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Maple syrup wasn't the only thing attendees could learn about during the 26th annual Hebron Maple Festival last weekend. Sunday afternoon, the Hebron Fire Department presented an extrication demonstration, after which they set the donated car on fire. Fire Chief Dan Huppe used the experience to discuss the process of rescuing a passenger from an overturned car, as well as the speed in which a car can go up in flames; he also stressed the importance of providing his firefighters with the appropriate gear to keep them safe and allow them to do their job to the best of their abilities.

Hebron Maple Fest 'Better Than Expected'

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Although a change in organizers meant there was some uncertainty as to how the 26th annual Hebron Maple Festival would go this year, after all was said and done, those involved had nothing but positive things to say about the maple-filled event.

"Things went better than expected," Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney said this week. "It was a reworked program, and I thought it went very well."

This year, the event was jointly hosted by the Windham Chamber of Commerce and Windham Arts. Under the new organizers, the festival took place at two designated locations: the town center and RHAM High School, with parking at the latter and shuttle buses available to take attendees from one place to the other.

"The buses were utilized, and I think next year we're going to have more vendors, but for the first year of reorganization I was very happy with the outcome and the number of people that attended," Tierney continued. "The tractor parade was well-received and a lot of the people we talked to were having fun."

Windham Arts Event Coordinator Sheri Putnam shared similar sentiments.

"I think everything was so amazing" she said, explaining she received plenty of positive feedback, especially due to the added activities.

"It was so much fun – there was a lot of fun to be had," Putnam said. "We had a lot of positive feedback from everyone that came and the majority of people we spoke with had nothing but positive remarks about the new way we're doing it. In the past it was marvelous, it was wonderful, but it was mostly food, so they loved the way that it was with more activities."

At the high school Sunday, attendees could be found mulling around the health, wellness and business expo, and the art and craft fair that took place in the cafeteria featuring items such as refinished antique chairs, soy candles in empty liquor bottles, paintings, pop-up cards, quilts, woodworking and more.

Meanwhile, the scent of maple filled the hallway from the maple cotton candy booth; guests were also able to enjoy maple-themed fare such as homemade maple cookies, grilled cheese with maple bacon, and maple and bacon cupcakes.

Other events were taking place there as well, including the opportunity to learn about greyhounds and greyhound adoption, listen to native life and storytelling, and enjoy a kids' obstacle course and spring crafts before hopping on the shuttle bus and heading to the center of town.

The hustle and bustle continued there; volunteers dressed in cow costumes called out to festival-goers to try some maple milk, as the smell of fried dough, hot dogs and hamburgers wafted through the air, sold as a fundraiser by members of the American Legion.

Over at Something Simple Café there was an entire maple menu to be found including maple cream puffs and cannolis, maple lattes and sandwiches like the Melted Maple, consisting of bacon or maple ham, egg, cheddar cheese, arugula and a house-made maple walnut cream cheese.

And as patrons enjoyed their food, they got to listen to the music of area singer Gina Martinez, who performed covers of a variety of songs.

See Maple Festival Page 2

Belltown Residents Question \$600K School Cut

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton residents and even some town officials Monday questioned the intent of a Town Council policy document that led Town Manager Michael Maniscalco to slash the proposed \$29.34 million Board of Education budget by more than half a million dollars.

The council's Budget Policy Statement – which is required by town charter as a way to provide guidance to the school and finance boards about the council's priorities for the coming year – said the Board of Education "should maintain current spending levels." It did not contain the same provision for the general government budget.

So Maniscalco flatlined the school board's proposed 2016-17 budget – ignoring the Board of Education's prior adoption of a 1.9 percent increase over the current year – while at the same time recommending a 3.83 percent increase to the \$10.36 million general government budget.

Monday's regular meeting of the finance board was held in the middle school library, in front of an audience of approximately 75

people, ranging from elementary school students to senior citizens. Residents spoke for more than an hour against the prospect of a level-funded education budget.

The comments were informed by a list of cuts circulated that day by Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith outlining what the budget would look like if there is no funding increase over the current year.

The list specifies the reduction of at least four teaching positions, not including two and a half positions already cut in the school board's adopted budget: two at Memorial School, one at Center School and one at the high school. A flat budget would also eliminate all middle school sports, as well as high school volleyball and golf. Cuts affecting technology at the district level and in the classrooms would amount to \$74,000.

When deliberations began following the public comments, Republican Board of Finance member Marc Lambert acknowledged a tight budget situation caused in large part by the \$51 million high school renovation project coming

due, but said the tax burden from the necessary infrastructure improvements doesn't negate the need to pay for rising operational expenses in the school system.

Those costs include the teachers' contract approved by the Town Council late last year which school board Vice Chairman Chris Goff has said comprises 1.72 percent of the board's proposed 1.9 percent increase.

"Until such time as somebody can present a logical argument to me as to why the two sides of our budget are being treated differently, I can't support treating them differently," Lambert said.

Democrat finance board member Dean Markham wondered aloud if Maniscalco's cut to the school budget was "some kind of retaliation and retribution for the squabble, if you will, between the Board of Education and the council."

"It would be very poor for our students and our educational system if that were the case," Markham said.

The school board sued the Town Council in

December to get a judge to resolve differing interpretations of town charter and state statute by deciding which entity has the authority to fill vacancies on the Board of Education. In an effort to put a halt to the legal wrangling, the Town Council on Tuesday approved a motion authorizing the town attorney to stipulate to the court that the council "will take no action to fill any future vacancy on the Board of Education until such time as a referendum has taken place" regarding a revision to the section of the charter pertaining to appointments.

Maniscalco's total \$43.1 million recommended budget, including \$2.71 million in debt and \$1.25 in capital expenses, 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, though the recently completed town-wide revaluation has changed the assessed value of

See School Cut Page 2



There was the usual spate of activities in the town center during last weekend's Maple Fest. At left, local volunteers stand beside the Old Town Hall and encourage passersby to try a festival staple: fresh maple milk, served hot or cold. But festivalgoers also flocked to the sugar houses. At right, Ron Wenzel of Wenzel's Sugar House talks with visitors about the process of making maple syrup.

Maple Festival cont. from Front Page

Elsewhere at the center there was a quilt show and teacup auction put on by the Historical Society, more kids' activities, a caricature booth and, at Hebron Elementary School, a BMX bike stunt show sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association.

Crista Goodwin-Babka, PTA president, said this week the PTA events (which included others at Gilead Hill School) "went great. We had great attendance at them; everyone was happy and smiling and we look forward to bringing back some family friendly events next year as well."

Over at the fire station, an extrication demonstration took place Sunday that culminated with a car fire.

Fire Chief Dan Huppe talked about the materials that make up a car's interior – and how quickly a vehicle can become engulfed in flames – and those watching got to experience that speed firsthand as firefighters used flares

to set the donated car on fire and, within a matter of minutes, the entire vehicle was enflamed.

"This is why we put our guys in \$1,500 worth of equipment," Huppe shared as the crowd – who could feel the heat from the blaze more than 20 feet away – watched firefighters get the flames under control.

And fire education wasn't the only learning experience to be found at the festival. As always, a main aspect of the event was the opportunity to check out area sugar houses and learn about the process of making pure Connecticut maple syrup. In Hebron, guests could stop in at Wenzel's Sugar House and Woody Acres Sugar House; both have been part of the festival since its onset.

On Sunday afternoon, Woody Acres owner Russ Schaller said the event had been going "pretty good."

"There were some slow times on Saturday but a good amount of people came by. I was

worried [the festival] would go down" with the change in organizers "and that'd be it, but I'm glad it's going well."

His wife Denise was nearby selling containers of maple syrup and her sugar-glazed walnuts, which Russ called a "hot commodity."

"One person bought 12 packages," Denise shared, adding "another bought two this year because she said she bought one last year and her husband fought her for them."

Adding to the appeal, Denise said she only makes the sugary treats once a year. "Once they're gone, they're gone," she smiled.

Meanwhile, over at Wenzel's Sugar House, visitors lined up to purchase syrup and plates of maple cake topped with vanilla ice cream before venturing over to visit the farmer's cow and heading down to the sugar house where Ron Wenzel could be found, ready to answer any questions and discuss all things maple.

"This was a phenomenal year" Ron told one visitor, explaining he started collecting sap on Feb. 22 this year and finished on March 8 or 9, whereas last year the process didn't begin until then.

"What's the difference between Connecticut and Vermont maple syrup?" another guest asked.

"Well, ours is better!" Wenzel laughed.

With the first festival under their belt – and deemed a success – Putnam concluded this week, "We're absolutely thrilled with the success that we had" and said the WCC and WA was "absolutely" planning for the 27th event.

"The majority of vendors that participated this year asked if they could be included on the list for next year, they had such a great experience," Putnam said. "We are definitely in for next year."

School Cut cont. from Front Page

homes since last year.

School board member Tania Sones spoke at the finance board meeting to say the difference between a 1.9 percent increase to the school budget and zero percent increase would be \$8.34 per month for a taxpayer with a home assessed at \$200,000.

She shared numbers from the town finance department that showed the school board's proposed 1.9 percent increase, combined with the recommended general government budget, would cost the average taxpayer \$36.67 per month. That's compared to \$28.33 per month if the school budget remains flat.

Mark Laraia, a former member – and chairman – of the Board of Education, reiterated statements by several residents who said failing to support education in town will result in an exodus to magnet schools.

"If they chose to go to a magnet school, who do you think will pay for the education? The town of East Hampton will. Young, inspired teachers will elect not to apply to East Hampton Public Schools due to the impression that the town does not support education. Who will pay for that? The children of East Hampton," Laraia said.

Laraia joined others in asking the finance board to send the budget to the town council as proposed by the Board of Education – and to urge the council to keep it that way.

"If the voters reject the budget, then cuts should be made. Let us, the taxpayers, decide the path for East Hampton," Laraia said.

A cross-section of students, parents and those with no children in the school system also emphasized children are already falling behind area schools in the area of technology. The lack of access to devices like laptops throughout the school system and a dearth of elective options in the upper grades make it difficult for graduates to compete with other college applicants, and impact their studies once they get to college, according to several residents.

Finance board members Alan Hurst, a Democrat, and Steve Ritchie, a Republican, joined Lambert and Markham in saying they were not in favor of a flat education budget. Alannah Coshov, who was appointed by the Town Council in November, and finance board chairwoman Allison Tokarz said they have not made their decisions yet.

Tokarz told her fellow board members and the audience that she would like a chance to review the list of cuts sent out by Smith earlier that day to the school community, which she said the finance board did not receive.

She also referenced multiple budget referendums last year and the resulting election shake-up in November that created a new Republican majority on the Town Council and finance board.

"As a Republican, I ran on being fiscally responsible, so I truly take that to heart," she said. "I don't think we can get away with a zero percent increase because we did increase salaries, but I do think we need to be slim across the board because the voters voted in the fall saying 'we want to lower taxes.'"

Maniscalco has consistently cited the Town Council Budget Policy Statement, with its insistence on maintaining the current level of education spending, as the rationale behind zeroing out the school budget proposal. But Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said Monday after the finance board meeting that the budget policy statement is not something that typically carries much weight.

"Usually the budget policy statement, quite honestly, has been ignored," she said. "It has always been ignored. It's never been one that people paid much attention to, much less the finance department or the Board of Education."

Maniscalco on Wednesday said town staff has been guided by the budget policy statement for at least as long as he's been there, which accounts for three full budget seasons.

"It's not been ignored," he said. "It's always been done."

The council's policy statement includes a directive to the entire town – not just the Board of Education – requiring that "every effort

should be made to maintain or where possible reduce staff."

Anderson, when asked about Lambert's concerns about the two sides of the budget being treated differently, pointed to the staffing edict to show that the council expects careful spending in town operations as well.

"I don't know that they're being treated differently [by the council]. The town manager cut the Board of Education to zero," she said. "I don't know how saying 'keep spending levels flat and don't hire any new staff,' how that differs."

Maniscalco on Wednesday stood by his adherence to the council's policy statement. He said policy alone guided his recommendation, and that he was not told specifically by any member of the Town Council to cut the school board budget to zero.

"The Town Council put a budget policy statement together like they've done every other year," he said. "It was voted on by seven members of the Town Council unanimously and it said that spending should be maintained, and that's what the budget I put together and proposed does."

A Board of Finance public hearing on the budget will be held at the library at East Hampton Middle School, 19 Childs Rd., Monday, March 28, at 6:30 p.m.

CNG Proposal Presented to RHAM School Board

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The RHAM Board of Education Monday saw a presentation by Connecticut Natural Gas on a proposed expansion that would bring natural gas to the center of Hebron.

The expansion would include installing six miles of gas main from East Street through to the town center, and the conversion of all town buildings along the route as well as Hebron Elementary School and RHAM middle and high schools.

The \$4.19 million proposal needs RHAM in order to move forward; the project isn't profitable enough for CNG without the two schools.

Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski had told Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney previously that the only way the school district was likely to approve of the proposal would be if it were budget neutral. And on Monday, that's precisely what was presented.

Of the total price tag, \$1.26 million will be contributed from CNG, and another \$1.7 million is expected through a contribution in aid of construction (CIAC) from CNG customers. Hebron would be responsible for the remaining \$442,000.

Along with the above, which includes the installation of the gas mains and meters, there

is an additional cost for the conversion of equipment and meter hook-up. Siminski provided a rough estimate of what those costs would be for RHAM, explaining four burners would need to be replaced, and two water heaters and two kitchens would need to be converted. In addition, there's an oil tank to remove, a new hot water heater to purchase and costs for engineering, demolition and gas piping.

Siminski supplied the board with what he called a "very preliminary" cost estimate for the above work, at \$262,200. And that money, Tierney said, would be paid for with the savings the district realizes from the conversion, which is expected to be around \$100,000 annually.

Tierney explained to ensure the project had zero impact on the RHAM budget, all conversion costs would be included in the 10-year low interest loan the town was going to acquire to pay for the project if it moves forward; the district would then pay the town from the savings realized each year until the debt is gone. And, afterwards, all future savings would be realized by the district.

Tierney said, "I can't say enough" about the proposal.

"This isn't Hebron benefitting off the backs of Marlborough and Andover" he added, reiterating the benefits for the district including the fuel savings and the opportunity to replace a significant amount of equipment at no cost to the district.

Representatives from CNG stressed they were hoping to move forward with the proposal rather rapidly to take advantage of the money they had available this year to contribute. With that in mind, the proposal will come back before the board at a special Board of Education meeting scheduled for Monday, March 28, following a public hearing on the proposed RHAM schools budget.

* * *

That public hearing on the proposed 2016-17 budget is scheduled for 7 p.m. in the RHAM High School auditorium. The budget proposal clocks in at \$27.85 million, a .28 percent increase over current year spending. This is significantly less than the budget originally proposed by Siminski; that spending package amounted to \$28.22 million, for an increase of 1.63 percent.

Siminski explained the reduction was due

to a lower-than-expected insurance rate. Formulating the budget gets underway before insurance costs for the upcoming year are known, he said, so a placeholder was determined by adding three percent to the amount budgeted for insurance for the 2015-16 school year. That brought the anticipated amount to \$2,813,902 – a number that has since dropped to \$2,126,802.

Siminski added the budget "continues to be a moving target" because the state budget hasn't been approved, and won't be until after the RHAM budget is finalized.

In addition, work is still being done to hammer out the capital budget for the upcoming year; \$462,000 has been budgeted as a placeholder, but the specific projects to be covered in that amount have yet to be decided.

On Wednesday Siminski said he was putting together a list of recommendations, explaining "I'm going to propose to the board anything that has to do with health, safety, and the overall condition of the building."

Those recommendations will also be shared at the public hearing, following Siminski's budget presentation.

East Hampton Council Scraps Bevin Boulevard House Buy

by Elizabeth Regan

The Town Council no longer plans to demolish the Village Center's oldest existing home and put up a parking lot.

Opposition from historically-minded individuals – including a petition signed by 341 people – led the council to reverse course on the purchase of 2 Bevin Blvd., which would have provided additional parking across the street from a proposed renovation to turn Center School into a municipal hub.

"The house is a survivor," East Hampton resident Mike Doran said Tuesday at the beginning of the Town Council's bi-weekly meeting. Citing a survey that found the property goes back to 1760, Doran marveled at its history: "It dates before the Revolutionary War. I mean, they were paying the king taxes."

The Apollas Arnold house is a Cape Cod-style structure on a granite ashlar foundation. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 as part of the Belltown Historic District. The district is representative of a small, New England mill town and is recognized as the only one of its kind completely devoted to bell making.

Most homes that old are gone now, according to Doran, and they can't be brought back. "This one's here. It should stay here," he said.

More than a dozen people expressed support for preserving the home at the meeting. Several of them refuted a legal opinion recently issued to the town by Kenneth R. Slater of Halloran & Sage, which stated "it does not appear" the property is located within the historic district and, even if it is, its status as part of the National Register of Historic Places "has no legal significance unless federal money is involved in the property."

Margaret Faber, a Middle Haddam resident and member of the state Historic Preservation Council, said the original application which secured the Belltown Historic District's official status with the National Register includes a map that clearly illustrates the property's pres-

ence within the district. Only the address is different; according to the town assessor's office, the initial application incorrectly listed the home as being at 11 Summit St., not 2 Bevin Blvd.

Faber cited an email from Jenny Scofield, the National Register and State Register coordinator with the State Historic Preservation Office, who wrote "a change in address does not result in the de-listing from the National Register of Historic Places."

Faber also told councilors that "contributing resources" to the National Register, including the Apollas Arnold House, are protected from "unreasonable destruction" by the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act.

"If a case is filed and the [state] attorney general determines that there are feasible and prudent alternatives to the demolition he can issue an injunction to prevent it," Faber said. She called the process lengthy and expensive and asked the council to avoid a protracted battle by either formally committing to the restoration of the home or declining to purchase the property.

The council went with the latter, unanimously supporting councilwoman Melissa Engel's motion not to purchase the property as planned. Councilman Ted Hintz Jr. was not present.

Chairwoman Patience Anderson said the town is not in a position to get into the restoration business and would rather leave it to members of the Chatham Historical Society and other preservationists who have already shown support for the Arnold House.

"I'm not entirely sure, and I was never completely convinced, that that piece of property was so critical to the project at Center School. So I am very pleased to be able to not purchase it and hopefully allow the house to be restored by the professionals, the historians. You certainly have a groundswell of support, so I wish

you luck," she told the audience.

Voters at a December town meeting originally approved the \$56,000 purchase, including legal fees, based on statements by town officials – including Anderson – that it is always advantageous to purchase parcels "contiguous" to existing town properties, that the property could help alleviate parking constraints in the Village Center, and that the purchase was "integral" to an unspecified plan for Center School.

There wasn't any other solid information available because the municipal hub idea had only been discussed by Town Council behind closed doors. The state's Freedom of Information law allows real estate negotiations to be conducted in executive session and exempts related documents from disclosure to the public until the property has been acquired.

The same legal opinion from town counsel that was vehemently refuted by several people at Tuesday's meeting also stated the town had been prepared to initiate eminent domain proceedings to obtain the property.

"By way of background, we were ready to file papers to acquire the property by eminent domain when finally, after numerous attempts, a representative of the investors who acquired the property by foreclosure, contacted me and confirmed that they would sell the property to the Town," Slater wrote in the opinion, dated March 17.

Chatham Party member Mary Ann Dostaler spoke during a second public comment period at the end of the meeting to say the plan to purchase the property was ill-advised from the beginning and that it lacked transparency. She asked if it is the practice of the council to prepare to move forward with eminent domain without disclosing it to the public.

Councilwoman Melissa Engel explained that using eminent domain had been discussed by Town Council, but that a majority of the members did not want to do that.

"So it wasn't pursued," Engel said.

Engel also acknowledged the property purchase should not have been taken up behind closed doors for so long. She said the idea came up last year under the previous council and that "it was not the decision of the majority of the people sitting on this council that that house should be kept in executive session as long as it was."

"The only thing that should've been kept in executive session was how much we were going to pay for it," she said.

Anderson, for her part, told Dostaler it's time to move on. "I don't think that we need to continue to belabor on how we got here and criticize; I think that what we need to do is work together as a community," Anderson said.

According to Faber, that means it's time to find a preservation-minded buyer for the property. She said the Chatham Historical Society, which already has a museum abutting the Apollas Arnold House, is ideally situated to take on the project.

She cited the availability of grant funding opportunities for the purchase, structural report and eventual restoration of the Apollas Arnold House, adding that it would also require the donation of time and talent from many volunteers.

"But I know that the Chatham Historical Society has a strong work ethic and spirit, and qualified volunteers would hopefully step forward to help in this regard," she said.

Town Council member Kevin Reich, upon voting not to purchase the property for the town, reiterated the need for a concerted community effort to preserve the historical artifact people had rallied behind so passionately.

"If in fact that property is as valuable as we all believe it is, it's going to take the effort of all the people sitting here tonight to make that a reality," he told those in attendance. "This is frankly just the beginning."

Providing Food Security with Local Produce in Hebron

by Geeta S. Sandberg

When Hebron resident Ben Sarnoski was in college, he took an elective on global food infrastructure. It was a decision that resulted in much more than a few credits to put towards his illustration degree; it led Sarnoski to take a number of steps to combat what he considered a flawed system.

“I think that transcontinental shipping is an unsustainable system for distributing food,” Sarnoski, 28, shared last week. “Right now, in our region of the world, if for some reason shipping supply lines were to end – if companies decided to no longer do it for whatever reason or say there was a massive fuel shortage – then grocery stores would have a really hard time staying stocked for more than a few days and that would be a pretty serious epidemic.”

He added, “I think right now in our civilization we have a dangerously high level of food insecurity; we’re putting a lot of eggs in too few baskets in the sense that we’re relying on shipping from all across the country and international shipping.”

And so, in response, after graduating college Sarnoski participated in a year-long farm apprenticeship at a farm in Salem, after which he worked there full-time for another year.

He then began growing produce on his 2.5-acre property in Hebron and, two years ago, started sharing the fruits (and veggies) of his labor through the creation of his community supported agriculture (CSA) service, Ben’s Harvest.

A CSA is a way for individuals to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer. Those

interested become “shareholders” who pay for a “crop share,” which entitles them to a regular supply of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables delivered to their door.

Sarnoski offers a regular share for \$400, which equates to 10 shares delivered bi-weekly; a large share for \$750 delivered weekly for 20 shares; and the option to sign-up for a single crop share for \$40.

During his first season, Sarnoski said he delivered to 7-8 different people; three on a weekly basis, others bi-weekly and some “here and there.”

Marlborough resident Christine Labas was one such shareholder last year who said she was looking forward to participating again this season.

She shared, “I really enjoyed the variety of vegetables that Ben grows: some familiar, like kale and zucchini, and some more interesting and novel, like little Hakurei turnips. Not only did I enjoy the vegetables, but I had enough to share with my neighbor.”

Sarnoski said he already has six shareholders signed on for this season and he’d like to acquire three more. And, in the years to come, he added he’d like to increase that number to be more in line with the farmers of yesterday.

“I read a statistic that in 1930 the average farmer produced enough food to feed 30 people,” he said. “Of course, there were more farmers then but if I could be as good as the farmers were 80 years ago and feed like 30 people consistently, I feel like that would be a good start.”

The first share is expected to be delivered June 17 this year, and Sarnoski said it will include produce such as lettuce, spinach, green onions, peas, carrots and beets. As the season continues, shares will include harvests of tomatoes, squash, zucchini, cucumber, cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant, corn, potatoes, apples, peaches and more, along with perennial fruit from the food forest.

Sarnoski harvests from two fields and a perennial food forest. The latter, he explained, is an aspect of permaculture with the philosophy “of working with nature rather than against.”

Traditional agriculture methods, he explained, revolve around “man trying to change nature” so that it yields the most produce “but the food forest is more about observing what nature does naturally, which is pretty much create a forest.”

He added, “If you take the layers of the forest – like the understory and the canopy – and you plant species that occupy them that happen to be edible, that’s what a food forest is. It



Hebron resident Ben Sarnoski holds some of the seedlings he’s growing in the outdoor greenhouse he has on his property in Hebron; two years ago Sarnoski started a community supported agriculture (CSA) service, Ben’s Harvest. Through the service, individuals pay to become “shareholders” to receive a regular “crop share” of organic produce, grown by Sarnoski, delivered to their home.

takes many years to plant one from scratch because it takes a forest a long time to grow into a fully functioning system, but once you do that and you choose what species are going to be in this forest it takes very little maintenance.”

Plants included in Sarnoski’s food forest include blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, elderberries, hardy kiwi, sorrel, grapes, oregano, seaberry, asparagus, quince, persimmon, chives, sage, mint, Asian pears and cherries, although Sarnoski added not all of these items are a guarantee, as some of the plants are too young to produce.

“The nice thing about the addition of the food forest as well as annual vegetables is that it varies sometimes what you get – it’s hard to know what you might get out of the food forest because it’s variable,” Sarnoski said. “So you get a lot of good stuff from the annual fields then all sorts of surprises from the food forest.”

Speaking about the benefits of a CSA, Sarnoski said, “The fresher the food is the better it tastes” and the more nutrient rich it will

be, since nutrients degrade over time. He added getting produce locally provides the opportunity for a wider variety, “because grocery store vegetables are usually selected for their ability to ship without being damaged, whereas a CSA doesn’t have to make the same kind of considerations.”

Sarnoski added, “You’ll have a tangible connection to your food source, and there’s also the issue of food security – and the only way we can really change the future is by voting with our dollar. And if you feel like food security is important, then supporting local farms is the way to go.”

He concluded, “I think the most important thing that [a CSA] does is ensures there would be a food supply even in the face of an unforeseen future.”

For more information on Ben’s Harvest, go to [facebook.com/bensharvest](https://www.facebook.com/bensharvest) or reach out to Sarnoski at 860-942-3678 or bensharvest@gmail.com.



The “crop shares” provided by Sarnoski include a variety of fresh, organic produce from his two fields and a food forest he has on his 2.5-acre property. Offerings usually include a couple weeks’ worth of produce that varies throughout the season, including lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, zucchini, apples and more.

Bomb Scare Leads to PD, Town Hall Evacuation in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Police Department had a bomb scare Tuesday afternoon, when a resident drove to the police station with a suspicious package he had discovered near his home on a local road, according to police.

The item – a small cylindrical object about the same dimensions as a coffee can wrapped in what appeared to be duct tape and a wick – was eventually found to be inert, police said.

The town hall complex at 20 East High St., including the police station, was evacuated after the resident arrived at the police station with the suspicious item around 4 p.m., police said. Route 66 remained open throughout the incident.

Police Chief Sean Cox spoke from outside the evacuated area Tuesday afternoon, to say the resident did not bring the suspicious item into the facility.

“We recently put up signage outside the police department that reflects that you’re not supposed to bring suspicious items or weapons inside the police department,” Cox said. “For-

tunately, he heeded that signage and it’s out in the parking lot now, where it really can’t hurt anyone.”

Cox said two troopers from the Connecticut State Police Emergency Services Unit were dispatched at the request of the East Hampton Police Department. The state police took the device to a “safe location” for further investigation, he said.

The town hall and police station reopened shortly after 5 p.m.

The East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department was on standby during the incident, Cox confirmed.

Invoking the popular “see something, say something” Homeland Security mantra, Cox reinforced that residents should report suspicious items, but emphasized they should never handle such items themselves. Instead, any concerned citizen should call the police department at 860-267-9922 so an officer can come out to evaluate the item where it was found.

The investigation is ongoing, police said.

Ordinance Would Let Chickens Come Home to Roost in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Backyard chickens and rabbits would be allowed on all properties if an ordinance is approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in May.

Up until last year, zoning regulations stated livestock – including poultry – was allowed on properties of 120,000 square foot in size, approximately 2.75 acres. For those living on smaller lots, livestock was prohibited.

But in 2014, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) began looking at new regulations. Bourque said the Agricultural Commission campaigned for agriculture everywhere – with no restrictions. PZC wasn't so sure, though, so as a compromise, the commission established a minimum lot size for raising livestock.

In January 2015, the new regulations went into effect. One of the regulations stated livestock could only be on 100,000-square foot lots – about 2.25 acres – that were in the rural zone. It was assumed, Bourque explained, that all lots in the rural zone – and not in the town center or suburban zone – were big enough to have livestock.

“Of course, for [PZC] the term ‘livestock’ meant cows and horses. All of their thoughts were around making a minimum lot size for large animals,” Bourque said.

But state statute has a very specific definition of what livestock is – and this is what PZC included in the new regulations. In the regulations, ‘livestock’ was defined as including “horses, bees, poultry, fur-bearing animals and

wildlife.”

So that meant no chickens on lots smaller than 100,000 square feet. Whether people actually follow that, though, is another story.

“There are probably a lot of people that raise chickens in Colchester that are under the radar that no one knows they’re doing it or that no one pays attention to,” Bourque said. “When someone complains, it becomes a zoning enforcement issue.”

That is exactly what happened that led to the ordinance, he said.

This past winter, a family in Westchester that lived on a small lot had several chickens, Bourque said. The chickens wandered into a neighbor’s yard several times, prompting the neighbor to complain, and it became a zoning enforcement issue.

“That was when it came to our attention that we had someone in the rural zone, where you’re supposed to do it, and couldn’t,” Bourque said. “It was never [the town’s] intent to stop small, backyard raising of poultry and rabbits.”

Bourque said raising chickens and rabbits is important to the agricultural community, especially since, for kids in 4H, project often begin with chickens or rabbits.

The Agriculture Commission – with the help of Town Planner Randy Benson – drafted a proposed ordinance to allow for backyard poultry and rabbits on smaller lots in all of the zones, including the suburban and town center zones.

The proposal states that for properties with less than 100,000 square feet, eight hens or rab-

bits may be housed on the property – with a few conditions.

The conditions state a variety of distances coops must be from the street, other houses, and property lines. They also state there must be adequate fencing, permanent buildings must have a building permit, food should be kept as to prevent offensive odors and the presence of pests and predators, the animals must be taken care of with generally accepted agriculture practices (GAAPs), and moveable shelters not attached to the ground are not subject to a zoning permit.

The proposal specifically states no roosters or Guinea hens are allowed.

On Monday, the Agriculture Commission unanimously endorsed the proposal ordinance to go to Planning and Zoning Commission in May for a public hearing and then possible approval.

“I think it meets the criteria” of what the Agriculture Commission was trying to do in terms of making chickens and rabbits legal, Bourque said Monday, adding that the ordinance will allow for families and 4H members to have flocks in their backyard.

“It’s definitely a sign of the times,” he continued, noting to commission members that the Town of Manchester recently approved a poultry ordinance – and shortly after the ordinance passed, Manchester Community College hosted two weekend classes for how to raise backyard poultry.

Along with endorsing the ordinance to move forward, Bourque suggested the Agriculture Commission hold an educational seminar to teach interested residents about poultry housing, options for raising them, and how to keep chickens.

“It will be a great visibility event,” selectman Stan Soby, in attendance at the meeting, said, agreeing that an educational seminar would be an excellent idea for the commission.

After discussing a few options for when to hold the seminar, the commission agreed to speak with the Collaborative for Colchester’s Children about the Family Day the collaborative will hold later this spring at Zagray Farm as a possibility.

If the ordinance passes, Bourque also suggested going to Tractor Supply in town, to explain the ordinance. Currently, when buying chicks at Tractor Supply, residents have to purchase 12 chicks; however, the ordinance would allow only eight hens. But Bourque said he is sure that, once he explains the ordinance, Tractor Supply will accommodate the town.

The proposed ordinance will now go before the Planning and Zoning Commission for a public hearing Wednesday, May 4, where it could potentially be approved. PZC members did not comment for this story, but Benson said the commission is “pretty open to consider revising” the ordinance.

The hearing will be held at 7 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Marlborough Finance Board Considers Dropping Resident Trooper

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

After considering cutting one of the town’s two resident state troopers last year, the Board of Finance is taking up the notion again.

At its meeting last Thursday, March 17, the finance board probed for numbers from First Selectwoman Amy Traversa to investigate the possibility of trimming a trooper. This time last year, the finance board spoke to the town’s two resident state troopers about their responsibilities, and considered eliminating one. At the end of the day, though, both remained in the 2015-16 fiscal year budget.

Currently, the town has two resident state troopers along with a number of constables. In the proposed 2016-17 budget presented by Traversa, the resident state trooper line totals \$363,623, a \$123,340 increase.

Traversa said the increase figures in the town paying 100 percent of the troopers’ salaries and benefits. She said that with uncertainty at the state, she budgeted conservatively.

Currently, the town is responsible for 85 percent of the two troopers’ salary and benefit costs, totaling \$240,283; the state pays for the other 15 percent. The percentage the state pays has grown smaller over the years, causing the town’s share to grow. For instance, for the 2012-13 fiscal year, the town paid \$169,833 for salaries and benefits for the two troopers.

Thursday, the finance board again suggested the town may need to do away with one trooper, and instead add more hours for their two constables (one is full-time and one is part-time). Traversa agreed she would bring those costs to the Board of Finance meeting Thursday after press time.

Currently, the proposed town operations budget is at \$4.86 million, with \$2.24 million in

debt service and \$1.11 million in capital. Take away the debt and capital, and the proposed budget is a 3.83 percent increase, or \$179,478.

Including the proposed local Board of Education budget of \$7.42 million, and the \$8.61 million for Marlborough’s share of the proposed RHAM schools budget (however the RHAM Board of Education was presenting to Marlborough Thursday after press time with updated numbers; the levy is expected to decrease due to reduced insurance numbers for RHAM), the overall town spending package for the 2016-17 fiscal year totals \$24.01 million, a \$943,000 increase over the current year.

The budget proposal would feature a 1.78-mill increase to the town mill rate, which would translate to a tax increase of 5.4 percent.

To reduce the budget “is going to come down to education and public safety,” Traversa told the finance board last Thursday.

“I think it’s going to come down to both,” finance board member Susan Lesser replied.

* * *

The local Board of Education also presented its budget to the finance board, a .36 percent increase of \$26,587, to total \$7,422,854.

After Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz presented the overall budget, the finance board opened up the discussion to questions and there were two hot topics – the fund balance, and the capital item requests.

The school board has drawn the ire of other town officials recently, as it has largely ceased its previously-routine practice of returning to the town funds left over at the end of a fiscal year.

Sklarz shared the history of the school board returning surplus money to the town.

At the end of the 2011-12 fiscal year, the school board returned \$59,713 of its surplus; for 2012-13, \$93,713; and for 2013-14, \$83,712. Those contributions sharply dropped at the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year, when the board opted to return \$1,164 of its \$107,594 surplus.

But finance board member Cliff Denniss said the figures Sklarz presented were “very misleading.” He said that, even for the years prior to 2014-15, there was still a lot more the school board could have returned – but didn’t.

“Yes, you did return some money, but there were some big surpluses too,” Denniss told Sklarz. As an example, he pointed to the 2013-14 fiscal year, when \$83,712 was returned to the town; the total surplus that year was \$168,128.

Sklarz explained each year the majority of the surplus money comes from salaries and benefits. He told the board that he budgets on actual people; however, when one leaves and the school replaces that teacher with a less experienced teacher with less insurance requirements, the school sees a savings. For the current year’s budget, Sklarz said, he is unsure how much in the way of surplus there will be at the end of the fiscal year, as there have been two teachers out on maternity leave, one on medical leave and one on personal leave – all of which get paid.

“The projected fund balance is maybe a couple of thousand,” Sklarz said.

Sklarz then explained that the school does keep a list of items that did not make the budget.

“Those items are between wants and needs to where we felt we needed to be,” he said. “Others [we would have] in a perfect world.”

Sklarz said it is a balancing act for the local school board to decide what to give back to the town, rhetorically asking, “What’s the magic number?”

The other issue brought up to the finance board was the question of where the capital non-recurring (CNR) items the school asked for went.

Sklarz explained he had submitted four requests to the CNR Committee: \$25,000 for the early childhood playground; \$37,000 for technology infrastructure; \$27,000 for updating the telephone system; and \$25,000 for the building security alarm system. However, those items didn’t make it into Traversa’s original budget presentation to the finance board, nor did they make the list of recommended CNR items the Board of Selectmen gave to the finance board.

“We did fund the energy system for the school last year,” selectman Dick Shea, who is also chair of the CNR Committee, said. “We are looking at a 5.4 percent increase, the only capital items [that got in] were bridges, culverts, and a dump truck.”

Shea also explained with the town being hooked up right now to the Nutmeg Network, a state-run fiber optic network for municipalities, the town did not want to jump on any telephone systems updates since the network may make those upgrades less expensive.

Traversa said she would look into the list and find out why the items were not listed.

* * *

The finance board met Thursday after press time, to be presented with the RHAM Board of Education budget. A public hearing on the budget is scheduled for Monday, April 25, with the town budget meeting on Monday, May 9.

Marlborough Settles Suit with Former Building Official

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The town recently settled a lawsuit with former building official Patrick Looney – a suit that went on for almost six years.

According to the settlement agreement, the case was settled for \$100,000 – half of which went to Looney’s attorney.

The lawsuit was settled at no cost to the town, since insurance through the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) covered the settlement and legal costs.

Jacques Parenteau, Looney’s attorney, said Wednesday that although he cannot speak on the specific terms of the settlement, he believes “Pat would have preferred a resolution that allowed him to come back and serve the people of Marlborough doing a job he loved.”

Looney – who was the town’s building official from 1994 to 2010 – sued the town and then-first selectman Bill Black in June 2010, alleging his employment contract was breached and his civil rights were violated. Earlier that year, Looney’s hours were cut from 36 per week to 20; in his intent to sue, filed in April 2010, Looney claimed the reduction in hours was exercise of his First Amendment rights.”

In October 2009, Looney had filed a grievance against his supervisor, Director of Planning and Development Peter Hughes, claiming Hughes had violated his “freedom of speech rights.” According to the April 2010 intent to sue, Looney “provided information” to a resi-

dent about the “potentially unlawful exercise” of the health department over outdoor wood-burning furnaces, which are regulated by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Looney alleged in the intent to sue that Hughes told him not to “discuss matters outside of his job duties” that concern state or local agencies. Looney later wrote to Black, “protesting the limitations placed on him” by Hughes.

According to the intent to sue, in December 2009, Parenteau asked Black to drop the restrictions, but counsel for Marlborough refused and “threatened” Looney with “discipline, up to and including discharge.”

In January 2010, town counsel Andrew Houlding notified the employees’ union that changing Looney’s position from full-time to part-time was “part of a cost savings reduction plan” and that it had been dropped to 20 hours per week. At the time, the reason for the reduction was because of a “sharp reduction in building activity.” When Looney’s position was reduced to fewer than 25 hours per week, he became ineligible for medical benefits and could no longer be part of the collective bargaining agreement.

The lawsuit commenced in June 2010, and the position of town building official was posted. Joe La Bella and Riva Clark, selectmen

at the time, were included in the search committee. According to the intent to sue, Looney applied; however, La Bella and Clark said during the interview that they had concerns hiring someone who was suing the town. He was not reappointed.

In September 2010, the three selectmen tried to dismiss the complaint, on the grounds that “all three individual defendants were entitled to qualified immunity.” Qualified immunity “protects public office holders and officials from the burdens of litigation.”

This argument was rejected originally by the federal District Court, but was overturned by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in September 2012. The District Court, while rejecting the qualified immunity, stated Black’s conduct in reducing Looney’s hours was not “objectively reasonable.”

The Second Circuit court disagreed, stating Looney’s claims of violations of free speech and due process were “groundless.”

At the time of the Second Circuit court’s ruling, the selectmen’s attorney Michael Rose said Looney “did not have a contract that required any specific amount of hours so the town had the right to reduce his hours.”

The Second Circuit court, according to Rose at the time, determined Looney “wasn’t speaking as a citizen on a matter of public concern, but rather he was speaking as a government

employee while he was at work.”

Although the two claims against Black and the selectmen were dismissed, there were still the two pending claims against the town of breach of contract and a state violation of freedom of speech in the workplace. At the time, Rose said the claims “would be dismissed at a later hearing.”

However, that was not the case.

According to a source familiar with the case, the issue was with the state violation of speech claim. Although the federal violation of speech claim was dismissed, the state claim was murkier. In order for both sides to avoid a costly jury trial that would have followed in an appeal, Looney and the town settled.

At a Board of Selectmen meeting Dec. 1, the board unanimously approved to settle with Looney. On Jan. 8, the settlement agreement was signed.

According to the settlement agreement, Looney’s compensation of \$50,000 constitutes “compensation for non-economic damages in the nature of loss of enjoyment of life, harm to reputation, and emotional distress.” The \$50,000 paid to Madsen, Prestley & Parenteau LLC was to compensate for attorney’s fees and costs, the agreement stated.

According to court documents, the two withdrawals of action were filed Jan. 21 and the case was closed.

Girls’ Tennis New Offering at Portland High School

by Elizabeth Regan

The creation of a new girls’ tennis team at Portland High School has revealed a level of interest in the sport that wasn’t evident when the only option was to play on the boys’ roster.

Up until this year, girls could join the boys’ team but were not able to compete at the state level.

Title IX, a federal law prohibiting discrimination against women in federally-funded education, requires schools to provide female and male students with equal athletic opportunities. So when sophomore Emily DiSalvo heard the addition of a new football team last year might open up the possibility for a new girls’ sport as well, she ran with it.

“When I started asking people, so many people were actually interested, which surprised me,” DiSalvo said.

She sent several girls – about nine of them – to Athletic Director Chris Serra to express their interest in joining a girls’ tennis team.

Earlier this month, Serra brought the idea to the Board of Education. He proposed the new program, which would be a cooperative effort between Portland and Nathan Hale-Ray high schools, as a way to ensure equal participation in athletics and to keep costs low through regionalization.

Serra told school board members the high school offers 17 athletic programs: 9 male teams and 8 female teams – “which can create a Title IX issue later on if we get audited by the state.”

The school board approved the cooperative pilot program for two years. School board chairwoman MaryAnne Rode applauded the move.

“I’m happy to see we’re being proactive and even-Steven in our approach to things,” Rode said.

Serra said after the meeting that the deci-

sion to add the program was student-driven.

“My priority is the interest of the student athletes, and if it’s there, we need to provide for them,” Serra said. “I think it’s great that they want to compete at a higher level.”

According to girls’ tennis coach Dave Kraszewski, there are about 14 girls on the team now, plus two girls from Nathan Hale-Ray High School. He said the vast majority of the players do not have any tennis experience whatsoever.

“But what we lack in experience we make up for in enthusiasm,” he said.

DiSalvo, who took only a single session of tennis lessons through the park and recreation department a few years ago, described the new team as a great opportunity for novices.

“The kids are coming in new, [and] the sport is new here too,” she said. “So it’s perfect for them. And me.”

The team’s resident expert, senior Ashlee Paradis, began playing tennis in seventh grade under the instruction of her cousin. She said she accepted an invitation from Kraszewski to play on the boys’ team last year.

“I was going to do that again this year, but now we have a girls’ team,” she said.

Paradis described herself as a competitive player with realistic expectations.

“I’m competitive myself mostly because I played with the boys last year, so I had to be,” she said. “I have an older brother so I grew up being competitive. But it’s not a big deal if we lose. It’s a game. It’s our first year.”

For DiSalvo, the first season promises to be educational.

“I don’t know that much about tennis matches because I’ve never played competitively before, but it’s an interesting thing for me to try,” she



Portland High School senior Ashlee Paradis practices her tennis swing after school this week. The PHS girls’ tennis team is in its inaugural season.

said.

According to Kraszewski and boys’ tennis coach Bob Malafronte, there haven’t been many girls participating in the tennis program over the years, though there have been some standouts.

Malafronte credited the girls for advocating

for themselves and carrying the idea from the athletic department all the way to the Board of Education. He said it’s about time they get the chance to play on their own team.

“I’m pretty sure we’re the last school in our conference to have a girls’ team, so we’re a little bit overdue,” Malafronte said.

One Injured After Andover Crash

An Andover man sustained minor injuries after a one-car crash on Wheeling Road March 19.

State police said Jared Delventhal, 19, of 128 Wheeling Rd., was transported by LifeStar to St. Francis Hospital after the crash.

Police said Delventhal was driving a Ford Focus heading north on Wheeling Road near Bear Swamp Road at approximately 11:30 p.m. Delventhal crossed over the yellow line for an unknown reason and collided with a tree, police said.

Colchester Police News

3/15: Colchester Police said Jay Doscher, 57, of 9 Lafayette St., Willimantic, was arrested and charged with DUI.

3/17: State Police said Jennifer Trombley, 39, of 37 Hodge Rd., Marlborough, was arrested and charged with failure to appear.

3/18: Colchester Police said Jonathan Robinson, 19, of 72 Boretz Rd., was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny.

3/20: Colchester Police said they are investigating after a larceny of a motor vehicle from a driveway on Oakleaf Drive. Police said the vehicle was a gray 2008 Ford Taurus X, license

plate 395-WJD, with a large dent on the rear of the passenger door. Anyone with information is asked to call Officer Shannon Owens at 860-537-7270.

3/20: Colchester Police said they are investigating after an unknown person entered an unlocked vehicle on Boulder Road and stole a Kenwood KT390 portable radio. Police said the radio is utilized as a communication radio with the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department. Anyone with information can call Officer Robert Labonte at 860-537-7270.

Obituaries

Colchester

Vincent Vespa Jr.

Vincent Vespa Jr., 70, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, March 13, after a head-on car crash by a drunken driver in Florida. His wife Emilia of 50 years survived the crash.

He leaves his son Vincent and daughter Deborah, their spouses and five grandchildren whom he adored. He leaves one sister, nieces and nephews.

After graduating from East Hartford High School in 1963, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps. He then went on to be an excavating contractor. He loved his occupation and the friends he met along the way.

He resided for one-two months in the winter at a fish camp. Fishing was his favorite sport. He had many friends there and they held a small ceremony for him.

This summer, his ashes will be brought to Rhode Island, as he requested, and set to rest in the ocean.

Anyone is welcome to join. It will be announced two weeks before it happens.

East Hampton

Michael Gaynor Brogan

Michael "Mike" Gaynor Brogan, born Sept. 20, 1944, passed peacefully in East Hampton Thursday, March 17, after a stoically-fought battle with cancer. Michael was surrounded by close friends and family in his final hours, bringing him comfort and love.

Born in Springfield, Mass., he was the son of the late Gaynor and Ghislaine (Durivage) Brogan. One of five children born into an Irish and French-Canadian family, Mike spent much of his childhood growing up in Pittsfield, Mass. He loved the Berkshires and had numerous stories to tell about his younger days growing up the oldest in his family. Mike adored his sisters and brother, despite age differences; they all remained close throughout their lives.

Mike graduated from UMass and did graduate work at the University of Miami. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam era. He was employed for 30-plus years at the State of Connecticut. Mike retired as a Fiscal-Administrative Manager in the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. He was a former member of the E.H. Conservation Board and the Moodus Sportsman's Club, both of which connected him to his love of nature. Mike was currently a member of the East Hampton Village Lions. He also previously sat on the CT Indian Affairs Council.

Mike loved to fish more than anything. If a puddle could hold a fish, he might throw a line in. He loved spending time in the woods with his hunting dogs over the years and was an avid bird hunter. Planting and gardening in his yard kept him busy during the growing season. During the summer months, Mike loved to head north to his cottage in Vermont, where he particularly loved fishing with his two grandsons, whether on his boat or off the dock. He generally chose to travel where the fishing was well-known and the fish were big, with Islamorada in the Florida Keys being his favorite destination. Over the years, his friends and family fondly referred to him as "Big Fish," and a nickname was born.

Never short on smiles or a joke, Mike always had something witty and engaging to say to anyone who had the pleasure to meet him. Mike loved his family and was a model of strong love. As his eldest grandson said, "Papa had a great amount of love and he was very strong with it."

Mike is survived by his wife, Linda; daughter, Melissa Crowell; grandsons, Brogan and Ethan Crowell; sister, Linda Sutyak; brother, Christopher Brogan; and his nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Mike was predeceased by his sisters, Gail and Lisa.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, March 22. A funeral service was held Wednesday, March 23, in the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Middlesex Land Trust, 27 Washington St., No. 8, Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Dorothy H. Anderson

Dorothy Hope Anderson, 96, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, passed away peacefully Saturday, March 5, at Middlesex Hospital. Dorothy was born at home on the family farm in Middletown May 18, 1919. She was the only child of the late Oscar and Anna (Johnson) Anderson, both immigrants embarking on a new life from Sweden.

Dorothy was a hard-working, unstoppable woman ready to aid a helping hand to anyone in need. She imparted light and joy to all who knew her. An avid and talented knitter, she spent years creating comfort and warmth to those in need with her charity knitting circle at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Dorothy is survived by her daughter-in-law, Ann Anderson of Greenwich; her grandchildren Scott and Elin, as well as many extended family members.

Other than her parents, Dorothy was preceded in death by her beloved son, Charles R. Anderson.

The family is grateful for the wonderful and loving care she received at the Water's Edge Health and Rehabilitation Center and would like to especially thank the nurses and staff of Hospice and Palliative Care Unit at Middlesex Hospital for the kindness and dignity they gave her during her last days.

There will be no calling hours and interment will be private. A memorial service honoring her life will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 2, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1 East High St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Dorothy's memory may be made to C.A.T.A.L.E.S., Inc, P.O. Box 901, Middletown, CT 06457.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit doolittlefuneralservice.com.



East Hampton

Frances V. Fredericks

Frances V. Fredericks, 72, of East Hampton, beloved wife of her childhood sweetheart Jack Fredericks, died unexpectedly Sunday, March 20, at Hartford Hospital. Born March 28, 1943, in New Britain, she was the daughter of the late Lawrence and Madeline (Ryan) Ferris.

Fran spent her summers on her Aunt Kitty and Uncle Malcom's farm in Albany, Vt., with her brother David and cousins Bobby and Ross. She was a dedicated volunteer, working with babies at the Boys and Girls Club of Bristol.

In her free time, Fran also loved watching her husband sing and play guitar in his band, doing ceramics, knitting, cross stitching and decorating her home for the holidays. Most recently, her time was spent with her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. She was a dedicated UConn basketball fan.

Fran is predeceased by her parents, and brother, David Ferris.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her three daughters, Dawn and Henry Kryszpin of Avon, Kelly and Bruce Gustine of East Hampton, and Kim Fredericks of Meriden; her grandchildren, Blake and Kathy Kryszpin, Katey and Matt Valley, Chloe, Maddie, Carter, Emily, Clara, Jack and Parker; and her great-grandchildren, Caleb, Logan and Nolan.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, March 29. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Wednesday, March 30, in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial was private, at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424 or to Bristol Boys and Girls Club, 225 West St., Bristol, CT 06010.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Richard Charles Judd

Richard Charles "Dick" Judd, 82, of East Hampton, passed away Tuesday, March 15, with his daughters by his side. Richard, born Sept. 21, 1933, was the youngest of five children having grown up in Bristol, where his parents, Chester K. Judd Sr. and Leila (Harold) Judd raised a loving family. Richard married his loving wife, Edna Arlene (Broomall) Judd, who always stood by his side.

In his younger years, Richard proudly served in the United States Air Force until being honorably discharged as Staff Sergeant in 1959. Richard used his creative talent in his career outside of the Air Force in home building, drafting and design of firearms and tools. His expertise was sought after by several companies in the Northeast.

Also, in his younger years, Richard was a pilot who enjoyed flying small planes, nature, animals, boating, fishing, skiing, sailing and long drives, most often heading towards the Connecticut River or the ocean. In his later years, Richard enjoyed eating ice cream with his wife Arlene while watching women's basketball. Richard's all-time favorite hobby was doing crossword puzzles. There was never a day that he didn't have one in hand.

Richard will be missed by his wife Arlene Judd, step-son Donald Moll, son Charles Judd, his daughters, Jennifer Judd and Georgianna Judd, and his nine grandchildren, Dillon Moll, Amy Moll, Kevin Moll, Sarah Galvin, Zachary Augenstein, Alyson Augenstein, Brandon Lebiszczak, Rachael Lebiszczak and Alexa Lebiszczak. Richard also leaves behind his two sisters, Betty Johnson and Marge Jabs, and many nieces, nephews and extended family, who have always been very important to him.

Richard has left this earth to be reunited with his parents, Chester Judd Sr. and Leila Judd; step-son William Moll and his two brothers, Chester Judd Jr., and Robert Judd. Richard's request for no services will be honored.

Family and friends will be notified of a celebration of his life at a later date.



Colchester

Leonard A. Carlson

Leonard A. Carlson, "Big Len," born April 6, 1937, passed away Friday night, March 18, at Hartford Hospital, surrounded by loved ones, at the age of 78.

He leaves two sons and their spouses, Leonard Jr. and Aimee of Colchester and Todd and Megan of Franklin (formerly of Colchester); six grandchildren, Ashley, Hunter, Brooke, Paige, Bobby and Samantha; a great-granddaughter, Zoe; and a brother, Herbert.

He was predeceased by his parents, Adolf and Olga (Peterson) Carlson, and seven siblings.

Mr. Carlson served proudly with the U.S. Army and had worked as a quality inspector for Swanson Tool in West Hartford for many years before his retirement.

A chapel service with military honors will be observed at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, with visitation prior to the service, from 5-7 p.m. Burial will be private.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Maureen Krekian

Maureen Krekian (O'Shea), beloved wife of the late Sam Krekian, passed away peacefully Friday, March 18. She and Sam were married for 41 years and spent their early days in West Hartford before moving and settling in Middletown, where she lived for more than 50 years.

Living on Nejako Drive and becoming a member of St. Pius Church formed the foundation for lifelong friendships and a spiritual life. Maureen was an active member at St. Pius belonging to the church Choir, Rosary Altar and the St. Veronica's Mother Circle. Maureen spent her early motherhood days at home raising children and later worked at Woodward Town and Country Pharmacy.

Maureen had a beautiful singing voice and belonged to the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords for more than 15 years. She was an avid reader, loved gardening, watching *Jeopardy!*, reading the daily paper, watching the Yankees and UConn basketball. She was an active member at MILE, and served as curriculum coordinator for two years.

As a young girl, Maureen survived the Hartford Circus Fire. Thanks to the heroic gestures of many but one young man in particular, Maureen escaped in order to fulfill the life she was meant to have. A life surrounded by family and friends which brought her much joy right up until the end of her time with us. She and her daughters recorded her memories of the fire at Storycorps in Hartford which is archived at the Library of Congress, and was broadcast nationally on NPR.

Even after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Maureen remained optimistic and always cheerful, even in the face of the many obstacles that come with Parkinson's. She wasn't about to let that define her. Strong of mind and spirit is how those who knew her well will remember her.

Maureen received excellent care throughout her illness. The family would like to thank Drs. Margaret O'Donahue and Otto Weis. She was well taken care of and formed loving bonds with the staff at the Village at South Farms and Portland Care and Rehabilitation.

Maureen is survived by her daughter and husband, Lynn and Rusty Everett of West Hartford; son, Richard Krekian of Manhattan; daughter, Joanne Krekian of Middletown; and her loving granddaughter Emma Everett; sister-in-law Marian O'Shea of Florida and brother-in-law George Bagdasarian of Newington; several nieces and nephews and many friends, with whom she shared long and deep relationships.

A funeral liturgy was held Wednesday, March 23, at St. Pius X Church, Westfield Street, in Middletown. Friends called Tuesday, March 22, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown.

Contributions can be made to either the Michael J. Fox Foundation or the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords.

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

East Hampton

Lorraine R. Forand

Lorraine R. (Fontaine) Forand, 96, of East Hampton, widow of the late Edward R. Forand passed away peacefully at her home Wednesday, March 23. Born April 22, 1919, in Fall River, Mass., she was the daughter of the late Joseph and Blanch (Normandon) Fontaine. Lorraine had lived in East Hampton since



1961 and was a parishioner of St. Patrick Church. She is survived by her son, Norman Forand and his wife Suzanne of Southington; a daughter, Janet Kravontka and her husband Mark of Manchester; four grandchildren, Kristine Vincent, James Kravontka, Eric Forand, Kimberly Cohen; and seven great-grandchildren, Andrew, Ryan, Audrey, Madison, Taylor, Benjamin and Olivia. Friends may call at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, March 29, from 8:15-9:15 a.m., followed by a funeral liturgy at 9:30 a.m. in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will be private at Notre Dame Cemetery in Fall River, Mass.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Polish Aid Home Care 310 Broad St. New Britain, CT 06053.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Robertina Trask

Robertina (Estabrook) Trask, 85, of East Hampton, formerly of Middletown, wife of the late Carlton Trask, died Saturday, March 19, at Middlesex Hospital.

Robertina was born in Maine, the daughter of the late Daniel and Mildred (Pelkey) Estabrook. Prior to her retirement, Robertina work as a presser for Forest City Cleaners.

Robertina is survived by her three sons, Robert Trask of Vero Beach, Fla., Steven Clark and his wife Laura of Middletown and Vincent Trask and his wife LeeAnn of Sydney, Maine; her three daughters, Susan Prigitano and her husband Vincent of Middletown, Renita Fazio and her husband John of East Hampton, and Ellen Drake and her husband Daryl of Sydney, Maine; several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by a son, Galen Clark; a daughter-in-law, Michelle Trask; two sisters, Donna Major, Madeline Alward; two brothers, Maxwell and Clifton Estabrook.

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

Memorial contributions may be made to Weiss Hospice Unit, c/o Dept. of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Marlborough

Robert D. Tuttle

Robert D. Tuttle, 85, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully Wednesday, March 16. Bob was born Nov. 8, 1930, in Bellingham, Mass., son of the late Margaret (Keegan) and David L. Tuttle Sr.

Bob served in the United States Navy in the Korean War, and was a West Hartford police officer for 25 years and 25 minutes. Rising to captain, Bob was considered a “cop’s cop.” After retiring, Bob served the State of Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles.

Bob leaves his wife, Julia (Horan) Tuttle; his children, Fr. Patrick Tuttle, OFM, Don Tuttle (wife Elaine), Julia Horan, Ellen Curtin (husband Bill), Margaret Tuttle; and nine grandchildren. Bob had many blessings and enjoyed them as they grew. Bob has three living brothers, Jack, David and Alan Tuttle, and a sister Jane Darling.

A wake was held at St. Patrick - St. Anthony Church, 285 Church St., Hartford, Friday evening, March 18, and a Mass of Resurrection was offered by his son Saturday, March 19. A burial at the Veterans Cemetery in Middletown Connecticut will happen at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St Patrick - St Anthony Church in Hartford, spsact.org.

Hebron

Linda Ann Abbott

Linda Ann Abbott, of Somers, passed away Tuesday, March 15, surrounded by her family. Linda was born Jan. 4, 1943, in Hartford, and later attended RHAM High School in Hebron.

Linda lived in Somers for 39 years and served as the Democratic Registrar of Voters and as chair of the Cultural Commission. As chair, she arranged summer concerts, coffeehouses, and art and photography shows at Piedmont Hall for the residents of Somers.

Linda took great pride in her home on Main Street. She earned a Certificate of Master Gardener from UConn, and applied those skills to her beautiful gardens that were a familiar sight to many Somers residents. She was a talented artist, and her watercolor and oil paintings were museum worthy.

Linda was a wonderful and loving mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend.

She leaves behind her daughter, Jill Cooper Barden of Whitman, Mass., and her two grandchildren, Ciara and Aidan; her brother, Arthur Abbott and his wife, Peggy, of Farmington; her sister, Sylvia Abbott Jucker and her husband, Ueli, of Ellington; her brother, Jon Abbott and his wife, Diana, of Holyoke, Mass.; and a large extended family of nieces and nephews, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She was the younger sister of Dick Datsun of Manchester, and Jane Riach of Enfield; and daughter of Ruth and George Abbott, who passed before her.

Calling hours will be held Saturday, March 26, at Leete-Stevens Enfield Chapels, 61 South Rd., Enfield, from 2 to 4 p.m. with a memorial service to follow.

Donations may be made in lieu of flowers to the ASL Association Connecticut Chapter, 4 Oxford Road, Unit E4, Milford, CT 06460, or The Masterpiece Trust (PBS), One Guest St., Boston, MA 02135.

For online expressions of sympathy and for directions, visit leetestevens.com.

Marlborough

Richard Light

Richard Light passed at age 75 in Marlborough Tuesday, March 15. He was born in Washington, Maine, Aug. 6, 1940, son of Roy F Light and Edith E. Mears.

Richard was a glazier until his retirement, a Vietnam veteran and a life member of the American Legion 197.

Richard is survived by his companion, Kathleen Stein; his children, Roberta Light, Robert Light, Randall Light and his wife Marcy, Reynold Light and his wife Alicia, Sara Wilson, stepchild Jessica Poulin and her husband Gerry; his sisters Phyllis Tucker, Gloria Gagnon, Lyla Tessier and her husband Harold.

A service will be held today, March 25, at 1 p.m., at the American Legion Hall on Route 66 in Marlborough.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to American Legion Building Fund, P.O. Box 178, Marlborough, CT 06447.

Portland

Sylvia Ann Pitruzzello

Sylvia Ann (Heiman) Pitruzzello, 80, of Middletown, passed away Wednesday, March 16, at Middlesex Hospital. Born in Unionville, she was the daughter of the late Aaron and Eva (Koplowitz) Heiman.

Sylvia lived in Portland the majority of her life and worked at Connecticut Underwriters for 39 years. She was well known for her famous coffee cakes and was an avid Hartford Whalers fan. Sylvia had a great sense of humor and spirit about her. She was loved by everyone she met. Most important in Sylvia’s life were her grandchildren, whom she adored.

Sylvia is survived by her son, Glen Pitruzzello and his wife, Amy of Middlefield; her daughter, Amy Uliano of Cromwell; and three grandchildren, Annmarie, Cal and Ava.

Along with her parents, she was predeceased by her sister, Lois Shea and her husband, Vincent “Jimmy” Pitruzzello.

Family and friends called Monday, March 21, at the Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown. There was no funeral service and burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Sylvia’s memory may be made to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, 450 Brookline Avenue, Boston, MA 02215.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit doolittlefuneralservice.com.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Easter, as we all know, is Sunday. And to be honest, I’ve never been a huge fan of Easter being in March. I prefer warmer weather for Easter; it just feels right. When you think of people dressing in their “Easter best” that day, you think of spring-themed clothes: light colors, pastels, perhaps a nice bonnet. You don’t think of sweaters and heavy coats and sometimes even boots because, guess what, there might still be snow on the ground.

But, with a March Easter – particularly in New England – that’s what you often can get.

Nah, what I like best are those mid-April Easters. The weather is warming, flowers are starting to bloom, birds are starting to sing. Your Easter best doesn’t seem so out of place.

Of course, it’s a little odd the exact date of Easter varies so much from year to year. It’s such a major holiday – and for Christians, probably tied with Christmas for the biggest – that it seems strange a more specific date hasn’t been agreed upon. I mean, yeah, the date Thanksgiving takes place changes each year; but it’s always the fourth Thursday of November, so at most you’re looking at a variation of a few days from year to year.

Oh, there’s a formula behind the date of Easter; it’s always the Sunday that follows the full moon that follows the first day of spring. But that first full moon of spring can change greatly, and that’s why the date of Easter fluctuates so much. Interestingly, in 1943, there was a full moon on Saturday, March 20 – just before the equinox. The next full moon after that occurred Sunday, April 18, which meant Easter that year was an incredibly late April 25. It won’t be that late again until 2038.

On the flip side, in 1818 the full moon occurred right on the first day of spring, Saturday, March 21. This meant the very next day, March 22, was Easter. It won’t fall that early again until 2285.

But, it’s one thing to have a formula; it’s another thing altogether to have a set date. (And just to make things a little more confusing: those dates I threw out apply to Catholic and Protestant churches. For Eastern Orthodox religions, things are a little different. They still use the first full moon of spring, but they follow the Julian calendar, which is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar commonly used. For example, Jan. 1 on the Julian calendar is Jan. 14 on the Gregorian calendar.

As a result, though the first day of spring on both calendars is March 21, the Julian March 21 is vastly different from the Gregorian March 21. This in turn effects just when that first full moon is recognized. The upshot is, this year Easter for the Eastern Orthodox religions will be observed on a date that translates to May 1 on the Gregorian cal-

endar. Now *that’s* a spring Easter.)

There is a movement afoot to create a set date for Easter. The *Guardian* reported in January that the archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, had been in discussions with representatives from Catholicism and the world’s other major Christian denominations on a fixed day for Easter. Welby said he hoped the unified date – which would be on the second or third Sunday in April – could be introduced in the next five to 10 years.

Last year, Pope Francis signaled that he was open to western and eastern churches coming together on a date for Easter, so that all Christians could celebrate on the same day. The pope said “we have to come to an agreement” on a common date. In 2014, the pope of the Coptic Orthodox church, Pope Tawadros II, wrote to Pope Francis to ask for a renewed effort to find a common date.

Now, there have been various attempts dating all the way back to the 10th century to come to an agreement on the date for Easter. In fact, in the UK, there has been a law on the books for nearly 90 years that would set a date. Easter Act 1928 would set Easter as the Sunday after the second Saturday in April. Alas, according to the *Guardian*, “the act has never been implemented, and successive governments have left it to churches to agree to any such change.”

I think having a set Sunday for Easter is a great idea, and I hope it does indeed come about within the next five to 10 years, like Archbishop Welby hopes.

For now, though, I’ll take comfort in the fact that next year, Easter will fall on April 16, so hopefully – *hopefully* – it won’t have snowed just a few days earlier.

But, all weather griping and discussing of dates and full moons aside, happy Easter from all of us at the *Rivereast*.

I still keep in touch with an old college professor of mine, and this week he shared an amusing story. He used to give an assignment where he’d split his class up into groups, and would ask each group to come up with an answer to this question: “What’s the difference between life and art?”

He said the best answer he ever got was from a student who was the spokeswoman for her group. She said her group had come up with an answer, but she had a different one. “Let’s hear both,” the professor replied. He said he didn’t remember the group answer, but this was hers:

“Without art, life would not be worthwhile. Without life, art might still be worthwhile – but you’d be dead.”

See you next week.