

RIVEREAST

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Hebron residents Ron Wenzel (left) of Wenzel's Sugar House and Russ Schaller of Woody Acres Sugar House stand in front of Wenzel's evaporator this week; both have been involved with the Hebron Maple Festival, which returns this weekend, since the event's onset. Although the festival now has different organizers, both will still be opening their sugar houses up to the public, providing the opportunity to learn the process of making pure Connecticut maple syrup.

Maple Festival Returns This Weekend

by Geeta S. Sandberg

It's the sweet time of year once more. The Hebron Maple Festival – now part of the larger Eastern CT Maple Madness – makes its return this weekend, and while the event is hosted by new organizers and contains a few changes, the hope of all involved remains the same: for good weather, a large turnout, and a fun time for attendees.

This year, the event, which made its debut in town 26 years ago, is being jointly hosted by the Windham Chamber of Commerce and Windham Arts. The festival, which provides the opportunity for people to learn about the process of making maple syrup – and enjoy the sweet results – used to stretch along Main Street. Now, however, it will take place at two designated locations: the town center and RHAM High School on Wall Street, with parking at the latter and shuttle buses available to take attendees from one place to the other.

At the high school, visitors will find plenty of things to eat, such as pulled pork, ribs, grilled cheese with maple bacon, homemade maple cookies, maple and bacon cupcakes, maple cotton candy, chocolate pineapple maple pops and more.

There will be activities such as sled dog demonstrations, native life and storytelling, dance performances, a kids' obstacle course and spring craft activities – and, new this year, a health, wellness and business expo.

Windham Arts Event Coordinator Sheri

Putnam said this week, "I hope everybody checks out the expo we're having," which will feature booths offering a variety of services including Reiki and massage, henna and temporary tattoos, a naturopathic doctor, Pampered Chef and Scentsy, and different contractors and businesses.

Putnam added another new event she wanted people to know about was an arts and crafts fair at the high school Sunday that will feature "lots of fabulous crafters and artists" including painters, an individual who refinishes antique chairs, several handmade jewelry crafters, a woodcrafter, sewers and quilters and more.

"We've got so much going on in there I don't want anybody to miss it!" Putnam said. She added for the event as a whole, "We hope for a very large turnout and wonderful weather most definitely, and that everybody attends and supports all the fundraisers that are happening with all the different vendors."

Along with the craft fair at the high school, another will make its return at Gilead Congregational Church on Saturday. Meanwhile, in the center of town attendees will find food such as hot dogs, hamburgers, chili, fried dough and crêpes along with maple steamers, maple cream puffs, sugar on snow, mini maple Rice Krispies treats, maple baked beans and beyond.

There will also be a variety of events including a quilt show and teacup auction put on by

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Fellow Officials Remember Carl Chudzik

by Elizabeth Regan

The members of the Portland Board of Selectmen are in shock this week, following the sudden passing of one of their own.

Carl Chudzik died Monday morning at home. He had turned 63 the previous Friday.

The Republican was first elected to the board in 2007 with the help of his wife, Joann, and young daughter, Addie. In 2010, that same family-led campaign team worked to send Chudzik to Hartford as state representative. He lost in an August primary to Christie Carpino – who would go on to win the seat in that fall's general election – but remained characteristically optimistic about the experience and all those who came out in support of him.

"I'm very proud of my supporters," Chudzik said at the time. "They never took any shots at the opposition. We ran on the planks that we stood by."

Chudzik said his main inspiration for running for state office was his daughter Addie, who was 10 years old at the time. He wanted to do his part to ensure his daughter had the same opportunities for success he enjoyed throughout his life, he said.

Those who served as selectmen with Chudzik point to his close family bond as the foundation for his abiding – and unflinchingly genuine – concern for the wider community.

Ryan Curley, a former Republican selectman who was elected town clerk last year, called Chudzik "the heart" of the board.

"He never put politics first; it was always what he thought was right," Curley said. "He kind of wore his heart on his sleeve in that respect."

Curley described Chudzik as a friend and a mentor who helped to guide the young Republican through his first campaign and two subsequent terms on the board.

"I don't know where the board goes without Carl," Curley said. "The guy made an impression. Things were better when he was there."

Selectman Brian Flood, a Democrat, is another friend who described generosity of heart as a hallmark of Chudzik's character.

"I have a boat. I don't know anything about boats," Flood said by way of illustration. "Carl took the time out to come out and help me with some issues. He's just that guy. He'll do anything for you."

Chudzik owned a real estate company in Rocky Hill. He was a life-long entrepreneur, who ran a cafe in Cromwell and worked as a seafood exporter at different points in his life.

Chudzik was born in Hartford and grew up in the Rocky Hill school system. He graduated from St. Francis College in Biddeford, Maine,

in 1975 with a bachelor's degree in marine biology, according to his obituary.

His colleagues in town described the environment as one of Chudzik's greatest areas of concern. According to Curley, he promoted parks, recreational trails and a public boat launch, among many other outdoor opportunities – anything "to be able to use the outdoors as much as possible."

Ben Srb, a Democrat, was elected to the Board of Selectmen in November but had known Chudzik for more than 15 years. "He was a great person who was passionate about the pond he lived on and the surrounding area," Srb said. "He meant well in everything he did that I saw over the years."

Selectman Fred Knous, also a Democrat, pointed to Chudzik's engagement in the process and his commitment to doing the right thing as reasons why he was so respected on the board and universally well-liked around town.

"I think he epitomized what a small-town selectperson should be," Knous said.

Republican Mike Pelton, first elected to the Board of Selectmen in November, said he got to know Chudzik during his campaign, and regrets that he will not be able to continue to benefit from his straight-talking wisdom and experience.



Carl Chudzik

"I was happy I got voted in so I could spend more time with him," Pelton said.

Democrat selectwoman Kathy Richards had the privilege of serving on the board with Chudzik ever since he was first elected. In that

See Carl Chudzik Page 2



Signs at the intersection of routes 85 and 94 in Hebron hint at some of the things to come this weekend during the 26th annual Hebron Maple Festival. There will be a tractor parade on Sunday, a nine-hole mini golf course and the show “Bubble Mania” at Gilead Hill School Saturday, and a BMX bike stunt show and raffle at Hebron Elementary School Sunday.

Maple Festival cont. from Front Page

the Hebron Historical Society, fire trucks and ambulances on display at the fire department, a kids activity booth, caricatures, kids music by DougalMusic.net from 11-11:30 a.m. and Bill Hurd soft rock music from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. both days.

And while a majority of events take place at the two designated areas, there are also activities to be found in other locations around town. Two pancake breakfasts are scheduled: one on Saturday hosted by Church of the Holy Family from 7-11 a.m.; and one Sunday hosted by the Hebron Lions Club from 7 a.m.-noon.

At Gilead Hill School, a nine-hole mini golf course will be set up all day Saturday, and seating starts at 10:30 a.m. for the show “Bubble Mania.” Meanwhile, at Hebron Elementary School on Sunday, a BMX bike stunt show and raffle will take place at 10 a.m. and again at 1 p.m.

There will be traditional Jewish baked goods at United Brethren of Hebron on Saturday, and at FennAgain’s Restaurant guests can sample maple liquor and bourbon and order off their maple menu both days.

On Saturday, Country Carpenters at 326 Gilead St. will be open to the public from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Owner Freddy Brehant shared this week visitors will find a blacksmith demonstration, a sewing demonstration on antique sewing machines, candle dipping, a woodworking demonstration, and the opportunity for kids ages 10 and over to create and keep their own wooden pen. There will also be antique military artifacts on display, and discussion by the Lebanon Militia on militia life in the early colonies.

“Everything has gone smoothly for us,” Brehant said of working with the new Windham organizers. “We’re going to try just being open the one day so that’s something to stress because we usually do both days. ... We’re hoping that we’ll be a successful event and we hope that the weather will work in our benefit to have a lot of people come out.”

Kevin McDonnell, one of the organizers of the tractor parade that will take place Sunday in the parking lot of Ted’s IGA, had similar hopes.

“My number one hope is that the weather holds out,” he said. “I’m just hoping for a big turnout. Last year we had 24 tractors... I’m just hoping to maybe bump that up to around 30.”

He added “even with the Windham Cham-

ber of Commerce organizing it this year and taking it over we were still able to keep everything the same and have the same route – it’s all going to stay the same.”

McDonnell said there would still be a pedal tractor pull for kids ages 5-10 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. And, he added, anyone who was interested could still join the parade.

“Just come and show up,” he said, as long as it’s on a tractor, not a riding lawn mower.

“It has to be tractors – any size tractor,” McDonnell said. “It doesn’t have to be an antique restored tractor; it can be a brand new tractor a farmer wants to drive off the field and bring over.”

McDonnell said those interested can arrive anytime after 11:30 a.m. and there’s room to park trailers. He added the parade kicks off at 1:30 p.m. and this year, Miss Teen USA will be riding in the procession.

And of course, along with the above, a staple of the Maple Fest will be taking place: area sugar houses will be open, to talk about the process of making pure Connecticut maple syrup.

Ron Wenzel of Wenzel’s Sugar House and Russ Schaller of Woody Acres have been involved with the festival since it’s onset, and they said this week the temperatures had been “just perfect” for making maple syrup.

“We didn’t need any snow shoes!” Wenzel laughed. And both said they were ready for the weekend.

Schaller said people should come out “to see how it’s made – a lot of people don’t know it comes from the trees!”

And Wenzel added it was the perfect spring-time opportunity for people to get out of the house and enjoy themselves.

“The festival should be well,” he said. “We’ll be here rain or shine!”

Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney also shared his hopes this week.

“It’s carrying on a 25-year tradition, so I’m glad to see that,” he said. “It looks like the weather is going to cooperate; the sugar houses are gearing up so I hope people come and visit our little town of Hebron and enjoy the Maple Fest.”

For more information and a full schedule of events and sugar houses go to hebronmaplefest.com.

Carl Chudzik cont. from Front Page

time, she saw first-hand how dedicated he was to the people of Portland and how closely he listened to their concerns.

And he was committed to working collaboratively with board members to address those concerns, according to Richards.

“We all did work together well, and that was important,” she said. “We had a good time, too. We could laugh together and still get things done.”

Each of Chudzik’s fellow selectmen, including First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, were shocked by the news of his death and saddened by the prospect of his empty seat at the end of the table during their bimonthly meetings.

“He was a wonderful selectman,” Bransfield

said. “He hardly ever missed a meeting. He was consistent; very supportive of the town of Portland, and very committed to helping us move forward. It’s a huge loss for us. I’m going to miss him terribly.”

According to Bransfield, someone will eventually take Chudzik’s position on the board – but nobody can replace him.

A selectmen’s meeting was originally scheduled for Wednesday, but Bransfield canceled it. Instead, members gathered at Chudzik’s wake to remember the man they all described as genuine, engaged, and committed to doing what was right for his family and his town.

Chudzik’s full obituary appears on page 8.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I’d been noticing it for the past couple of weeks, and the news finally reported on it this week: gas prices in Connecticut are on the rise again.

I’d been delighting for months as gas prices just dropped lower and lower and lower. Around four years ago, they experienced a similar freefall, but here in Connecticut the lowest price I saw for a gallon of gas was \$1.99, before it began creeping back up. This time around, I figured that would be the case again – I’d be lucky to see gas drop below \$2, and it certainly wouldn’t last for very long.

Wrong. It fell below \$2 and kept on falling; the lowest I paid for a gallon of gas – I’m talking everyday price, without any grocery store or members’ club discounts – was \$1.65 a gallon. And at some stations, I saw it drop even further over the next few days. There’s a Citgo in Manchester that I often pass on my way to work that got as low as \$1.54/gallon. (Why didn’t I partake? Quite simply, didn’t need to. With these low low prices, I was filling my tank to the top; no more stopping halfway because I just couldn’t deal with spending \$40 in one trip to the gas station.)

I was anxious to see how low gas would get. Already it was at prices I hadn’t seen since probably the summer after I graduated college, in 2001. But just how much further would it fall? It was close to \$1.50 already. \$1.25? Below \$1 even?

Alas, it wasn’t meant to be. I began noticing gas slowly, but sadly, crawling back up. Soon in the mid-\$1.70s, then in the \$1.80s. Heck, there’s even a place in Glastonbury I also pass on my way in – I must pass like seven or eight gas stations on what’s not a very long drive into work every day – that’s already over \$2/gallon. (Although that particular station is well known for being the most expensive one in town – at least 10 to 15 cents higher than other stations in Glastonbury. They get away with it, but it just doesn’t seem right.)

The news finally seemed to take note of the rising pump prices as well, with TV and print outlets running stories on it this week – not just in Connecticut but nationwide, as AAA reported Monday the national average for gas jumped 12 cents per gallon in the past week, the largest week-to-week increase since March 2015.

Why the rise? A lot has to do with the time of year, according to United Press International. UPI said oil refineries are preparing

to shift to a summer blend of gasoline – a blend that is more expensive to produce because of the additional environmental safeguards necessary during summer driving months.

And as they prepare for that shift, the refineries are shut down – leading to less gas in the pipeline, a AAA spokeswoman told *Middletown Press* earlier this week.

On top of all this, the weather is getting nicer (well, in theory; as I write this, the state weather forecasters haven’t ruled out a significant late-weekend snowstorm), so people are getting out more – and therefore driving more. There’s an increased demand but, for the moment anyway, a decreased supply. So, naturally, that will lead to higher prices.

Also throwing a wrench into things: the price of crude oil – which had been cratering, contributing greatly to the gas-price freefall – has really been on the rise as of late. The *Press* reported the price-per-barrel of crude has shot up 45 percent in the past month, and is now around \$38 a barrel.

There’s uncertainty as to just where the price of crude oil will ultimately end up, but for the moment, it’s gone up a lot – and that only adds to the seasonal spike we’re seeing.

I’m going to keep things in perspective, though; “spike” is a relative word. Even with the climb, most of the gas prices I see are below \$2 per gallon. AAA projects national gas prices to rise another 20 to 30 cents per gallon by Memorial Day, and even if that’s true and comes to pass in Connecticut, we’ll still be paying a good deal less than what we were paying for gas in the summer of 2015.

Gas is still low. It may not be \$1.54/gallon low, and probably won’t be again for quite some time, but it’s still making for a more pleasant experience at the pump than what we’ve been used to.

It’s just now apparently time to start hunting for those grocery store gas station discounts again.

Very sad to hear this week about the sudden passing of Portland selectman Carl Chudzik. I didn’t know Carl all that well, but in the years I’ve been editor, I’ve heard nothing but good things about him from my Portland reporters. And on those occasions I did bump into him, he was always nice, and kind, and typically wearing a big smile. He seemed like a great guy, and he’ll definitely be missed.

See you next week.

CIP Committee Working to Address Andover Needs

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Andover Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Committee announced this week it was taking proactive, bipartisan steps to address the town's infrastructure and make what it said were needed investments in its facilities.

In a March 15 press release, the committee wrote it had, "in a very tongue-in-cheek manner," adopted the slogan "Make Andover Great Again!" and was working to improve the town – in spite of a Board of Selectmen that, the committee wrote, "remains mired in dysfunction and inaction."

"While annual budgets have been under expended for almost 10 years, very little (if any) of the under expended funds have been returned to the townspeople by way of infrastructure maintenance or improvement," the release stated. "Meanwhile the town's facilities are deteriorating, and unencumbered cash reserves and separate capital improvement funds have swelled."

Based on the audit for the 2014-15 fiscal year, the town's unassigned fund balance was more than \$2 million; CIP Committee Chairman Dan Warren said this week the number fluctuates on a month to month basis, but said the current amount is in the same "ballpark."

The release adds the town has also "failed to perform the simplest of administrative tasks, such as applying for the 2016 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant."

And so, in response, the CIP Committee is working to address "the ailing infrastructure of the town and make needed investments in its recreational, social, and governmental facilities."

Recent efforts include drafting a comprehensive 10-year investment plan to go along with the town's Plan of Conservation and Develop-

ment, which is headed to public hearing April 18.

In addition, two subcommittees have been created: the Building Advisory Subcommittee and the Trails Advisory Subcommittee.

The first is charged with providing professional guidance for the preparation of specifications and bidding for town projects and developing a strategic asset management plan. Construction professionals Ken Romeo and Kevin Reagan were appointed to the subcommittee, and it's shared in the release they bring "extensive construction and project management experience, as well as a strong commitment to community service, to the table."

The second subcommittee is related to trails in town. Residents Jeff Murray, Bill Penn, Carrie Crompton and Eric Kopp were all appointed to the Trails Advisory Subcommittee, which has been charged with recommending improvements and maintenance to the Hop River State Park, organizing trail cleanup volunteers, and the formation of a trail development program to build new trails and connect existing natural and recreational resources in town.

Speaking on the CIP Committee's efforts this week, Warren said it was likely there would be an increase in the amount of money recommended in the 2016-17 budget to address some of the town's needs but "the intention is to spend down some of the accumulated unassigned balance that has been growing over the past seven years or so to mitigate tax increases."

Moving forward, Warren explained, "The budget is going to be a lot more transparent and will be detailed and very articulated as to the source of the money and how it's being spent."

Warren said efforts will also be made to start

including partial funding in the budget for larger ticket items down the road such as a new senior center, "so we don't have to take a hit in one fiscal year."

As for the negative comments about the Board of Selectmen in the press release, Warren said, "It's certainly not intended to provoke any hostility but I think anyone who has attended a Board of Selectmen meeting can see that they're just not able to tackle these issues and if anything [the comments are] a challenge to them."

Warren mentioned, for example, a lost opportunity to receive state funds for an emergency generator for the First Congregational Church (which is used as an emergency shelter and houses the food pantry) after the required paperwork wasn't filed in time. He also mentioned the ongoing issue with the request for a town easement to access property at 64 Long Hill Rd.

The issue with the easement, he said, "only reached the point that it has because the First Selectman and Board of Selectmen did not reach out to the Planning and Zoning Commission before the property went to auction; it was listed as a high priority parcel for the town to acquire and they just never talked."

Warren stressed he's not the only one concerned about these issues.

"This isn't just me; it's really a bipartisan effort," Warren said. "The chairman of the Republican Town Committee [Jeff Murray] has been really supportive. ... We've started a little grassroots movement to try to reveal to the town what's going on and also to engage people to get active."

Murray, who is also a member of the Board

of Finance with Warren, shared similar thoughts Wednesday. He explained he looked into other municipalities in the state similar in size to Andover to compare their town facilities and offerings and he found Andover was "lagging behind."

"Money hasn't been spent on improving our infrastructure too much," Murray said. "We want to focus on implementing some of those plans for conservation and development and focus more on the center of town and the rail trail system that goes through town, and taking a look at town buildings and seeing if there's any opportunities there for grants."

"It just seems like things have stagnated in town," Murray added. "There are a lot of people in town that want to see some improvements, and I think we can do that. The town's not smart about going after grant money and we just kind of want to awaken the residents to say 'Look, the money's available, we need to start focusing on this.'"

Like Warren, Murray said the efforts were bipartisan, concluding he was trying "to bring both parties together for some common sense improvements in town."

A vacancy remains on both of the newly-formed CIP subcommittees, and anyone interested in joining or volunteering in some other capacity can contact Warren at dhwarren@gmail.com.

The draft Capital Improvement Plan for the 2016-17 budget will be discussed at next Monday's joint Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance meeting; the public hearing on the town's Plan of Conservation and Development is scheduled for Monday, April 18, at 7 p.m.

Van Tassel Shares State Budget Concerns in Hebron

by Geeta S. Sandberg

At the Board of Education meeting last week, Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tassel expressed some concern over the state budget, and what could happen with funding the school receives moving forward.

"I am very concerned with the financial implications of the windfall that we're experiencing at the state level in the current fiscal year but also in the next fiscal year," he stated. "There are many projects and many grants we receive from the state and I think there's a good chance Hebron may not receive municipal aid [moving forward]."

He added, "It's very concerning; Education Cost Sharing, Excess Cost, transportation, School Readiness funds, and other types of grants, the solar project we have underway right now – these are all funding sources we may see significant reductions to as a result of where we are with the state."

Van Tassel concluded, "It's important to keep this in mind as we move forward. We are in an unprecedented time and we just need to keep our ear to the ground and I will certainly keep you informed."

Board member Kevin Williams also spoke to the issue, urging people to reach out to the state and area representatives to express their support for certain areas.

"If there are specific aspects of funding that you consider critical – i.e., School Readiness – if that's important to you, you should reach out and contact Rep. [Gayle] Mulligan, Sen. [Cathy] Osten, and the Connecticut General Assembly Education Committee proactively," he said.

"Don't wait for the item to be brought up on

the chopping block to make your comments," Williams concluded. "Make your voice known now that these are important things you support and need backing so maybe they won't even come up in discussion."

Also last week, the board approved a motion to allow non-certified staff members to donate some of their accrued sick leave, vacation time or personal days to another employee who, Van Tassel said, is experiencing "catastrophic physical ailment."

This is the second time the board approved such a request – they also voted in January to allow the voluntary transfer of leave for an employee who was battling their third round of cancer and had used up all their paid time.

But despite the second request just two months later, Van Tassel stressed the move wasn't precedent setting.

"My recommendation to the board would be to accept this request once again," he said. "This is certainly not something that is precedent-setting for the future; we're not establishing a practice with this and that is known by the collective bargaining group."

Van Tassel said the memorandum of agreement would mirror the one approved in January: only non-certified staff members would be able to donate time, and at a 2-1 ratio (meaning two donated days equal one full day of paid time off for the employee), with said donations accepted through March 25.

The amount that can be donated would be capped at 60 days, Van Tassel furthered, which would equal 30 days for the employee in question "only for utilization in the 2015-16 school

year."

He added, "Those who do donate, if they run out of days, they have to understand the board isn't going to grant them further days – we're just keeping it consistent with what was already developed."

Board member Carol Connolly said, "I fully support this," and thanked Van Tassel "for making sure we take care of the folks who are in charge of our children."

She also commended the non-certified staff, "because they always seem to come together to help each other and that's the type of person I want teaching our children every day."

Member Maryanne Leichter however, said she wasn't in favor of the idea – a position she held with the original request in January.

Leichter explained, "Sick days are given to staff members as a benefit – their benefit. They're not something to be given away or taken away; they're there in case you need them."

The motion passed 5-1, with Leichter against.

In addition at the meeting, finance director Richard Huot provided an update on the status of the cafeteria program at the school. He shared there was a slight deficit for the month of February – \$142 – due to two snow days.

"We have goods on hand that we didn't sell," he said. "If we had those two days we would probably be ahead by another \$2,000."

However, he said "we will probably make that up; the last four months of the year are usually the heaviest – we are in good shape."

Huot added compared to February of last

year, "Hebron stands to receive \$7,000 more in state reimbursement. That's a significant change as compared to last year."

He furthered, "The cafeteria also served 1,500 more meals, despite declining enrollment, so I think we are doing a lot of promotion, doing a lot of things in the school to encourage the kids to eat, and a lot of conversations going around with parents in terms of encouraging them to have their kids eat a good meal [at the school] so we're very pleased with the results."

An update was also provided on the solar project, which will put solar panels on the roof of Hebron Elementary School. Assuming state grant funding comes through, 601 panels are expected to be installed over the summer, which Huot said could reduce the school system's energy bills by an average of \$45,000 per year. The panels have a lifespan of 25 years and each one can produce 250 watts of power; Huot said they would pay for themselves within five-six years.

Huot explained the project was on the "high priority list" with the state legislature, with action likely to take place in May. In addition he said plans and specifications for the installation were currently being developed, and work was being completed on paperwork that needs to be submitted to the State Department of Education to move forward with the project.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 14, at 7 p.m. in the Gilead Hill School music room, 580 Gilead St.

East Hampton Group Balks at Bevin Boulevard Land Buy

by Elizabeth Regan

A group of East Hampton residents are suggesting the Town Council's plan to purchase a property at 2 Bevin Blvd. – which was approved by voters in December – was not well thought-out.

The council has identified the property as a potential parking lot for a proposed renovation that would turn Center School into a municipal hub including the Town Hall and police department, among other offices.

The half-acre parcel is the site of the Apollas Arnold house, a circa-1790 Cape Cod-style structure on a granite ashlar foundation. Margaret Faber, a Middle Haddam resident and member of the state Historic Preservation Council, said it is the only 18th century house remaining in the Village Center.

The town's industrial center was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. Known as the Belltown Historic District, it is representative of a small, New England mill town and is recognized as the only one of its kind completely devoted to bell-making.

The Bevin Boulevard property figures into each of five scenarios outlined in a report by Friar Associates released late last year. The Farmington-based architectural, engineering and design firm was hired in April to assess the practicality and cost of using Center School as a municipal hub. Various layouts in the report show the property being used as a parking lot for the police department, the town hall or for

Center School.

The report also includes a \$15,000 demolition estimate for each scenario.

But the information in the report wasn't publicly available at the time voters approved the purchase. The report was held back while the council engaged in real estate negotiations based on the contents of the report. The state's Freedom of Information law allows officials to keep residents in the dark about "real estate appraisals, engineering or feasibility estimates and evaluations" up to the point that a property "has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions have been terminated or abandoned, provided the law of eminent domain shall not be affected by this provision."

When voters approved the purchase for an estimated cost of \$56,000, they did so based on statements by town officials that it is advantageous to purchase parcels "contiguous" to existing town properties and that it would help alleviate parking constraints in the Village Center. The vote, made by a show of hands, was 115 to 77.

Nine residents, many of them members of the Chatham Historical Society, spoke at last week's Town Council meeting to oppose the demolition of the property for use as a parking lot, according to minutes. They said the Historic Register protects the district's contributing resources from "unreasonable destruction." A contributing resource is any structure within

the district officially recognized as adding to its historic significance.

Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said the property has not yet been purchased and no action could be taken at that meeting, according to minutes.

Maniscalco said a contract has been received but has not been signed.

In a phone interview Monday, Anderson called the situation a "quandry."

"We're kind of shocked at the whole outcome of this. At this point we're just kind of chewing on the information that's been brought to us," she said. "I can't speak for the rest of the Town Council but I do know we'll be having a discussion at our next meeting. I defer to the will of the entire Town Council."

She also expressed surprise that the concerns are just being raised now, but said she hopes there's a way around the issue: "[I] appreciate that there's such vigilance about keeping our historic face in the village center, which was one of the reasons why we wanted to preserve Center School. I don't think we're exactly at opposite ends."

Residents at last week's meeting suggested possible uses for the historic home that could include space for town offices, meeting space, a welcome center or a museum.

Another resident suggested dropping the sale completely so as not to waste taxpayer money.

While finding someone interested in mov-

ing the home off-site is another option, federal guidelines for the National Register of Historic Places specify that properties listed on the register should be moved only "when there is no feasible alternative for preservation."

Faber wrote in an email this week that the council's lack of awareness about the home's historic status shows the town did not do due diligence in vetting the purchase. "We depend upon the Town Council to make wise well-informed decisions in the public's best interest and ignorance of the property's historic encumbrance is no excuse," she said.

She also brought up the town's Plan of Conservation and Development and its focus on preserving the town's "natural, historic, and scenic resources."

"Proposing to demolish the last 18th century structure remaining in our Village Center runs counter to the town's own stated priorities. Hopefully this will be realized and the town will endeavor to restore, adaptively re-use and showcase the Arnold House as part of its town 'hub,' not raze it for a parking lot," Faber said.

She cited survey and planning grants which can be used to prepare feasibility and engineering studies, architectural plans and specifications as well as Historic Restoration Fund grants which can be used for structural renovations.

A petition urging the Town Council not to demolish the house had garnered 286 signatures as of Wednesday evening.

Maniscalco Slashes East Hampton School Budget by \$600,000

by Elizabeth Regan

The new East Hampton superintendent of schools, Paul Smith, got an education in local politics after Town Manager Michael Maniscalco reduced the \$29.34 million proposed school board budget by almost \$600,000 on its way to the Board of Finance.

Maniscalco said the town charter empowers him to cut the Board of Education budget. The school board disagrees, citing a provision in town code that directs the town manager to present the budget to the Board of Finance as submitted.

Maniscalco said at a special meeting of the finance board Monday that the cut brings the proposed education budget into accordance with a directive by the Town Council to maintain current spending levels. Last month, the Board of Education unanimously approved a spending plan that was 1.9 percent higher than the current year's budget.

Smith has said his recommended budget for the schools is as low as it can go without sacrificing jobs or programs. Bringing the proposal from a 1.9 percent increase down to zero would require layoffs of five to seven teaching positions or the elimination of programs such as afterschool sports at the middle school, or a combination of both.

Maniscalco's recommendation for the general government budget came in at \$10.36 million, an increase of 3.83 percent over the current year. Debt comes in at \$2.71 million and capital expenses are \$1.25 million in Maniscalco's proposal.

The total \$43.10 million recommended budget would bring the mill rate to 29.48, an increase of 1.7 mills. A mill is \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the proposed mill rate, a taxpayer with a house assessed at \$200,000 would owe \$5,896 in property taxes on the home. That's \$340 more than such a homeowner pays now.

Several people in the audience at Monday's budget meeting complained during a public comment period at the end of the meeting that any cuts to the Board of Education budget should be made as part of an open discussion by elected officials on the finance board or the

Town Council, instead of by Maniscalco.

Resident and Chatham Party member Mary Ann Dostaler was the first to bring up the cut, which wasn't specifically addressed during the presentation.

"I don't know how that happened or why but I think it's cowardly that a reduction in the budget is made on the education side by the town manager, and not by the elected officials that can be held accountable for that vote," she said.

Maniscalco bristled at the statement, saying he took "a little bit of offense."

When Dostaler started to speak up again, Maniscalco raised his voice: "Excuse me, I'm talking, thank you. As I was saying, it's well within my power and authority as granted in charter to do that."

Dostaler later apologized to Maniscalco for speaking "inarticulately."

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said Tuesday in a phone interview that Maniscalco is empowered to reduce the school board's budget request and that it's been done by other town managers in the past.

"Mr. Maniscalco is doing his job and now the Board of Finance takes it upon their plate to determine whether or not that is reasonable," Anderson said.

It was a variation of the sentiment expressed by finance board member Dean Markham at the meeting.

"We all have to understand the town manager is an employee of the town and the Town Council and at their beck and call, so to speak," Markham said. "We, however, are elected independently; we are elected to do the best for the community and to use our background, intelligence and hard work to put together a budget in the best interest of the town. Whether that's a budget that shows no dollar increase for the Board of Education or \$2 million, that's for us to determine."

Town charter authorizes the town manager to "assist the council and the Board of Finance in the preparation of an annual budget." It also specifies that the finance board, "with the advice of the town manager," shall submit a pro-

posed budget to the council by April 15. The charter empowers the council to make any changes it deems necessary except for increasing the total amount.

But Board of Education member Chris Goff said Wednesday that the town code of ordinances – which is separate from the town charter – requires the town manager to present to the finance board "a proposed budget consisting of the total expenditures and revenues estimated for the ensuing fiscal year and recommendations thereon along with the proposed budget of the Board of Education as submitted by the Board of Education."

Goff emphasized "as submitted by the Board of Education."

The school board will meet with the finance board Friday in an already-scheduled meeting to go over the education budget. Goff said members will present the budget as they approved it, with the 1.9 percent increase.

"It's up to the Board of Finance what to do next," Goff said.

He said the school board has scheduled its own budget workshop for Saturday morning to go over possible cuts, which would likely mean layoffs and a resulting increase in some class sizes.

Maniscalco's budget presentation Monday evening included a PowerPoint presentation, but no actual budget document. Finance director Jeff Jylkka told board members the recommended budget would be ready in time for deliberations the following day.

A copy was still not available to the press as of Wednesday night.

Maniscalco said the budget increase is driven by the \$51 million high school renovation project, which is coming due in the upcoming budget to the tune of \$1.5 million.

In a phone interview, Maniscalco said debt service combines with a reduction in state funding and the recent town-wide property revaluation to create a "perfect storm" of rising costs.

The recent revaluation contributed to a decrease of 1.44 percent – or \$16.5 million – to the town's Grand List. The Grand List repre-

sents the total assessed value of taxable property in town.

The stormy outlook loomed large over the creation of the town council's Budget Policy Statement, a document required by charter that outlines the council's budget goals and priorities for the coming year. The exercise is meant to provide guidance to the Board of Finance, the town manager, and the Board of Education over the course of the budget process.

The policy statement approved by the council in January specifies the school board "should maintain current spending levels."

But Goff pointed to the council's unanimous endorsement late last year of a teachers' contract that comprises 1.72 percent of the school board's proposed budget increase.

"To cut the 1.9 [percent increase] is actually going backward. It's reducing the budget, not maintaining it," he said.

Town Council member Ted Hintz Jr. has justified the council's stance by saying the school board budget goes up by about \$500,000 each year, while the board typically ends up returning between \$100,000 and \$300,000 to the general fund at the end of each fiscal year.

The policy statement also says departments should make every effort to maintain or reduce staffing.

Smith told finance board members his budget proposal already eliminates 2.4 teaching positions and one non-union staffing position through attrition to mitigate a 3.2 percent increase in fixed costs like salaries and benefits.

Smith described the 1.9 percent budget increase as "the number that maintains the current programming without adding anything new."

He said he takes the council's policy statement "very seriously" – and that his proposed budget is true to the spirit of the council's directive despite coming in at an increase. If anything, he said, the budget already places the town council's demands ahead of the students.

"It meets the needs of the policy statement more than it meets the needs of the children," he said.

Colchester Finance Board Sends Budgets to Public Hearing

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Comments were flying at Wednesday's Board of Finance meeting, but ultimately board members voted to approve the changes to the town and school budgets they'd reached a consensus on last week – and send the spending proposals to public hearing.

The agreed-upon proposed budgets include a \$100,000 increase from the Board of Education budget initially presented to the finance board and a \$50,000 decrease in the presented town budget.

Totaling \$54.29 million of spending, the proposed 2016-17 fiscal year budget includes \$14.40 million in town operations, debt and capital and \$39.90 million in education.

The budget proposal would feature a mill rate of 31.05, up from the current year's 30.76. This would translate to a .95 percent tax increase. One mill is equal to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property and under the proposed mill rate, a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$7,762 in taxes.

On town operations, there would be a \$636,411 increase, or .46 percent, over current year spending.

Finance board chair Rob Tarlov said the \$50,000 decrease in First Selectman Art Shilosky's original budget is not really a reduction in spending. He explained that, during the 2014-15 fiscal year, \$50,000 was transferred from the roads account to the snow removal account, due to the significant number of snowstorms. After that transfer, however, money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency arrived to cover the snow overages, so the \$50,000 went into the town general fund.

It's been sitting there ever since, so the board decided to put those funds into the roads account – and then trimmed the \$50,000 from the roads account accordingly.

As for the school budget, there is a proposed \$99,993 increase, or .24 percent, over current year spending.

The school budget was originally proposed by Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu in January as a .61 percent increase or \$40.04 million of spending. However, in February, the school board adopted and sent to the Board of Finance a \$39.80 million, zero percent increase budget. The proposal, which was exactly \$730 less than the approved 2015-16 budget, called for cutting teachers, as well as several other reductions.

Items included in the list of reductions were three existing teaching positions and one new position. It also included charging Bacon Academy students for parking.

Since the school budget's adoption, though, several residents have come out to finance board meetings and advocated putting money be put back in. Their voices were heard, and last week, the finance board reached a consensus to add \$100,000 back into the budget; the Board of Education then voted to add back in the cut teaching positions and to scrap the pay-to-park plan at Bacon.

At Wednesday's Board of Finance meeting, residents offered a mix of opinions on the town and school budgets. Steve Schuster praised the school board's initial adoption of a \$39.80 million budget – and lamented the finance board's

decision to raise it.

"[The school board] listened to you probably for the first time they've ever listened," Schuster said, referencing past implications by finance board members that they wanted to see the school budget come in at a zero percent increase over current year spending. "If the Board of Education continues the way they're going, it's going to be unsustainable."

However, resident Jen Mattos thanked the finance board for adding the money back in.

"We showed up, we talked, we filled out the survey," Mattos said, referencing a survey the finance board had asked residents to fill out last fall, to gauge their feelings on town spending. "The survey said we would support an increase [to the school budget]. I still support the \$100,000."

During Wednesday's meeting, the crowd began getting into some back and forth with each other, but the finance board members quieted them, and offered their opinions on the proposed budgets.

"I have no problem with putting the \$100,000 back in," finance board member James McNair said, adding that the board should send the school budget to referendum with that money back in and if it gets rejected, "the people have spoken."

"If you put it out there and the people of Colchester say 'Nope, you guys got it wrong,' that tells us something," he said. "What is the true will of the people?"

The newest finance board member, Andrea Migliaccio, agreed with McNair, stating, "We

don't have a crystal ball; we don't have a magic answer."

The idea of putting the money back in and letting voters weigh in at referendum was shared by most of the finance board members – most, but not all. Andreas Bisbikos remained opposed to the increased spending for the schools, a position he's expressed at previous meetings.

"Some people have said I haven't listened to the people, and I find that extremely disrespectful," Bisbikos said. He said that, during election season last fall, he was the finance board member who campaigned the most.

"I knocked on a lot of doors and I met with a lot of people. There's a common theme; taxes going up, cost of living keeps going up," he said. "We need to listen to everyone, not just one group that comes in."

He went on to say that there are "extremists" on both sides of the issue and that he would like to see more civility in public meetings and online, calling any fighting "pathetic."

However, at the end of the discussion, the board took two motions: to send the \$14.40 million town budget to public hearing and to send the \$39.90 million school budget to public hearing. The town budget passed unanimously and the school budget was 5-1, with Bisbikos opposed.

The public hearings are set for Monday and Tuesday, April 4 and 5, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave. After the hearing, the finance board will move the budgets to a May 3 town meeting, and, if approved, they'll head to a May 10 referendum.



When Gano's Power Equipment opened in April 1971, it was only a small storefront on Clark Lane. But these days, Gano's is housed in a building constructed by Frank Gargano specifically for the business, in 1974.



Colchester Business Celebrates 45 Years

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Forty-five years is a long time for a family-run business – and Gano's Power Equipment on Linwood Avenue can now add that success to its list of accomplishments.

Frank Gargano opened the store, which sells outdoor equipment and lawn care items, in April 1971, in a storefront on Clark Lane in Colchester.

The business came about because of Frank's hardship. Frank had worked at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. However, in 1970, the company changed its pay structure – and Frank said he went down five labor grades, resulting in a much smaller paycheck.

"It was hard to make a living," he said. "I started mowing, doing landscaping, and repairing mowers."

While brainstorming about what to do, Frank said the idea to open up Gano's came about. He explained he "started on a shoestring" – he borrowed \$1,500 and went from there.

"We first started a small 'mom and pop' store, then hired our first part-time employee two or three years later," Frank said. Since then, Gano's workforce has grown to 14 strong, a mix of full- and part-timers.

In 1974, Gano's moved to its current location at 120 Linwood Ave. – a building Frank himself constructed.

In addition to moving to bigger digs, Gano's

over the years has expanded its product line. These days, the store's offerings include outdoor power equipment, lawn mowers, chainsaws and commercial mowing equipment. It also sells accessories, tools, snowplows, sanders, fertilizers and more. Some popular brands Gano's carries are Simplicity, Scag, Stihl, Timberwolf, Honda, and Little Wonder, along with others.

At the time of the store's beginnings, Frank's son, Tony, was 3 years old. Tony rose through the ranks as he aged; working in service, sales, and parts.

"As a kid growing up, this is what I did," Tony said, explaining he went from sharpening chains to servicing equipment like lawnmowers.

The store began to evolve from pencil and pad with index cards for inventory to computerized systems, the Internet, and social media.

But, Frank said, one of the biggest differences he saw over the years was that he used to know all of the "higher-ups" in corporations – but by the time he retired about five years ago (Tony is now sole owner of the business), he didn't.

One difference Tony's seen is that these days people often come into the store already knowing a lot about what they want.

"Years ago, when there was a Chevy dealership in town, the new model was covered up in front and you had to go [to the dealership] to

see it," he said. "Now people do their homework and research before coming in."

There are some things though, that have remained the same – one of the chief ones being Frank and Tony's love of the job.

"Things have changed dramatically, but I loved going to work and every day was a challenge," Frank said. To Frank, the customers and employees were family.

"We treat customers the way you want to be treated; fairly and honestly," he said.

That quality customer service is as much of Gano's in 2016 as it was in 1971.

"We give [customers] good service, great products, and we have the knowledge," Tony said. "Put all of that together and it creates what we have. Quality employees that care about the same things we care about."

Another thing that will never change, Tony said, is the store's devotion to the community as a whole.

"As a company, we donate to clean up on the green, sponsor the fife and drum core, the Colchester Community Theatre, the Lions, the firemen's breakfasts, the congregational churches, baseball teams, cheerleading...it's all for the community," Tony said.

Along with what the company supports, Tony also runs the CT Lyme Riders, a group focused on raising money and awareness for research

on Lyme disease.

To him, supporting the local community is a vital part of being a small business owner.

"It always seems like it's the small, local businesses that donate to the community," Tony said. "We're part of your community; we live here, are from here, and we give back here."

Frank said he never imagined the store would turn 45.

"I figured we would have our run," Frank said. "But family supports it. Tony took the bull by the horns and went with it."

As far as goals for the future, Tony said he simply wants to "stay community involved, stay as a family-run business, continue to grow and offer new and different products."

He said he sticks by the store's model – "any product we sell, if we wouldn't own it ourselves, we won't sell it."

Although Tony said he has yet to discuss any specific celebrations for the 45th anniversary, he does want to wait until Frank comes home from Florida in April.

And then, it's back to work.

"Fifty would be a milestone to celebrate," Frank said.

Gano's is open Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The store is located at 120 Linwood Ave. and can be reached at 860-537-3431.

Colchester Girl Scout Gives Cookies to Veterans

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Every spring, Girl Scouts spread out all over town selling boxes of cookies – something that has become a ritual across the nation.

This year, though, a 6-year-old Colchester resident and her family decided not to participate in the typical way. Instead, the Daisy from Troop 63312 raised \$1,200 and gave 300 boxes of cookies to veterans at the Connecticut State Veterans Home in Rocky Hill.

Samantha Moon, a first-grader at Colchester Elementary School, is the daughter of an active Army soldier, Gordon Moon. To honor her father, learn about veterans and give back to the community, Samantha collected donations – and distributed the boxes herself last Friday.

“One of the things we wanted to teach her was that it’s not always about her,” Gordon said. “It’s important to give back. A lot of kids don’t understand the military and what veterans have done.”

Once the family had the idea of donating cookies, Gordon said he contacted the state Department of Veterans Affairs to see what they should do next, and the department suggested donating them to the home in Rocky Hill. The family posted the fundraiser on Facebook where friends, family, and military members donated from as far as Texas, Florida, Kansas and England.

The original goal was 100 boxes, he said, since there are 200 veterans at the home.

“We never thought 300 boxes,” Gordon said. “The troop leader couldn’t believe it.”

The Girl Scouts of America host a program of cookies for soldiers. When someone buys a

box of cookies, they can also choose to purchase a box to be sent overseas.

“I’ve gotten one while on tour overseas,” Gordon said. “We decided to stay local, since we’re only here a couple of years.”

Before moving to town in the summer of 2014, the Moons were based in Kansas; Gordon said the family is only in Colchester for three years, because of the length of his tour here.

Last Friday, Samantha spent two hours at the veterans’ home, distributing the boxes from veteran to veteran in the dining room. She pulled around a small red wagon filled with boxes of cookies including Thin Mints, Samoas, Tagalongs, Trefoils, Do-Si-Does, Savannah Smiles and more.

“At first I was shy, but then I wasn’t shy anymore,” Samantha said. “Normally veterans don’t get a lot of treats.”

Gordon explained most veterans there at the home don’t have a lot of family and were very surprised to see this small, blonde-haired girl with her bright girl scout vest bringing them cookies.

“A lot of veterans thought they would have to pay,” Samantha said.

While some veterans didn’t take the cookies, as they were on a diet, they all appreciated Samantha’s gesture.

After the distribution, three leftover cases of cookies were brought to the troopers at Troop K in Colchester, and the remaining boxes will be going to a homeless shelter for veterans within the state.

Gordon said Samantha has been invited back



Samantha Moon, 6, of Colchester hands a box of cookies to a veteran at the Connecticut State Veterans Home in Rocky Hill Friday. Many of the veterans, she said, thought they needed to pay; however, she explained she raised \$1,200 – in order to give them out for free.

to the veterans’ home.

“To have a little girl there was nice,” he said. “We’re trying to think about something else we can do.”

Until then, Gordon said it was a great learning experience for Samantha – and that she realized how a small thing like a box of cookies can make a big difference to a single person.

Mary Poppins Sails Into Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

The magic of *Mary Poppins* is coming to Portland High School, complete with memorable songs and elaborate dance numbers and special effects, to show people of all ages that “anything can happen if you let it.”

The curtain goes up Friday and Saturday in the auditorium at the high school, located at 95 High St.

“It was fun watching all the magic come together,” Emily Bradshaw, a sophomore, said during a rehearsal earlier this week. Bradshaw plays Winifred Banks, wife of the meticulous George Banks and mother to Jane and Michael.

The musical follows a dysfunctional family, led by two preoccupied parents, and the nanny who reminds them what’s really important in life.

Students have been working since December to master the complicated score, block out the scenes and, finally, put it all together in an ode to the iconic nanny’s engaging mix of magic and common sense.

The “magic” is sprinkled throughout the show, from the scene during which Mary Poppins pulls impossibly large objects from her carpet bag to the one in which items fall off the kitchen wall and then fall back into place.

Then there’s the kite that flutters over the audience in the iconic “Let’s Go Fly A Kite.”

The special effects are part of an elaborate display of theatrical scenery by set designer and PHS art teacher Stu Noelte. Numerous set changes keep the crew of 25 students busy as they roll in huge backdrops and set up furniture.

Scenery ranges from a nursery and parlor to a bright streetscape and, of course, the rooftop where the entire cast steps in time in one of the production’s most sweeping numbers.

Noelte said it took him and a group of parent

volunteers – he called them “scenic dads” – nine Saturdays and seven Wednesday nights to construct the sets. For the first time, several students came on board as carpentry apprentices as well.

“It was a huge show for us,” Noelte said, describing it as the most extensive one he’s undertaken.

The show is directed by Ben Tucker, a choral teacher at the high school. He said he chose the production because it fits in with the year’s Disney theme for the music department – which will be capped off with a music department trip to Orlando, Fla., in April.

The timing is right because performance rights for the musical just became available, according to Tucker.

“It fit perfectly all the kids that we have,” he said. “We had a Mary who could tap, who could sing, who could do all those things. We had all the ensemble to fill it. We had a pit [orchestra] who could handle the music. [They’re] just playing the pants off it. They’re doing really well.”

The title role is played by senior Kiley Lord in the nanny’s recognizable long, red coat. Lord, who has been dancing since she was 2 years old, said the role is something she’s been working toward all her life. She currently studies dance at Greater Hartford Dance Academy in Glastonbury.

“It’s really amazing to see everything sort of fall together and see my hard work pay off,” she said.

She credits the PHS theater program with adding singing to her performance repertoire. She first tested her vocal chops in the school production of *Anything Goes* during her freshman year.

“That’s what got me into singing,” Lord said. “I’ve done drama productions in elementary

school and stuff like that, but it wasn’t anything like this.”

The talented performer plans to study communications in college and hopes to earn a master’s degree in broadcast journalism. She hasn’t yet decided which college she will be attending.

The actors – there are 17 roles and an ensemble of 15 – credited the crew and the pit orchestra with making the show possible. The pit orchestra and the crew each boast 25 students.

Junior Roland Thivierge, who plays Robertson Ay, a servant in the Banks home, said the cast relies on the pit orchestra to keep the show flowing smoothly.

“The pit does an amazing job when we get off tempo; they stay with us and they just pick us up and make sure we can do the best show we can do,” Thivierge said.

All told, there are 80 members of the cast and crew. Many of those students describe the group as a family.

Included in that family are Portland Middle School students Clara Guilmette and Josh Aresco, who play Banks children Jane and Michael.

“She’s the young’un,” Thivierge said at a rehearsal Tuesday, pointing to Guilmette.

Thivierge had stepped in for an absent Aresco that day, spending much of the performance hunched over or on his knees in a comedic effort to compensate for his height.

“I throw a little comedy in there, just try to make everyone laugh,” Thivierge said.

Guilmette said she appreciates the opportunity to become part of the stage family. She described coming out to see high school productions in the past and being impressed by the

final product. But actually performing in a main role has shown her how exhausting – and fun – it is to bring a show to life.

“It’s been a lot more fun being in it than just watching it,” Guilmette said.

Senior David Tacey plays the narrator and Jack of all trades, Bert. He, too, described the relationship between the performers, musicians and crew as a “family bond.”

“Since this is one of the biggest musicals we’ve ever done, this is a great way to finish off the four years,” he said.

Tacey began as a member of the ensemble in *Anything Goes* as a freshman. Last year, he played the role of Will in *Oklahoma*.

“I kind of like being the fun character. It’s really good to work with different parts and kind of try to find yourself within the character,” he said.

Tucker, who had his directorial debut with *Anything Goes* in 2013, considers the production the most difficult one he’s ever attempted.

“The set is really complicated,” Tucker said. “Almost every scene there’s a set change, so that makes it really tricky. There’s a lot of coordination with the music and the actors on stage. The music itself is in ridiculously hard keys.”

But his students are up to the task.

“They all really care about what they’re doing and they’re all super talented,” he said. “They’re a lot of fun to work with.”

Showtimes for *Mary Poppins* are 7 p.m. tonight, March 18, and 1 and 7 p.m. tomorrow, March 19, in the PHS auditorium. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors, and \$6 for children. The cast will also hold a meet-and-greet tomorrow at 11:45 a.m., where they will help children create their own kites.

Bransfield Proposes \$32.76 Million Budget in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield has proposed a \$32.76 million budget for 2016-17 that promotes public safety and economic security by adding another police officer to the department and increasing capital improvement funding by 155 percent over the current year.

The combined general government and Board of Education budget proposal represents a 2.00 percent increase – or \$641,113 – over current year spending.

The general government budget proposal comes in at \$12.75 million. That's 2.65 percent – or \$329,365 – over the current budget. The Board of Education proposed budget is \$20.01 million, an increase of 1.58 percent increase or \$311,748.

If the budget is approved, the mill rate of 32.34 would rise by 0.41 mills to a total mill rate of 32.75 mills.

A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the proposed mill rate, taxes paid on a home assessed at \$200,000 for the 2016-17 fiscal year would be \$6,550. That's an increase of \$82 over the current year.

The proposed budget would bring the Portland Police Department to 12 officers in January.

The spending proposal also includes a new,

entry-level position for the Highway Department. The spending plan does not, however, allocate funding to replace retiring Supervisor of Public Works Operations Donald Powers.

Bransfield said the highway position has the potential to be filled in January.

"We're saving a little bit of money by having an entry-level highway position that will be doing more of the day to day operations," she said in an interview with reporters.

Bransfield pointed to the 155 percent increase in capital funding as a hallmark of the spending plan. The proposal calls for the transfer of \$412,850 from the general fund to the capital improvement plan. The extra \$250,850 over the current year's total is possible because the town has paid off a five-year capital lease, Bransfield said, "so the dollars we were paying for that lease, we have placed into investing in some capital for the town."

Capital improvements include \$10,000 for upgrades to the developing Air Line Trail, \$40,000 for the town-wide revaluation, \$43,000 for senior center roof improvements, and \$62,000 to replace restrooms at Brownstone Intermediate School.

The Board of Education adopted its budget

in January with some new positions and programs. Among the changes is an additional preschool classroom for 3- and 4-year-old students with and without disabilities, according to a letter of introduction written by Board of Education Chairwoman MaryAnne Rode.

"Like in many school districts, Portland is seeing an increase of students presenting with significant developmental concerns at preschool screenings who would benefit from a preschool experience," she wrote.

The proposed education budget also supports the district's emphasis on technology by eliminating the current technology assistant position and replacing it with two full-time positions: an Information Technology Specialist and a Tech Integration Specialist. The proposal adds two full-time, certified library media specialists so that there will be a librarian with teaching credentials in each of the three elementary schools. It also eliminates three non-certified library positions to avoid redundancy and alleviate the cost increase, two of those through attrition.

Chromebook laptop computers are included in the budget proposal for all incoming seventh-graders.

When the school board first approved the spending plan, O'Reilly said the new positions and program expenses were mitigated by several factors. They included a large number of retirements with replacements coming in at lower salaries, a shift to high-deductible health care plans, and an increase in the number of Open Choice seats.

The Open Choice program allows urban students to attend public schools in nearby suburban towns.

O'Reilly said adding Open Choice seats could change the state reimbursement rate from \$4,000 to \$8,000 per student.

According to the state Department of Education, the state pays \$8,000 per student when the number of Open Choice students is 4 percent or more of the total student population.

A public hearing on the town budget was held Tuesday. Bransfield, O'Reilly, and Rode presented the budgets to fewer than a dozen people in attendance. However, the public comment period at the end of the hearing yielded no input from residents.

Up next for the budget proposal is a workshop next Wednesday, March 23, at 7 p.m. at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

East Hampton Police News

2/26: Janice P. Light, 49, of 77 Trout Lake Dr., Westbrook, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to obey a traffic signal, East Hampton Police said.

2/27: After a brief investigation into a two-car motor vehicle accident that occurred on West High Street, in which one vehicle fled the scene, Jamie C. Smith, 45, of 56 Wopowog Rd., was issued a summons for evading responsibility and failure to grant right of way while making a left turn, police said.

2/29: After a brief investigation into a two-car minor motor vehicle accident, William Dickenson, 57, of 4 Wangonk Tr., was issued a summons for improper left turn and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

2/29: Sandor Devecis, 54, of 28 Main St., was arrested and charged with using a motor vehicle without permission and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said. Devecis also had an outstanding warrant for his arrest and was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police added.

3/1: Victoria Carr, 30, of 11 Seminole Tr., was issued a summons for misuse of plates, failure to carry a license and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

3/4: Jennifer Janca, 42, of 6A Starr Place,

was issued a summons for improper use of registration, insufficient insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

3/5: Robert Filippone, 69, of 71 Mill St., Glastonbury, was taken into custody for violating a protective order, said police, who added Filippone also had an active warrant for his arrest stemming from a separate incident in which he violated a protective order.

3/7: Michael Dipace, 21, of 43 Front St., Middletown, was taken into custody pursuant to two active warrants for his arrest, police said, and was charged with two separate counts of second-degree failure to appear.

3/9: Kelly E. Ezold, 30, of 65 Standish Rd., Colchester, turned herself in pursuant to an active warrant for her arrest and was charged with failure to respond to an infraction, police said.

3/10: David Misorski, 27, of 135 Clark Hill Rd., was issued a summons for illegal burning, police said.

3/11: Paul Albert White, 29, of 38 Old Marlborough Rd., was taken into custody pursuant to an outstanding warrant for his arrest and was charged with failure to register address, police said.

3/11: Almighty Supremeborn Allah, 43, of 208 Hamilton St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right,

Colchester Police News

3/8: Colchester Police said Dereck Rivera, 23, of 96 Hammond Court, was arrested and charged with threatening and disorderly conduct.

3/8: Colchester Police said Thomas Kirker, 51, of 10 Royal Oaks Dr., Norwich, was arrested and charged with failure to exhibit home improvement certificate. Police said Kirker did home repairs without a certificate.

3/8: State Police said Jessie Blesso, 37, of 83 Friendship St., Willimantic, was arrested and charged with two counts of failure to appear.

3/11: State Police said Joseph Lanford, 25, of 172 Foster Dr., Willimantic, was arrested and charged with violation of probation.

3/11: State Police said Alfred Masse, 21, of 249 Lake Williams Dr., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace.

3/13: State Police said Wilberto Gonzalez, 41, of 308 Windsor Ave., Windsor, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

Marlborough Police News

3/9: State Police said Trevor Pease, 45, of Williamsburg Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree assault, and interfering with an emergency call.

3/12: State Police said Maurice Girardin, 43, of 103 Hebron Rd., was arrested and charged with criminal mischief, disorderly conduct, and interfering with an officer.

Hebron Police News

State Police said Marcus LaGuardia, 19, of 25 Mai Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with narcotics kept only in original container, sale of restricted substances, drug paraphernalia, possession of less than half an ounce of cannabis, tampering with evidence, and interfering with an officer.

Four Injured After Route 2 Crash in Colchester

Four people – including a 4-year-old girl – were injured in a crash on Route 2 March 8, police said.

State police reported Sheri Speer, 46, of 151 Talman St., Norwich; Kathleen Shepherd, 63, Brian Shepherd, 27, and a 4-year old girl, all of 15 Willow Ln., Canterbury, were transported to Backus Hospital for minor injuries.

Speer had pulled over on the side of Route 2 eastbound near Route 11 in a BMW X6, police said. Kathleen Shepherd, driving a

Toyota Rav4, was also traveling eastbound, police said, when another vehicle swerved into her lane to avoid the BMW, and the Toyota collided with the BMW.

Police reported Brian Shepherd and the 4-year-old had also been in the Toyota with Kathleen Shepherd. All four people involved in the crash were transported for minor injuries. Kathleen Shepherd was issued an infraction for failure to drive a reasonable distance apart.

Police: Colchester Man Stole Generator

A Colchester man has been arrested in relation to a stolen generator on Caffyn Drive.

State police said Anthony Alos, 30, of 416 Lebanon Ave., Colchester, was arrested and charged March 10 with three counts of risk of injury to a child, conspiracy to commit third-degree burglary, fourth-degree larceny and disorderly conduct.

According to the affidavit, Alos was familiar with the Caffyn Drive neighborhood. On

Feb. 18, police said, Alos allegedly approached the home and spoke with three juveniles that were home alone. While two of the juveniles spoke with Alos, the other juvenile spotted a man in the backyard taking a generator from the shed, police said, and recorded it on his cell phone.

According to the affidavit, Alos did return the generator and as of Tuesday, no one else had been charged in the incident.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Florence Louise Stebbins

Florence Louise Stebbins, 88, of East Hampton, widow of the late James Stebbins, died Wednesday, March 9, at Avalon in Mystic. Born May 23, 1927, in East Hampton she was the daughter of the late William and Florence (Mills) Everett. Florence had retired from Jarvis Air Foil of Portland where she had been a secretary for more than 25 years.

She is survived by her four daughters, Elizabeth Turney, Perilla Wachter, Amelia Munro, and Karen Stebbins-De Pietro, all of East Hampton; two sisters, Myrtle Steinmiller of Amston, Laura Everett of East Hampton; 16 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

She was predeceased by a stepson, James Stebbins, and two brothers, Frederick and William Everett.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Thursday, March 17. A funeral service was held that morning, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial followed in the family plot in Lake View Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to East Hampton Ambulance Assoc., P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Godfrey L. Sandstrom

Godfrey L. "Sandy" Sandstrom, 87, of Meriden, died Monday, March 7, at Meriden Health Center.

Sandy was born March 1, 1929 in Portland, son of the late Godfrey C. and Ruth (Lawrence) Sandstrom. He was a veteran of World War II, serving with the U.S. Army and later the Korean War, serving with the U.S. Air Force.

Prior to his retirement, Sandy was a testing technician working for SNET. He was a member of SNET Pioneers and VFW. Sandy loved to watch UConn girls' basketball and Boston Red Sox baseball. He will be greatly missed by his many friends and family.

He is survived by his daughters, Cheryl (John) Zabiski of Portland, Elaine Smith (best friend and longtime care giver) of Meriden, Judy (Thomas Sr.) Flemke of East Hampton, Sandee McLemore of Ohio and stepdaughter Cheryl Marcoux of Florida; his grandchildren, Robert Shackett, Tammy Perry, Tina (Matthew) Lanzi, Thomas Flemke Jr., Melissa (Orlando) Poventud, Kimberly (Michael) Caccamo, John (Amanda) Zabiski III, Crystal Curry, John Curry, and Ryan Curry; great-grandchildren Patrick, Joshua, Kimberly, Katrina, Ashley, Talia, Madeline, Katelyn, Emma, Salem, Dale, Ethan, Natalie and Giovanni; and one great-grandchild, Logan.

He was predeceased by his sister, Nellie Bastura.

Funeral services are private and burial will be at the convenience of the family. There are no calling hours.

Special thanks to the staffs of Meriden Health Center and Franciscan Hospice Care. Those who wish may send memorial contributions in Sandy's name to the Franciscan Hospice Care, 267 Finch Ave., Meriden or the Sandy Peszynski Breast Cancer Foundation, 93 East High St., East Hampton.

Biega Funeral Home has care of the arrangements. To share memories or express condolences online, visit biegafuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Mary Chemerynski

Mary "Mae" Chemerynski, 94, much-loved matriarch of the Savitsky and Chemerynski families, passed away Tuesday, March 8, following a brief hospitalization.

Mae was always happiest when she "had something to do." As a youngster, she grew up on a dairy farm in Colchester, where feeding livestock and cutting hay were normal activities. During her adult years, she was employed as a seamstress. Even after long hours of work, she would come home to tend her beautiful flower gardens. On occasion, people driving by had to stop to let her know that her gardens always put a smile on their faces.

Mae was always willing to help her church, especially when they were getting together to make pierogi. Up to the present, she and the "girls" spent Wednesdays making sleeping bags for the homeless and enjoying each other's company. Her other favorite handicraft was crocheting. Most babies born into her extended family could count on receiving a cuddly handmade blanket, sweater or toy. It was with her large family and many friends that Mae spent her most joyous moments. Holidays, birthday parties and family reunions in the backyard afforded her a chance to catch up on the lives of the people she loved.

Mae Savitsky was born April 7, 1921, in New York City. Her family then settled in Colchester, where Mae graduated from Bacon Academy in 1939. She met and later married Howard Chemerynski on February 10, 1945. Together they built a house, which remained her home for the rest of her life. They raised two daughters who saw firsthand the benefits of hard work, an enjoyment of the outdoors, and the importance of love.

Mae is survived by her daughters, Diana Mae Matsuzaki and Patricia Fitzgerald and her husband, Edward. She leaves behind her granddaughter, Leigh Oropallo and her husband, Dan, as well as her grandson, E. Bryan Fitzgerald. Her beloved great-granddaughter, Vera-Mae, will dearly miss their playtimes together. Numerous nieces and nephews and their families will also miss her presence. Mae was the sturdy base of a strong family tree.

Mae will be reunited with her husband and favorite gardening partner, Howard and is predeceased by three siblings.

Friends visited with the family at the Belmont Funeral Home Monday, March 14, and joined for a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated at St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church in Colchester on Tuesday, March 15.

In lieu of flowers, people are encouraged to make donations to Hole in the Wall Gang Camp; 565 Ashford Center Rd., Ashford, CT 06278 (holeinthewallgang.org) or to the charity of their choice.

Colchester

Alice Trailor

Alice Trailor, 74, died peacefully at Backus Hospital Saturday, March 5, following an extended illness. She was born in New London Sept. 20, 1941, to the late Roy and Stella (Roscoe) Trailor.

Alice was a graduate of Bacon Academy and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Connecticut, where she also pursued advanced studies. Alice was well known in equestrian circles; not only did she perform in equestrian competitions she also was the owner of several winning race horses that raced in New England. She held various positions during her career and retired from AT&T.

Alice is survived by her brother Roland Trailor Sr., and several nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Saturday, March 12, at St. Andrew's Church in Colchester. Burial immediately followed at Old St. Andrew's Cemetery. There were no calling hours.

The Belmont Funeral Home was entrusted with arrangements.



Hebron

Marilyn L. Persson

Marilyn L. (Gray) Persson, 92, formerly of Hebron, Brockton, Mass., and East Bridgewater, Mass., died peacefully Wednesday, March 9, at St. Elizabeth Manor in Bristol, R.I. Marilyn was the wife of the late Roger E. Persson.

Born, raised and educated in Brockton, she was the daughter of the late Wilton L. and Katherine H. (Brady) Gray. She served in the Army's WAC division during World War II, and following her discharge, returned to Brockton, where she attended the Williams Business School. Employed as a secretary for many years, she worked for a Boston law firm, for Dr. Anthony DeFeo, and for the Brockton Hospital, retiring in 1989.

Marilyn was an avid golfer and a member of various golf courses. She was also a voracious reader who enjoyed crossword puzzles, poetry, music, theatre, art museums, all things Irish, the ocean, and Frank Sinatra. She was always interested in staying current on events, politics, and fashion. Most of all, she was devoted to her family and friends.

Marilyn was the mother of Janice Williams and her husband Donald of Little Compton, R.I., Jody Macrina and her husband Richard of Hebron, Kathleen Costello and her husband Michael of Mattapoisett, Mass., and the late Roger E. Persson Jr.; and grandmother of Jonathan Williams, Lauren and Leigh Costello, and Tiffany Macrina. She was the sister of Shirley Murphy, Ronald, Russell, and David Gray and the late Wilton, Norman, John "Jack", Wallace Gray and Lorraine Litchfield. She is also survived by a sister-in-law, Donna Persson, and many nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held in the Conley Funeral Home, 138 Belmont St. (Route 123) Brockton, Mass., Saturday, March 19, at 11 a.m., followed by a funeral service at noon. Burial will be at a later date in Melrose Cemetery in Brockton.

In lieu of flowers donations in Marilyn's name may be made to Friends of the Douglas Library, 22 Main St., Hebron, CT 06248 or the American Women Veterans Foundation, P.O. Box 1776, Sun Valley, ID 83353.

For condolences and directions, visit conleyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Kenneth W. Richter

Kenneth W. Richter, 71, of Middletown, husband of Rita (Siena) Richter passed away Sunday, March 13, at home, after a long illness. He was the son of the late Warren and Evelyn (Reynolds) Richter.

Born Sept. 4, 1944, in Lawrence, Mass., he grew up in Portland and lived in Middletown for most of his life. He formerly worked at the *Middletown Press* for 30 years and retired as a printer from Covidian. During the Vietnam War, he served in the U.S. Army as a map specialist. He enjoyed building and competing in aerobatic model airplane competitions and was a member of the American Model Association. Boating was a major part of his life, having competed in hydroplane competitions throughout the Northeast.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Greg Richter and his wife, Marilyn of Berlin; a sister, Karen Faass and her husband, Karl of Middletown; grandchildren Christian and David and numerous brother and sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews.

His family would like to send a special "thank-you" to Angela who helped care for Ken; Natalie, his former nurse; and all the hospice staff.

Services will be held Saturday, March 19, at 10 a.m., at The First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. There are no calling hours.

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

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

Colchester

Robert William Balaban

Robert William Balaban, 75, born June 29, 1940, to the late Jack and Bertha Balaban, passed away after an extended illness Sunday, March 13, surrounded by his loved ones.

Bob was a lifelong resident of Colchester. He graduated from Windham Technical High School in 1958 and shortly thereafter started up his first business, Balaban's TV and Radio. In 1961, Bob had the good fortune of delivering a television to Israel and Olga Gendler. It was during this delivery where he met their daughter, Maria, who, shortly thereafter became the love of his life. The story goes that Maria immediately knew she had met her destiny, and purposely pulled a wire on the new television to ensure Bob's return. The rest is history. The two married March 4, 1962, and have been blessed and fortunate to have celebrated 54 years of love, devotion and happiness.

He is survived by his beloved Maria, "Marineough," as he lovingly referred to her, their two children, Mark Alan Balaban and his wife, Elisa, and Jodi (Balaban) Mendlinger and her husband, Peter; six grandchildren, Elizabeth Chon of New York, Israel Jake Balaban, Michael Logan Balaban, Olivia Blake Mendlinger, Jordan Ilan Balaban and Nash Eron Mendlinger; sister, Ruth Berezin of California; special sister and brother-in-law, Marcia and Albert Daversa, and several nieces and nephews, all of whom he loved and adored.

He was predeceased by his sister, Ida Balaban, and his brother, Julius Balaban.

Bob's career was filled with tremendous fulfillment and accomplishments as well. He was a visionary with incredible foresight and creativity. From Balaban's TV and Radio he moved on to his next business venture, where he was joined by the late Donald W. Standish, and together they formed Balaban and Standish. After expanding to Old Saybrook, Deep River and Middletown, in 1967 they acquired Linderme and Zurcher, and in 1971 they went on to acquire Hallock's Furniture and Appliance Store.

In the mid-'80s, Bob started his second career in real estate development and later moved into the building and construction aspect of the real estate business. While Bob had no formal training in construction, he possessed an innate sense of how buildings should be; he had the golden touch. It was his pride and joy to eventually build his son and daughter's dream homes, where they still reside with their families.

Among these accomplishments, he also served as a member of the board of directors and, ultimately, president, of Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Colchester, as well as serving as the president of The Colchester Rotary Club.

Bob had a heart of gold with a philanthropic nature, he was generous to a fault and fiercely loved and cherished by his family. He was an exemplary role model for his family, friends and employees. Even more telling than this was the kind and respectful manner in which Bob treated his friends, employees, co-workers, tenants and associates. Bob treated people as though they were members of his family and his passing leaves a void which can never be filled. He will be sorely missed by everyone who had the honor of knowing him.

The family would also like to thank Lynda Verrill and Sandy Gallucci, who provided outstanding, compassionate and dedicated care when Bob was at home, as well as the other home health care providers and the kind and wonderful caregivers at Middlesex Hospice, who helped make Bob's final days peaceful.

May his memory be a source of strength and courage and a blessing for all those who knew and loved him.

A funeral was held Monday, March 14, at 3 p.m., at Chabad Jewish Center of Glastonbury, 25 Harris St., with Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky officiating. Following interment, the family received friends at Peter and Jodi Mendlinger's home, 80 School Rd., Colchester, and thereafter for seven days from 2-8 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to MGH Stroke Research Center/CAA Stroke Development Office c/o Shawn Fitzgibbons, 100 Cambridge St., Ste. 1310, Boston, MA 02114. Please make your checks payable to Mass General Hospital with the memo: 1200-028184, or visit the "Support" section at angiopathy.org. Donations can also be made to the Middlesex Hospice and Palliative Care, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457.

The arrangements have been entrusted to Weinstein Mortuary, Hartford.

Marlborough

John Gilbert Brinkman Jr.

John Gilbert Brinkman Jr., "Jack," 74, of Marlborough, passed away suddenly but peacefully at home Sunday evening, March 13, with his loving wife, Cindy, while watching his beloved UConn Huskies. Born Nov. 5, 1941 in Norwich, he was the son of the late John Gilbert and Adelaide (Klingman) Brinkman.



After serving with the Army National Guard, Jack graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a degree in food economics, which he used in the field as a sales representative from 1972 until the present. He was currently a regional sales manager for Major Food Products, Inc. of New Jersey.

He attended many sporting events and used his passion for sports to coach girls' basketball and softball for many years. He also loved planting around his home, entertaining friends and family, and dining out. His greatest joy, however, was found in his family, especially his grandchildren.

He leaves to mourn his passing his loving wife of 48 years, Cynthia (Dreasen) Brinkman; two daughters and their spouses, Rebecca and Kristian Ramsey of Calverton, N.Y., and Catharine and Eric Rifino of Huntington Station, N.Y.; three grandchildren, Elliott, Madeleine and Benjamin Ramsey. He will also be missed by his three siblings; Michael Brinkman of Arlington, Va., Ann Getty of Venice, Fla., and Paul Brinkman of Sarasota, Fla. Jack considered his family to include his many friends, with whom he kept in close contact.

The family received guests Wednesday, March 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Funeral services were observed Thursday, March 17, at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 30 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron. He was laid to rest in Maplewood Cemetery, Norwich.

Those who wish to make donations in his memory can do so by sending them to St Peter's Episcopal Church, 30 Church St., Hebron, CT 06248.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Thomas Bugaj

Thomas Edward Bugaj, 67, of Portland, passed away Sunday, Feb. 28, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Middletown, he was the youngest son of the late Joseph and Stella (Binkowski) Bugaj.

Thomas enjoyed his work as a test systems engineer at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in Middletown prior to his passing. Tom was a loving husband and devoted father, often putting his family's needs before his own. He was an avid NASCAR and Boston Red Sox fan, a Golden Retriever lover, and enjoyed working on computers and his cars in his free time.

Thomas is survived by his wife and best friend of 42 years, Nancy (Lashette) Bugaj; his sons, Ryan T. Bugaj of Portland and Dean A. Bugaj of Old Orchard Beach, Maine; daughter-in-law Brittany, and two beautiful granddaughters, Bryleigh and Everly. He is also survived by his brother Michael and sister-in-law Evelyn, both of Enfield; along with several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, March 19, at 11 a.m., at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Burial will be held at Calvary Cemetery. Friends may call this evening, March 18, from 5-7 p.m., at Biega Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, those who wish may send memorial contributions to the Henry Low Heart Center at Hartford Hospital. Donations may be sent to giving.harthosp.org/donate.

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

East Hampton

Joseph Victor Poulin

Joseph Victor Poulin, 84, of Summerfield, Fla., formerly of Holly Drive, East Hampton, passed away Friday, Feb. 19, after a brief illness. He was the husband of Roberta Poulin, who passed on March 9, 2013.



Born in Skowhegan, Maine, Vic was the son of the late Joseph and Alida (Lessard) Poulin. He was the sixth oldest of nine children and the middle son of five in the family. His first language was French, but quickly learned English in grade school. He joined the Air Force during the Korean War and was stationed at SHAPE in Paris, France as a translator.

After returning to the U.S., Vic graduated from St. Francis College in Biddeford, Maine, with a degree in education, and married Roberta in 1961. He taught French, English and Latin in high schools in Limestone, Maine and later East Hampton, where they chose to raise their family. A lifelong Red Sox fan, he was the EHHS boys' varsity baseball coach for many years, earning nearly 200 wins and reaching the state semifinals twice.

Retiring to Florida in 1994, Vic became an avid golfer, scoring a hole-in-one on Hole 2 at Spruce Creek South in 2003. His love of golf and his joie de vivre allowed him to accumulate many friends over the years. He will be missed by all his family and friends.

Survivors include daughter, Suzanne E. Poulin of West Orange, N.J.; son, Stephen V. Poulin of Milford; son, James M. and Meaghan M. Poulin of Cary, N.C., and his five beloved grandchildren; sister, Solange Turcotte, and sister, Martha and David Kammer, of Edgewater, Fla.; sister, Bernadette and Herbert Karter of Oakland, Maine; brother-in-law, Walter Vivarelli of Skowhegan, Maine; sister-in-law Charlene Poulin of Kennebunk, Maine; and dozens of nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association.

Arrangements are by Hiers-Baxley Funeral Services, The Villages, Fla.

Portland

Carl A. Chudzik

Carl A. Chudzik, 63, of Rocky Hill, died peacefully in his Portland home Monday, March 14. He was born in Hartford, the oldest son of the late Carl and Bertha (Michaud) Chudzik.



He was educated in the Rocky Hill school system and graduated from St. Francis College in Biddeford, Maine, in 1975, with a bachelor's degree in marine biology.

He leaves behind beloved wife, Joann (Aberle) Chudzik, and daughter, Addie Chudzik. He also leaves behind a brother, John Chudzik; sister, Jody Chudzik; brother-in-law, Robert Aberle; and sister-in-law, Cynthia Traskos.

Carl was a very successful real estate broker in Rocky Hill and entrepreneur his whole life. Carl was a member of the Portland Board of Selectmen for several years. Carl loved fishing, boating, hunting and other outdoor activities, and loved spending time with family and friends doing so.

Funeral services were Thursday, March 17, directly in the Giuliano-Sagarino Funeral Home at Brooklawn, 511 Brook St., Rocky Hill. Interment followed in Rose Hill Cemetery. Family and friends called at the funeral home Wednesday, March 16.

For an online guestbook, visit brooklawfuneralhome.com.