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A forum on the state's opiate addiction crisis was held at East Hampton Middle School last Friday. At the forum, East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox – joined by a panel of experts including Rushford Medical Director J. Craig Allen (center) and South Central Connecticut Mental Health Board Executive Director Kristie Barber (right) – said law enforcement officers can't arrest their way out of the opioid abuse epidemic sweeping the town, state and country.

Trying to Solve Heroin Crisis

by Elizabeth Regan

Kim Richards' candid talk about trying to help heroin addicts through a system shrouded in shame yielded a surprise speaker at an East Hampton forum last Friday night: her daughter, Brittany.

Brittany Richards, an addict for six years who's been in recovery since October, stepped out of an audience of about 80 people in the East Hampton Middle School library to join her mother and five other substance abuse experts at the table of panelists. The group was convened by state Rep. Melissa Ziobron, R-34, to discuss the state's opiate addiction crisis.

Brittany told panelists she was grateful for their willingness to talk about an issue many people would rather ignore.

"I think this needs to be said more and brought into the public eye," Brittany said. "Especially for kids that are starting really early. They just don't know what you lose. I lost everything."

Those on the panel included Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon and East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox, as well as two addiction specialists and one local volunteer.

Brittany counted among her losses a home, a nursing school education, and a job as a horse-riding instructor. The biggest loss came when

she temporarily gave up custody of her young daughter.

According to Brittany, addicts aren't themselves when they're using. They do things they'd never consider otherwise, like she did last summer when she jumped out of her drug dealer's moving car.

"I got five head fractures. I'm deaf in one ear. These are the things that addicts do and walk away with," she said.

The issue of heroin use gained prominence in town following three suspected overdoses – two of them fatal – in a seven-hour period over the New Year's holiday. Cox said there has been another death from a suspected overdose since then.

Statewide, accidental overdoses involving heroin have more than doubled over the past four years. Statistics released this month by the Office of the State Medical Examiner show heroin was involved in 174 deaths in 2012; 258 deaths in 2013; 327 deaths in 2014; and 415 deaths in 2015.

Cox told the audience his 14-officer department has been trained and equipped to use the overdose antidote naloxone, commonly known as Narcan, and began carrying it two weeks ago. He said Tuesday officers have not yet needed to use the drug to reverse an overdose.

All the panelists at the forum agreed Narcan

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One of RHAM's 'Finest Teachers' Remembered

by Geeta S. Sandberg

With sunny skies and a temperature near 50 degrees Monday, there was no weather-related reason to keep students home from school. It wasn't a holiday either, and yet students and faculty at the RHAM middle and high schools had the day off.

But for many, it wasn't a day to sit home and relax; the closure was in response to the number of staff who expressed a wish to attend the funeral of the late – and beloved – teacher Lawrence Fagan Jr.

"I asked faculty to let me know which members were interested in attending," RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie said Wednesday. "The response I got was overwhelmingly large."

Fagan, 56, lived in West Hartford with his wife and three children and had been battling cancer. He taught at the high school for 16 years and passed away at home Feb. 17.

"The number of faculty members that wanted to attend was such that it would have been impossible to hold regular classes," Leslie stated.

And so, the decision was made to close school, which also ensured anyone who wanted to attend Fagan's funeral – whether student or staff – had the opportunity.

"I was very grateful [Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski] was in support of that idea as well so we were able to make it hap-

pen," Leslie said.

For Fagan's wife Susan that decision – and the support shown by the RHAM community – has been a comfort for her family during their time of sorrow.

"It was a huge honor" school was closed, she said. "I just thought of Larry – it wasn't something that would necessarily make him happy because he would be like, 'Why would they do that for me?' But it just made me realize how much they really love him."

Their son Noel felt similarly; he remarked this week he was "amazed" at how much his father meant to his students.

Susan Fagan added, "I'm on Twitter all the time looking at the kids' comments" about her husband. "And we have so many cards that have come in over the past year from students who just wanted him to know how much of an impact he made on them. Even now that he's gone I'm getting really heartfelt letters about how much he meant."

Leslie, who said he was fortunate to have known Fagan "as a friend, as a colleague, and as a teacher," called him "very generous. He would do anything for anybody. He was a devoted family guy."

He added Fagan "really epitomized that teacher that perfected the art of teaching, in that he knew how to connect with kids to kind of

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The RHAM middle and high schools were closed Monday so students and staff could attend the funeral of beloved teacher Lawrence Fagan Jr., who passed away Feb. 17 after battling his second brain tumor. Fagan was described – over and over again – as a teacher known for his wit, humor and the connections he formed with students.



Kim Richards of East Haddam describes the broken system that surrounds those addicted to opioids and their families. Richards told an audience of about 80 people at a forum at East Hampton Middle School about her struggles advocating for a daughter now in recovery after six years of addiction.

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is just one way to address the complex issue of opioid use in the community.

Dr. J. Craig Allen, medical director of the Rushford addiction treatment center, said part of the solution involves recognizing addiction as a disease and not as a moral weakness. Addiction changes the brain, he said, affecting the way it controls functions including impulse management, memory and motivation.

“The thing that is, for me, the most fascinating and frightening thing about substance use disorder is the way it can take over your brain,” Allen said.

It’s a disease to which people are most vulnerable when their brains are developing, he said. Avoiding any addictive substances until the age of 21 is “incredibly helpful” to building what he described as a lifelong immunity.

Kristie Barber, executive director of the South Central Connecticut Mental Health Board, said the statistics are staggering.

“If an adolescent doesn’t use any substances, including nicotine, until the age of 18 – even if they have a genetic predisposition...even if it’s in their family – they have a 90 percent chance of not becoming addicted to substances the rest of their life,” she said. The likelihood of escaping addiction completely goes up to 96 percent for those who avoid the use of any drugs until they are 21 years old.

The numbers struck East Hampton Local Prevention Council Chairwoman Irene Kuck profoundly when she started finding out more about the dangers of substance abuse through the council. Before that, she used to think experimenting with drugs was part of growing up.

“But learning that even a trial with drugs can cause instantaneous and irreparable damage to their developing brain has kind of led me to have really frank talks with my kids,” Kuck told the audience. “It’s not an option to even try. You like the way your brain is now; you have a responsibility to preserve it.”

She said communication is key, both within families and across the wider community.

For Kim and Brittany Richards, that means telling their story to educate others and, hopefully, to spur change.

Kim said Brittany’s addiction began six years ago with prescription painkillers. But despite “doctor shopping” for medical professionals willing to write those prescriptions, there was another drug more easily available – and cheaper.

“Eventually, like so many others, she turned to heroin and sold her soul,” Kim said.

Kim’s own life became pure hell as she tried to advocate for her daughter, she said.

Everywhere she looked, Kim found the system lacking: doctors weren’t being held accountable for overprescribing the powerful pills and drug companies weren’t being brought to task for the way they marketed them; there weren’t enough treatment options or available beds for inpatient rehabilitation; and insurance companies were failing to provide coverage for drug treatment as required by the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.

Then Brittany went to prison after being found with heroin and drug paraphernalia, ac-

ording to Kim. She said there was no medical assistance to guide Brittany through the detoxification process and to help her avoid a relapse upon her release.

“With so many people clogging the system with heroin spillover crimes, why is it there’s no substance abuse treatment in prison?” Kim asked.

Delphin-Rittmon, who applauded Kim and Brittany for persevering and for speaking so openly about their experiences, said her agency is working with the Department of Corrections on a pilot program in New Haven to address that issue. The initiative allows inmates who are on methadone before being arrested to continue the treatment while in prison.

“If they’re able to get the methadone while in prison, it helps reduce the cravings and reduce the likelihood they’ll be engaging in some of the under-the-table or illegal ways of getting the medication in prison,” Delphin-Rittmon said.

The czar of the state’s mental health and addiction agency also encouraged those who feel they are not getting the care they deserve to contact Connecticut’s Healthcare Advocate, Victoria Veltri.

Locally, Cox said he’s doing what he can with limited resources to stem the tide of prescription drug and heroin use in town.

He hopes to secure grant money through the state Department of Transportation to increase traffic stops as a way to reduce the number of people driving under the influence. He is also working to get one of his 14-member department certified as a drug recognition expert to help determine when someone is driving under the influence of a drug other than alcohol.

Cox cited the death of local icon Jim Morris in October 2014 as an example of the gravity of the situation and the need for enhanced enforcement. Morris was killed when a driver veered into the northbound lane of North Main Street and onto the sidewalk.

According to court documents, police charged Jennifer VanWycke of East Hampton with second-degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, risk of injury, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, failure to carry a license, failure to drive right, driving on a sidewalk, operating a motor vehicle under the influence, misconduct with a motor vehicle, possession of a narcotic substance, failure to keep a narcotic drug in the original container and possession of drug paraphernalia. The court case is ongoing.

“The crash occurred on the sidewalk in the morning. It’s not traditionally what people think of as a DUI situation,” Cox said. “Also realize that when people are abusing prescription medications, it’s harder, trickier, for us to detect that.”

Flanked on one side by a state commissioner and on the other by an expert in drug treatment, East Hampton’s police chief acknowledged the need for comprehensive solutions that address all facets of the opioid epidemic.

“From a law enforcement perspective, here’s what I can tell you: We’re not going to arrest our way out of this. Absolutely not going to happen,” Cox said.



Along with being a wonderful teacher, Fagan was also described as a devoted family man. Fagan is shown here with his wife Susan and, clockwise from top, children Raymond, Claire and Noel.

‘Finest Teachers’ cont. from Front Page

pull them along in his journey of discovery.”

Along with connecting with the students he taught during the day, Leslie said Fagan also forged relationships with those he taught during the school’s adult education program in the evening – many of whom were former RHAM students that, for various reasons, had left the school.

“He had a connection with all of those kids that kind of lost their connection here [at RHAM] and weren’t as successful in the regular day as [they were in] adult education – he made a connection with kids who needed someone to guide them and keep them engaged in education,” Leslie said.

Siminski echoed those sentiments and said Fagan “made a marvelous impact on students.”

“The way he approached teaching allowed kids to understand and retain the material. He was just a good teacher: he used humor, he used wit, to get his message across and in a relaxed atmosphere,” he said.

Social Studies coordinator Jennifer Stachowiak said this week Fagan was “a class act.”

“He epitomized all that is good in teaching,” she said. “Larry exuded a charismatic and kind demeanor. As a teacher, he has certainly left his mark. Students loved him and there was no shortage of kids signing up for his classes.”

Stachowiak said Fagan was knowledgeable in many areas, but he always remained humble. She added he was a family man who knew “that kindness and patience are not only helpful in parenting but in teaching as well.” Part of his mantra, she said, was “failure is not an option.”

“He genuinely saw the good in all kids and worked incredibly hard to help them all.”

Stachowiak said Fagan was “a funny man, and his wit and quirky sense of humor were all part of his charm and his process for connecting with students and staff.”

Fagan was known for a number of events, traditions and “organizations” at RHAM including the fictitious Pisces Club, which he started in response to the Leos Club – a charitable organization at RHAM that is an offshoot of the Lions Club – because he felt another astrological sign should have representation. Then there was Fluffernutter Day, something he started after being appalled by the number of students who didn’t know what his favorite sandwich – a Fluffernutter – was. And so, the day before Thanksgiving break he’d set up a table and make students Fluffernutters, which consist of peanut butter and marshmallow fluff; Stachowiak said the day was something RHAM staff intended to continue.

She added, “Larry was an amazing human being and people were better for knowing him. There will certainly be a void in the social stud-

ies department and he will be missed by all staff and administration.”

And “arguably,” she said, “he was one of the most well-loved teachers in the building...”

Jack Caplan was one of the many students who benefitted from Fagan’s instruction. He shared Wednesday that while he met Fagan after starting his AP psychology class this year, “I’ve known of him for several years because he has such a reputation for being a great teacher.”

Caplan shared Fagan would come into class every day “with an infectious smile and strong commitment to teaching. Everyone in his classes wanted to do well because it seemed unfair to not put in effort when he regularly went above and beyond the job description to create a culture of mutual respect, enthusiasm for psychology, and love for learning.”

And along with teaching the required curriculum, Caplan said Fagan also taught his students life lessons through the strength he exhibited in the face of illness.

“Mr. Fagan taught literally hundreds of students how to smile in the face of an unimaginably daunting challenge,” Caplan said. “The strength that he showed throughout what I’m sure was a terrifying episode did not go unnoticed, and I think it gave others the resolve necessary to confront whatever trials they may be going through in their own lives.”

He concluded, “While Mr. Fagan might not be with us physically, countless happy memories of him and his classes will live on in the hearts of students and colleagues for years to come.”

Harrison Pellerin, another of Fagan’s students, had similar praise. He explained he took Fagan’s psychology class partially because of his interest in the subject, “but mostly because I looked forward to having him as a teacher.”

Like Caplan, Pellerin called Fagan’s happiness “infectious,” and said his humor could make “the most monotonous parts of classes and note-taking not only entertaining, but enriching.”

He added, “Mr. Fagan’s passion for psychology was equally matched, if not trumped, by his passion for helping and caring about students. He taught psychology, but his most important lessons were those he taught us about the importance of caring for others and about the strength of happiness. If you ever saw Mr. Fagan in the hall he would be smiling, anyone around him would be smiling – and before you knew it, you were too.”

Pellerin concluded, “I know all of us in the RHAM community miss Mr. Fagan’s vibrant and positive personality, but that will never be lost to any of us. In our hearts we will always remember the true lessons that one of RHAM’s finest teachers has taught us.”

Hebron Selectmen Move Ahead with Gas Expansion Proposal

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Board of Selectmen voted at its meeting last week to move ahead with the proposed gas expansion for the center of town.

The selectmen authorized Town Manager Andrew Tierney to pursue funding options and calculate the conversion costs of the project.

As part of the proposal from Connecticut Natural Gas, all of the town buildings along the expansion route – which would run from East Street to the town center if approved – will need to make the switch to natural gas, including the RHAM middle and high schools and Hebron Elementary School.

If the town were to move forward with the proposal, CNG would contribute \$1.25 million toward the expansion. The company estimated Hebron would be responsible for \$441,900 if the town paid for the project if it granted CNG no tax abatement; \$242,900 if it granted CNG a 10-year tax abatement; and \$168,100 if it gave CNG a 25-year tax abatement.

Included in that price is the installation of the gas mains and meters, but the town – and any of the 260 residential customers along the route who decide to make the switch – would be responsible for the cost of conversion of equipment and piping to the meter.

Tierney brought a preliminary conversion cost to a special meeting on the proposal held Wednesday Feb. 17, and said the “worst case scenario” in terms of what the town may need to pay to make the shift to natural gas is \$1,160,000. He added, however, that number was likely to decrease as the details are ham-

pered out.

Annually, CNG estimated changing to natural gas would amount to about \$117,000 in savings for the town; the gas company would also be responsible for paying taxes on the equipment, estimated at \$60,000. Tierney said one potential payment option would be to put any savings, as well as the tax money, toward the cost of the project; he also mentioned RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski told him the only way RHAM was likely to agree to the expansion was if the project was budget neutral. CNG has said that, without RHAM on board, the project “doesn’t work,” as the schools are such large buildings and thus would realize the most in savings from the switch.

“I think this is an economic benefit for the town of Hebron and that’s how it was proposed last night,” Tierney said at the meeting Feb. 18.

Selectman Brian O’Connell added, “At this point I’m going to recommend we do move forward. We need to find what the numbers are—we need to give people a choice.” He added, “Choice in utilities helps business districts.... I need to look at what benefits residents and the business community.”

Board of Selectman Chairman Dan Larson added he liked that natural gas was a lower pressure gas than propane, didn’t require vehicle transport, and had a lower carbon emission than other fossil fuels.

“We all know our carbon footprint is destroying the planet. I would love to see lesser-polluting options and we’re doing that,” Larson

said, adding, “I think Hebron is trying to be environmentally and economically conscious.”

Larson mentioned the selectmen’s decision earlier in the meeting to unanimously approve participation in Solarize Connecticut, a program that promotes residential solar installation in town.

Citizens Green Committee member Gil Salk was present at the selectmen’s meeting and stated regarding the program, “This does not cost anything and I think it’s good savings for people who want to solarize – I would encourage it.”

Solarize Connecticut started in 2012 and includes almost 60 communities across the state. A presentation on the program was made at the Feb. 4 Board of Selectmen’s meeting, and it was explained most towns at least double the amount of solar in their municipalities during the length of their Solarize Connecticut campaign – which is usually 18 weeks – compared to the total over the previous seven years.

Through the program, Hebron will competitively select one or more solar installers that will provide discounts in exchange for the town’s education and outreach, which may include lawn signs, banners, events, workshops, social media and traditional media to promote the program.

Homeowners will have access to below market pricing in conjunction with state incentives and a 30 percent income tax credit, as well as the option to access financing options through the program.

“I think it’s a good project to move forward with” said Tierney.

Also last week, the board unanimously approved two grant applications.

The first is for an Electric Vehicle charging station for the senior center not to exceed \$10,000. Tierney explained through previous grants the town procured both a charging station at the Town Office Building and an electric vehicle utilized by the senior center. However, since the senior center vehicle is often at the station, the station isn’t readily available to the public. A second station would mean the vehicle could be charged at the center, and the station at the Town Office Building could be left open to the public.

The second application is for the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Recycling Rewards grant program for waste reduction initiatives. The grant request is for \$8,000 and, if awarded, it will go toward the purchase of 40 recycling containers to be placed next to the trash receptacles in the town’s parks.

“We do our best to apply for every grant to try to offset costs to the town,” Tierney stated. “We don’t always get them, but at least we’re applying.”

The next regular Board of Selectmen’s meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office building, 15 Gilead St.

RHAM Superintendent Proposes 1.63 Percent Budget Increase

by Geeta S. Sandberg

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski proposed a budget for the 2016-17 school year of \$28.58 million Monday, an increase of 1.63 percent over current year spending.

The budget clocks in at \$28,581,094, which is \$452,663 more than the approved 2015-16 school budget. Included in that number is a \$100,000 appropriation for maintenance; however, it’s an amount that doesn’t come close to covering the list of repairs needed at the schools as determined by two assessments conducted last year.

In November, the regional school board approved submitting an application for a \$10 million School Construction Grant from the state. The grant package was submitted with the understanding most of it will get denied, and under the recommendation of state Rep. Gayle Mulligan and state Sen. Cathy Osten, who told the board to submit a “pie in the sky” package that included all of the recommendations. Osten had explained previously applying for the school construction grant was part of the process, even though the assumption was it would get denied; once that happens, Mulligan and Osten said they’d move the package forward for bonding.

Osten added previously the school construction bond was usually one of the last things the General Assembly works on, and the status wasn’t likely to be known until the end of May.

Siminski said this week he had “no word” on the status of the school construction grant and, if it’s denied, it will be up to the school

board to decide how it wants to proceed, and whether or not it wants to increase the amount budgeted for maintenance.

He added, “I put the \$100,000 in there so that they could take a look at allocating it the way they felt was best, and I’m going to figure out what I want to do as far as maybe taking a look at it too because I know finances are really tough. I just hope they were happy with the number that I’ve given them.”

Also included in the budget proposal is a reduction of four teaching positions through retirements, which Siminski said is in line with declining enrollment at the schools; enrollment at the middle school is projected to decrease by 34 next year to 533 students, while enrollment at the high school is projected to drop by 28 students to 995.

In addition, \$91,352 is included for a School Resource Officer, the agreement for which is in the process of being finalized; the SRO will be a Hebron trooper who will be on-site at the schools.

Meanwhile, health insurance is budgeted at \$2,813,902 for an increase of \$67,665, but Siminski said he received word the increase would be one percent less than what was budgeted. He also said switching over to a high-deductible health plan had resulted in “significant savings on health insurance costs.”

Also reflected in the budget proposal is a .75 percent salary increase – plus step – for certified staff (“step” refers to the pay scale used to determine salary, which is based upon degrees

held and length of time teaching). A 2.1 percent increase in the administrators’ salary as per the third year of their contract is also reflected, as is a two percent salary increase (plus step) for non-certified staff.

The budget proposal also includes \$19,450 for high school math textbooks, \$5,247 for high school social studies textbooks, \$4,940 for high school science textbooks, and \$3,592 for English textbooks.

Funds have also been budgeted to enhance the schools’ network, continue with the computer replacement schedule as well as the one-to-one technology initiative which provided Chromebooks to all eighth grade students in the 2015-16 budget, and is now proposed for students in grades nine and 10.

Meanwhile, both the heating oil and diesel fuel accounts are projected to drop for the 2016-17 school year. Heating oil is budgeted to go down \$112,278, to \$205,621, and diesel fuel by \$5,758, bringing it to \$127,742.

This is an area that could also see further changes, pending the approval of a natural gas expansion in the center of Hebron which would include the RHAM middle and high schools. Connecticut Natural Gas has estimated the change would result in \$101,357 annual savings for RHAM, but Siminski said the only way the district was likely to agree to the proposal was if the costs associated with the expansion – such as the conversion of the school’s boilers – were budget neutral; Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney was instructed by the Hebron

Board of Selectmen last week to hammer out the costs of the conversion as well as possible funding options.

The budget proposed Monday also includes \$382,500 for vocational, agricultural and magnet school tuition – a \$2,500 increase – and \$826,455 for special education, up \$280,582.

From 2010-2014, special education accounted for about 20 percent of the school budget, and Siminski explained, “it’s important to note one of the reasons ours is a little higher [than special education spending for the Hebron, Andover and Marlborough school districts – the three towns that send their students to RHAM] is because we have more students out of state.”

For example, he said two students were in school in Springfield, Mass. for specialized programs, and added, “We also service the 18-21 year old population.”

If approved as proposed, Hebron would be responsible for 54.47 percent of the 2016-17 budget or \$15,373,307, based on the number of students enrolled at the school; Marlborough would be responsible for 30.50 percent, or \$8,608,149; and Andover would be responsible for 14.84 percent or \$4,188,358.

Now that the initial budget has been proposed, the board will hold a number of budget meetings. The first is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 29, at 6:30 p.m., when coordinators from the art and music department as well as social studies, science and math will present their budgets.

New Britain Man Charged in Fatal Marlborough Crash

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A New Britain man was charged last week with negligent homicide as a result of a crash in town last May that killed a Glastonbury woman.

Felix Pagan, 62, of 352 South St., was arrested Feb. 18 and charged with negligent homicide with a motor vehicle and failure to drive right, state police said. The collision, which occurred shortly before 5 p.m. May 26, 2015, killed Courtney Wilczewski, 22, of 82 Shipman Dr., Glastonbury.

The crash happened on Route 66 near Shepard Drive in Marlborough, police said. Pagan was driving an Access Transportation Solutions van, with a student in the back seat, at the time. Access Transportation is a Glastonbury-based company that provides student transportation to and from area schools.

Police said Pagan went over the center line and struck Wilczewski's Nissan Altima head-on. After hitting the Nissan, the student transport van spun and hit a third vehicle in its driver's side door. The woman and passenger in the third vehicle were uninjured, police said.

Pagan, along with the juvenile that was in the van at the time, were transported to Hartford Hospital for "non-evident" injuries, police said, meaning injuries that were not readily visible. Wilczewski was originally transported to the Marlborough Clinic; however, she was later transported by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. An autopsy report from the Office of the Chief Medi-

cal Examiner reported Wilczewski died of blunt trauma as a result of the crash.

An eight-page affidavit obtained this week detailed the police investigation into the collision. Police reported Pagan said the last thing he remembered was driving toward Marlborough from Hebron, listening to music and singing and the next thing he knew he had crashed and people were coming up to him in the vehicle.

In a written statement to police made the day of the crash, Pagan told police he was en route to Glastonbury, while singing to oldies that were playing on the radio. Pagan said he remembered the song he was singing, "Atlantis" by Donovan, when he "just went and when I came through, I heard [the student] screaming behind me."

Pagan told police he couldn't remember if he blacked out or not and that he is diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.

"I check my sugar level morning and night, daily," Pagan told police in his statement. "When I went to check my sugar level today, at about 5 a.m., the batteries were dead on my sugar level meter that checks my glucose. Due to the batteries being dead, I didn't check my glucose level this morning. I haven't checked my glucose level thus far today."

During Pagan's transport to Hartford Hospital to check for injuries, a blood glucose level test was administered to Pagan about 38 minutes after the accident, police said.

That test revealed Pagan had a blood glu-

cose level of 325 mg/dL. A healthy glucose level for someone with diabetes is 90-180 mg/dL, and side effects of a high glucose level can be fainting, drowsiness or blurry vision, according to the affidavit.

Due to the fact that a student transportation van was involved in the accident, police said they requested a member of the state Department of Motor Vehicles to respond to the crash to inspect the vehicles. Although Access Transportation was cited for not having a needed brake inspection done on the van, police said "none of the violations the carrier was cited for caused or contributed to this crash."

However, the affidavit reported the DMV found a discrepancy between Pagan's state medical certificate, required to hold a commercial driver's license, and his long-form examination, needed to determine physical qualifications of a driver. Commercial drivers hold the certificate on them at all times, while the long-form examination is filed with the state. According to the affidavit, the long-form examination described Pagan as being a diabetic, needing corrective lenses to drive and taking insulin twice a day. However, the medical certificate made no mention of any such conditions.

The investigating trooper, Jeff Dunshee, said in the affidavit he made multiple attempts to reach Pagan by phone, to obtain a statement indicating what he did in the 24 hours prior to the accident. Ultimately, on June 7, Dunshee said he went to Pagan's home where Pagan told

the trooper he did not want to speak with him, and wanted an attorney.

Still, Dunshee, using the statement Pagan provided to police the day of the crash, determined that "Pagan made the conscious decision to drive a student transport van for what he knew would be several hours, despite the fact that he knew he had not checked his glucose level that morning, a practice which he admitted to doing every day," the affidavit said.

Dunshee said Pagan made no efforts to test his glucose level during the day, approximately 12 hours after attempting to check it at 5 a.m.

Dunshee added, according to the affidavit, "Pagan acted negligently by ignoring his known medical condition which the U.S. National Library of Medicine explains, ignoring your sugar levels can cause fainting, without showing any symptoms."

As a result, Pagan was arrested last Thursday.

Pagan was released on a \$250 non-surety bond and is expected in Manchester Superior Court March 7 for his arraignment.

Meanwhile, Wilczewski's parents have sued Access Transportation and Pagan for an amount in excess of \$15,000, for financial obligations including ambulance fees, LifeStar, hospital costs, and funeral and burial expenses. According to court documents, that lawsuit, which was filed last September, is headed to a jury.

East Hampton Dispatch Deal with Glastonbury Delayed

by Shawn R. Dagle and Elizabeth Regan

The Glastonbury Town Council postponed a public hearing Tuesday regarding a tentative agreement for Glastonbury to provide emergency dispatch services to East Hampton.

The council was scheduled to discuss a memorandum of understanding between the towns during a public hearing at its Feb. 23 meeting. However, the public hearing was postponed as the details of a final agreement continue to be worked out.

Council Chairman Stewart Beckett said some administrative questions arose as the two towns discussed the language of the memo. Rather than rush out an agreement for consideration, the towns decided to wait and make sure the agreement is drafted correctly.

Beckett said that trying to combine two towns' dispatch systems can be a little tricky; he emphasized that the delay is not an indication that the potential agreement is in jeopardy.

"Everyone is pretty committed to doing it," he remarked.

East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said Wednesday that staff members in both towns have been working diligently to make the regionalization effort a reality. And while time is a critical factor considering East Hampton's contract with the nonprofit dispatch service KX is set to expire by late June, it's also crucial to make sure the agreement is as fine-tuned as possible. "At the end of the day, this is a foundational document for what's going to be a regional dispatch center," Maniscalco said.

He added that the agreement could come to serve more towns than just Glastonbury and East Hampton – "and we need to get it right."

East Hampton has been in negotiations for months with Glastonbury regarding a potential agreement.

In a state budget climate dominated by de-

clining municipal aid and heightened discussions about regionalization, Glastonbury officials have said the agreement to provide dispatch services to East Hampton will give Glastonbury the opportunity to decide for itself whom it wants to partner with – rather than waiting for an edict from the state.

"It is much better to control our own destiny," said Beckett.

The arrangement would use a combination of state grant money and funding from East Hampton to update Glastonbury's dispatch center and provide dispatch services.

Colchester Emergency Communications (KX) – which presently provides dispatch services to the Town of East Hampton – will cease operation this June after eight communities indicated they would not be renewing their contracts with the company.

The future of KX began to unravel last June when a deal to consolidate its operations with Montville fell through. This was followed by an announcement in July that Lebanon would be leaving as well. Seven other communities followed suit.

Initially it appeared that both East Hampton and Marlborough – another of the KX member towns – would be seeking dispatch services from Glastonbury. Fire, police and town officials from the three communities met to discuss a potential agreement. (Unlike East Hampton, Marlborough would have been just been moving its fire and ambulance calls to Glastonbury; state police Troop K in Colchester handles that town's police calls.)

However, Marlborough town officials balked at the estimated cost of joining Glastonbury, and its Board of Selectmen subsequently voted to send out a Request for Proposals regarding emergency dispatch services. At this point, it appears the town will not be joining any agree-

ment with Glastonbury.

Without Marlborough on board, East Hampton and Glastonbury are seeking available state grant money to help fund the necessary capital improvements to expand the system.

The Glastonbury Town Council agreed Jan. 12 to authorize Town Manager Richard Johnson to execute an agreement with the state in order to obtain available grant monies for dispatch services.

According to Johnson, Glastonbury is eligible for a \$250,000 Transition Grant from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. There is also an Inter-municipal Capital Equipment, or ICE, grant that is pending state approval.

In addition to capital improvements, Johnson has indicated that three to four new staff members will have to be added to the dispatch center to cover East Hampton. They would be considered Glastonbury employees, but would be paid for by the Town of East Hampton.

Adding East Hampton will be "cost-neutral" for Glastonbury with East Hampton paying for the service, according to Johnson.

The move could cost East Hampton as much as \$770,000 in the first year, based on tentative numbers provided by Maniscalco.

That figure includes approximately \$215,000 in operational costs and \$555,000 in start-up capital expenses. Maniscalco said the capital expenses – such as computer software, radio repeaters, and an additional dispatch console – are preliminary estimates that are likely to go down as the town explores specific pricing options.

No definitive figures have been put forth regarding the cost to Glastonbury of providing the expanded services, though Johnson has indicated the capital costs will exceed \$250,000.

Anything above that number would either be paid through additional grant monies or by East Hampton, Johnson said.

The Glastonbury Town Council did approve \$20,000 at its Feb. 9 meeting to begin the process of providing service to East Hampton. The money – and an additional \$17,000 from East Hampton's capital reserve fund – will allow for the purchase and installation of equipment so the two communities can communicate if dispatch services are needed by East Hampton before late June.

While it is expected that KX will continue its operations until June 30, there is the chance that those services could terminate earlier than that, according to both Johnson and Maniscalco. In order to ensure that East Hampton has dispatch services, the town agreed to put up part of the money to get the necessary equipment.

But a memorandum of understanding is what will make the agreement a reality.

Johnson and Maniscalco have indicated such a memorandum would include financial obligations, insurance requirements, responsibilities for each town and similar matters.

No definitive date has been set for the public hearing to discuss the memo, though Beckett said it could be brought up at the Glastonbury Town Council's next meeting on March 8.

Meanwhile, Maniscalco said both towns are moving full-steam ahead in order to establish protocols and policies to guide the consolidation.

He said he is working with the town attorney to determine if a public hearing is required in East Hampton once the memorandum of understanding is drafted.

Shawn R. Dagle is a reporter for the Riverast's sister paper, The Glastonbury Citizen.

Solving the Pocotopaug Problem in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

Lake Pocotopaug is an “enigma,” according to the expert hired to come up with a nine-point watershed management plan for identifying the source of the lake’s problems and proposing solutions.

“It doesn’t behave the way lakes normally do,” George Knoecklein, of Northeast Aquatic Research, said at a summit on the lake’s health hosted by the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug at Angelico’s Lake House Sunday.

Knoecklein was responding to what Roger Abraham, an East Hampton High School science teacher and Environmental Club advisor, called the “alarming lack” of plant species in the lake.

A group of Abraham’s students discovered the strange phenomenon for themselves while carrying out a random sampling around the lake. Knoecklein said his firm found the same thing during a vegetation survey last year.

“That’s a very curious thing about your lake that we’re still investigating: why there’s very, very few aquatic plants out there,” Knoecklein said.

The expert in inland water bodies said after Sunday’s meeting that the situation is a complete anomaly.

“There are no other lakes I know of that have so few aquatic plants,” he said. “I mean, there’s virtually no aquatic plants out there, which is just an unbelievably weird situation.”

Knoecklein was unaware of any surveys on aquatic plants being done prior to 2006, when representatives from the state Agricultural Experiment Station came out to inventory aquatic plants and found two plants.

The agricultural station’s website illustrated its 2006 data with two isolated instances of aquatic plants on a map – along with this possible solution: “Very heavy development along

the shoreline without buffer zones keeping nutrients out of the water may contribute to the large amount of algae in the water, which lets in no light for the growth of vascular plants.”

Knoecklein said his survey found more than two plants, “but still not very many.”

The state’s assessment was bolstered by a 2013 recommendation by Knoecklein for stabilizing shoreline erosion to limit the amount of phosphorous that washes into the lake through stormwater runoff containing fertilizer.

One of the most visible symptoms of the lake’s ills are seasonal blue green algae blooms. The problem was dramatically manifested last August when the town closed beaches at Sears Park and Schoolhouse Bay for three weeks due to elevated blue-green algae counts. The year before, a bloom shut down public lake access over Labor Day weekend.

Blue-green algae is principally fed by phosphorous and nitrogen.

“The goal of this lake management program is really to figure out where that phosphorous and nitrogen is coming from,” Knoecklein said.

While there were more questions than answers about the source of the lake’s ills at the Sunday summit, Knoecklein said the nine-point watershed plan should be ready for presentation sometime around June.

The watershed management plan is a requirement for a federal grant that could be used to fund efforts to actively clean the lake, for education efforts or for lake monitoring.

The Town Council approved a one-year contract with Knoecklein’s firm in January. The plan will identify concrete steps and maintenance protocols for the lake.

Knoecklein said the firm is busy tracking down all the sources of water coming into the lake and verifying approximately 15 years’ of

data against which to gauge its current health. While the data analysis is not yet complete, what he alluded to was ominous: “The more we look, the more we find, basically. And the more we find, the more we don’t like what we find.”

That left summit attendees to talk about how to convey the importance of making sure the town is fully invested in the lake’s future.

State Rep. Melissa Ziobron, R-34, reported that \$200,000 in funding through the Agricultural Experiment Station was slashed from the state budget. But a grant through the Small Town Economic Assistance Program is still on the table.

The grant application submitted by the town asks for \$500,000 for a green infrastructure project to manage stormwater and improve the quality of the lake watershed. The effort is focused on a parcel of land donated to the town last year at the corner of O’Neill Lane and Old Marlborough Road, where the town hopes to create a stormwater catchment area and rain garden along with restoring the wetlands.

Ziobron recommended rallying around a concerted letter-writing effort directed toward the state’s Office of Policy and Management, which administers the grant. She suggested lake advocates come up with a unified message first, then send out letters individually – the more, the better. That message could also guide the creation of a petition, she said.

Randall Miller, a board member with the Connecticut Federation of Lakes and a facilitator with the East Haddam Lakes Association, told the audience the key to progress involves in convincing town officials and taxpayers of the lake’s economic impact.

He cited statistics compiled by the University of Connecticut in 1999 that show a direct

relationship between the health of a lake and the town’s bottom line.

According to Miller, ignoring water quality issues means tax revenue from the lakes will decrease in direct proportion to the deteriorating water quality.

“Poor water quality causes a decline in the taxable real estate values and that puts either upward pressure on your mill rate in town or requires budgets to be cut,” Miller said.

In East Haddam, a study of assessor’s records by the Lakes Association showed about 20 percent of the real estate grand list – which is the total amount of all assessed properties in town – comes from residential properties around its three lakes.

Miller said the UConn study indicates that if water quality drops to the point where it’s unsafe to swim or eat fish caught in the lake, property values drop in the range of 36-43 percent.

That means the town of East Haddam could lose between \$1.5 and \$1.8 million – between 7 and 8 percent of its revenue – if its lakes became unswimmable.

The message was well-received by the members of the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug, who said efforts to conduct a full analysis of assessor’s records are already underway as a way to put a dollar figure to the losses East Hampton could experience if the lake’s problems aren’t solved.

By the end of the meeting, those like Town Council member Melissa Engel remained frustrated with the lack of answers about the source of the lake’s contamination. She said she is aware of numerous studies conducted over the past 20 years without any solid leads.

“I am starting to think it’s an unanswerable question,” Engel said.

Colchester School Board Moves Forward Flat Budget

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Board of Education sat in silence on multiple occasions Wednesday night, as it contemplated a decision that would cut teachers, the facilities manager and multiple smaller line items.

By the end of the night, the board approved a list of reductions totaling \$242,422, bringing the proposed 2016-17 budget \$730 under the 2015-16 adopted \$39.80 million budget.

Last month, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu presented a proposed \$40.04 million budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year. The spending package would have been a \$241,822, or 0.61 percent, increase from current year spending.

However, due to pressure from the Board of Finance, the school board requested the school administrators come up with a list of reductions that would keep the budget even with its 2015-16 amount. That list included the trimming of four certified teachers – including a new 1.0 full-time-equivalent (FTE) special education position, for a \$50,330 savings. Other teachers reduced are already employed by the school system: a 0.4 FTE science teacher at Bacon Academy, for a \$20,089 savings; a 0.4 FTE world language teacher at Bacon for a \$20,089 savings; and a 0.2 FTE world language teacher at William J. Johnston Middle School for \$10,045. (Due to these teacher cuts, the unemployment compensation line in the budget would rise \$12,255.)

Other larger cuts Mathieu proposed were \$44,265 from capital reserve money and

\$40,672 from technology. He also proposed cutting the facilities manager position, to save \$44,517. Currently, that position is filled by Tony Gallicchio, who also is the town’s facilities manager. The school board pays half Gallicchio’s salary, while the town pays the other half. The reduction makes the facilities manager a part-time town employee.

Mathieu stated, after a discussion with the first selectman, the town would reconfigure the position if cut by the education board because the town still needs those services met. The education board has head custodians that can cover the position, Mathieu said.

Other, smaller cuts were: \$1,500 from language arts textbooks for the middle school; \$2,100 from printing, postage and office supplies; \$3,600 from professional development; \$2,000 from IT supplies; \$1,000 from advertising; \$1,000 from music travel to competitions for Bacon; and \$500 from positive behavior intervention support supplies.

The line for professional development, Mathieu explained Wednesday, changed by \$600 after he chose to save central office software training and instead replace that with adventure training to allow WJMS’ gym teachers to be certified to handle the school’s ropes course. Mathieu said there is money in the 2015-16 budget to cover the needed adventure training.

Other changes would include changing telephone plans, for a savings of \$7,970; and requiring parking fees at Bacon Academy for a

\$5,000 reduction.

On Wednesday, those reductions went through after the board voted 4-2 to accept the zero percent increase budget and pass it along to the finance board. The budget will be presented to the Board of Finance Tuesday, March 1.

The decision was not an easy one for the board. Board member Michael Voiland introduced a motion to spare the science teacher at Bacon Academy and the special education teacher at Jack Jackter Intermediate School. That motion failed 2-4, with only he and Mary Tomasi voting for it.

“None of these should be here to begin with, but there needs to be a list,” school board chair Ron Goldstein said Wednesday.

Voiland said he can’t support the cuts. “The administration is recommending them because they have no other choice,” Voiland said of the request to get the budget flat.

Lauren Hickey – a non-voting student member of the board – balked at the reductions, questioning what happens if the finance board cuts the education budget further.

“This is not to be taken lightly,” Hickey said. “It’s disconcerting to see things that would affect [students’] lives.”

Hickey suggested moving along the 0.61 percent increase and then figuring out what to do if it fails at referendum.

“I think we would prefer not to do this,” school board member Renie Besaw said. “We have to consider what’s likely to pass by the

Board of Finance and referendum. In a different environment, we would love to keep everything and even add things.”

The problem with increasing the budget, Besaw said, is that the district needs the community’s support.

Finance board member Rob Esteve was present Wednesday and said that his board’s feeling is the school board does not have the community’s support when it comes to the budget.

“Based on the information at hand, we generally feel you don’t have the public’s support to pass a budget of an increase of \$240,000,” Esteve said, stressing he was speaking as an individual and not for the finance board.

A motion to pass the flat budget on to the finance board passed 4-2, with Tomasi and Voiland voting against and Goldstein, Besaw, Don Kennedy and Brad Bernier voting in favor.

Goldstein explained the flat budget will be presented on Tuesday; however, he stressed changes can still be made to the budget until it is sent to referendum.

At the end of the meeting, only one member of the public spoke about the budget – parent Dawn May, who simply told the board that, despite Esteve’s comment, the board should not give up on the community’s support.

Both the Board of Education and town budget proposals will be presented to the Board of Finance Tuesday, March 1, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

East Hampton Council Looks to Add Police Dog

by Elizabeth Regan

While the Town Council has been adamant that the town cannot afford to add another police officer to its 14-man force, it is enthusiastically backing the addition of a dog.

Councilwoman Melissa Engel told the council Tuesday a group of volunteers is looking to raise \$30,000 for what she described as a “cross-trained, drug-sniffing, search and rescue police dog.”

Police Chief Sean Cox has put it this way: “It’s not what you would call a one-trick pony.”

While drug sniffing is not the dog’s only role, Cox has said it’s a driving force behind the resurrection of the police department’s canine program that fell to the wayside in the 1990s.

At a local forum on the heroin epidemic held last week, Cox brought up the issue of traffic stops and police dogs as a way to keep the problem in check.

“The United States Supreme Court came out with a ruling recently that said this: even if the officer’s Spiderman sense tells him there’s drugs in the car and he wants to get a dog there to help confirm that Spiderman sense, you only have the time that it takes to write out a ticket to hold that operator,” Cox said.

That’s why it’s critical to have a dog in town instead of relying on another department’s canine program, according to Cox.

Going forward, the annual cost will be about \$10,000 for food, veterinary care and training. The dog and its human counterpart must go away once a month for recertification and one week per year for training, Cox said.

He said a large portion of the expense of a canine program is backfilling a position while the officer is at the training academy.

East Hampton resident Randy Cavanaugh

spoke at the council meeting in support of adding a police canine to the force.

“I know firsthand how it feels to lose someone to heroin,” he said. “I feel it would be cheaper for us to get the dog than to bury a family member and suffer the long-term results of it. In my opinion we can’t put a price on saving lives.”

Both Engel and Cox are part of “Belltown’s K-9 Challenge Committee” seeking donations for the purchase and training of the dog and a host of related expenses.

Cox said the department has identified a breeder in southern Connecticut with experience starting a police canine program. The position of canine officer will be open to anyone on the force and candidates will have the opportunity to spend some time with the breeder first to determine if they’re a good fit for the assignment, according to Cox.

Several months of basic training for the dog and handler covers areas such as tracking, evidence recovery, building searches, handler protection, obedience, and classroom education.

“Once they complete that training, they spend a little time out on the road demonstrating that they’re capable and then they go for the advanced [training], which would be the narcotics detection,” Cox said.

Republican council member Mark Philhower said he backs the canine program 100 percent. “I think it’s something that’s needed. We’ve had a dog in the past and I think we need one to move forward,” he said.

Donations may be directed to the East Hampton Police Department. Checks should include a notation that the money is for the police canine program.



A raid of a Wildwood Lane home Tuesday yielded 56 marijuana plants and 2.5 pounds of prepackaged buds, ready to sell, according to police.

East Hampton Raid Finds Dozens of Pot Plants

by Elizabeth Regan

Three East Hampton residents are facing multiple drug charges after federal, state and local forces descended on a homegrown marijuana factory in East Hampton Tuesday.

The arrests were made after a search of 29 Wildwood Ln. yielded 56 marijuana plants ripe for the picking and 2.5 pounds of prepackaged buds ready to sell, according to police.

Detectives from the North Central Field Office of the Connecticut State Police Statewide Narcotics Task Force, along with special agents from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and members of the East Hampton Police Department, carried out a search and seizure warrant around 5 p.m., according to police.

Officers found three separate “grow rooms” in the house, where they said high intensity lights and ballasts and an extensive irrigation and ventilation systems police were consistent with the cultivation of the drug. They also seized \$2,900 in U.S. currency, several grams of THC “wax” made from the extracted marijuana oils, and numerous pipes and bongs.

State police said the investigation began af-

ter detectives received information that marijuana was being cultivated in the home.

Detectives identified the people who lived there as Destin Kelley, 32, Julian Clark, 30, and Elizabeth Moore, 36. The investigation determined they were responsible for cultivating the marijuana, police said.

Kelley, Clark and Moore were taken to Connecticut State Police Troop K in Colchester and each were charged with cultivation of marijuana, operating a drug factory, possession of over 1 kilo of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession with intent to sell marijuana.

All seized items are being held at Troop K as evidence, police said.

The three were held on bond pending a court appearance in Middletown Superior Court Wednesday. Kelley and Clark were each held on \$250,000 bond, while Moore was held on a \$100,000 bond.

The North Central Field Office of the State Police Statewide Narcotics Task Force is investigating the case.

Andover Resident Receives 10 Years for Sexual Assault

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Andover resident and former middle school teacher Dale Kukucka received a 10-year sentence last week for sexual assault charges he was convicted of in December.

Kukucka, 37, was sentenced Feb. 17 to 10 years in jail and 15 years of probation. He was convicted Dec. 10 of first-degree strangulation and third-degree sexual assault – both felonies – as well as third-degree assault. The charges all stemmed from the choking and sexual assault of a woman at the Grange Hall in East Haddam in 2013.

According to an arrest warrant affidavit from the time of his arrest in November 2013, Kukucka assaulted the woman Oct. 20 of that year when she went to use the restroom at the Grange during the annual Moodus Fife and Drum Muster; the woman told police she was washing her hands when a man – later identified as Kukucka – grabbed her neck with his right hand and put his left hand over her mouth.

The woman struggled and moved toward the bathroom window, which she broke with her elbow before losing consciousness, the affidavit said.

Two witnesses who heard the struggle entered the restroom and found the woman on the ground with Kukucka on top of her, the affidavit stated. One of the witnesses described the woman as having “a lot of blood on her face and in her hair” and said Kukucka had both of his hands up her shirt.

Both witnesses told Kukucka to get off the victim, and while one of the witnesses attended to the woman, the affidavit stated the

other attempted to restrain Kukucka. However, after a physical altercation between the two, Kukucka was able to get away.

He was later identified in part by his girlfriend, who had left the Grange earlier in the evening but returned to use the bathroom. The affidavit said that, after being told not to go in the restroom because “someone was raped,” his girlfriend heard people talking about the incident and mentioning, “Dale from the Essex Sailing Masters,” which is a fife and drum corps Kukucka belonged to.

According to the affidavit, Kukucka’s girlfriend approached one of the troopers at the scene and said she was dating a man named Dale and she had a picture of him on her phone; that photo was shown to one of the witnesses, who positively identified Kukucka as the man he’d pulled off the woman in the bathroom.

Kukucka had been employed as a science teacher at Carmen Arace Middle School in Bloomfield at the time of the assault; his employment was terminated a week after his arrest.

Kukucka also has another case pending against him: he was charged with fourth-degree sexual assault for kissing an 18-year-old female against her will and attempting to touch her breasts at the Banner Lodge golf course in East Haddam in 2012.

According to published reports, Kukucka received accelerated rehabilitation for the offense; however, the special probation was revoked after he was arrested for the East Haddam charges.

Two Arrested on Drug Charges in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

Complaints about the sale of heroin from a Portland apartment led to the arrest this week of two local men on multiple drug charges, according to police.

Portland Police Department Lt. Ron Milardo said an investigation led by Sgt. James Kelly resulted in a narcotics search and seizure warrant carried out Monday at 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., Apt. 1. The warrant was based on complaints from neighboring residents and building management as well as numerous hours of officer surveillance on the apartment, according to Milardo.

Milardo said James Granata, 57, of the same address, was known to sell heroin from the apartment.

Heroin, marijuana, drug paraphernalia and

narcotics that were not in their proper container were all seized as a result of the warrant, according to Milardo.

Granata was charged with possession of narcotics, possession of narcotics with intent to sell, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, and failure to keep a narcotic drug in the original container.

Granata was held on a \$50,000 bond pending a Middletown Superior Court appearance Tuesday.

Michael Dickinson, 51, of Airline Avenue, was also arrested at the apartment and charged with possession of narcotics and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Dickinson has a court date of March 8 at Middletown Superior Court.

Longtime Colchester Pastor Remembered Fondly

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The Rev. Fred “Ted” Dole was a man always looking out for others whether it was as a pastor or as the chaplain of the volunteer fire department.

Dole, 75, of East Hampton, formerly of Colchester, passed away Feb. 9 after an illness.

Born Oct. 19, 1940 in Massachusetts, Dole graduated Trinity College and later earned his Master of Divinity degree from Hartford Seminary. He served as interim pastor at Westchester Congregational Church in 1972 before becoming pastor in 1974. He served for 31 years until his retirement in 2003. After his retirement, he was made pastor emeritus.

At Westchester, Dole accomplished several building improvements including renovating the basement, creating Canney Hall, adding a new kitchen, replacing the rotting steeple, restoring the old steeple and making it into a gazebo, and rerouting the driveway and improving the parking lot.

Dole was the first pastor in the renovated parsonage across the street from the church. His family lived there for over 20 years before they purchased their own home a few miles from the church.

He was also known for mentoring several individuals who would go on to careers in the ministry.

While he was the pastor at Westchester, Dole was known for teaching his children about giving back.

“When it snowed and everyone else we went to school with looked forward to a snow day...us three kids had to shovel the stairs of the Westchester Congregational Church and there are a lot of them!” Sheryl Scheidel, Dole’s daughter, said. “We didn’t appreciate it back then as children, but we now are involved in many community or outreach programs that provide opportunities to others as a direct re-

sult of doing things for others.”

While serving as pastor at Westchester, Dole joined Company 2 with the Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Department. John Jones, fire police captain for the department, said Dole joined simply as something to do since he had gotten bored just being a pastor.

“Where he lived in Westchester, he could see the Company 2 firehouse,” Jones said. “He would hear the siren and wonder what was going on. The guys up there were a very close bunch. He just liked that part of it.”

Dole began driving the trucks and fighting the fires along with becoming chaplain for the entire department.

A fire department chaplain, deputy chief Don Lee explained, is not only the crew’s spiritual advisor, but the one who firefighters go to for emotional support.

“The chaplain is here to help the members when they have bumps in the road in their life or we have a bad call,” Lee said. “It may be the death of a member or the death of a child; those major events that shake us to the core.”

Lee said Dole was that guy that everyone would go to.

“When you needed to sit and talk to someone or sort things out in your mind, he understood,” he said. “Ted, being one of us, was there with us. He saw it; he was engaged so he could put things in perspective and sort through the questioning.”

Lee said it didn’t matter if it was noon, 6 p.m. or 1 a.m.; Dole was always available to firefighters in need.

“He was soft-spoken, but told you the way it was,” he said. “He was down to earth, but guided you along the way. That’s what drew everyone to him.”

Jones specifically remembered one fond, funny memory of Dole from their earlier days with the fire department, during a social gath-

ering.

“He wanted to try our ‘Hayward Juice,’” Jones shared. “It was one that would sneak up on you, if you know what I mean.”

Jones recalled Dole had two glasses before he was out for the day.

“We brought him home in the back of a pickup truck, rang the bell and ran like hell,” Jones laughed. “He didn’t drink much Hayward Juice after that.”

After Dole left Westchester Congregational, he and his wife Edi joined Marlborough Congregational Church.

The Rev. Bob Faulhaber at Marlborough Congregational said the day Dole and his wife first walked in to the church, no one knew he was the retired pastor at Westchester.

“He was very inconspicuous,” Faulhaber said. “He came in and said ‘hello’ at the door. He never identified himself as the retired pastor of Westchester Congregational.”

Faulhaber said he finally figured it out when he realized Dole had more knowledge of the faith than any lay person should.

One thing everyone who knew Dole agreed on is the legacy he leaves behind. Beyond his work in the churches and with the fire department, Dole was an avid model train enthusiast and a part-time professional photographer.

“He was the picture-taker,” Lee recalled. “Very rarely did Ted get into pictures.”

At Marlborough Congregational Church, a special collection of Dole’s photographs line the basement.

Faulhaber said those pictures were the biggest gift Dole left.

“He could capture things few people could capture,” Faulhaber said. “It wasn’t just line up people and take a picture.”

In January, Jones said, Dole hadn’t been doing well with his illness. He received a call from Dole that he wanted the new Westchester Con-



Ted Dole, also known as “the Rev.,” passed away Feb. 9 after an illness.

gregational pastor Rev. Ron Thompson to take his place as chaplain for the fire department.

So the department held a small ceremony at Dole’s home, with Dole passing his chaplain badge onto Thompson.

“Through all of his pain he was in, he blessed all of us,” Jones said. The ceremony “was a tear-jerker to say the least.”

For Dole’s memorial service last Saturday, Feb. 20, Marlborough Congregational covered the walls of the hall with pictures Dole took and the church still had hundreds left over. Over 300 people filled the hall that day, remembering Dole’s life and saying goodbye to the man that affected so many of them.

Colchester Ambulance Equipped With New Technology

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

One Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Department ambulance is now equipped with a new life-saving tool with the addition of a new Lucas chest compression unit.

The fire department’s administrative assistant Jean Walsh said she happened to come across the unit advertised in a flyer, and, while she was researching it, she saw one of the department’s crews come back from a call. The first responders were exhausted; having given chest compressions and CPR, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, to a patient from the time of the call to the time the person arrived at the Marlborough Clinic.

CPR is a vital action to keep a person’s blood pumping and ensure the patient has a pulse once they reach the hospital. But, deputy fire chief Don Lee said, CPR is a physical drain on a first responder. He noted he knew someone who dropped dead of a heart attack soon after giving CPR simply because of the stress on the first responder.

“We are susceptible to those things ourselves,” Lee said of paramedics and heart-related issues.

That is where the Lucas device comes in. The device gives continuous chest compressions on the patient experiencing cardiac arrest and pauses for the responder to give two breaths. The device straps onto the patient and stays in place while the patient is moved.

Walsh said responders need to stop CPR while transporting the patient up or downstairs on a stretcher.

“It’s difficult to perform this function where two hands are needed, but one is needed to hold on,” Walsh said.

Also, she said, along with relieving the stress on the first responder, the Lucas makes it easier for responders once in the ambulance. Walsh explained responders have difficulty performing efficient CPR in the back of a moving am-

bulance.

Transportation in the ambulance can take 10 minutes or longer and because of the physical exertion, responders have to switch off in order to maintain compressions. If CPR is stopped at any time, the responders have to start counting all over again, Colchester first responder Corey Mosdale said.

Having the machine on the patient also frees up the paramedic to perform other tasks such as administering medication, he said.

The Lucas machine can perform 30 or 100 compressions per minute, depending on the setting the responder uses. According to the Lucas website, the device can provide a better level of consistent compressions of required depth – and at the proper rate consistent with the American Heart Association’s CPR/AED protocols – than humans.

Colchester first responder Kaitlyn Standish said the device will come in handy during the day, when the volunteer department isn’t staffed with as many people. (Standish explained because of most volunteers’ work schedules, the department has more people available at night than the normal 9-5.)

The device “is helpful when you don’t have the manpower,” Standish said. To perform CPR – and for the extended time needed – takes multiple first responders, so they can switch off as well as drive the ambulance.

The need for such a device, Walsh said, has grown, since Colchester’s population is expected to become 30 percent senior citizens in a few years. Thirty-six percent of the fire department’s calls already are heart-related, she said.

First responders having the knowledge of CPR will never go away though. Mosdale described the ability to perform CPR and chest compressions as a “not perishable skill.”

“Driving down the road, we don’t have [a



Corey Mosdale, left, and Kaitlyn Standish, first responders for the Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Department, demonstrate how to work the Lucas Chest Compression Unit. The unit is a new addition on one of the ambulances.

Lucas device] in the car,” Mosdale said, referring to the need at any moment for a first responder to treat someone. “We’re not always going to have it, but it’s a good tool.”

However, the problem with obtaining the unit was funding. Without the money in the fire department’s budget, the \$15,000 device was out of reach. Walsh said she reached out to multiple local foundations inquiring how the department would go about applying. One, the Schwartz Family Foundation in Colchester, immediately sent a check for \$5,000. That’s

when the effort really began moving.

“It jumped into high gear,” Walsh said. “I started calling every agency.”

In December, the Board of Selectmen accepted a \$15,000 donation from an anonymous donor. With that, the device could be purchased and the excess saved for a second unit for the department’s other ambulance.

Until that money is raised though, Lee said the fire department is excited to at least have the one Lucas – and it’s ready to go whenever needed.

Portland Residents to Vote on Property Purchase

by Elizabeth Regan

Eligible voters in Portland will have the opportunity to vote on the purchase of a piece of property on Middle Haddam Road earmarked as the trailhead for the proposed extension of the Air Line Trail.

The special town meeting on March 2 will ask taxpayers to authorize the purchase of 78 and 82 Middle Haddam Road – known around town as the Keegan property – for \$172,000. The combined property was appraised at \$160,000, according to a report by Silverstein Appraisal Services released earlier this month.

The potential sale involves a 21.7 acre parcel with 25 feet of road frontage and a 900-foot, partially-paved roadway opening into the interior of the property, the appraisal said. A second parcel is one acre with 188 feet of road frontage.

The properties are owned by Central Connecticut Sand and Gravel LLC of North Haven, according to assessor's records. The appraisal report said both properties were acquired from Severino Bovino on May 28, 1999.

The larger property served as a quarrying operation until a few years ago.

An environmental assessment on the prop-

erty presented to selectmen in January by environmental engineer Amy Vaillancourt from Tighe & Bond did not find any contamination in the soil. Efforts to secure deep groundwater samples were not successful despite boring 50 feet into the ground, she said.

The Planning & Zoning Commission voted almost a year ago to recommend the purchase in support of the town's planning goals.

The \$172,000 price tag, including fees, would be paid through the capital non-recurring fund and the land preservation fund as well as line items for legal fees and contingencies.

A licensing agreement with Eversource Energy signed last month cleared the way for the Air Line Trail Steering Committee to move forward on its recreational rails-to-trails initiative more than two years in the making. The 2.2 trail will extend from the East Hampton border near Depot Hill Road and will run close to Route 66 before branching off to cross Middle Haddam Road and Breezy Corners Road on its way to the termination point near the Middlesex YMCA's Camp Ingersoll.

The town has applied for a Department of Energy and Environmental Protection trail de-

velopment grant for \$685,932.

The steering committee's plan for the new trail calls for two inches of gravel and a final coat of stone dust.

Air Line Trail Steering Committee member Rosario "Riz" Rizzo, Jr. said the town has been notified it is on the "short list" for funding. The awards are likely to come out in mid-March, he said.

The grant comes with a requirement for the town to match 20 percent of the grant, according to First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield. She said the property purchase would serve as that match.

In addition to serving a specific purpose as the trailhead for the Air Line Trail, Bransfield said the large property is "certainly a nice contribution to the town in terms of land that would be open and available for future generations."

The resolution voters will be asked to approve specifies that both parcels should be used for open space.

At a meeting of the Board of Selectmen last week, Selectman Ben Srb expressed reservations about putting such a restriction on the

smaller property. He said the town takes money off the grand list every time it acquires a property.

"The front parcel is a one acre approved building lot and I wouldn't want my hands tied if we ever needed to sell that one acre lot," Srb said.

Bransfield acknowledged the property does have potential as a building lot, but pointed out the advantages of having a buffer between public and private properties.

"There's often conflict and it's often related to noise, lights, traffic and other use of land," Bransfield said. "Public and private land: sometimes it's a beautiful marriage and sometimes it gets a little rocky."

The special town meeting is open to all registered voters and anyone who owns at least \$1,000 in taxable property in town. Participants will be able to discuss and amend the resolution before voting.

The special town meeting will be held Wednesday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at the Portland Public Library. A regular Board of Selectmen meeting will follow.

Carpino to Seek Fourth Term in Portland/Cromwell

by Elizabeth Regan

State Rep. Christie Carpino, R-32, has announced a bid for her fourth term as the voice of Portland and Cromwell in the state House of Representatives.

"My job as the state representative is to fight for the people I represent. I have one special interest – making sure I do right by the very people that sent me to Hartford. It would be an honor to continue being their voice at the Capitol," Carpino said in a written announcement.

Carpino's focus at the Capitol revolves around the quality-of-life issues most important to the people of Portland and Cromwell. "Connecticut families want an affordable place to call home. They want a safe community, with good schools, quality health care services and stable jobs," she said. "If re-elected to the General Assembly, my focus will remain the same – doing the right thing for the people I represent."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield expressed appreciation for all Carpino has done for the town so far. She said she works closely with Carpino to make sure the issues important to Portland are addressed in Hartford.

"Christie and I are great partners and we work together effectively toward the goals of the town of Portland and the state of Connecti-

cut," Bransfield said.

Most recently, Bransfield worked with Carpino on suggested language for a bill proposal that would require the state Department of Public Health to conduct a compliance review and audit on regional health districts every two to three years. The need for consistent state oversight came to the fore after a series of events involving the Chatham Health District late last year culminated with the resignation of embattled Director of Health Thad King and the withholding of some funding by the state public health department.

Carpino has also proposed bills this year to increase transferability of college credits to save students time and money, enhance access to 911, reduce government spending, and promote the safe rescue of children in dangerous vehicles, according to the press release. She is also championing measures to increase health information privacy to better protect all of Connecticut's residents.

A member of the legislature's Judiciary committee and Public Health committee, she also serves as co-chairman of the Program Review and Investigations committee. She is the only state representative from the minority party to

co-chair a committee in the Democrat-dominated General Assembly.

Portland Town Clerk Ryan Curley called the town lucky to have Carpino as its representative. "We have a true partner on the state level that we can always count on, whether it is a local event or helping with Route 66," Curley said.

Portland Republican Town Committee Chairman Rob Taylor described Carpino as an amazing asset to the town.

"She always makes herself available for local events and spends a considerable amount of time working with the community to ensure the best results for everyone. Christie is by far the hardest working State Representative this district has had in a long time," Taylor said.

Carpino has received the unanimous endorsements of both the Cromwell and Portland Republican town committees.

She won the seat in 2010, after defeating incumbent Democrat James O'Rourke. Prior to serving at the state level, Carpino, an attorney, served on Cromwell's Board of Assessment Appeals, was the vice chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the vice chair of the Republican Town Committee.



Christie Carpino

East Hampton Police News

2/13: John Gaylord, 23, of 72 South Rd., Portland, was issued a summons for improper use of registration, East Hampton Police said.

Pedestrian Injured in Colchester Hit and Run

State police said a pedestrian was injured after being hit on Route 149 near Church Street Feb. 17.

Police said the incident occurred at 1:11 p.m., when the pedestrian was struck by the right side mirror of a vehicle heading northbound. Police reported the vehicle continued heading north on Route 149 without stopping and the pedestrian was transported to the Marlborough Clinic.

Colchester Police News

2/17: Colchester Police said Charles Scott, 33, of 147 Chestnut Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with failure to appear. Police said he was also charged with sixth-degree larceny on a separate warrant.

2/17: State Police said Timothy Westcott, 28, of 456 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, was arrested and charged with reckless driving, DUI, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of narcotics.

2/17: Colchester Police said they are investigating after an unknown person damaged approximately 40 feet of a split rail fence on Middletown Road between Feb. 16 and Feb. 17. Anyone with information can call Officer Robert Labonte at 860-537-7270.

2/17: State Police said Deane Burkhart, 44, of 4 Charlton Hill Rd., Hamden, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

2/18: State Police said Luis Ramos, 44, of 81 Neck Rd., Old Lyme, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

2/20: State Police said Francis Dimaio, 42, of 26 Woodland Dr., Cromwell, was arrested and charged with speeding, DUI, and failure to drive in the proper lane.

Obituaries

Hebron

Andrew Patrick Mulligan

Andrew Patrick Mulligan, "Drew," 22, of Hebron, passed away unexpectedly at home on Wednesday, Feb. 17. Born June 15, 1993, in Philadelphia, Pa., he was the beloved son of James and Janine (Danyluk) Mulligan of Hebron.

His true passion in life was found in playing ice hockey. Drew was currently employed as an electrician for McGee Electric. He will be remembered most for his big heart and caring nature – especially to his sister and best friend, Karly. He will be greatly missed.

In addition to his loving parents, he leaves his sister, Karly A. Mulligan of Hebron, and numerous extended family members and friends.

Drew was loved by all – especially those friends who came in to his life because of his hockey career. One gift that Drew has left for his family is the friendship of many of those same people, for which they are eternally grateful.

The memorial liturgy was celebrated at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23, at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron. The family received guests at the church starting at 9 a.m. until the time of the service. Burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, donation in his memory may be made to the Boston University CTE Center (bu.edu/cte/financial-support) to help support research toward concussions and other traumatic brain injuries.

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

Colchester

Amber Winder

Amber (Menard) Winder, 32, of Salem, formerly of Colchester, passed away peacefully at her home Tuesday, Feb. 9, after a long, hard-fought battle with cancer.

Born May 14, 1983, to Willard Olmstead and Suzanne Menard, Amber always strived to become a great success in everything she did. She attended school while she was a bus driver to gain certifications in the dental and clerical fields and began her search for her latest job where all her skills were key, and quickly found her career, reaching great heights.

In 2008, Amber married her longtime soulmate John W. Winder and began raising his two children, Taylor A. Winder and John M. Winder, as her own. Amber and John were blessed with a third child, Kaleb J. Winder, in 2011 and bought their first home that same year. Amber and John, being outdoor enthusiasts, started a small farm at their home and spent much of their time tending animals and catering to a growing business. Other interests included camping, hunting, fishing and hiking.

Amber is survived by husband John; three children, Taylor, John and Kaleb; parents Willard and Suzanne; stepfather Jerry Talavera; siblings Jason and Jasmine Menard; and numerous extended family members.

Amber's strength, courage and tenacity will be forever remembered and cherished.

A memorial will be held at her home in Salem in the spring with a date to be announced.

Any donations can be sent directly to the family home at 599 Old Colchester Road, Salem, CT 06420.

Colchester

Michael Kincade

Michael Kincade, 55, a resident of The Caring Community of Connecticut, passed away Monday, Feb. 8, at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital, New London.

A memorial service was held Tuesday, Feb. 23, at the Thomas L. Neilan & Sons Funeral Home, 12 Ocean Ave., New London. Interment was private. There were no calling hours.

East Hampton

Rene L. Smith

Rene L. Smith, 87, of East Hampton, beloved husband of 65 years to Gloria (Hickox) Smith, died peacefully Saturday, Feb. 20, at Cobalt Lodge Health Care. Born Sept. 3, 1928, in Westbrook, Maine, he was the son of the late Ernest and Lena (Breault) Smith.

Rene served his country in the U.S. Navy for five years and then worked as an aircraft sheet metal worker, retiring from Projects Inc. in Glastonbury.

Rene sang in the Middletown Choral and was an avid gardener selling his blueberries at the Portland Farmers Market. He was a member of the Belltown Council Knights of Columbus. Rene and Gloria loved to travel and camp.

Besides his loving wife Gloria, he is survived by his sons, Glenn Smith of East Hartford, Lester Smith of New York City; three daughters, Nancy Trask and husband Kenneth of North Carolina, Barbara Novotasky and companion Rick Biondi of East Hampton, Paula Dagesse and husband Steve of Florida; sister, Gloria Smith of Arizona; six grandchildren, Stephen, Stacey, Rachel, Marissa, Krista, Kayla; and five great-grandchildren.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Thursday, Feb. 25. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated today, Feb. 26, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church, East Hampton. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Patrick Church Repair Fund, P.O. Box 177, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Hebron

Donald Lack

Donald Lack, 83, of Hebron, formerly of Marlborough, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Feb. 23, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Feb. 3, 1933, in New Britain, he was the son of the late Fred and Olga (Tynik) Lack.

Mr. Lack began his career as a pharmacist, owning and operating his own pharmacy in New Britain. He was also a longtime teacher at Smith Elementary School in New Britain. Donald and his wife Nancy raised their family at their home in Marlborough where they resided for 48 years before moving to Hebron after his retirement.

Mr. Lack was very active in the Marlborough community as a member of the Lions Club, Garden Club and served on the Board of Finance.

He leaves his wife of 61 years, Nancy (Bowers) Lack; two children and their spouses, Kenneth and Jeri Lack of Grants Pass, Ore., and Cherie and Ken Chao of Arvada, Colo.; four grandchildren, Jayna and Kelsey Lack, Lindsey Chao Schaffer and Victoria Chao; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by two siblings, Ruth Root and William Lack in addition to his parents.

A celebration of his life will be held at Loveland Hills Community Clubhouse in Hebron Sunday, Feb. 28, from 1-4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Lions Club of Marlborough or to Planned Parenthood Association of Southern New England.

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

Colchester

Everett J. Clark

Mr. Everett J. Clark, 86, of Altoona, Fla., passed away Sunday, Feb. 21. He was born in Middletown, was raised in Colchester and raised his family in Hebron. In 1994, he and his wife retired and moved to central Florida.

He was a member of St. Mary of the Lakes Catholic Church. He was also a life member of the Lion's Club International and was a member of Knights of Columbus. He worked in lumber manufacturing.

Survivors include his daughters: Shelley Grendzinski, Denise (Thomas) O'Neill, Cathleen (Peter) Monaco, Mary Ellen (Charles) Lewandoski; sisters: Evelyn Turner, Mary Lu Wall; 10 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his wife: Farrie Clark, and his daughters: Linda Clark and Laurel Magill.

Beyers Funeral Home in Umatilla, Fla., is in charge of the arrangements. Online condolences may be made at beyersfuneralhome.com.

Andover

Thomas Ursin

Thomas "Tommy" Ursin, 67, of East Hartford, formerly of Andover, loving husband of over 34 years to Deborah (Rocco) Ursin, passed away peacefully Friday, Feb. 19.

Born in Rockville, the son of Ellen Ursin Varca of Bolton, and the late Elton E. Ursin, he grew up in Andover fishing and hunting along Burnap Brook and lived in Berlin and New Britain before moving to East Hartford 30 years ago. He was a graduate of RHAM High School and Central Connecticut State University. Tom owned and operated Ursin's Professional Painting for over 15 years, with his meticulous attention to detail earning him the reputation of the best painter around from his devoted customers.

He was a communicant of St. Francis of Assisi Church in South Windsor. Tom was a true lover of nature and enjoyed being outdoors; fishing, camping, and exploring his surroundings, and could spot a hawk, a deer, or a turkey from a mile away. He was a member of the Rhode Island Mobil Sportfishermen Club, where he enjoyed spending time with friends and surf casting from the beach. Tom also spent many seasons coaching girls' softball in East Hartford, as well as many weekends golfing and playing cards with his wife and their friends. He was a true and dedicated friend to all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

In addition to his wife and his mother, he is survived by his beloved children, McKenzie Monaco and her husband, Michael, of Glastonbury, Marc Ursin and his wife, Joni, of Manchester, and Matthew Ursin of Portland, Ore.; three grandchildren, Griffin, Cassidy, and Giselle Ursin; three sisters, Kathryn Cioffi and her husband, Raymond, of Cromwell, Virginia Hunter of Andover, and Laure Ursin of Bolton; a stepsister, Paula Varca of Vernon; his mother-in-law, Angela Rocco of Rocky Hill; three brothers-in-law, who fondly referred to him as the "gentle giant," Mark Rocco of New Britain, Santo Rocco and his wife, Susan, and Matthew Rocco, all of Rocky Hill; a sister-in-law, Leonora Johnson and her husband, Blake, of Bloomfield; and several nieces.

The family wishes to express their loving gratitude to Tom's sister, Laure; his uncle, Wolfgang and his wife, Paula.

His family received friends for memorial calling hours Thursday, Feb. 25, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Samsel & Carmon Funeral Home, 419 Buckland Road, South Windsor.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, Feb. 26, at 11 a.m. directly at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 673 Ellington Rd., South Windsor. Interment will be private and at the convenience of his family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made payable to RIMS, reference Tom Ursin Scholarship Fund, c/o Ted Davison, 325 Woody Hill Road, Westerly, RI, 02891.

For online condolences and a guestbook, visit carmonfuneralhome.com.

We know Bobby Z. and Johnny T. were there to greet you at the pearly gates.

Colchester

David Partnoy Hurovitz

David Partnoy Hurovitz, 82, died Wednesday, Feb. 17. Born in Toronto, Canada, July 24, 1933, to mother Fanny Partnoy Hurovitz and father Harry Hurovitz, he moved to Moodus, Connecticut in 1948.

He graduated high school, did a two-year hitch in the Army, followed by a short stint in college. He grew up in Moodus, then Hartford. He lived his life in Colchester and Glastonbury and moved to Boynton Beach, Fla., in 2008.

He was father to Craig Shawn Hurovitz and Dana Holy Hurovitz, who died in December 1999. He was the proud grandfather of Benjamin Lee Hurovitz and father-in-law to Mitze Lee Hurovitz. He was the husband of Michelle Edwina Yush Hurovitz for 59 years, until her death in November 2015.

David was predeceased by his half-brother Robert Partnoy of Canada and step brother, Louis Mager of Connecticut.

David was always a hard worker and most of his life he was self-employed in the restaurant and cabaret fields.

His funeral service was held Sunday, Feb. 21, at Congregation Kol Haverim, 1079 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. Burial followed at the Hartford Mutual Society Cemetery in East Granby.

Contributions in David's memory may be made to The American Diabetes Association, The American Heart Association or to Congregation Kol Haverim.

Carmon Windsor Funeral Home has care of the arrangements. For online condolences, visit carmonfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Josephine Premo

Josephine Premo, 83, wife of Charles E. Premo, passed away Saturday, Feb. 20, at Midstate Medical Center, surrounded by her family. Born in Meriden March 20, 1932, to the late Margaret and Joseph Dziodzio, she had resided in Meriden until moving to Colchester 27 years ago.

Mrs. Premo was a parishioner of St. Stanislaus Church and attended St. Stanislaus School, Meriden High School and Laurel Business School. She was employed by W.T. Grants, Times Wire and Cable and Catholic Family Services.

Jo enjoyed traveling the New England coast; Maine being her favorite destination for lobster stew. She also was an avid fan of the UConn women's basketball team.

Josephine is survived by her husband of 60 years, Charles E. Premo; her son Keith Premo and his wife Laura, of Tomball, Texas; her daughter, Deborah Gawel and her husband Robert. She is also survived by her four grandchildren, Keith Premo II (Haley) of Georgia, Lexi Patterson (Alonzo) of Texas, Matthew Gawel of Maine and Becky Gawel and two great-grandchildren, Charlie and Greta Premo.

The funeral was held Thursday, Feb. 25, from the John J. Ferry & Sons Funeral Home, 88 E. Main St., Meriden, CT 06450 and later that morning at St. Stanislaus Church, Meriden, for a Mass of Christian Burial. Burial was in St. Stanislaus Cemetery, Meriden. Relatives and friends called at the funeral home Wednesday, Feb. 24.

For online condolences and directions, visit jferryfh.com.

Marlborough

Roseann Vivian Nowsch

Roseann Vivian Nowsch of Westbrook, formerly of Marlborough, died Monday, Feb. 15, in Middletown, after a brief illness. She was 86.

Roseann was born June 15, 1929, in Hartford and spent her childhood in Glastonbury. She was the daughter of Sadie ("Sabita") Christiana and Andrew Forghetti. She was affectionately known as "Sister" to her siblings: her brother, Anthony Forghetti of South Windsor, and her two sisters, the late Micheline (Forghetti) Sherriffs of South Windsor and Angela (Forghetti) Prasser of East Hartford.

Roseann graduated from Glastonbury High School in 1947. On Valentine's Day 1948 she married the late George Eugene Nowsch at the Marlborough Congregational Church. Roseann and George met while she was working at the soda fountain of Franklin's Drug Store in Glastonbury. They built a house and lived for many years in Marlborough before eventually moving near the ocean, which Roseann loved, in Clinton and then Westbrook.

Roseann retired from the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles in 1995 after many years of service. She was a longtime member of the Women of the Moose in Willimantic and Marlborough and loved animals, gardening, reading, knitting and watching *Castle* on TV.

She is survived by her four children, Susan Lowrey and her husband Robert of Glastonbury; Norma Bromley and her husband Ronald of Vermont; Heidi Leone of California and George Nowsch Jr. of Michigan. Roseann's grandchildren are Robert Lowrey Jr. of Colorado; Gregory Lowrey of Marlborough; William Bromley of Colchester; Tyler Bromley of Westchester; Alexandra Leone of California; Peter Leone, US Navy, stationed in Virginia; Preston Nowsch and Nathan Nowsch of Michigan. She also has three great-grandchildren, Harper Lee Lowrey of Colorado; Jonah Lowrey and Elias Lowrey of Marlborough. Roseann also has many, many nieces and a few nephews; many cousins and wonderful friends and neighbors.

A memorial service is being planned for the spring and interment will be at Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Arrangements are being handled by D'Angelo Funeral Home in Middletown.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis TN or Sabita's Rescue Fund at The Hartford Veterinary Hospital, 2300 Berlin Tpke., Newington, CT 06111.

Portland

Dorothy Lawton Whitman

Dorothy Lawton Whitman, 84, of Chaplin, beloved wife to Leonard A. Whitman of 35 years, passed away peacefully Sunday, Feb. 21. She was the daughter of the late Raymond and Ruth (Boomhower) Lawton.

Dorothy lived in Portland most of her life and in later years spent many wonderful winters in Silver Springs, Fla., before returning full-time to Chaplin.

Dorothy's pride and joy was her family. An exceptional mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, she will be dearly missed by her five children: Janet Glazebrook and her husband David, Jaycee Clark and his wife Patty, Judi Pawlowski and her husband Mitch, Jacki Charest and her husband Colin, and Jennifer Kelaher and her husband Jim and a very special niece Casey Kaiser. She also leaves behind nine grandchildren: Jonathon Glazebrook and his wife Desi, Brittany Leet and her husband Mitchell, Benjamin Glazebrook, Caitlin McNamara and her husband Pat, Brent Clark and his fiancée Jessica, Chris Charest, Brianna Unsworth, Natalie Clark, and Sierra Unsworth. Dorothy had five great-grandchildren that were the light of her life: Connor and Kieran Glazebrook, Levi and Logan Leet, and Emi McNamara. She is also survived by her sister, Eleanor Kaiser, and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her brother, Henry Lawton.

After raising her five children with her first husband, John E. Clark, Dorothy and Leonard began their married life together June 6, 1981. They spent many enjoyable years traveling the country, making lifelong friends wherever they went. Dorothy was a 50-plus-year member of Beta Sigma Phi and a past Grand Worthy Matron.

Throughout the years, Dorothy remembered every birthday, anniversary, and occasion for every person in her world and acknowledged each with a card or a phone call. As her family was growing, Dorothy was active as Den mother, Brownie leader, Girl Scout leader, PTA chairman, DeMolay Boys leader, Rainbow Girls leader, and any other activity that supported her children. When grandchildren arrived, Dorothy lived for family gatherings and special occasions.

Dorothy's family will receive relatives and friends today, Feb. 26, at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St., (Route 195), Willimantic, from 1-2 p.m., with her memorial service beginning at 2 p.m. Burial will be privately held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of Dorothy may be made to the Chaplin Senior Center, 132 Chaplin Street, Chaplin, CT 06235.

For an online memorial guestbook, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Beverly Popowich

Beverly Popowich, 82, of Colchester, was lifted into the arms of Jesus, her merciful Savior on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital in New London.

She was born on July 14, 1933 in Glastonbury to the late Irene (Strickland) Johnson and Henry Higgins. Her beloved husband Walter predeceased her in 2012.

Left to cherish her memory are her sons, Martin and wife Jane Zibuda, Brian and wife Andrea Zibuda; daughters, Doreen and husband Jeffrey Janssen and Diane Jordan; grandchildren, Rachel Janssen, Matthew Przybyl, Jennifer and husband, Andrew Johnston, Joshua and wife, Brooke Currie, Marjorie Jordan and Adam, Andrew, Megan and Ava Zibuda; great-grandchildren, Clara, Sofia, Phoebe, Manny, Matthew, Summer, Rebekah, and Owen; sisters Donna Selleck and her husband George, Bonnie Johnson; brother Lee and his wife Ann Johnson; and many dear extended family members and cherished friends.

She was predeceased by her brothers, Glendon Higgins and Harold Johnson; sisters, Madeline Varni, Zeldia Nowisch, Gail Billings, and Barbara O'Meara; her sister-in-laws, Doris Popowich and Frances Varnish; and her beloved daughter-in-law, Helen Zibuda.

To know Beverly was to know a woman filled with deep and abiding faith in God.

Beverly Higgins-Popowich attended Mohegan Community College and earned a degree in the arts and sciences. One of her greatest achievements was being chosen 1994 Ms. Senior Connecticut. She was named "Most Inspirational" by her fellow contestants. She spent the year touring the state as a good-will ambassador. In her spare time, she also became a certified clown and loved entertaining at children's birthday parties and health care centers.

The Washington Apple Commission in Wenatchee, Wash., chose her as a finalist out of 8,000 entrants for the Granny Smith apple contest.

Beverly joined the East Haddam writers' group and pursued her love of writing. Beverly also spent time as a volunteer in the "Why Not Read Program." She helped start the Writer's Group, "The Rough Writers" at the Cragin Memorial Library in Colchester. She worked as town secretary of Colchester and Columbia for several years and was devoted to her family and always reached out to those in need.

A few of Beverly's favorite things were holding her husband's hand, being near the ocean, having "sister dates", and enjoying her family, especially her grandchildren.

Friends may call from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. Funeral services are at 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 29, directly at the Marlborough Congregational Church located at 35 So. Main Street. Burial in the Marlboro Cemetery will be private.

Those who wish may make a donation to the church or The Mitchell Farm Equine Retirement Sanctuary, 300 East Haddam Rd., Salem, CT 06420.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

"We're just going to have to come to terms with it. He might just be the nominee."

Those were the words of Trent Lott, former Republican Senate majority leader under George W. Bush, during a recent visit to Capitol Hill. The "he" was The Donald – and after last Saturday, Lott just might be right.

Trump, as we all know, won handily in the Republican primary in South Carolina Saturday night. And the victory officially vanquished the candidacy of Jeb Bush, the man who less than a year ago seemed all but certain to be the Republicans' nominee for president.

But along came Trump – and his blustery words of hate and idiocy seemed to capture the nation. Or at least a part of it. Enough of it to send Bush's White House dreams cratering off a cliff, anyway.

What did Bush in? I'm not sure. It could've been the name; if the success of Donald Trump has made anything clear, it's that Republicans seem to be sick of the status quo. And having a third Bush president just may have not seemed that appealing. As Stephen Colbert put it Monday night: "He had all the advantages of name recognition, but was saddled with the burden of name recognition."

I think a lot of people perceived Bush as really kind of bland, particularly when compared to Trump, who delighted in bullying Bush with the very best in middle school insults. Toward the end of his campaign, Bush decided to lower himself to Trump's level, calling him an idiot and a jerk, but it always rang false. Bush seemed too inoffensive and polite to really be believing in what he said.

But, whatever the reason, Bush lost last Saturday – quite badly in fact. He came in fourth, failing to collect even 10 percent of the vote, so he held a press conference and wrapped up his campaign. (Well, "suspended" it; I love how politicians always "suspend" their campaigns – like they're going to come back to them later. It reminds me of how low-rated TV shows are rarely canceled; instead, they're put "on hiatus.")

Anyway, back to Trump.

I've maintained for months I don't think Trump can win the general election in November. And I still think that's true. Because there are still so many people running – even with Bush out of the way, there are still five candidates in that race – Trump is winning these primaries without overly huge numbers. Like I said earlier, he handily won the South Carolina primary Saturday – but collected just 32.5 percent of the total votes cast. That's not even half the voters *in his own party*. How can he be expected to win the general election? I suppose you can argue that, as more candidates fall away, more might turn to Trump....but that's hardly a given. How many Jeb supporters will say "Donald Trump, he's our man"?

Now, while I still don't think he'll win in November, the Republican nomination may be a different story. And I can't really believe I'm saying that. Things can change, but for now, Trump seems pretty unstoppable.

The *New York Times* had an interesting story after Saturday's results suggesting Republicans perhaps have only themselves to blame for Trump's meteoric rise; they took The Donald's candidacy about as seriously as the rest of us – which is to say, not at all.

During the campaign, the *Times* reported, those so-called Republican "superPACs" spent a whopping \$215 million. Of that amount, just \$9.2 million – or 4 percent – was spent on attacking Trump.

And even as they stared up at him in the polls, the candidates seemed reluctant to go after Trump – opting to criticize each other instead. The *Times* quoted Stuart Stevens, the chief strategist for Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign, as saying, "It's crazy that nobody else is trying to win except Trump."

Stevens singled out Marco Rubio in particular: "Rubio is not going after the person who is winning. I've never seen a campaign that seems as satisfied to not go after the leader."

I'm guessing the Republicans – again, like most of us – felt Donald Trump would eventually go away. But he hasn't. And it'll be interesting to see if the GOP has any moves up its sleeve to stop Trump from the nomination that, for the moment, appears may very well be his.

Speaking of politics, I got a little bit of brushback this week for bashing the Republicans for saying they wouldn't even vote on a Supreme Court nominee President Obama put forward, whereas in 2007 Sen. Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, did the same thing regarding any nominees President Bush put forward, and I didn't say a word back then.

Beyond the fact that I didn't have my column in 2007 (I was editing the paper then, but I didn't start writing a column until August 2008; my very first column, by the way, touched on baseball, *Jeopardy!* and food. The more things change....), there are a couple of problems with that. First, as near as I can tell from my research, Schumer acted alone; no other Democrat senators made similar statements. Whereas this year multiple Republican senators – including the Senate's majority leader, Mitch McConnell – have said they won't vote on Obama's nominee.

Secondly, what Schumer said in 2007 was that Senate should not confirm another U.S. Supreme Court nominee under Bush "except in extraordinary circumstances." He said the Senate "should reverse the presumption of confirmation," adding that he felt he and his colleagues were "hoodwinked" by two other Bush nominees for the Court, John Roberts and Samuel Alito, who Democrats felt moved too quickly to overturn legal precedents after they were confirmed and installed.

But it's important to note Schumer never came right out and said the Senate shouldn't even vote on the nominee. This seems like a small distinction but it really is not. Because that's what draws my ire the most. The Republicans won't even hold a vote. On Tuesday, they reiterated this childish stance. No vote. No confirmation hearings. Not even a courtesy meeting with whomever Obama nominates.

Look, if you want to reject the nominee, reject the nominee. (That's why I hope Obama nominates a moderate Democrat who's drawn bipartisan support in the past – make it more difficult for the Senate to justifiably balk at him or her.) But to not even hold a vote – and to not even have a freaking courtesy meeting with the person – is almost unheard of in its childishness and pettiness.

Of course, to hear McConnell talk, it's all that nasty Obama's fault. He's forcing them to act this way – all by doing his presidential duty.

Obama, McConnell said Tuesday, "has every right to nominate someone. Even if doing so will inevitably plunge our nation into another bitter and avoidable struggle, that is his right. Even if he never expects that nominee to actually be confirmed but rather to wield as an electoral cudgel, that is his right."

And I'm sure McConnell and his colleagues will have absolutely nothing to do with making this "another bitter and avoidable struggle," or with wielding Obama's nominee as an "electoral cudgel," right? It'll all be Obama's doing.

The whole thing is equal parts sickening and infuriating. Of the 54 Republicans in the Senate, 24 are up for re-election this year. As I said last week, I hope Americans remember in November.

See you next week.