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Colchester Rotary Gives Thanksgiving Baskets

by Julianna Roche

It may have been nearly freezing Monday, but that didn't stop the Colchester Rotary Club from distributing 170 baskets brim-full of Thanksgiving fixings to needy local families during the club's annual Thanksgiving Dinner Drive at Town Hall.

The event has become a Thanksgiving tradition for the Rotary, which started the basket distribution more than 35 years ago; since 2004, the event has been held in partnership with the Liberty Bank Foundation.

Despite the cold weather Monday, Colchester Rotary Club president Nicole Reardon said "it was still a great day; it always is."

"It's something we love doing," she continued, adding that every year, "it's a very humbling experience."

Those receiving baskets are "very moved when they come in and very appreciative. Some are very emotional," Reardon said. "And you feel very happy to help, because you don't know their situation."

Reardon added that this year, 20 of the baskets were also delivered to the two affordable senior village housing units in town.

Originally, the Rotary would have to contact local churches to find out what households or families in town were in need of the baskets. Now, however, the Rotary goes through Social Services to compile a final list.

To prepare for the drive, during the months of October and November, the Rotary also works closely with Westchester Market and Noel's Market in Colchester to put together the

baskets, which they then offer to local families who might not be able to afford putting a traditional holiday dinner on the table on their own.

In addition to a turkey, the baskets include other Thanksgiving classics like gravy mix, canned vegetables, potatoes, stuffing mix, rolls and butter, cranberry sauce, juice and a pumpkin or apple pie.

According to Sue Murphy, executive director of the Liberty Bank Foundation, this year the Rotary Club raised \$9,739 for the event and received matching funds of \$2,435 from Liberty Bank, for a total of \$12,174.

In past years, Liberty matched 50 cents of every dollar the Rotary placed in their Thanksgiving Drive account. However, the number of towns competing for the money has grown since, with a total of 43 Rotary clubs and one Lions Club teaming up with Liberty this year.

Participating Rotary clubs then use the funds to provide Thanksgiving food, either by donating the funds to a local human services agency that provides Thanksgiving food for needy residents, or to buy and deliver the food themselves.

Without help from the community, however, Reardon said, the drive wouldn't be possible.

"Although the Rotary gives out the baskets, it's really the community that gives them out," she explained, adding that community members "play a big part in providing food for the baskets," as they are the ones spending the prior four to five weeks donating money to the club to be used toward the drive.

"We give the baskets to [the needy] and we

See Colchester Rotary page 2



Colchester Rotarian Evan Evans helped organize Thanksgiving baskets during this year's annual dinner drive, where 170 families were provided with fixings for a holiday meal.

Susan Bransfield to Head CCM

by Elizabeth Regan

Susan Bransfield, first selectwoman for the roughly 9,000 people in Portland, will soon be representing 162 towns and cities from all over the state as the new president of the state's largest organization of municipal leaders.

The Portland Democrat was elected last week at the Connecticut Conference for Municipalities (CCM) annual convention at Foxwoods Resort Casino. The one-year term will take effect on Jan. 11, according to a press release from the organization.

She is a seven-term first selectwoman.

Bransfield said Monday that the conference's ethos is in line with her own guiding principles as Portland's top official.

"We're committed to running our towns efficiently and effectively, with a high quality of living - which is what people in Connecticut

demand," she said.

CCM Director of Communications Kevin Maloney said Bransfield will make a significant contribution to the group's success in 2017.

"Susan is a veteran, small-town first selectwoman with an immense knowledge of local government and a strong understanding of the issues facing urban centers as well as the larger suburban towns," he said.

CCM provides research and training opportunities for its member municipalities while advocating at the state level for issues that affect local taxpayers.

Bransfield currently serves as the organization's first vice president. She is the chairwoman of CCM's Legislative Subcommittee on Public Safety, Crime Prevention and Code Enforcement.

CT News Junkie last week reported that Bransfield spoke during a press conference at the site of the group's annual convention to blast the municipal spending cap set to go into effect in 2018. The cap is part of legislation passed by the state General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy last year.

The municipal spending cap means cities and

towns can't increase their spending by more than 2.5 percent if they want to qualify for state funds, according to *CT News Junkie*. The online news source reported that Bransfield said the spending cap makes it possible for the state to "take over" local budgeting authority.

Bransfield has brought knowledge about state government to the local board of selectmen on various occasions, especially during this spring's uncertain budget planning process. That's when different state budget proposals being floated around the Capitol left municipalities in the dark about how much aid they could expect in the coming fiscal year.

East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said it's valuable to have a small-town leader in charge of a statewide organization.

"Our issues are very diverse and very unique and I'm sure she'll bring a wonderful perspective to many of the issues that affect all of us," Maniscalco said.

Before becoming first selectwoman in 2003, Bransfield worked with the Connecticut State Department of Education as an education service specialist for the Child Nutrition Programs,

according to the release. She is also a past president of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns. Bransfield earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of Hartford and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut.

Bransfield succeeds Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, who is finishing out a single term as president of CCM. Boughton, a Republican, recently filed paperwork with the State Elections Enforcement Commission to lay the groundwork for a possible gubernatorial campaign, according to *CT News Junkie*. The news outlet said he must raise \$250,000 to make him eligible for public financing based on current Citizens Election Program guidelines.

Bransfield is joined by Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary, as first vice president, and Coventry Town Manager John A. Elssesser as second vice president.

Newly-elected leaders to the CCM Board of Directors are East Hartford Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc, Darien First Selectwoman Jayme A. Stevenson, and New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart. They join 16 returning board members.



Members of Bacon Academy's Colchester Interact Club also pitched in with the Thanksgiving basket distributions Monday. Pictured with Colchester Rotary Club President Nicole Reardon, center, are Interact members, from left, Kara Guinan, Jenna Pan, Samantha Iobring and Jared Evans.

Colchester Rotary cont. from Front Page

get the credit for it, but it's a big community effort to be able to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for these families," Reardon continued, adding she was "very thankful" for the community's help.

Additionally, any excess funds from the drive that aren't used are then put towards "food-related endeavors in the future."

"They [the Rotary] often have funds leftover to donate to the food pantries at the town's elderly housing complexes as well," Murphy added, for example.

"It's all for a good cause," Reardon said, "and the highlight is that the whole community is really and truly giving the baskets to these people."

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Happy day-after-Thanksgiving, everyone.

I hope you all had a lovely day with family and friends – and plenty to eat as well: all the turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, etc., that you could want. And of course, lots and lots of pie.

Wait, what's that you say? You didn't get enough dessert yesterday? You say you want more?

You may be in luck. Just the other day I came across a culinary delight that sounds utterly awesome in its extreme decadence. Many of you, I assume, have heard of turducken – a chicken stuffed inside a duck stuffed inside a turkey. But have you ever heard of piecaken?

Piecaken is a pie baked inside a cake. Does it sound horrifying, or delicious? A little bit of both?

And while turducken frankly sounds like kind of a pain to make – granted, as a single guy, anything beyond boiling pasta teeters on the laborious – piecaken sounds pretty easy, actually, thanks to a recipe I found online.

Start with a fully-baked pie, of any kind of your choosing. Next, make the cake batter. Homemade is always the best, of course, though like me you'll probably say "what's wrong with cake mix?"

Pour a layer of the cake batter in a springform pan. Drop the pie into it. Then pour more cake batter on top. And then you bake that sucker. Bake it at the temperature the cake mix calls for – but, remember, there's a pie inside the cake, so the cake may take a little longer to bake than usual. So, periodically check on it, use a toothpick to check its done-ness. And then, voila! A pie stuffed inside a cake. Piecaken.

If you're anything like me, you're totally going to have to try this.

Speaking of food, with the nice long weekend here, this might be a good opportunity to get in the spirit of the holiday season by making a festive gingerbread house – and who knows, you just may win something for your efforts.

The Hebron Historical Society is launching a Gingerbread House Contest.

Start with assorted sizes and shapes of gingerbread. Add icing to stick shapes together. Then put on candy, pretzels, cereal – whatever you want – to decorate your original edible structure.

To enter your house in the contest, simply bring it to Old Town Hall, located right on Main Street next to Douglas Library, on Friday, Dec. 2. Houses can be dropped off between 10 a.m. and noon, and between 4 and 6 p.m.

Houses will be judged according to technique and creativity, as well as whether the house was made from scratch or a kit. Kids

and adults will be in separate categories, and awards will be given.

Houses will be sold by silent auction, and proceeds will go to the historical society's efforts to raise funds to replace the roof on Old Town Hall and re-paint the building. The society will also sell T-shirts, mugs and ornaments for the "Raise the Roof" campaign.

The competition will be held in conjunction with the Hebron Artisan & Craft Show Saturday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Vendors will be located in the Old Town Hall as well as the Douglas Library, and food trucks will be located on the green.

Even Santa Claus will be there, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., "working" at the historic John Graves Workbench, among the old Rathbun tools.

A few years ago, I visited a similar gingerbread house exhibit at a library in South Windsor. It was fun seeing all the different creations – and it smelled delicious too. The Hebron contest sounds like a lot of fun too; I'd encourage everyone to participate, or at least swing by the Old Town Hall next Saturday and check the exhibit out.

Today's commonly known as Black Friday, and folks across the country hit the stores at the break of dawn – or perhaps even last night – in an effort to find that perfect deal. Probably many of you have already been out and about and braved the malls and the lines. But hopefully you saved some shopping energy for tomorrow.

For tomorrow is Small Business Saturday.

Held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, Small Business Saturday – which started in 2010 – is a time when shoppers across the country are urged to avoid the big box stores or the online retailers and instead do business at little mom-and-pop stores. It's a great idea. Smaller stores sometimes get left out in the cold around the holidays, as people flock to the chains and the malls. But there are often great deals, and great selection, to be found at the mom-and-pop places. You also get to know you're spending your money locally, and helping out the local community. Plus, let's face it: shopping at a small business is often a more pleasant experience than shopping at one of those big mega-stores.

And fortunately, each week the *Rivereast* is full of ads for stores in the community you can check out. So, to co-opt an old slogan, let your fingers do the walking through the *Rivereast* pages, and then hit up one of the many mom-and-pops in Hebron, Marlborough, Andover, Colchester, East Hampton or Portland. Supporting local business is always a good cause.

See you next week.

Everett Chooses Trial by Judge

by Geeta S. Sandberg

A former Hebron resident charged with manslaughter after fatally hitting a RHAM Middle School teacher with her car in 2014 has opted to be tried by a judge instead of a jury.

Elizabeth Everett, 52, who has since moved to Wethersfield, was charged in relation to the March 14, 2014, accident that occurred after she drove to the middle school to let her son out of her sports utility vehicle. After doing so, according to the arrest warrant affidavit released last August, Everett went the wrong way to exit the parking lot; when she passed the middle school and came across some school buses, the warrant said, she knew she had to turn around.

It was then that Everett said she began to back up her SUV while looking over her shoulder "and immediately heard a thump," according to the affidavit. After getting out of her car, she went to the back and realized she had hit a woman, later identified as middle school teacher Dawn Mallory, 65, of Groton, who was walking to the school from the staff parking lot.

As a result of the accident, Mallory suffered a skull fracture and bleeding in the brain and was transported by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital, where she passed away two weeks later, after her family removed her from life support. The warrant states that the postmortem exam indicated the cause of death as blunt injury to the head.

Everett was arrested in July 2014. She was originally charged with misconduct with a motor vehicle and unsafe backing, but those

charges were upgraded June 20 of this year to include second-degree manslaughter, second-degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle while intoxicated, and two counts of illegal operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Everett was found to have a blood alcohol content of 0.07; the legal limit for intoxication is 0.08.

Earlier this year Everett's lawyer, William F. Dow III of New Haven, motioned to have the evidence that Everett had alcohol in her system at the time of the accident suppressed.

According to the *Journal Inquirer*, Dow stated Everett never gave consent for state police to take a blood sample from her, but Assistant State's Attorney Charles Johnson said Everett gave consent to at least one trooper to have her blood tested following the incident – something that was backed up by testimony from Trooper Jeffrey Brunoli, who said he followed state police policy and told Everett she could have a voluntary blood and urine analysis done to clear her of responsibility.

The judge for the case, James Graham, ruled Oct. 27 that Everett gave valid consent for her blood to be tested, and the evidence remains admissible.

Due to his involvement in the case, following Everett's request for a trial by judge, the *Journal Inquirer* states Graham informed the defense and prosecution that they could request he be recused from presiding over the trial and be replaced by a different judge. However, neither side made that appeal.

Everett is due in court for her trial Tuesday, Nov. 29, at 10 a.m.

Marlborough Voters Balk at Waterfront Property Purchase

by Julianna Roche

By an 89-34 vote, townspeople decided Monday not to move forward with purchasing a .75-acre property at 17 East Lake Rd., which had been discussed as a potential future location for a community or recreation center.

More than 120 residents packed into Marlborough Elementary School's cafeteria Monday night to have their say on the \$200,000 waterfront purchase, and were given an opportunity to ask questions following a brief presentation about the property.

First Selectwoman Amy Traversa led the presentation, which provided attendees with background information and facts regarding the property, as well as reasons to consider the purchase, potential concerns, and sources of funds.

"This is about the process, not whether or not we get the property," she said. "We thought it was important to give Marlborough citizens the opportunity to make that decision themselves."

The purchase was presented to the finance board by Traversa in late October, where she explained the town had been "approached out of the blue" by its current property owner James Dwyer about purchasing the land – where a small cottage (with 44 square feet of waterfront) sits adjacent to Blish Park with a view of Lake Terramuggus.

"I'm not in favor or against it, and that's something important to know," the first

selectwoman said, adding that the purchase was a "town want, not a town need," and while she had the opportunity to turn the offer down, she did not have the authority to move forward with the purchase unless it won the town's approval.

Since the original offer, the town had signed a purchase agreement with the tenant, which stated it could purchase the property (which was appraised at \$343,600) for \$200,000 with a Dec. 31, 2016 closing date.

The agreement, while still a legal contract, essentially just gave the town the first right to refuse the purchase without having to compete with any other outside offers.

To fund the \$200,000 property purchase, the town had planned to use \$50,000 from the open space fund, \$22,000 from the land acquisition fund, \$50,000 from the undesignated capital expenditure reserve within the capital non-recurring fund, and the remaining \$78,000 from the undesignated fund balance.

Following the presentation, there were fewer residents who spoke out in support of the purchase than those who voiced their concerns – which included, for example, the lack of a concrete plan for what would actually be done with the property, and what additional costs there would be.

"If we purchase the land, nothing is going to be done for a while," said resident Shannon

Cieslowski of 15 Blish Rd. "There is no set building or plan that's going to take place."

While stating she thought "maybe" the purchase was a good idea, resident Patricia Koshko of 31 Parker Rd. agreed that there were a lot of uncertainties, especially considering the town was going to pay as much as \$200,000 for the property.

"We've purchased a lot of land here in Marlborough and it's just sitting vacantly," she said, adding she feared the purchase would also have a negative impact on taxes, and "that's going to come out of your pocket."

"We have to cut [spending] someplace here," Koshko continued. "Our taxes are going up each and every year, so what's next is going to be the school budget."

Larry Pryor of 421 Jones Hollow Rd. said that while he thought the purchase was "a nice opportunity under normal circumstances," he still viewed it as "an indulgence" considering the amount of outstanding town debt Marlborough currently has.

"We owe \$21 million," he said, adding that he doubted anyone in town "would run their home finances as to be so heavily in debt and [still] spend the money."

Referencing the finance board's \$200,000 cut from the local Board of Education budget back in March, Pryor said he also couldn't justify

the property purchase "when we have to take money from the school board."

Pryor did, however, add that he thought, under other circumstances, the property would be a "marvelous opportunity," and he appreciated "the format the Board of Selectmen [had] taken" in bringing the potential purchase forward to the town.

Following the final vote count, Traversa thanked residents for attending, as it was "important [they] were a part of it."

On Tuesday, while reflecting on the town's decision not to move forward with the property purchase, the first selectwoman said she had "mixed feelings," but recognized it was her "responsibility to bring the offer to the residents to decide" and "ensure they had all the information needed to make an informed decision."

"I'm relieved that people finally seem to understand the reality about the amount of debt they have approved over the years," Traversa said, "and yet we've lost an incredible opportunity that would have made this town truly special for generations."

Traversa said during the meeting she has "no doubt" the property will sell quickly, as the owner has already been given a couple offers – but just what that means for the town and the future development of a community or recreation center is yet to be determined.

Hebron Selectmen Back Natural Gas Proposal Including Gilead Hill

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Board of Selectmen last week expressed support for an eight-mile natural gas expansion that would bring the utility to the center of town.

If the action sounds familiar, it's because the board chose to move forward with a similar proposal in February, but postponed the plan two months later to allow for more planning.

The original proposal from Connecticut Natural Gas was for a 6.5-mile expansion and as part of the plan, all of the town buildings along the expansion route – which would run from East Street to the town center – as well as RHAM middle and high schools and Hebron Elementary School, would need to make the switch to natural gas.

New this time around, however, CNG also presented an eight-mile option that includes the installation of additional gas main up Gilead Street to hook up Gilead Hill School.

At the Nov. 10 Hebron Board of Education meeting, Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tasel had mentioned the selectmen were going to consider adding Gilead Hill School to the plan, something he said would be helpful since the school is required by law to remove an 8,000-gallon oil tank by 2019 at a cost of approximately \$100,000 – something that would have to be put through as a Capital Improvement Plan request.

According to a cost analysis of the two proposals by finance director Elaine Griffin, without Gilead Hill School the cost to the town would be approximately \$1.25 million with projected fuel savings of \$117,400 per year. CNG would also contribute \$53,460 in tax revenue, bringing the town's total revenue/savings each year of the project to \$170,860.

Meanwhile, including Gilead Hill School would increase the cost to approximately \$1.66 million, including approximately \$900,000 in conversion costs and around \$760,000 for the town's share of the pipeline installation; projected fuel savings are \$135,330, plus an estimated CNG tax revenue of \$60,040, for \$195,370 in total revenue/savings for the town.

However, due to the cost increase, under the second proposal the town would not see any net budget savings – apart from the second year – until six years after the project's completion; under the proposal without Gilead Hill School, the town would see net budget savings from the beginning.

Griffin explained including Gilead Hill School tacks on approximately \$23,000 in expenses in the first year the project needs to be repaid, but year two would see an \$81,000 decrease due to the elimination of the \$100,000 CIP request in the 2018-19 fiscal year for the oil tank at Gilead. Years three-five would have an operating expense increase of \$14,330, \$10,280, and \$1,286 respectively, before the project results in net budget savings.

In the end, the selectmen decided to support the plan that includes Gilead Hill School.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said this week, "Even though the total cost is up, the offset money from CNG is more, so if we don't do it now I think that opportunity would be lost."

CNG is contributing \$2.12 million for the project including Gilead Hill School; without GHS, its offer included a \$1.67 million contribution.

Tierney added he feels including GHS is "a good thing; it's going to improve the infrastruc-

ture within our town. CNG is going to bring the gas line up Route 85 and anybody along that route can hook up to it."

Any residents along the expansion route will have the option to switch to natural gas, but would be required to sign their own service agreement and pay for any conversion costs. In addition, other businesses along the route will also be able to hook up to the gas main, and Tierney explained he'd received numerous calls from interested businesses.

To move forward with the proposal, approval by the RHAM Board of Education is required, after which the selectmen will schedule a town hearing. CNG expects a decision by January, and if the project moves forward construction is expected to last from April to June, with town buildings and the schools operating on natural gas by the end of September.

(The RHAM Board of Education saw a presentation on the proposal at its board meeting Monday, and also decided to move forward with the plan. See related story on page 12.)

The selectmen last week also voted to approve a tax foreclosure on 501 Church St., property that used to be a gas station but has been abandoned since 1991.

Last year, the selectmen voted to move forward with efforts to take ownership of and renovate the property, which is a brownfield, but since that time the town has been unable to acquire any grants to help with the property's remediation.

Town Planner Mike O'Leary and the Brownfields Task Force had been authorized

by the board to submit a brownfield grant application that included a stipulation the town would move forward with acquiring the property through tax foreclosure if the grant was approved.

However, after the application was submitted for two different rounds of grant opportunities through the Department of Economic and Community Development – and denied – it was decided the town needs to first acquire the property and seek a development partner to help make the project more shovel-ready, and then reapply for a grant.

Town Attorney Kenneth Slater explained in a Nov. 10 letter to the selectmen that based on input received from DECD staff, "it is clear to the Brownfields Task Force that a future application will unlikely be successful if the town does not proceed in acquiring the property prior to the next application, and to the extent possible, partner with a potential developer of the site as part of the application proposal and submission."

Over \$80,000 in taxes is owned on the property, which have not been paid in more than 15 years.

The tax foreclosure is expected to start within two weeks of the board's approval and is likely to take six-eight months to complete.

Once the property is acquired, the Brownfields Task Force would again apply for grant funds to cover the property's remediation.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 1, at 7:30 p.m. in the Hebron town office building, 15 Gilead St.

East Hampton Voters Approve 30-Acre Purchase

by Elizabeth Regan

Taxpayers at a town meeting voted Monday to approve the Town Council's plan to purchase 30 acres next to Memorial School.

Only a few "nays" could be heard when moderator Steve Greco called the voice vote. There were about 40 people in attendance.

The property is made up of one 21.53-acre parcel alongside the school and one 8.27-acre parcel behind the Royal Oaks subdivision. The smaller property abuts the Middlesex Land Trust's Sellow Preserve and the Air Line Trail. They are both held by the estate of Domenic DiDomizio, who died in 2015 at the age of 94.

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said there is not a current, intended use for the larger property.

The smaller one, however, will likely be used by the land trust for walking trails, according to Anderson: and "we have our eye on it for potential use for drilling a well to supplement the Royal Oaks water system."

A discussion lasting almost a half hour elicited some concerns from residents on nearby Dogwood Lane and Harlan Place about the impact on their water supply, but most of the people at the meeting – including the neighbors – ended up voting for the purchase.

Tim Smith, public utilities administrator with the East Hampton Water Pollution Control Authority, said the public wells at the subdivision are "currently fine" and that buying the property simply makes it possible to drill an-

other well in the future if the need arises.

"Today, we are not in need of drilling another well at Royal Oaks," Smith said.

Steve Kistner, a resident of Dogwood Drive who recently bought his home there, told Smith he had to get a new well drilled when he moved in because it had gone dry. He said conversations with his new neighbors revealed the problem with wells running out of water began when the nearby Royal Oaks subdivision was built.

The town-owned Royal Oaks water system was completed in 2005 and serves 82 homes, according to town documents.

"My concern is that if you drill another well at Royal Oaks, will this disrupt my well again?" Kistner asked. "There's a number of houses in that Royal Oaks residential area that are now accessing the city water. How will that impact us and can you give any type of assurances?"

Smith, who had said this was the first he'd heard of any wells on Dogwood Drive going dry because of the Royal Oaks development, told Kistner he couldn't offer any assurances because groundwater is unpredictable.

But if the town decides to dig another well, he said, testing would be done to area homes to make sure it's not affecting their water level.

If the town's well was negatively affecting nearby homeowners, Smith said, "the state would not allow us at that point to develop the well."

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco assured residents the results of any testing on their wells would be available to them.

Kistner acknowledged that many of the people at the meeting didn't live in the area that could be affected by a new town well, but emphasized it's an issue when he and his neighbors have to hope water comes out every time they turn on the tap.

"If this water is going to be diverted even more, it's a bit of a concern," he said.

Resident Liz Whitty remembered when "the water supply was so abundant that they piped some water up to Memorial School." She asked if that was still the case.

Smith confirmed the town water authority connected the Royal Oaks well to the Memorial School well via a pipeline so that each one could back up the other – but he denied any water problems at Royal Oaks.

"Just on Dogwood Drive," Whitty replied.

Smith said the key to solving town-wide water problems is establishing a community water system. He cited a failed 2007 referendum that led the Water Development Task Force to explore "smaller interconnections" that would not extend as far as the failed proposal.

Voters in 2007 shot down a \$28.5 million proposal that would have served 5,300 people.

At the end of September, the council approved an RFP for firms interested in conduct-

ing a study on ways to interconnect the town's two water systems at the Royal Oaks subdivision and in the Village Center.

Smith told those at Monday's meeting the study would also address "whatever other pipes we can afford to run up through Dogwood or wherever else we may need to go."

The RFP closed on Nov. 4 and the submissions are currently under review by the Water Development Task Force, according to Maniscalco.

Longtime resident Hunt Voelker was among several people who spoke up to support the property purchase as a way to keep out a residential development that could be more of a drain on the water table than the town's potential well.

"This property is a very desirable piece of property for builders," Voelker said. "I think this being an open space for the town of East Hampton would be a good thing instead of having another set of houses in there."

After the meeting, Anderson expressed excitement that the purchase had earned the voters' approval.

"We have to be forward thinking," she said. "I don't know if we'll drill a well or expand Memorial, but at least we have options to do that. And we're protecting the wells of people around the area to ensure that no residential development occurs."

East Hampton Officials Continue Quest to Upgrade Town Hall, PD

by Elizabeth Regan

With a population almost double what it was when the town hall offices first moved to 20 East High St., East Hampton officials are looking to select a site – or sites – for larger and more modern town hall and police department facilities.

The current town hall building was constructed in the 1940s by Connecticut Light and Power and used as a service center, according to Maniscalco. He said it was purchased by the town in the mid-1970s.

Efforts to secure a new town hall and police station were the subject of numerous studies and committees going back almost two decades with no visible progress – but the current town council seems determined to change that. According to a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued last week, councilors plan to pick the winning location by Jan. 23.

Meanwhile, the council has authorized the creation of a building committee to help guide design and construction once the site is selected. Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said applications for the committee are available now. While there has been no deadline set, she encouraged those with experience in building, design, architecture, engineering or other related fields to apply as soon as possible.

"I'm just so glad we're making progress and we're moving forward," Anderson said this week.

Anderson is anxious to put together the building committee at the same time the council is going through the site selection process – "because once we choose a site, we want [the building committee] to hit the ground running."

The council will consider proposals that put the town hall and police station in the same location or in different locations. According to the RFP, the goal is to purchase the property "during the 2016-2017 and 2017-18 fiscal years."

Town departments are currently stuffed into 8,000 square feet in the town hall and 2,048 square feet in an annex at 240 Middletown Ave, the RFP said. The police department takes up 2,500 square feet in the basement of the town hall.

The council had discussed the possibility of putting out a larger-scale that would have sought not only a location, but also project schematics, total price for land acquisition and construction, and a timeline. But councilors shifted course earlier this month when they unanimously approved a more refined approach that left site selection to them while giving a building committee the power to put the actual design and construction out to bid.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco has cited cramped offices, structural problems, inaccessibility and a lack of parking as issues that

plague the current town hall.

Police Chief Sean Cox has called for expanded workspace and parking spots, citing an off-site locker room and parking lot about two miles from the station that hinders efforts to attract and retain officers. He has also been vocal about the negative effect of the outdated facilities on the recruitment of female officers, of which there are none currently.

A 2015 report from Friar Associates identified the need for roughly 18,000 square feet in a new town hall and 9,000 square feet in a new police department. The Farmington-based architectural, engineering and design firm was hired in April of last year to assess the practicality and repurposing Center School as the new town hall and police department, among other options. The report was an update of the firm's comprehensive 2008 facilities evaluation.

The Center School municipal hub plan was scrapped by the council in September.

The winning bid must have a minimum lot size of 2.75 acres for the town hall, with approximately 60 to 100 parking spots. The police department would need at least 2 acres, with 27 to 45 parking spots.

Both sites must be easily accessible to the public. The RFP said properties being considered for the police department must have easy access to a main road for emergency vehicles.

Other considerations include offer price, access to utilities, and proof that the property owners are up to date on taxes.

Proposals are due Jan. 9. The final selection will be made within two weeks, according to the town's timeline.

The building committee will go into effect upon the purchase of the property, Anderson said. Based on a resolution approved by the council earlier this month, the committee will be charged with putting the actual design and construction out to bid. It will be responsible for recommending one bid to the council and, if approved by the council and taxpayers, will be charged with making the plan happen. Other duties include helping to secure funding and educate the public.

The committee will include nine members from the community plus three ex-officio members who can participate in meetings but cannot vote: the town manager, a town council member, and a finance board member.

The committee will dissolve once the project is finished or when it is rejected by voters at referendum.

No building committee applications had been received as of Tuesday, according to Maniscalco's office.

Information and forms can be found online at easthamptonct.gov.

Portland Police News

11/11: Pamela Ives, 31, of 75 Stantack Rd., Middletown, was charged with possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, Portland Police said.

11/20: Lucien Polumba, 19, of 55 Wiese Alber Rd., Higganum, was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Colchester Police News

11/14: State Police said Kyle A. Hair, 36, of 477 Rte. 32, Franklin, was arrested and charged with illegal possession of a narcotic.

11/14: State Police said James B. Burton, 62, of 226 Country Club Rd., Waterbury, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive in the proper lane of a multiple lane highway.

11/16: Colchester Police are investigating a larceny of a pop-up style camp trailer from a commercial parking lot on Lebanon Avenue.

East Hampton Police News

11/3: Joseph Butler, 41, of 11 Wilkes Rd., was issued a summons for illegal burning, East Hampton Police said.

11/14: Jessica Spearin, 31, of 157 Daly Rd., was issued a summons for operating under suspension, police said.

The incident occurred sometime between Friday, Nov. 11 and Wednesday, Nov. 16. The case is an open investigation.

11/18: State Police said Michael P. Lacy, 24, of 41 Dogwood Rd., Moodus, was arrested and charged with failure to respond to an infraction.

11/18: State Police said Robert E. Pitts, 31, of 6 Beech Dr., Apt. 3, Norwich, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Marlborough Police News

11/14: State Police are investigating a burglary which occurred sometime between Thursday, Nov. 10 and Monday, Nov. 14 to a vehicle parked on Emily Road. According to the victim, a laptop computer and backpack were taken. Anyone with any information about this incident is asked to call the state police at 860-465-5400.

11/16: State Police are investigating a burglary that occurred on East Hampton Road sometime between Nov. 15 and Nov. 16. Anyone with information is asked to call Troop K at 860-465-5400.

11/19: State Police said Anthony D. Coleman, Jr., 23, of 115 Hollywood Ave., West

Hebron Police News

11/14: State Police said David J. Phillips, 25, of 33 Brennan Rd. was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Hartford, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license/registration, speeding (over 70 m.p.h.), unauthorized manufacture/sale/etc. of narcotics or certain hallucinogens, possession of a controlled substance (or more than half an ounce of cannabis), and possession of a controlled substance: hallucinogen/4 oz. marijuana.

11/19: State Police said Wesley Pearson, 18, of 104 Earle St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with unauthorized manufacture/sale/etc. of narcotics or certain hallucinogens and possession of a controlled substance: hallucinogen/4 oz. marijuana.

RHAM School Board Approves Switch to Natural Gas

by Geeta S. Sandberg

At the RHAM Board of Education meeting Monday, the board voted unanimously to move forward with a proposal that will switch the schools over to natural gas.

The plan from Connecticut Natural Gas includes the installation of eight miles of gas main from East Street in Hebron to the town center, as well as to the town's two elementary schools. As part of the proposal, all of the town buildings along the expansion route as well as the schools – including RHAM – need to make the switch to natural gas.

The RHAM board's approval comes on the heels of similar backing expressed by the Hebron Board of Selectmen at its meeting Thursday, Nov. 17 (see a related story on page 16).

Converting to natural gas will cost the district approximately \$264,000. Schools Superintendent Bob Siminski explained included in that price is changing the oil burners to gas burners, converting hot water tanks, the kitchens and the science labs, cleaning out the old oil-fired equipment and removing underground tanks.

Currently, approximately \$197,394 is spent on fuel, with the district utilizing approximately 100,200 gallons of oil at \$1.97 per gallon. Switching to natural gas is expected to provide an annual savings of \$101,357 with annual usage costs estimated at \$96,036, according to the presentation by CNG. Siminski explained that at first, though, the fuel line will remain

about the same in the budget, as those savings will be used to offset the cost of the project.

Siminski said Tuesday he feels moving forward with the proposal is "good for the district because we've done a lot of work with conserving electricity through the modernization of light bulbs and motors and installing solar, and I think this is another step in reducing our energy costs – our fixed costs."

To move forward with the project, the school board scheduled a district meeting for Monday, Dec. 19. Pending approval, the Hebron Board of Selectmen will then schedule a town hearing on the proposal. CNG is looking for contracts to be signed by the end of January 2017, with construction expected to last from April to June.

If the project proceeds, RHAM is expected to be operating on natural gas by the end of September 2017.

* * *

Also Monday, Siminski shared some key points for the board to think about as the 2017-18 budget season approaches.

He discussed the budget climate, which includes a projected state budget deficit of \$1.3-1.5 billion, and uncertainty as to how that would affect municipalities. In addition he mentioned enrollment at the middle school was expected to decrease by 48 students, which he'd address by recommending a reduction of two middle school teachers and reducing the number of

middle school teams from six to five for next year.

Siminski also pointed out five retirements are expected at the end of the current school year, and also said the Hebron school district was considering, due to declining enrollment, to use one fewer bus next year, which would likely result in longer bus routes and certain students having to walk further for the bus stop.

Grants also continue to be an issue, he explained, with the continued absence of the transportation grant and a possible reduction in the Excess Cost Grant, which reimburses the district a portion of the cost for special education.

Meanwhile, expected areas of increase include negotiated salary increases, a projected health insurance increase of 10 percent, and the cost of continuing the 1 to 1 initiative for grades 11 and 12 that will provide each student with a Chromebook.

Siminski is expected to present his initial budget proposal at the December Board of Education meeting.

* * *

In addition this week the board took action following two executive sessions.

After an executive session held at the start of the meeting, the board attorneys were authorized to go forward with litigation surrounding the windows at the middle and high schools.

Siminski explained that, after it was discovered moisture was getting between the panes

of glass on the windows that were installed when the school was constructed, the board hired a consulting firm to analyze the situation.

"It was found they were put together improperly and some of the material used was not appropriate for the use it was put to, and consequently the windows failed," he stated.

More than 300 windows at the schools are impacted.

And so, in response, the board is asking that the windows be replaced and the vendor, EFCO, pay for all associated costs. Between the replacement glass and installation, Siminski said of the project cost, "we're looking at \$1.5-1.7 million."

Lastly, following executive session at the end of the meeting, the board finalized a two-year administrator's contract that includes a 2.2 percent raise in each year of the contract.

Under the agreement, the administrators will not have the option to join Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) insurance, and will instead be offered a High-Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with the employee premium cost set at 19.5 percent. As per the contract, in-network deductibles will increase from \$1,500/\$3,000 to \$2,000/\$4,000.

The contract runs through the 2018-19 fiscal year.

* * *

The next RHAM Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 19.

Controversy Over Colchester Finance Board Vacancy Continues

by Julianna Roche

For the Board of Finance, finding a suitable replacement for former member James McNair's seat has continued sparking discord at meetings.

When McNair first announced his resignation, board members debated over what party affiliation could fill the vacancy, considering wording in the town charter and state statute were in direct conflict with one another.

According to the charter, the vacancy must be filled by an individual with the same political party as the prior member. While McNair is registered as a Democrat, he held a Colchester Independent Party (CIP) seat on the board – which caused some confusion as to who could fill his spot since state statute instead asserts the vacancy can be filled with any party except the Republican party, as the board has already reached its maximum of four Republican members.

A memorandum issued earlier this month by the town's attorneys finally set the issue to rest, ruling that town charter bylaws would typically trump state statute in this case, meaning the vacancy should be filled by another member of the CIP.

However, as of Nov. 2, when the memorandum was issued, only one person in town, Deanna Bouchard – who was previously enrolled as Democrat – had recently enrolled in the CIP, making her the only possible candidate for the seat. Because the enrollment transfer period from one party to another is 90 days, Bouchard is not technically eligible to fill the vacancy, which, per the town charter, the board needs to fill by Jan. 1.

According to the Nov. 2 memorandum, the board must abide by state statute and fill the vacancy with anyone who is not an enrolled member of the Republican Party.

At their Nov. 16 meeting, the board interviewed its first potential candidate to fill the vacancy – Democrat Mike Egan, a former Board of Education member who, while on that board, was charged with disorderly conduct and second-degree criminal mischief in January 2010, following an altercation in October 2009 at a Bacon Academy high school football game.

According to an arrest warrant affidavit, Egan and his then-wife allegedly broke up a fight between their son and another youth – who happened to be Bouchard's son – before Egan threw a student's cell phone into the woods in attempt to keep the altercation off the Internet.

Though the charges were ultimately dropped in May 2010 – after Egan appeared in Norwich Superior Court to read an apology letter, and paid for the phone – concerns over Egan's temper were raised right off the bat during his interview last week by finance board member Andreas Bisbikos – who read off a list of "information" he considered to be "highly concerning" regarding Egan's "emotional temperament."

In addition to the former charges brought against him in 2010, Bisbikos mentioned an incident where Egan stormed into Town Hall on May 10, 2016 and verbally assaulted resident Jim Kelly in public, claiming Kelly had vandalized and stolen balloons from signs Egan had put up on the town green.

"Let's say you have a disagreement or a vote goes down [on the board], can you guarantee you won't storm into Town Hall and verbally assault the person you disagree with?" Bisbikos asked.

"Was I psyched about [the balloons being

vandalized and stolen]? No. Did I overreact? Yes," Egan said. He added that, if appointed to the seat, he would no longer be advocating on personal issues as an individual, nor would he continue sending in letters to the editor for the *Rivereast*.

"I think the Board of Finance should act as a unit," he continued. "I think you should have one voice. ... Whatever is decided as far as the Board of Finance is concerned, that should be the voice we hear."

During public comments, both Bouchard and Kelly spoke in opposition to Egan's possible appointment to the board, claiming his temper as a serious cause of concern.

Bouchard described the 2009 incident involving her son as "very scary" and "very violent." She went on to explain that, in addition to being banned from school property and school functions for six months, "Mr. Egan was admonished by the court marshals for his demeanor" toward her in the courtroom. (Bouchard did not return multiple calls for comment for this story.)

"I think those actions speak for themselves," she continued, adding that if anything, since 2010, his behavior has only "gotten worse."

Kelly agreed, claiming that prior to the outburst in Town Hall this year, he remembered making a comment in a meeting challenging the budget earlier during budget season, to which Egan turned to him and said "in a low voice, 'You've been holding this budget hostage for several years and you need to knock that s—t off'."

"That's a verbal threat and it escalated after that," Kelly said.

"I really strongly feel if I had not pulled my phone out [during the incident at Town Hall],

he would have physically assaulted me," Kelly continued, adding he would not want to serve on a board with "somebody who's that volatile."

"I certainly want to know that I can come here and voice my opinion ... whether you agree or not, and not have to worry about my safety," Kelly said. "What's it going to take before something changes? Is somebody going to get hurt before somebody does something about this? Maybe if, as the board, you don't let him on ... maybe that will send the message."

Following Kelly's comments, Egan issued a verbal apology saying he couldn't "say sorry enough."

"I'm not proud of some of those situations. If you feel those two things disqualify me, then that's your opinion," he said to the board.

Bradley Bernier, also a former Board of Education member, was the sole supporter of Egan's appointment.

"I served on the board for half of [Egan's] time there," he said. "Even through lively discussions, Mike was always a gentleman and I appreciated his voice at the table and I think each of you could be better for having him at your table."

"I was on the Board of Education for nine years," Egan said. "There were issues where we had some pretty opinionated people. ... I thought I did a pretty good job of trying to listen to everyone's opinion and move forward."

* * *

According to Tarlov, the board will continue accepting applications for the vacancy through Dec. 6, and will interview candidates and likely make a final decision at their next meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 7, at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

Obituaries

Hebron

Howard J. Lunt

Howard J. Lunt went into the loving arms of our Lord and Savior Thursday, Nov. 17.

He leaves his wife of 60 years Ann (Riker) Lunt; his sons, James Lunt of Columbia and Richard Lunt and his wife Susan of Columbia; his daughters, Linda Caswell and her husband Paul of Andover, Lois Roy and her husband Kevin of Hebron and Rebecca Hayden of Hebron; former daughter-in-law Sharon McCavanaugh; brother, Paul Lunt from Norwich; 11 grandchildren, Kayla Lunt, Jonathan and Sarah Caswell, Heather and Craig Collin, Richard Lunt II, Alfred Lunt, Rochelle Roy, Kyle Roy, Jessica and Brian Vance, Andrew Hayden, Holly Hayden and James Hayden; two great grandchildren, Alexia Caswell and Charlotte Vance; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his parents, Lois and Burton Lunt; his brothers, Claude, Orlin, Francis and Gordon.

In his early years, you could find Howard on any one of a number of fields doing what he loved most – playing sports. His true love was baseball. He was a first draft pick for the Boston Red Sox and then was drafted to war. So it goes without saying he was a true Boston Red Sox fan.

Howard was an Army veteran, serving during the Korean War, and received honorary medals for Korean service, National Defense and Sharpshooting. He and his wife, Ann, owned and operated Lunt's Market for over 25 years.

Howard was a true humanitarian in his town. He helped found the Hebron Harvest Fair and Hebron Youth Basketball and was a cubmaster for years. For many years, you could find Howard on any and all of the fields coaching youth, which was his joy. You could always find him in attendance at any event that involved his children and grandchildren from the fields to the theater.

The family would like to thank the nursing staff of the ICU unit at Manchester Memorial Hospital on behalf of Howard for the gentle, compassionate, kind care they showed him and his family.

The family received guests Tuesday, Nov. 22, directly at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron, before the celebration of the Memorial Liturgy. Rendering of military honors followed Mass. Burial private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the AHM Scholarship Fund, 25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, CT 06248.

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

Andover

Blanche Alice Bruno Nagy

Blanche Alice (Masse) Bruno Nagy, 78, of Andover, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Nov. 2, at New London Rehab. She is survived by her beloved husband, Edward Nagy. Blanche was born March 6, 1938, in Windsor, Vt., to the late Laurent and Blanche (Belisle) Masse.

She is also survived by her children Pamela Morano of Colchester, Peter (Kristen) Bruno of Enfield, Tricia (Andrew) Leary of Pawcatuck and Laurie (Shane) Drum of Vernon; her stepchildren, Gary (Debbe) Nagy of Owings, Md., and Karen Nagy of Windsor; her grandsons, Anthony, Daniel, Travis and Logan; and her sisters Marguerite Davis of Middletown and MaryAnn Larose of Venice, Fla.; also many nieces and nephews and extended family members.

She is predeceased by her sisters Lucile Stone, Betty Duffy and Jeannette Ulm; her brothers Wilfred Masse and George Masse.

She worked as a teller and as a secretary. She later became a homemaker and sold Fuller Brush. Her favorites were bowling at Holiday Lanes in Manchester, fishing, playing bingo, going to fairs, traveling to Florida, and country music concerts. She was a member of the Andover Seniors.

Her burial was private in Roxbury. Affordable Cremation of Connecticut was in charge of her arrangements. Family and friends are welcome to attend her Celebration of Life at Manchester Country Club Friday, Nov. 25, from 2:30- 4:30 p.m. Memorial donations may be made to Hospice (Vitas Healthcare).



Colchester

Luella Gifford Moore

Luella Gifford Moore, 97, died Wednesday, Nov. 16, at Harrington Court. She was the youngest of nine children born to the late Loren and Mary (Singleton) Gifford Dec. 13, 1918, in Oil City, Pa.

On July 25, 1936, Luella was united in marriage to Joseph E. Moore in New York; he predeceased her Dec. 1, 1986. They moved to Salem in 1947, where they raised seven children. She was a charter member of the Gardner Lake Fire, Co. Auxiliary. In 1989, Luella moved to Port Charlotte, Fla., where she was a very proud and active volunteer in the Cultural Center; she returned back to Salem in 1999 and was active in the Salem and Colchester senior centers.

Luella is survived by her son, Jeffrey E. Moore and wife Cynthia of Salem; her daughters, Deborah White and husband Mitch of Westbrook, Kathleen Nixie of Galveston, Texas, Karen Sperry of Lafayette, Ga., Deanna St. Jean of Salem and Janet Ireland and husband Jerry of Florida; 13 grandchildren, six great-grandsons, 10 great-granddaughters and one great-great-granddaughter, as well as many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents and her husband Joseph, she was predeceased by her daughter Peggy Moore sons-in-law Virgil Sperry and Gerard St. Jean as well as all her sisters and brother.

Per her wishes, there were no calling hours, and a graveside burial was held Tuesday, Nov. 22, at the Salem Green Cemetery on Hartford Road.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Luella's memory may be made to the Gardner Lake Fire Co.

Belmont Funeral Home has been entrusted with Luella's care. Visit belmontfh.com to leave condolences to the family.



East Hampton

Dianne Marie Garofalo

Dianne Marie (Bennett) Garofalo passed away peacefully, surrounded by her family at her bedside, Monday, Nov. 21, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was born Sept. 2, 1944, in Revere, Mass.

In 1963, she graduated as valedictorian from the Soldier's Home School of Nursing. Throughout the years she worked as a LPN, Real Estate Agent & Facility Manager all the while caring for her children.

Dianne is survived by her husband of 53 years, Vincent Anthony Garofalo Jr. They were married in Everett, Mass., Feb. 1, 1964. Through this union she is lovingly remembered by her children, Vincent Garofalo III, Cheryl Robida and husband John of Virginia, Lisa Bielele and husband Joseph, Michael Garofalo and wife Pamela and Beth Garofalo. She is survived by grandchildren Jacqueline, Vincent IV, Kegan, Erin Rose, John, James and Giada. Her wings of guidance will watch over her two great-grandchildren, to be born in 2017.

Dianne was an avid craft maker, spending many hours behind the sewing machines and floral wreaths. She also loved to garden and doted on the hydrangea and hibiscus plants as they bloomed. She finally grew her first pumpkin this year and was very proud of the accomplishment.

Dianne was fascinated with airplanes and could watch them for hours at the airport and air shows. She had a passion for Fire and EMS services through her daughter who volunteered. That interest opened her heart to Beth's close friend and "adopted" son, Kenneth McGahee. He was a wonderful support system for her and she will miss him very much. May she rest peacefully and forever be in our hearts...

Friends may call at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, Nov. 25, from 6-8 p.m. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Saturday, Nov. 26, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church East Hampton. Burial will follow in the family plot in St. Patrick Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance Association at P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Portland

Sheila Elena McGinn

Sheila Elena McGinn (Noetzel), 51, of Middletown passed away peacefully at Hartford Hospital Wednesday, Nov. 16, surrounded by her loving family and close friends.

Sheila was the beloved wife of Alfred P. Noetzel; they married in 1987. Al had served in Vietnam with the 11th Armored CAV (F Troop) and with the 9th Infantry Division (C Co 5/60th Mech). Sheila was born in Middletown Jan. 29, 1965, the daughter of Frances Mozdzierz Sprague of Portland and the late Robert J. McGinn.

Sheila's death came unexpectedly, even though she had been hospitalized for diabetes-related problems for about two months. She was recovering and was told she could go home in a week. She was elated, as was her family. Unfortunately, her untimely death occurred two weeks later.

Sheila graduated from Portland High School in 1983. She later achieved two Associate in Science degrees in Business at Middlesex Community College and one in Radiological Technology from Capital Community College. She worked for Moblex for approximately five years and loved her job. She visited convalescent hospitals throughout Connecticut and always tried to chat and comfort the patients. Sheila was a communicant of St. Mary Church of Portland. She and Al raised three daughters, Kersti of Dallas, Texas, and Shannon and Kerry of Middletown.

Sheila was a loving mother whose girls meant the world to her. She was very proud of them and always encouraged them to continue their education and to be considerate of others. She tried to never miss their athletic games or dance recitals throughout their grammar and high school years. She loved animals and always tried to help lost animals find their homes or adopt them herself. She left her two dogs Gyro and Reese who were devoted to her and are having a difficult time during her absence.

Sheila leaves her two brothers, Daniel McGinn of Portland and Thomas McGinn (Karen) of East Hampton and two nieces Katie and Erin McGinn of East Hampton. She also leaves her aunts Barbara Chayer of Cleburne, Texas, and Mary McGinn of Woburn, Mass. Also left to mourn Sheila is a special longtime friend, Betty Steele Morgan who has been indispensable in her support.

She was predeceased by her sister, Claire M. McGinn (1982) and Robert F. McGinn in November 2015.

In addition, she was predeceased by her beloved grandparents, Francis J. Mozdzierz and Marguerite Sullivan Mozdzierz and her Great Aunt Hilda Sullivan House and Great Uncle Warren House of Portland. Her paternal grandparents were Elena Hanlon McGinn and Edward L. McGinn of Woburn, Mass.

The family would like to thank the staffs at Yale New Haven Hospital, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, and the Neuro-Trauma ICU at Hartford Hospital for their superior care. The care she received at Yale New Haven Hospital led to steady and major improvement.

Her funeral was held Wednesday, Nov. 23, from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, where the funeral cortege proceeded to St. Mary Church for a Mass of Christian Burial that morning. Burial followed in St. Mary Cemetery. Family and friends paid their respects Tuesday, Nov. 22, and Wednesday morning, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Joslin Diabetes Center, Attn. Development, One Joslin Place, Boston, MA 02115.

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



Colchester

Valeria Sievel

Valeria Theresa Jasenski Sievel died peacefully Sunday, Nov. 20, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital in Middletown, after a short illness. She was born Nov. 2, 1926, in Torrington, to Felix and Mary Jasenski.

Like many of her generation, she remembered fondly the closeness of extended family that lived together and supported each other during the Depression. She graduated from Torrington High School in 1944, when many classmates were already serving in World War II. She worked in the cost office of the Torrington Company until her 1948 marriage to the love of her life, Stanley Sievel. Stan always said he was smitten with Valeria when he saw her every Sunday at St. Mary's Church, and when he played saxophone at her brother's wedding, but he had to wait for her to grow up before he could court her. As their sons John, Tom, and Mark, and later daughter Lisa, came along, they were immersed in family life, settling in the house that Stan built on Johnson Street.

Family celebrations and holidays with extended family were the highlight of her life, and Christmas was never complete unless she had baked 12 kinds of cookies and decked the house with greenery she assembled. Through the years she worked as a bookkeeper for Trabees Clothing Store and for Scasco Oil Company. After Stan died in 1982, she began a career in banking with First Federal Bank, rising from teller to customer service manager at the Litchfield office at what was then Eagle Bank. She was always proud that she was the oldest and the best student in the banking courses she pursued.

After enjoying annual vacations on her beloved Cape Cod for 24 years, she retired to East Harwich in 1993, where her house, Dream by the Sea, became the headquarters for extended summer and holiday visits from her children and grandchildren, Lindsay and Alex. She delighted in the salt air, walking the beach, participating in devotions at Holy Trinity Church, and sharing all the special places she discovered on the Cape. For several years she worked as a customer service representative at the Orleans office of Cape Cod Five Cent Savings Bank.

She moved to Colchester in 2006, where she was a member of St. Andrew Church.

She was an avid Red Sox fan and staunch Democrat, proudly casting her last ballot for the first woman presidential candidate. She continued cooking and baking her special holiday desserts until recent years, and loved nothing more than gathering her family around her table. She was grateful for so many exceptional neighbors, most especially Madelyn Starkey, who was an extraordinary friend and caregiver.

Her family wishes to thank the staff and volunteers of the Middlesex Hospital Hospice unit, and the Middlesex Hospital Visiting Nurses, who always showed such compassion and warmth in their caregiving.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 34 years, Stanley Sievel, and by her brothers, Edmund Jasenski, Chester Jasenski, and Henry Jasenski; her sisters, Sophie Jasenski and Jennie Solywoda; and many beloved brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

She is survived by her sons, John Sievel of Ashford (José); Rev. Thomas Sievel of East Haven; Mark Sievel of Newtown (Monica); and daughter, Lisa Sievel-Otten (Robert) of Manassas, Va.; granddaughter, Lindsay Otten of Alexandria, Va.; grandson, Alexander Otten of Manassas, Va.; her sister, Tessie Melville of Torrington; and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held today, Nov. 25, at 11:30 a.m., from Gleeson-Ryan Funeral Home, 258 Prospect St., Torrington, to St. Francis of Assisi Church, 160 Main St., Torrington, for a Mass of Christian Burial at noon, celebrated by the Rev. Thomas A. Sievel. Burial will follow in New St. Francis Cemetery, Torrington. Friends may call today from 10-11:30 a.m. at Gleeson-Ryan Funeral Home.

Memorial donations may be made to the Haitian Health Foundation, 97 Sherman St., Norwich, CT 06360 (haitianhealthfoundation.org).

To offer an online condolence, visit gleesonryanfh.com.

Obituaries continued

East Hampton

Helen Wright

Helen (Stark) Wright, 77, of Brandon, Fla., passed away at home, surrounded by her loving family, Thursday, Nov. 17. Helen was born Jan. 17, 1939, in New Brunswick, N.J., to Rita (Walker) Lattrell and Robert K. Stark Sr.

Helen attended East Hampton High School in East Hampton. She was a life member of the Ladies VFW Auxiliary Post 5095 and a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the East Hampton Fire Department.

Helen is survived by her loving husband of 60 years, John P. Wright Sr.; children Susan VanVlack (Charles), John Wright Jr. (Heidi), Bruce Wright (Jamie) and Michael Wright; her beloved sister and best friend Margarite (Stark) Lagendyk, brother Robert K. Stark Jr., and sister Patricia (Stark) Royce; 10 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and many special nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brother James Stark and brother-in-law David Lagendyk.

Services will be held Saturday, Dec. 3, at 2 p.m., at Wesley Church, 6100 Memorial Hwy., Tampa, Fla.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to LifePath Hospice (chaptershealth.org).

Marlborough

Kenneth Irving Cooley Sr.

Kenneth Irving Cooley Sr., 86, of East Hartford, passed away Saturday, Nov. 19, at Marlborough Health Care. He was the beloved husband of 63 years to Eleanor (Barnett) Cooley. Born Feb. 23, 1930, in Hartford, he was the son of the late Raymond and Margaret (Crane) Cooley.

Ken retired from Pratt & Whitney after 45 years and was also a Korean War veteran. He loved being with family and was most happy when there was any opportunity to spend time with them; he loved to laugh. He enjoyed bowling, movies, especially older films and westerns, and was an avid Red Sox fan.

Besides his wife, he leaves behind his daughter, Debra (Cooley) DeJohn and s/o Louis Campbell; son, Kenneth I. Cooley Jr. and his wife Meg (Hansen) Cooley; daughter, Rebekah (Cooley) Zaikarite and husband Philip Zaikarite Jr.; daughter, Laura (Chappel) Marcus and husband Harry Marcus; son, Dalbert Ameil; daughter, Dawn Yombrick; nine grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, a great-great-grandson, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his two sisters.

A funeral service was held Wednesday, Nov. 23, at the Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St., Rocky Hill. Burial with military honors followed in Rose Hill Memorial Park. Family and friends called at the funeral home Tuesday, Nov. 22.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, Connecticut Chapter, 200 Executive Blvd., Suite 4B, Southington, CT 06489, or online at alz.org.

Condolences may be left online at rosehillfuneralhomes.com.