Hass. Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., Thursday, Jan. 7. A memorial service will be held today, Jan. 8, at 11 a.m., in St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Main Street, East Haddam.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 31 Main St., East Haddam, CT 06423 or to Square Dance Foundation of New England, 238 Woburn St., Redding, MA 01867.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Carl W. Currie

Carl W. "C.W." Currie, 82, of East Hampton, husband of Dorothy M. (Lucier) Currie, died Wednesday, Dec. 30, at his home, with his family by his side. Born May 28, 1933, in Monticello, Maine, he was the son of the late William J. and Beatrice Roxi (Allen) Currie.

C.W. proudly served his country in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He had retired from Pratt & Whitney Aircraft where he had been employed as an engineer for 36 years and he earned the nickname "Captain Airflow."

C.W. was a member of Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam since 1981. He was very active in East Hampton Little League since 1958. C.W. was an avid gardener always having multiple vegetable gardens. He also loved building with wood at home, at his church, and little league buildings.

Besides his loving wife, he is survived by his son, Daniel Patrick Sterling Currie and his wife Susan of Colchester; three daughters, Catherine Ann Garofalo of Colchester, Hollye B. Thomas and husband Mark of East Hampton, Elizabeth J. Garofalo and fiancé Mark Salie of Moodus; a brother, Al Currie and sister-in-law Lucille of Middletown; nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild; also six nephews and four nieces.

He was predeceased by his sister Loretta and son-in-law Guy Garofalo.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 9, at 11 a.m., in Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam, with the Rev. Maryann Osborn officiating. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in Skinnerville Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to Christ Episcopal Church P.O. Box 81, Middle Haddam, CT 06456.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Hebron

Paul Wolicka

Paul Wolicka, 72, of Hebron, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 5, peacefully at his home. Born Pauvblo Nikolaus Wolicki on June 12, 1943, in Germany, he was the son of the late Vasil and Stefania (Kozak) Wolicki.

Paul immigrated to the United States in 1962 from Venezuela, and soon after served with the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Returning home, he worked as a professional driver for Northeast Utilities. Paul enjoyed boating, fishing and auto racing, and he was an avid wrestling fan. Most of all, he was a hardworking man who strived to provide well for his family who truly loved him dearly.

He leaves his former wife, Debra Wolicka of Wethersfield; son, Paul Wolicka and wife Jennifer of Colchester; daughter, Maureen Schwartz and husband Nitai of Colchester; brother, Bohdan Wolicki of Florida; two grandchildren, Mckenzie and Devon; and several extended family and friends.

The family will receive guests from 4-6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Howard Kinney Jr.

Howard Kinney Jr., 81, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully in his sleep Tuesday, Jan. 5. Howard was the son of the late Howard and Helen (Sutherland) Kinney.

He was predeceased by his wife Harriet "Bunnie" Kinney, his daughter Heather Kinney and his sister Margaret Kirschner.

Born May 17, 1934, in Newington, he moved to East Hampton where he lived for 36 years. Prior to his retirement he worked for Stamm Construction of Newington for over 30 years before having to retire due to illness. He was a lifetime member of the New Britain Fish and Game Club. He always had a passion for trucks and machinery, and he was the best driver to handle any rig, especially the large ones. He loved to garden and of course he loved his goats. He was a dear friend to many and always welcomed conversation with strangers. He was "The Guy" to call when you needed a hand.

Howard is survived by his five daughters, Roseann Bullett of East Hampton and her husband Mark, Kimberly Brown of Glastonbury and her husband Steve, Linda Driscoll of Wisconsin and her husband Tom, Deborah Burgess of Enfield and her husband Peter, April Varricchio of Manchester; two sons, Raymond Varricchio of Florida and his wife Candice, Jason Kinney of Hebron and his significant other Debbie; 12 grandchildren, TJ, Travis and Todd VanBlaricom, Charles Filmore Jr., Shannon Ochoa, Ethan and Jessica Brown, Jacob, Christopher and Brian Burgess, Angel Varricchio, Joseph Albert; 19 great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Monday, Jan. 11, from 4-7 p.m. A funeral service will be held Tuesday, Jan. 12, at 10 a.m., in the funeral home, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial will be in Indian Hill Cemetery in Middletown.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

