

RIVEREAST

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100 Years Young... Irene Scott of Portland celebrated her 100th birthday Nov. 29. She is a lifelong resident of Portland and a proud member of Zion Lutheran Church. Still active for her age, she enjoys taking care of her small flower garden, solving crossword puzzles each day and, of course, keeping up with current politics. She also enjoys her six great-grandsons – and is shown here with four of them over the Thanksgiving holiday. Front row, from left, are Mason and Tyler Scott; back row, from left, are Ryan Burns, Irene Scott and Billy Burns.

Belltown Schoolhouse to be Demolished?

by Elizabeth Regan

A member of the Middle Haddam Association has warned the town that the old schoolhouse on the edge of the village's historic district will be demolished in the spring.

That's the message East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco relayed last week as part of his bi-weekly update to members of the Town Council.

Amid murmurings of apparent surprise from her fellow officials, Councilor Melissa Engel asked Maniscalco to "say that again."

"They want to take down the school on Schoolhouse Lane in Middle Haddam," Maniscalco repeated. "They wanted me to make sure that you guys were aware they were planning on taking that property down by spring, I believe."

The private, non-profit Middle Haddam Association was formed in 1947, according to a database maintained by the Office of the Secretary of the State. The association appears to have been largely dormant through 2005, when the group came back to life with the goal of purchasing the former school so it wouldn't be used for residential construction.

The school was built in 1900, according to the town assessor's database.

Middle Haddam Association Vice President Ted Rossi, a Middletown lumber company executive and Middle Haddam resident, confirmed Tuesday he had informed Maniscalco about the impending demolition "as a courtesy" to the town.

The property has been the subject of discussion as a possible site for a town-run recreational center since the tenure of embattled

former Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe, who resigned in 2010. Several current officials say O'Keefe first floated the idea of using the building to house a gym and maybe even a pool.

"We've waited 10 years for the town to come up with an option," Rossi said. "It's impossible for us to bear the burden any longer."

When asked if there had been any recent talks with town officials prior to last week, Rossi said he didn't think he should respond. Instead, he said the question should be directed to Maniscalco "and members of the council."

Maniscalco on Tuesday said the only discussion he has had with the current council about the Middle Haddam School occurred last week when he informed members of the proposed springtime demolition.

"There's no story," he said.

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said Tuesday that she was aware previous councils had talked about options for the Middle Haddam School, but the issue had not been brought to the seated council until Maniscalco told them it would be demolished.

"I'm sure we would welcome an opportunity to discuss it if [the Middle Haddam Association] wants to come before the council and discuss it with us; I'm sure there would be council members that would be willing to listen," Anderson said. "But it sounds like [Rossi] has made up his mind."

Maniscalco denied having participated in any meetings to discuss the potential renovation of the building in the past year, and said none of his staff members were involved in such meet-

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Art Instructor Named Colchester Teacher of the Year

by Julianna Roche

In the middle of her Colchester Elementary School (CES) art classroom, Stefanie Goodie sits comfortably on a pint-sized wooden bench that's meant mostly for her students.

She speaks softly, with patience and kindness exuding from her voice, making it easy to picture her calming down a classroom of 20 or so rambunctious kindergarteners in the same room.

Last month, Goodie, who is CES' only art teacher for about 550 students, was honored as Colchester's District Teacher of the Year at the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Awards Ceremony at the Bushnell in Hartford.

According to Principal Judy O'Meara, Goodie was selected for the award by her colleagues and the school's administrative team, who recognized her for her "dedication and love" for the students, which "really stands out."

In a press release, one of her peers also went

on to describe her as "a valued member" of the CES staff and someone who "goes above and beyond to support the children, teachers and parents" of the school.

According to Goodie, art has been in her blood for as long as she can remember – starting with her grandmother, who first introduced her to the subject.

"My grandmother loved art and so I think it started with her," she said, adding that she also "loved all her art teachers" growing up from elementary school into high school.

"I just like the process of creating and how free it can be. You can just take an idea and build upon it using different materials, and just exploring artists and the different media," said the East Haddam native (Goodie currently resides there with her husband Travis and children – 5-year-old Ava and 3-year-old Ellis).

Goodie, who has a bachelor's degree in art

education from Central Connecticut State University and a master's of education from Walden University in Minnesota, has worked at CES since 2005, originally filling in for the then art teacher who was on maternity leave.

In 2006, when the teacher didn't come back, Goodie was hired in her place – where she now teaches art and integrative arts for pre-kindergarten through second grade students.

"I like this age because they're just beginning to explore and they're not afraid to do it," she said, adding that older students may "have had a bad experience or they just say 'I can't draw' and they don't want to try... but [in] pre-K and kindergarten, they have no fear and they just want to try."

In her classes, Goodie said she has students explore using a range of different materials – including paints (such as watercolor, acrylic and tempera), crayon, marker, and students' favor-

ite, Cray-Pas.

"It's messy, but we love it," she laughed.

As part of the district's Innovation Nation and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) initiatives, Goodie also teaches one period of integrative arts every day – where she and her students collaborate with other classes for projects.

For example, she said, her first- and second-grade classes recently finished a Thanksgiving play, where she helped students design scenery and a music teacher taught another group songs.

"We can collaborate with classroom teachers on special projects," she explained. "We can take small groups of kiddos that have a spark of an interest in something. It's just fun to do."

Teaching a group of 20 or so "kiddos" isn't always easy, Goodie said, especially "trying to

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ings either.
 Gregory Farmer, a field officer with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, said Wednesday he met with Parks and Recreation Director Jeremy Hall in April to discuss stabilization and reuse options for the building.

Farmer described the town as “certainly interested” in the property.

“Despite years of neglect, it’s still fairly solid,” Farmer said of the brick building. The assessor’s database lists the building as having 6,336 square feet on its main level, plus a slab foundation of the same size.

Hall, when reached by the *Rivereast* Wednesday, confirmed he met with Farmer in the spring. Hall added that he and Maniscalco also met with Rossi and Rossi’s architect from Northeast Collaborative Architects about a \$2.5 million plan to renovate the former school as a recreational center. The plan was submitted by the same architect in 2009, but the proposal did not go anywhere at the time.

Hall said the plan includes a gym, racquetball and tennis courts, a community room and office space.

The town has been pre-approved for a grant through the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation to explore renovation of the building that would cover much of the same ground as the 2009 plan, according to Hall. He said he brought the project idea to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board this summer, at which time members had questions about staffing, maintenance, membership structure and funding, among others.

August meeting minutes of the advisory board state a possible vote was postponed to the next meeting “to get more information and details about the possible project.”

Hall explained the board decided Hall should ask Maniscalco to bring the issue to the council. “I just don’t know if he ever spoke to the council directly or indirectly,” Hall said.

The issue was not revisited at the next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting, according to Nov. 1 minutes.

Maniscalco returned a call from the *Rivereast* Wednesday afternoon, not to answer questions about apparent discrepancies in his statements, but to demand loudly that the paper stop “bothering” his staff and trying to stir up trouble in the East Hampton community. Then he hung up.

Thursday morning, Anderson reiterated Maniscalco had not informed the council about any communications regarding the former school – and that nobody from the Middle Haddam Association had approached the council.

“Usually if someone is interested in selling a property, they will write a letter to the council asking if it has any interest,” she said. “Nothing was communicated to us, formally or even informally, as a council. I guess I’m puzzled why that wasn’t done.”

The association’s president, Barbara Angelico, told the *Rivereast* Tuesday Maniscalco’s announcement about the demolition should not have been made publicly. She said Rossi’s message to the Town Council was “one person’s opinion” meant to encourage councilors “to make a decision.”

Describing the talk of demolition as informal, she added that the point was to remind the council the property is available “and, if the town wanted to use it in some capacity, the association would be very much in favor of working with the town and coming up with favorable terms.”

Angelico emphasized the Middle Haddam Association has not “had a formal meeting to even discuss it.”

The Middle Haddam Association’s bylaws, adopted in 2005, require a two-thirds vote of members at the annual meeting or a special meeting if the group wants to acquire or dispose of property. The same voting requirement must be met before the board of directors can “execute any contract or enter upon any undertaking” that costs more than \$1,000.

The association’s secretary, Lois McCutcheon, said Tuesday she was shocked by Maniscalco’s announcement of the demolition. She said she had heard nothing from the board of directors about knocking down the building.

She had, however, received a Nov. 17 email from association member Chuck Roberts inviting board members to a meeting. The meeting was set to be held after press time Thursday.

The Middle Haddam Association Board of Directors has not met since May 2012, McCutcheon said.

McCutcheon said the association has a member list of about 145 people, many of whom donated a total of more than \$50,000 to purchase the former school.

The group paid \$157,000 for the 2.2-acre property in November 2005, according to the assessor’s database.

In minutes from the last 2012 association board meeting, Rossi reported the group was in default on its \$124,999 mortgage. He also said he had personally invested \$75,000 in the project.

“Every attempt to interest the town in the school had resulted in failure and interest from other parties had also come to nothing,” the minutes said.

Members voted to put the property on the market with a commercial broker for \$250,000 that September.

The minutes stated three board members at that time volunteered to pay the interest on the loan for June and July, which came out to \$430.56 per month.

The property did not end up going on the market as planned, McCutcheon said.

Angelico said the payments are currently being made because “someone stepped up to the plate and has been taking care of it.”

McCutcheon said Rossi has been paying the



The old schoolhouse on the edge of the Middle Haddam Historic District is ticketed for possible demolition in the spring – a message that caught members of the Town Council by surprise last week.

mortgage.

When asked for comment, Rossi said “the association owns the building and is paying the mortgage.”

The property is exempt from property taxes based on its non-profit status, according to tax assessor Terry Dinnean. But in looking at a photo of the property in his records on Wednesday, Dinnean said he thought it was odd a long vacant building with no apparent development plans would remain eligible for such a tax break.

He said it is his policy to look into such issues when he becomes aware of them.

The association has filed annual status reports as required by the Internal Revenue Service every year since 2005, according to the IRS website.

Assessor’s records show the Middle Haddam Association purchased the property from Old Schoolhouse LLC. A state database of registered businesses lists prominent local developer Wayne Rand as the owner of the dissolved venture.

Old Schoolhouse LLC bought the property from Peter Sierpinski for \$97,500 in 2003, according to the assessor’s department.

A 2000 article in the *Hartford Courant* said a group of concerned Middle Haddam residents thwarted the efforts of Sierpinski’s father, a Middletown developer, to convert the building into 12 housing units. The citizen’s group succeeded in overturning a Planning and Zoning Commission decision that would have allowed condominiums in former schools.

Rand had intended to turn the building into condo units for those 55 years old or older, according to multiple officials.

Local preservationist Margaret Faber, who is

Lois McCutcheon’s daughter as well as a member of the state’s Historic Preservation Council, said she hopes the building can be sold with a preservation easement attached instead of being demolished.

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation describes a preservation easement as a legal agreement that protects the property from changes not in keeping with its historic, architectural, or natural character. The owner retains the title, use and control of the property as well as the right to sell, donate or will the property. The easement is usually binding to future owners.

The former school is governed by the local Middle Haddam Historic District Commission. A “certificate of appropriateness” must be approved before the owner can apply for any building permit, according to the regulation. Exemptions apply if the building inspector declares a building dangerous due to deterioration.

While most of Middle Haddam is part of a National Historic Register District that provides some federal protections against the demolition of its buildings, the school is just outside that boundary. The national historic designation goes partway up the south side of the eponymous street but falls short of the 12 Schoolhouse Lane address on which the thick brick structure sits.

The schoolhouse may be eligible for inclusion on the national historic register based on its age, integrity and significance; it could be added if a nomination form is submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office and ultimately approved by the National Park Service.

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fit everything in with the schedule” considering students only have art class once a week (a 20 minute period for pre-kindergarten and 40 minutes for kindergarten through second grade).

Still, she said, the number of rewarding moments definitely outweighs the challenging ones and the art teacher considers herself “lucky to work in the [CES] building” with so many “amazing teachers.”

“When they [the students] are just beginning to experience something new, a new artist or a new material, they’re so excited about it,” Goodie continued. “Just the look on their face gives me a good feeling and I’m like ‘Okay I’m doing my job.’”



Colchester Elementary School’s art teacher Stefanie Goodie was recently awarded Colchester’s District Teacher of the Year for her work with pre-kindergarten students through second-graders.

Portland Selectmen On Board with Complete Streets Group

by Elizabeth Regan

Now that the Board of Selectmen has authorized a policy to guide the creation of a safer and more accessible transportation network in town, the local Complete Streets Group is looking forward to putting the words into action.

Kathy Herron, chairwoman of the Portland Complete Streets Group, said one of the group's first priorities is to help the Board of Selectmen decide how to allocate \$1 million for sidewalk improvements approved by voters at referendum in November. The same vote authorized \$6 million for a large-scale recreation complex on Route 17 and \$2.5 for improvements to deteriorating roads like Brownstone Avenue.

The Complete Streets policy was unanimously approved by selectmen in October after months of review.

The procedure outlined in the document lists the steps that should be followed every time a transportation project is undertaken. According to the policy, selectmen should get input from the Complete Streets Group in addition to relevant town staff to identify ways to make sure everyone can share roads and walkways safely. The budget should then be developed through

the land use, public works and finance departments.

The policy applies to all town-owned roads and land within the public right-of-way. It also requires the town to apply Complete Streets principles when dealing with the state Department of Transportation on improvements to Routes 66, 17 and 17A.

Herron described the policy as a "statement of intent" by selectmen to consider "all users" in transportation projects.

The volunteer Complete Streets group branched off from the Air Line Trail steering committee in June 2014. It is part of a national organization that began in 2004.

The concept of "complete streets" involves forging paths that can be used safely by pedestrians, cyclists, people with mobility challenges, transit users and motorists. The goal, according to the national Complete Streets organization, is to become less dependent on automobile travel by investing in other forms of transportation so everyone can have full and equal access to jobs, health care, school, shopping and recreational opportunities.

The state DOT adopted its own Complete

Streets policy in 2014.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she looks forward to working with the Complete Street Group on changes to the transportation infrastructure. She applauded the "committee of citizens" on its efforts to improve sidewalks and streets and pointed to the policy as a sign of the Board of Selectmen's shared commitment.

Citing the policy as an important factor in helping to secure funding at the state, regional and local level, Bransfield said she recently applied for a federal grant through the regional council of governments to help improve sidewalks in town. Grant allocations to municipalities in the state have ranged from a few hundred thousand dollars to around a million dollars, according to Bransfield.

The road and sidewalk improvements described in the policy focus on the town's four school campuses and their environs. The priority area radiates out from Main Street, encompassing Rose Hill Road and Collins Hill Road, as well as Route 66 from the Arrigoni Bridge to the vicinity of Camp Ingersoll. Recommen-

dations for possible bike or multi-use paths extend to the Glastonbury and East Hampton borders.

According to Herron, the document was based on policies from West Hartford, Connecticut and Natick, Massachusetts.

Selectmen in February appropriated \$8,000 to bring in a consultant from the architectural firm Kent + Frost to devise a "town-wide master plan" to guide planning, funding, construction and maintenance of a pedestrian and bicycle system in town.

Herron said Tuesday it was subsequently determined the creation of a master plan was not within the \$8,000 budget.

"A master plan includes very specific info on what roads/streets/sidewalks will be renovated and how they will be renovated and include engineer specs," Herron said. "So a Complete Streets policy was created that will guide any work and plans in the future."

In addition to the policy, the firm created maps illustrating the priority area for road improvements as well as proposed sidewalks and bike paths.

Rock Land Farms in Colchester Joins the Mix

by Julianna Roche

There is a warmth to Ellen Young that is best described by the way she first greeted me – a complete newcomer to Rock Land Farms – with a huge smile and the kind of hug you'd expect from a close relative.

Young and her husband John are the owners of Rock Land Farms, a new horse farm that sits on a wooded cul-de-sac at 192 Shailor Hill Rd.

Though the couple has lived on the property next door for years, they didn't acquire the land where the horse farm currently is until more recently.

John "called me one day and said, 'Hey, I just bought the land next door and we're going to build a small barn!'" Ellen laughed.

Three years ago, John purchased three horses from an auction at the University of Connecticut for Ellen and his two nieces (19-year-old Nichole and 16-year-old Marissa, who he said have both "been into horses forever").

There was just one problem, though.

"We had nowhere to put them," he laughed, which eventually led them to the idea of building a small barn to house the trio – Samuel, Frederico and Da Vinci.

To do so, John (who had no prior design or architectural experience) used a design software program to plot out the building on his computer.

"You could make each square and each block whatever size you wanted," he explained, adding that soon enough the original "little picture I drew grew into this 12-stall barn."

This past August, the Youngs finally brought their horses home to the brand new barn, which will be able to board up to 12 horses once they open their doors to the public in "the next two weeks or so," Ellen said.

In addition to the horse stalls, the wood-paneled barn (which has a multi-colored stone face and a forest-green roof with trimmed windows), also boasts a lounge area, office, washer/dryer, a bathroom and shower, and plenty of storage space.

"We thought the shower would be good because people come before work and after work, and sometimes you just want to shower before you head home," Ellen said, adding it's a perk many horse farms don't have.

Each stall will also have its own security camera, which will be connected to an app that horse boarders can download to their phone and use to monitor their horses 24/7.

"I think the cameras will be great for the public if they want to be able to see their horse and make sure it's taken care of properly," Ellen said, adding, "It's really important that there's always somebody here – John is, since he's retired. It's nice because a lot of places, there's not somebody on all the time." (During the day, Ellen also works as owner and director of a group home in Colchester, New Beginnings for Life, LLC.)

According to Ellen, Rock Land Farms also has an on-call horse vet and will offer grooming and horseshoe services if people are interested. Once the under-construction indoor riding area is finished, the Youngs plan to start offering horseback riding lessons, therapeutic riding and clinics, even hosting birthday parties or wine tastings if the opportunity presents itself.

"There's a lot of opportunity," John said. "It just keeps growing because we keep seeing more opportunities, so we've made it a little bigger, a little fancier."

With its arched ceiling entranceway and stunning skylight cupola sitting in the center of the building, the barn has an interior so elegant it looks more like a rustic wedding hall you'd find on Pinterest than a horse barn.

In fact, Ellen said, several people have already expressed interest in having their wedding there.

The barn also has a second story overlooking the grounds, where caretakers will have the ability to drop hay or food directly down a chute and into a feeding basket which is hanging in each individual stall.

"Horses have special diets, so we can keep it



Rock Land Farms owners Ellen and John Young stand in the entranceway to their newly-built barn on 192 Shailor Hill Rd. with their granddaughter Emma Grace.

separate," John said, adding that they are also in the process of building more paddocks outside, so that horses can be separated if need be.

"Some horses don't get along and some people like to have their horse alone. Some people bring their own feed," Ellen explained. "So people have options here."

Ellen said there is also a large trail system behind the farm that leads to Day Pond and Salmon River, which is already used for horseback trail riding and will continue being used

by visitors to Rock Land Farms.

However, the best part of the barn, according to the Youngs, is having a place for their family and the community to come together.

"Coming here... it's just nice," Young said. "And the horses – they're just good for your soul."

* * *

Rock Land Farms is located on 192 Shailor Hill Rd. For more information, drop by or contact John at 860-608-0606.

Detailing the Norwich Tuition Plan in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

Though the halfway point of the 2016-17 school year is quickly approaching, the Board of Finance only last week reviewed Bacon Academy's tuition analysis plan regarding out-of-district students.

The review took place at the finance board's Nov. 16 meeting.

Referencing an established agreement made between Colchester and Norwich (which took effect this year and allowed 10 freshmen students from Norwich to enroll at Bacon, with the City of Norwich paying an annual tuition of \$14,254 per student), the plan deals with how the town intends to allocate their tuition both back to Bacon and to the district.

Though this year 100 percent of the \$142,540 tuition will be allocated directly to Bacon, over the next several years that will gradually change, until the school has reached its cap of 40 out-of-district students, with 10 per grade.

By that point, according to the plan, 90 percent of the total tuition (which amounts to \$570,160) will go towards the district while 10 percent, or \$57,016, will go to Bacon.

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein explained this process as an "alternative source

of revenue for the district to support [their] plans."

He furthered that "every penny we get" will be used "to offset the education budget." However, the focus at the beginning will be to help support Bacon's current needs such as replacing older technology in the building.

The decision to enroll Norwich students originally stemmed from the school's need to address fiscal issues and curriculum enhancements, which have been difficult to sustain in the last several years with the dropping enrollment and economic climate.

In 2012, Bacon's then-principal Mark Ambruso and Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu met with the Norwich superintendent to discuss the idea, before the education board finally voted unanimously to move forward with accepting Norwich students to Bacon in December 2015.

Both towns subsequently signed the agreement, which despite being effective until June 30, 2020, does give Colchester the ability to terminate the agreement on June 30 of any year, provided 12 months advanced written notice is given to Norwich.

That seems unlikely however, considering this year so far has been "extremely successful," according to Goldstein.

"From what I've heard from [Principal Matthew Peel], it's been going great," he continued. "They've actively been a part of the community and I know Matt made a special effort the first few days of school to make sure they were welcomed."

The 10 Norwich students also had good things to say about their new school, according to Goldstein, who said they accompanied Mathieu and Peel to speak about their experience to middle school students in Norwich, which they said has been positive so far.

"It's exciting that Bacon is attracting students from out of the district," the chairman said. "It's a great way to supplement revenue without taxpayer dollars."

This year, there were only 10 out-of-district students who "signed up" to enroll, so selecting which students would attend was simple, Goldstein said, adding that in the event that more than 10 students express their interest in a given school year, a blind lottery will be used

as the selection process.

Whatever Colchester receives in terms of tuition from Norwich, he continued, will be to "offset what's needed to be raised by tax dollars" and it will not be used to fund "new or added" costs, including services for out-of-district students.

For example, as per the agreement, Norwich pays for student transportation to and from Bacon and is also obligated to pay any additional funds for their students, including special education costs.

"That's very important to emphasize," Goldstein said. "We're reimbursed dollar for dollar."

* * *

To view the agreement between Colchester and Norwich, visit the Colchester Public Schools website at colchesterct.org. Click on the "Board of Education" tab, followed by "Board of Education Meetings," "Agendas, Information Bulletins and Minutes," and then scroll to the Dec. 8, 2015 meeting, where you will find a list of viewable handouts explaining the agreement.

East Hampton Town Manager, Superintendent Outline Budget Priorities

by Elizabeth Regan

The Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools took their dog and pony show on the road for the first time during the 2017-18 budget planning process as they unveiled their priorities Tuesday to a joint meeting of the town's three most powerful governing boards.

The team approach reflects a new way of voting on the proposed annual budget. In November, 73 percent of voters approved a change to the town charter that "bifurcates" the budget, meaning all budget referendums going forward will include separate questions for general government and education.

Advocates for bifurcation had touted the process as one that encourages close cooperation between the two sides of the budget as officials work in tandem to craft and promote spending plans that will pass muster with voters at the first referendum.

Opponents disputed the idea that bifurcation has any effect on reducing the number of repeat referendums.

Manager Michael Maniscalco and Superintendent Paul Smith put their presentations on a large screen in front of the high school's new seminar room, known as the T-Bell, for members of the Town Council, Board of Education, Board of Finance and a small audience of citizens.

Smith and Maniscalco emphasized the information was preliminary and that solid proposals with dollar amounts attached would not be ready until January in the school board's case and February or March in the case of the municipal budget.

Maniscalco laid out a set of priorities that included decreasing reliance on state municipal aid as money from the state continues to be threatened by a ballooning state budget deficit. The state Office of Policy and Management currently puts that deficit at \$1.3 billion.

Grants-in-aid account for about 20 percent of the town's current general government budget, according to Maniscalco.

"Whatever we come up with for our revenue estimate from the state, we're going to back one percent off," he said. "And next year we're going to back off another one percent. And the year after we're going to back off another one percent."

Maniscalco explained he developed the general government priorities with input from each town department. He said he based the list on the top three goals each department head hopes to accomplish in the upcoming budget year.

Maniscalco called for the continued funding of a police officer recently authorized to start in January, as well as the hiring a new school resource officer in a cost-sharing arrangement with the Board of Education.

Maniscalco also expressed a commitment to improving roads and addressing runoff issues that affect Lake Pocotopaug.

No dollar figures were discussed.

Additional recommendations include hiring an additional inspector in the Building, Planning and Zoning Department; replacing the Sears Park parking lot and the community center roof; introducing credit card payments in the town clerk's office; and supporting the town's year-long 250th anniversary celebration.

Another focus was added to his presentation after the day's rain reminded him of another problem to be addressed, according to Maniscalco: "If you're going to be in the police department right now, you're probably going to want to wear a life jacket because it is flooding. It's very simple. There is water coming in through the jail cells, there's water coming in through the doors. Whether it means putting a new roof on or building a new building, it's an issue that needs to be fixed."

When it was Smith's turn to speak, he made it clear that the priorities he presented had been established prior to input from school administrators, the Board of Education and the public. He said he will be reviewing requests from administrators over the next month in order to

present a complete budget proposal to the school board on Jan. 17.

Smith told officials from the three governing boards his focus is on minimizing new expenses, reorganizing staff as necessary to avoid new hires, and identifying the most critical programs to be included if budget savings can be found elsewhere.

He said large class sizes anticipated in several grade levels at the elementary and middle school level could be addressed by "re-allocating staff as much as possible to the highest populated grades."

He gave examples that included moving one kindergarten teacher to Center School to reduce overcrowding, which is most evident in fifth grade. That level currently consists of classrooms with 26-28 students each.

The change would leave next year's kindergarten level with anticipated class sizes of mostly 23 students each. One class would have 24 students.

The teachers' contract negotiated between the East Hampton Education Association and the district specifies "reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the class size at no more than twenty-five pupils."

The most expensive priority is a \$160,000 proposal to create a program at the town's elementary and middle schools to focus on special needs students who might otherwise require outplacement. The program would require two more teachers to be hired, Smith said.

There are currently 11 students placed outside the district right now at a cost of roughly \$150,000 to \$160,000 per student, Smith told officials.

The proposed program would probably affect four to six students at each of the two elementary schools and the middle school. Making sure the students' needs can be met in the district would avoid the "tremendous costs" of outplacement, Smith said.

Smith put forward the purchase of updated

math textbooks and online components for grades six through eight at a cost of \$46,000 for a six-year contract or \$15,000 per year. The district purchased the program for kindergarten through grade five last year, according to Smith.

The district also must allocate \$40,000 for its 10-year accreditation process with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The accrediting agency is responsible for setting standards and deciding if they're being met. Smith said the organization requires each district to provide meals and separate hotel accommodations for 16 evaluators when they visit in March 2018.

Smith listed other priorities including \$30,000 in after school programming expenses for clubs at the elementary and high schools as well as a Unified Sports team for those with and without intellectual disabilities at the middle school. The figure also includes additional support for sports teams to increase numbers.

He also pinpointed the need for additional part-time support in the high school library and for district-wide technology initiatives.

Smith said roughly \$300,000 of the total \$316,000 cost associated with those priorities could be mitigated by retirements resulting from an incentive authorized by the school board.

The district is looking at potential cost savings in several areas related to grants and regional collaborations, according to district business director Karen Asetta.

One example of the regionalized approach is a cooperative special education program with East Haddam. The other town's expected contribution should cover the cost of two teachers and one paraeducator in addition to facility rental.

Asetta said a cost-sharing agreement in food service will bring in \$30,000, while a van-sharing program is estimated to save \$12,872 for each of two or three vans, depending on need.

State Rescinds \$300K Grant Award to RHAM

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The state will not be providing the RHAM school district with a \$300,000 grant that was expected to help fund required handicapped accessibility improvements at the high school, school administration recently learned.

Schools Superintendent Bob Siminski explained this week the district received word from the state in September 2009 that a handicapped accessibility audit was going to be conducted at the high school. Following that audit, in May 2011 a list of issues the district needed to correct was provided, after which RHAM contracted with an architectural firm to meet with the state Department of Education as the district's advocate to review the findings.

"Once that was completed, they agreed to a list – a corrective action plan – and what we have been doing over the years is addressing the issues quoted in this plan through the maintenance budget," Siminski explained.

Some of those issues included lengthening some of the handrails in the school and changing some of the grab bars in the handicapped bathrooms.

"The last thing was the accessibility to the high school fields," Siminski shared. "And we were told at the time of all this that the state would reimburse us for the work to make the fields handicapped assessable, and we did the appropriate filing and in May 2016 we got a letter from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) indicating we were awarded a grant for \$300,000 to cover 61.43 percent of

the eligible final costs of that project."

But then, on Nov. 15 Siminski received an email from DAS stating that grant award had been revoked.

DAS Director Konstantinos Diamantis stated in the email, "I have reviewed the information provided to our office and must regrettably inform you that we cannot provide a grant under these circumstances. We do not do stand-alone athletic field projects even if a legitimate code violation exists."

Diamantis furthered, "At any point when school construction projects are underway, state building codes are assumed to be followed which include ADA and Title IX compliance."

Siminski said he was "crushed" when he read the email, explaining it was important the district comply with the terms of the audit because failing to do so could result in the loss of grants "and we're talking about quite a bit of money."

In response to the news, Siminski explained he sent a letter to state Sen. Cathy Osten, who arranged a meeting with representatives of the state Department of Education and DAS which Siminski will attend along with Board of Education Chairman Danny Holtsclaw.

"The big issue is, where is this money going to come from?" Siminski asked. "With the state having a budget deficit as it does, state funds are going to be very scarce, so that's why the meeting is important, because hopefully out of that we'll get some resolution."

Colchester Police News

11/21: Colchester Police said Justin D. Warren, 26, of 12 Mary Ln., was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

11/22: Colchester Police said at 2 p.m., they received a report from a resident on Skylark Road, who said an unknown person entered her home sometime between 11/21 and 11/22 and stole her LG 47-inch flat screen television and a home theater control box. The home was not occupied at the time.

11/24: State Police said La Di J. Lasham, 32, of 13 Borden St., New Haven, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol, failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple lane high-

way, failure to stop on right, cell phone use while operating a motor vehicle in motion, and failure to have lights lit and devices illuminated.

11/25: Colchester Police said at approximately 11:15 a.m., they received a report of a theft from a shed at a residence on Peck Lane. According to the victim, an unknown person made entry into his unlocked shed in his backyard and stole an Echo PB-500 backpack leaf blower and a Stihl 025 chainsaw. The case is currently under investigation.

11/25: State Police said Justin Hannington, 35, of 320 Jones St., Hebron, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

East Hampton Police News

11/9: Tanner Lovely, 24, of 21 Seminole Rd., Middlefield, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to maintain lane, operating a motor vehicle without a license, misuse of plates, and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

11/13: Christie Hemmingway, 42, of 1555-4 Portland Cobalt Rd., Portland, was issued a summons for failure to maintain lane and operating a motor vehicle under suspension, police said.

11/16: Jozef Banel, 59, of 386 West High St., was arrested and charged with operating under the influence and failure to drive right, police said.

11/17: Brett W. Comette, 22, of 95 Baker St., West Haven, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle while under suspension and illegal use of a cell phone, police said.

Marlborough Police News

11/23: State Police responded to a larceny at New China Sea restaurant on North Main Street, which occurred sometime between 7:05 p.m. and 7:41 p.m. According to police, the suspect is described as a white male wearing jeans, a white hooded sweatshirt, a white hat and brown shoes, driving a newer model of a light-colored Ford SUV. Anyone with information is asked to contact State Trooper Kimberlee Ruppert at Troop K at 860-465-5400.

Hebron Police News

11/26: State Police said Jonathan M. Harrison, 42, of 98 Hog Hill Rd., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple-lane highway.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Our incoming tweeter-in-chief was at it again this past week, with The Donald taking to his smartphone to spread baseless claims that "millions of people" voted illegally, then a few days later hopping onto Twitter to say that anyone burning the flag should face "consequences" – such as a year in jail or perhaps a loss in citizenship.

There was a huge outcry after both Twitter incidents – an outcry I'm not sure Trump is all that displeased with (more on that in a bit) – and it's easy to understand why.

Let's start with that first tweet. If Trump insists on being president, then he really should start acting more presidential – and spreading false news is not a very presidential thing to do. As numerous news outlets have pointed out, there is no evidence millions voted illegally, or of any other voter fraud. Trump has since criticized reporters for reporting there is no evidence of this; but really, if he's the one making these claims, the burden of proof should be on him to verify his claim.

And if he's so convinced there was voter fraud, why is he hopping mad that Jill Stein is orchestrating (and the Clinton campaign going along with) recounts in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan? It's a pipe dream that those recounts will actually change anything, but if there was indeed this voter fraud he claimed, wouldn't a recount be wise?

But Trump doesn't see it that way. As Clinton campaign attorney Marc Elias said in his own tweet, "We are getting attacked for participating in a recount that we didn't ask for by the man who won election but thinks there was massive fraud."

As for that second tweet, about flag-burning: I don't like flag-burning; I never have. I find it insulting, and I think there are better ways to protest. That being said, it *is* protest. It's a matter of free speech, free expression, and as such is protected by the First Amendment. The Supreme Court itself has ruled as such. One of the things about free speech is you sometimes (often times) hear or see things you don't like. I'm not a fan of flag-burning. But jailing someone or revoking their citizenship for it – that's just not right, and is flat-out unconstitutional.

When Trump got elected, his supporters cheered the protection of the Second Amendment. But really, it's the fate of the First Amendment (freedom of speech, freedom of the press) I'm more concerned about.

Like I said earlier, there was the expected firestorm to both of these Twitter explosions; I find it hard to believe Trump didn't see that coming, and indeed, he probably wanted it to happen. I've been very, very clear here over these past several months I don't like Donald Trump, but he's not stupid. He knows what he's doing. When the news dropped that he settled, for \$25 million, the Trump University fraud lawsuit, he shortly thereafter took to Twitter to criticize the cast of *Hamilton*. And just like that, everybody – myself included, I have to say – was talking about those angry tweets, rather than the massive fraud settlement. The lawsuit faded to the back pages – and I'm sure Trump was very happy.

And during the past week, as Trump raged about voter fraud and then jailing/deporting flag-burners, rumors continued to swirl about possible global conflicts of interest due to Trump's massive business holdings, as well as sustained infighting and confusion over potential cabinet appointees. But what's garnered more attention? The tweets. (And here too, I soaked it up; I mean, what did I just spend the above paragraphs writing about?)

Trump is a master manipulator. I think he

knows what he's doing. It's important to focus on the incredibly un-presidential things he says, yes. But it's also very important to not lose focus on what else is going on.

* * *

I'm known in the office for fairly often, when something happens to displease me, impulsively blurting out, "Oh, fiddlesticks." It likely developed as a way for me to rein in salty language in the workplace, a way to express frustration without actually swearing. I don't know how the word exactly entered my vocabulary; growing up, I watched a lot of old movies and TV, so the expression probably seeped in along the way (it does sound a little like something you'd hear Wally or the Beaver say).

Occasionally, I'll get asked "what exactly are fiddlesticks?" And I'll be honest, replying, "I have no idea." Well, a coworker recently decided to look it up.

According to the UK website "The Phrase Finder," the expression derives from literal "fiddle sticks," or the bows that are used to play violins. Another site, "World Wide Words," notes that, sometime during the late 1500s or early 1600s, the word also came to represent something silly or inconsequential. Why? Perhaps simply because it's a funny-sounding word, the site supposes. The site adds that fiddlesticks "took on a humorous slant as a word one could use to replace another in a contemptuous response to a remark. George Farquhar used it in this way in his play *Sir Henry Wildair* of 1701: 'Golden pleasures! golden fiddlesticks!' From here it was a short step to using the word as a disparaging comment to mean that something just said was nonsense."

Ok, so fiddlesticks means basically, to quote Owl from *Winnie-the-Pooh*, stuff and nonsense. So why do I use it as a swear euphemism at work? Darned if I know. Perhaps because it begins with the magic letter "f," and saying "fudge" has.....well, it's been done.

So, now I know the meaning of "fiddlesticks" – and I also know it's a word I've been slightly misusing for these many years. But I imagine, next time I come across an email that won't open or an event listing missing the vitals of date, time and place, I'll find myself uttering "fiddlesticks" anyway. Why? It's just fun to say.

* * *

In the paper last week, we ran a listing of Portland "holiday happenings" taking place this month – and the listing erroneously mentioned the holiday train display would be up, at the old firehouse on Main Street. Unfortunately, that information supplied to me was outdated; the display won't be running this year. Readers may recall a story from this time last year indicating the 12-year tradition was in jeopardy, as the Portland chapter of the Connecticut Cellar Savers, which ran the display, had recently disbanded. The defunct organization's president Michael Tierney told the *RiverEast* last December it would "probably be the last year."

So I was pleased when I got the notice for the paper last week suggesting the display was running again after all – and disappointed when I got the call last week letting me know the notice was wrong and the display had in fact not returned. It was a fun display, and very elaborate in its set-up. It's a perfect thing for kids to check out during the holidays.

Hopefully this is just a one-year break, and the mounters of the display can find some way to bring it back for Christmas 2017.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

Glastonbury

Janice L. Raff

Janice L. Raff (Smalley) passed away Sunday, Nov. 20, with her son by her side. She leaves her family to be with the Lord and reunite with her husband, Paul, who passed in 2014. Janice was born July 16, 1936, the only child of Vada (Williams) and William Smalley.

Janice grew up in Wethersfield, graduating from Wethersfield High School in 1955, with a secretarial vocation. Upon graduation she spent almost a decade working for Travelers Insurance in the Group Department. In 1954, she met Paul Raff Jr. and after a long courtship, they married on May 11, 1963, enjoying 51 years of marriage. She and Paul were committed to starting a family, and with this large commitment, Janice then left work to fully dedicate her time to motherhood.

She will always be remembered as having endless patience, as well as her kind and gentle demeanor. She provided her children with unconditional love and support. She and her husband Paul bowled in leagues for a number of years. They also took many a weekend trip to Saratoga to go to the horse races.

When Janice left Travelers, she used her secretarial skills assisting her husband with his role as secretary at the Glastonbury Elks Club – BPOE 2202. Not everyone recognized that mom was an unsung hero, providing him assistance for so many years of behind-the-scenes support. When her children were old enough, she began a part-time job with the *Glastonbury Citizen*. When she left this position, she incorporated her love of children by providing childcare, for children of varying ages, circulating throughout her home for 20 years. In the first year following her stroke, animals and children, who she encountered at the nursing home, prompted her to speak meaningful phrases with enthusiasm that she had otherwise lost.

Janice leaves behind her children, William P. Raff, of Glastonbury, and Holly J. Fydenkevez, a son-in-law, Joseph Fydenkevez, and two grandchildren, Ashley and Michael Fydenkevez of East Hartford.

Calling hours will be held at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury, Saturday, Dec. 3, from 10-11:30 a.m., with a funeral service to follow at 11:30 a.m., also at the funeral home. Burial will conclude services at St. James Cemetery, Glastonbury.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to either Protectors of Animals, 144 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06118 (poa.inc.org) or Connecticut Children's Medical Center, 282 Washington St., Hartford CT 06106 (connecticutchildrensfoundation.org) Mother, we love and will miss you always.

Colchester

Dylan P. Fitzgerald

Dylan P. Fitzgerald, 24, died unexpectedly at W.W. Backus Hospital in Norwich Friday, Nov. 25. He was born in Exton, Pa., June 26, 1992 to Edward and Chantal (Studer) Fitzgerald.

Dylan graduated from Bacon Academy High School in 2011, and proudly served in the United States Marine Corps until his discharge in April at the rank of sergeant. Dylan was united in marriage July 30, 2012, in Jacksonville, N.C., to Jessica Lynn Busher. While in the Corps, Dylan excelled in shooting, earning a coveted spot on the Marine Corp Rifle team in North Carolina. He was a proud Marine whose greatest joy was the time he spent with his children. Dylan worked as a mechanic at Valvoline in Colchester and enjoyed golf.

Dylan is survived by his wife, Jessica Lynn Fitzgerald and their children Liam and Alaina, all of Colchester; his parents, Edward and Chantal Fitzgerald; sister, Jessica Lindsey and soon-to-be-husband William Miller; maternal grandparents, Martial and Liliane Studer; paternal grandmother, Dorothy Fitzgerald; niece and nephews, Lily, Chris and Zeth; his mother and father-in-law David and Hope Ann Busher; as well as numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, friends.

Visitation with the family was held Thursday, Dec. 1, at the Belmont Funeral Home in Colchester; a short service was held during this time.

Visit belmontfh.com to leave condolences for the family.



Colchester

Yvon Belanger Sr.

Yvon Belanger Sr., 64, of Windham, formerly of Lebanon and Colchester, passed away surrounded by his children and loved ones at Backus Hospital in Norwich Thursday, Nov. 10, after a long battle with cancer.

Yvon was born in Magog, Quebec, Canada, Aug. 14, 1952, son of Pierrette Richard Belanger and the late Oscar Belanger, both of Magog, Canada. Yvon, along with his family, emigrated from Canada to the U.S. as a young boy, ultimately settling in Connecticut.

Yvon worked for the Charles C. Hart Seed Company of Wethersfield as a truck driver for about 18 years, previously working for the town of Marlborough and throughout most of his life Yvon has been a lumberjack. Yvon had an impeccable work ethic and a passionate enthusiasm in anything he did and very rarely would ever take a day off. He was also a longtime league bowler; he enjoyed playing on a horseshoe league as well and was an enthusiastic Dallas Cowboys football fan. Most importantly, he will always be remembered for his generosity, sense of humor, and the friendly way he that he had of making everyone he met feel like family.

He will be so deeply missed but always be remembered by his children, Yvon G. Belanger Jr. and his wife Diane of Lebanon, Michael J. Belanger of Lebanon, Danielle M. Belanger and Brandon Lavallee of Griswold, Jeffrey L. Angell and his wife Cindy of Oakdale; also very dear to Yvon, Lois Ereshena and her son Shawn Ereshena of Windham; his brother John Belanger of Hebron, his sister Lisa Stephanski and her husband Steve Stephanski of Tilton, N.H.; his grandchildren, Ryan Belanger, Angelique Cocca, Julia and Michael Donatello; his first wife and friend Roxiann Belanger; and an infinite amount of extended family and friends.

Calling hours will be held Saturday, Dec. 3, from 1-3 p.m., at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. There will be a Celebration of Life to honor Yvon from 4-11 p.m., following the service, at the American Legion in Marlborough, 128 East Hampton Rd. Burial will be held privately in his family's home town of Magog, Canada, at a later date.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Jewel Arlene Schluntz

Jewel Arlene Ben-civenga Schluntz, July 10, 1934-Nov. 26, 2016 RIP

We lost a mother, sister, grandmother, great-grandmother, great aunt, aunt and friend today. A nurse and caregiver! A strong woman who cared for others sometimes better than she cared for herself. Her family was her treasure and she will be greatly missed. We love you Jewel!! We will miss your laughter and your funny stories. Today you went home and God already knew who you were and all of the sacrifices you made on earth. There was no line. No test to pass. The gates opened and a joyous reunion took place!

Jewel was predeceased by her husband, Fred Schluntz. She is survived by four children whom loved her dearly, Louis Schluntz (Heidi), Freddie Schluntz (Kathy), Sherry Brewer (Brian) and Penny Ritchie; six grandchildren, Adam Brewer, Raven, Danielle Pyer (Shawn), Aaron Schluntz, Kurt Schluntz and Aaron McLaughlin (Danielle); one great-granddaughter, Riley Pyer and one on the way; her sister, Emma Cicale (John); and several nieces and nephews and close friends.

The family would like to thank two wonderful caregivers who became part of the family, Tracy and Colleen.

There will be no calling hours. A celebration of Jewel's life will be held at a later date for all to attend.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Ruth May Ciucias

Ruth May (Hotyckey) Ciucias, 93, of East Hampton, formerly of East Haddam, passed away peacefully Friday morning, Nov. 18. Born May 7, 1923, in Flushing, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late Stanley and Antoinette (Narwid) Hotyckey.

Ruth was the widow of the late Zygmunt K. Ciucias, with whom she shared 57 years of marriage before he predeceased her in March of 2004.

Ruth leaves to mourn her passing two children, Jeffrey Ciucias of Palmyra, Va., and Julie Ciucias and her son-in law Richard Pikulski of East Hampton; two grandchildren, Abigail and Hanna; a brother, Franklyn Hotyckey of Worcester, Mass.; two sisters, Eleanor Weismann of Madison and Elaine Woods of East Haddam; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by two sisters, Antoinette Bray and Virginia Cooley, and a brother, Edward Hotyckey.

Ruth had many accomplishments that began with her graduation from the prestigious Mt. Sinai School of Nursing in NYC, becoming a registered nurse. She was awarded the coveted Murray Guggenheim Medal for exceptional academic and clinical performance. After graduating, Ruth worked as an O.R. nurse at Mt. Sinai Hospital for three years, performed private duty nursing in New York City and held numerous other positions throughout her life.

While working in New York City, Ruth met her husband Zygmunt, married and moved to East Haddam, where they built a house together on family land. After taking time to raise her children, Ruth worked for many years at Connecticut Valley Hospital in the geriatrics unit, a position she loved dearly. Her other accomplishments include awards for singing, poetry, painting and photography. Ruth was the runner-up in the 1996 Ms. Senior CT pageant, where she received the award for best Life Philosophy.

She had a zest for life and enjoyed countless hobbies, including knitting, crocheting, gardening, baking, flower arrangement and for years entered country fairs across the state, relishing in countless blue ribbons. Never idle, Ruth was involved in many organizations and causes including the Millington Green Community Club, Homemakers Club, Grange 256, 4H Club, and was a Boy Scout Leader.

In later life, Ruth was a proponent of volunteerism and sought to raise money for many causes, sang and played the banjo to the elderly in nursing homes as the "International Lady of Song" and won East Haddam's Volunteer of the month for her work in raising awareness and funds to save the one-room schoolhouse on Millington Green (which she attended as a child).

An eternal student, Ruth was an avid reader, always keeping apprised of activities in town government, history, hobbies, helpful resources, health and nutrition. She completely treasured her experiences, trips and friends with the Making Memories group at the Colchester Senior Center.

In her late 80s, Ruth delighted in taking three holistic health cruises with her daughter, Julie, seeing the Caribbean sights, taking classes in healthy living and making more cherished memories. Her family would like to thank her longtime care givers Pat and Peggy, who helped her stay in her own home until her early 90s. She will be deeply missed for her hand-written cards and letters, never missing a birthday or special event.

In Ruth's honor, always remember to feed the birds in winter.

Services will be observed and announced in the spring of 2017.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Millington Green Schoolhouse Fund, c/o East Haddam Town Offices, P.O. Box K, East Haddam, CT 06423.

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



Colchester

Kelly M. Green

Kelly M. Green, 39, of Colchester, died unexpectedly at home Saturday, Nov. 26. She was born in Plainfield Oct. 1, 1977, to Edward and Dody (Morris) Sherman.

Kelly married Richard Green on May 25, 2008.

Kelly is survived by her loving husband, Richard Green; her daughter, Shealyan Wells; son, Dylan Green; stepchildren, Timothy Green and Robin Green; her mother, Dody Sherman; sibling, Jae Sherman; and grandson, Lukas Donaldson.

There are no calling hours and services will be held at the convenience of the family.

Belmont Funeral Home has been entrusted with Kelly's care. Visit belmont.com to leave condolences for the family.

Hebron

Robert Joseph Molinari

Robert Joseph Molinari, "Bob," 84, passed away Monday, Nov. 29, at Backus Hospital in Norwich, after a short battle with cancer. He was born in Hartford Jan. 18, 1932, a son of the late Modesto and Mary (Sartori) Molinari. After high school, Bob enlisted in the U.S. Airforce Reserves.

He married his beloved wife, Nell Lemieux, on Sept. 3, 1955. They made their home and raised their family in Windsor Locks and later settled in Hebron. For over 30 years, Bob worked for IBM as a service representative. After retiring, he worked for FEMA. Whenever possible, Bob and Nell traveled extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe. They enjoyed vacationing in their RV, on cruise ships, and taking guided tours of Italy.

Bob was a member of the Elks of Willimantic and the Sons of Italy. He was an avid reader with a strong interest in World War II history, he enjoyed bike riding, trail walking, and he loved to listen to classical music. His favorite pastime, which gave him the greatest joy, was babysitting his great-grandchildren. He will be remembered by his family as a private man who took great pride in being a good provider for all their needs and who was a devoted and loving family man.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his beloved wife of 61 years, Nell; his children, Nancy, Robert Jr., Mary Jean and her fiancé Walter, and Paul; four grandchildren, Kristen and fiancé Wendell, Michael, Michelle and Nicholas; great-grandchildren, Skylar Jade and Tessa Hailee; and numerous extended family and friends in the U.S. and Italy, including his longtime friend Alicia and her family in California.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a daughter, Gina Marie, a brother, Joseph, and a sister, Katherine Merrigan.

Calling hours will be held Sunday, Dec. 4, from 2-4 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will be held Monday, Dec. 5, gathering at 10 a.m., followed by a funeral home chapel service at 10:30 a.m. with full military honors. Burial will be private in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society. (cancer.org)

The Molinari family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the wonderful staff at the William W. Backus Hospital for the loving care they gave to Bob and his family, throughout his stay.

For online condolences, auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



