

RIVEREAST

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Members of the RHAM High School Class of 2016 – most covered in celebratory Silly String – cheered excitedly as graduation came to a close last Friday, successfully culminating their high school careers. More graduation photos are at [facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin](https://www.facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin).

## RHAM Class of '16 Praised, Encouraged

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Smiles were plentiful last Friday, June 10, as members of the RHAM High School Class of 2016 made their way across the baseball field during the event's procession. The breeze blew their blue robes, and a variety of decorations could be found on the top of their mortarboards, tassels dangling on the right – soon to switch to the left. They were led by faculty and the top 10 students in the junior class who, along with the junior class president, acted as a transition between the departing class, and those that will take their place.

The field, meanwhile, was filled with family and friends eager to see their loved ones complete their high school career and head out into the world – a world class valedictorian Patricia Brosseau explained is quite different from the one they grew up in.

"When most of us were born," she said during her graduation speech, "Google hadn't been invented and cell phones were a feature of just cars. ... We've lived through an incredible amount of change in our short time here, from a world of frosted tips and Beanie Babies, through the Great Silly Bandz apocalypse during elementary school and the Heelys craze that got crushed by authority before it really started."

And, she continued, "There are parts of the

present I don't think anyone would have expected. In 1998, Hillary Clinton was just the president's wife during the Monica Lewinsky scandal, and now she's running for president against an angry businessman with a fake tan," she said to laughter. "Even weirder, if our generation had its way the president would be an elderly socialist and we'd all be going to college for free."

Speaking of college, Brosseau, who's attending Carnegie Mellon University in the fall, called it – and its cost – "another fun part of our new world."

"It's a good thing our parents bought those houses, because after these four years [of college], we'll probably be moving back in with them," she cracked. "Sorry, Mom."

But all humor and sarcasm aside, Brosseau admitted she didn't know what the future held, but said she believed it would be positive, concluding, "The future will be crazy and unexpected, but ultimately we are the generation that will shape it."

Salutatorian Cassandra Michaud also spoke to change and the future during her speech, telling her classmates, "I know that the knowledge and experience that we have gained over the

See RHAM Graduates Page 2

## 'Class of Construction' Graduates EHHS

by Elizabeth Regan

Dubbed the "Class of Construction" by new Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith, the 147 graduates of East Hampton High School have persevered through a high school experience marked by a \$52 million renovation project that began halfway through their four-year stint.

Gathered with students, staff and administrators in the Memorial School foyer before the start of Sunday evening's outdoor commencement exercises, Smith said the graduating seniors have had a positive attitude in the face of the school's physical upheaval.

"What struck me right away was you have a group of seniors who, as much as they weren't going to benefit from the school, still came together like you'd want to see a class do," he said. "They were the Senior Class of Construction, but they've had a good spirit all the way through."

Senior Brittany Marrow called the construction "absolutely frustrating." She described getting stuck in a hallway because half of it was blocked off and arriving at a bathroom only to find it closed.

She acknowledged the change will be worthwhile for future students, even though she won't get to enjoy the new school. Instead, she'll be pursuing a career in special effects makeup. She cited the nonprofit Epoch Arts organization, with its annual haunted house and theatrical productions, for helping to foster her interest and hone her skills.

James Harris agreed the construction could

be a struggle.

"There were times I was in class and I just couldn't concentrate so I'd have to walk out. It was just a whole mess," he said. "We got by, though. I mean, we're here."

And being there – in the Memorial School foyer in his blue cap and gown with his future in front of him – made him realize there was a lot to be thankful for about his high school years and the friends he made.

"It really makes you appreciate things more," he said. "It's the last chance to get together with people you're not going to see for a long time."

According to Sierra Taylor, construction was just another thing to get used to.

"After a while you kind of forget that there aren't any ceilings or floors," she said with a laugh.

The more important thing was the foundation provided by teachers. Taylor pointed to band director Andrew Groves as one such source of support.

Taylor credited Groves with persuading her mother to sign her up for singing lessons, which set the stage for plans to become a professional opera singer. The teacher also encouraged her when she decided to learn the trombone and then picked up the tuba "on a whim."

"He's always been there to support me and push me," she said of Groves. "I think he was as, if not more, excited than my mom to find out where I got into."

Taylor will study music performance and music education at Nazareth University in



The East Hampton High School Class of 2016 threw mortarboards in the air and unleashed a torrent of Silly String after receiving their diplomas and being told they are the hope for the future.

Rochester, N.Y.

A speech by class salutatorian Nicole Burns during the ceremony acknowledged the struggles and the triumphs of finishing high

school in a construction zone.

"We have all endured the constant pounding of construction that we will never fully reap  
See 'Class of Construction' Page 2

**RHAM Graduates cont. from Front Page**

past few years will help to see us through. We have many to thank for that, from our parents, teachers and coaches, to our friends, and even ourselves. It doesn't matter if that strength comes from academics, from athletics, from social ability, or from hobbies. Everyone here has proven themselves worthy."

She added, "It's time that we go out on our own quests, no matter where they take us, and whether we go as a group or go alone, be bold, be brave, do great things – no matter the size – and don't forget to vote."

And if class president Gordon Perrett had his way, those votes would be for him.

"The world is changing for us and we will have to find our places in it. Many firsts are happening for us soon; our first time on our own, our first day of life without RHAM, our first presidential election – that I regrettably will not win," he said with a smile.

Perrett praised his classmates, all they'd accomplished and all they were sure to do.

"The class that sits before you is amazing, witty, smart, talented and completely weird – in a good way," he stated, sharing members of the class went on mission trips, volunteered, and won all kinds of competitions in business, poetry, dance, video games, the rodeo, music, math, horseback riding and more.

"And no one seems to boast what they do... so, in addition to being a collection of unique and talented people, we are also incredibly humble."

After graduation, Perrett added, "We have graduates going into the military, going to college, joining the workforce, and some just waiting for the right opportunity to do what they love and enjoy life. Whatever the case may be I have no doubt that you will find success in your endeavors."

Also addressing the class was athletic director and retiring social studies teacher Mark Logan, who encouraged of the class of "MMXVI" to take a stand for something they believe in, have courage, and find their passion.

Logan mentioned Mohammed Ali, who passed away June 3, as a controversial figure who had the courage to take a stand for what he believed in.

And "How is he any different from any other American who's stood up for his beliefs?" Logan asked. "Like John Adams defending the soldiers after the Boston Massacre, or Abraham Lincoln finally coming around and taking a stand against slavery, or Susan B. Anthony pushing for equal rights for women and having the vote, or Rosa Parks saying 'I'm not going to sit where they want me to.' The list is long. The wheels of progress can be painfully slow at times; they just need something to draw attention to the cause – perhaps that someone can be you."

When the speeches and music selections by the RHAM High School wind ensemble came to an end, Board of Education Chairman Danny Holtsclaw presented the diplomas. As each line of students stood and made their final walk as high schoolers, those still seated got increasingly excited, tossing beach balls in the air – which faculty attempted to confiscate until the end of the ceremony – blowing the occasional fog horn or sending a shoot of Silly String at classmates.

Then, once the final students made their way back to their seats, that excitement exploded; beach balls, fog horns and Silly String filled the sky along with their cheers, which nearly drowned out Superintendent Bob Siminski's request that they flip their tassels, and his official presentation of the Class of 2016, which includes:

@Alexis Maria Acosta, @Kara Jane Adams, Connor James Aldrich, @Mary Nicole Allain, Stuart Churchill Allen, Tyler Sage Anderson, @Aiswarya Arul, @Adam Jason Barnett, Skyler Mae Barrett, Sean Philip Barry, @Megan Margaret Barstow, Steven Lee Barton, +Steven Robert Bayer, McKenna Lee Beben, @Casey Elizabeth Bednarz, +Sara Emily Bell, Christopher James Benken, @Eric Michael Bergen, Gina Marie Betz, Howard Martin Bogue, Alexandra Mae Bookstaver, Stephanie Ann Borowski, @Stanyслав Peter Borsh, @Leah MacKenzie Breault, \*Patricia Lynne Brosseau, Cameron Steven Brown, Adam George Brudz-Rodríguez, Benjamin Matthew Burke, @Nicole Kathleen Burley, Jessica Charlene Burr, Michael Robert Calderoni, @Mary Katherine Cannon, \*Jack Oliver Caplan, Matthew James Caputo, Maresa Elizabeth Catanzaro, Elizabeth Lee Chapman, Josalyn Elizabeth Cipkas, @Riley Catherine Clark, Katherine Erin Clarke, \*Haley Evangeline Clegg, Bradley Michael Coleman, Tyler Ryan Collard,

Matthew Vincent Colonna, Alison Elizabeth Conte, Sarah Elizabeth Coombs, Brodey David Coutant, Zachary Michael Crosby, Allison Laura Crowl, Nicholas Paul Cullen, @Joseph Thomas Cyr, Nathan Joseph Czapiga, Christopher James D'Antonio,

\*Marina Diane Dabaghian, James Eldon Daigle, Zachary James Dalton, Alexander Joseph Damon, Antonio Frank Davis, @Alexa Nicole DePersia, Anthony James DeRienzo, \*@Emma G. Dokmanovich, @Katelyn Eileen Donahue, @Maura Elizabeth Donahue, Joseph Austin Doyle, Austin Merrick Drexler, Dustin Robert Dube, Robert George Ekern, \*Colin Marshall Farrar, Emma Elizabeth Filosa, Daniel Leo Fogarty, @Christina Lee Folsom, @Hunter Thomas Forstmann, Gregory David Franklin, Kali Diana Gagne, Samuel Michael Gagnon, \*@Matthew Joseph Garcia, Taylor Marie Garger, @Cody Kelly Gauvin, Travis Neville Gervais, Spencer David Giglio, Mckenzie Rose Gilbert, Benjamin Douglas Gilmore, \*@John Grant Golemba, +James Louis Gurry, Benjamin Patrick Haas, Derrick Abraham Hanelius, Laura Grace Heitman, \*Owen Luke Henderschedt, \*@Marina Elisabeth Hess, Ann Samrah Hetherington-Coy, Justin Robert Hoffman, Kaitlin Anne Hohman, Cody Michael Houston, Joshua John Hudak, Christopher Steven Hunt, Kyle John Hunt, Jordan Joseph Hyde, Alicea Roxanne Hyland, \*@Katrina Marie Irwin, Michael Brian Jacewicz, Miranda Lin Johnson;

\*Rebecca Grace Johnston, \*Aidan Richard Kalisher, Kyle Scott Kanaitis, \*@Rodolfo Edwin Keesey, Caitlin Rachael Keith, @Erin Eileen Kelly, Nicholas Anthony Kelsey, \*@Ryan Patrick Kennedy, Noelle Elizabeth King, Meghan Jane Kulow, \*@Olivia Grace Diana Kurtz, Anson Peter Kuzmickas, Simon Erik Lambert, Jacob Steven LaMondie, James Philip Landrey, Vanessa Marie Landry, Tori-Marie Lauria, Elijah James Lawrence, Robert M. Lawrence, Maega Tabitha Laws, @Haley Nicole Leaming, \*Megan Nicole Leclerc, Paul Matthew Leone, Andrew Edward Leslie, Benjamin Victor Levasseur, Emily Violet Lisitano, Dylan River Luzzi, Lauren Elizabeth MacConnell, Jason Richard MacDonald, \*@Grace Tarbox MacLachlan, Nicholas John MacLean, @Alexa Marie Mancini, McKenzie I. Maneggia, +Ashley Maria Maratta, @Kellie Marie Schee Martin, \*Ryan Michael Masotti, Cole Jordan Massey, Tyler Ryan Mawdsley, \*@Tara Nicole McGuinness, Brian Patrick McKenna, Anna Rose McLean, Michael Richmond McMahon, \*@Ethan Philip McRae, \*@Jessica Charlee Merry, \*@Cassandra Blue Michaud, @Sarah Michelle Mikkelsen, Jarod Albert Mimó, Jenna Catherine Rose Moreira, Sinead Careen Moylan, Matthew James Mulligan, @Chelsea Amanda Mumley, Kellan Navarre, Rachel Ann Nelson, Carl Philip Alexander Neubauer, \*@Emily-Rose Nicoletta, \*Joseph Robert Nieszczezewski;

Jakob Kaine Niles, Caroline Lily Novak, Marissa Starr Nowisch, Christopher Patrick O'Neil, Brian Albert Olmstead, @Nicole Marie Orama, Nathan James Ortegon, Joshua Patrick Ostrowski, Christopher Joseph Paggioli, \*@Carli May Palmer, Nicholas Troy Paluso, +Michael Robert Pampreen, \*@Harrison Edward Pellerin, \*Gordon Allen-Rinaldi Perrett, Jake Thomas Petrozza, Madison Elizabeth Phelps, William Robert Plausse, Renée Katherine Poirier, William James Pond, Bella Sherry Prieto, Cassandra Nicole Prior, \*Sarah Hoadley Pruitt, Jared Thomas Rand, @Sara Michelle Randazzo, \*@Kira Elizabeth Raymond, Brady Allen-Rinaldi Reardon, Jesse James Stanley Rearick, Colin Michael Risley, +Jordan David Rivera, Carolyn Eileen Roberts, Tyler Edward Roberts, Benjamin Daniel Rockoff, Conner Thomas Rose, Savanna Lee Rovazzini, Nicholas Paul Rowe, Jacob Sebastian Russo, Jacob Paul Sadowski, \*Michael Anthony Salamone, \*Shaela Tara Salinger, Michael Edward Saltus, Brandon Michael Salvus, @Emily Lucy Saunders, Rachel Theresa Schlegel, Jacob Clark Schluter, Kyle Ryan Scutnik, Danielle Jeannine Senechal, Rachele Marie Shafer, Amanda Skoglund, \*John Kenneth Slater, Paige Julia Slayton, Benjamin Craig Smith, \*@Caroline Maddonna Smith,

Jillian Joy Smith, @Sarah Ann Smith, @Shannon Tynan Smith, Katherine Elizabeth Sokol, Chase Hunter Soulagnet, \*@Amanda Victoria Speno, Devin Paul St. Jean, Jeremy Isaac St. Pierre, @Olivia Rae Stalega, Nicholas Alan Starkowski, Dalton Lindberg Stein, @Madeline Elizabeth Stone, \*Sierra Madelaine Stone, Rachel Catherine Surdel, Zoe Elizabeth Szolomayer, @Erica Nicole Tardif, Ryan Thomas Tedford, Devon Emma Thomas, Ayla Scott Thurstan, Ava Marie Tilsch, Branden Kenneth Tingley, Corey Chaelen Tirone, Kayla Marlaine Tluck, \*@Julia Tofan, \*Ross Johnson Tomanelli, \*Brianna Anevay Tracy, Christopher D. Tsirikis, \*Julia Josephine Turgeon, Matthew Joseph Turo, Amanda Jean Tyler, \*Sharon Nicole Van Meter, Micaela Doreen Veronese, Joe Robert Veronesi, \*@Caroline Elizabeth Veschi, @Emily Nora Claudine Vieten, Larissa Judith Vilcinskis, \*Anya Natasha Vrabie, Kate Emma Weathersbee, +Daniel Richard Webster, \*Christian Paul Whalen, Rachel Nicole White, Jordan Grace Wingate, Michael Wesley Wolanin, @Emily Frances Yetishefsky, Alyssa Anderson Zipoli.

\* Member of the National Honor Society in good standing

@ Green Cord/100 or more hours of community service

+ Enlisted in the Military



**EHHS class salutatorian Nicole Burns played the drums in her cap and gown as the band joined the chamber choir in presenting "When I Grow Up," from the musical *Matilda*, during Sunday's commencement ceremony.**

**Class of Construction cont. from Front Page**

the benefits of, the tripping over trash bins in the hallways, the need for bottles of water in the hottest part of the school year," she said. "We couldn't even have our graduation at the high school because the school is closed down. But this is what makes us so strong. Our class will always be able to persevere."

And while future generations won't have the same lessons in perseverance that came from construction, Burns said they will have a wonderful new school.

"Just going into the new science wing makes me happier about the future of our school," the aspiring aerospace engineer said. "With the building improvements, there will be something for everyone."

She cited the gym, the music lab, and a new library as some of the improvements.

"The building will finally live up to the quality of education that the teachers provide us at this school," Burns said.

Valedictorian Kate Taylor introduced her speech with a welcome to the assembled throngs.

"We are graduating, and there is much rejoicing," she said.

The Class of 2016 joined together in an unenthusiastic "yay."

It turns out the response was a coordinated effort inspired by English teacher and class advisor Mark O'Donnell.

Taylor explained this week that O'Donnell had been talking about using the Monty Python reference in a graduation speech for the past four years. Once he found out Taylor would be valedictorian, he asked her if she would do it.

"I thought it would be a fun thing to include to get the whole class involved, and would be especially amusing for the Monty Python fans in the class," Taylor said.

She was able to get her fellow students' cooperation by posting about it on the class Facebook page.

The rest of Taylor's speech built on the sense of unity evident in the opening line and the class response.

"We make up an interesting and diverse group of people," Taylor said. "Some of us are artists, some leaders, some jocks, dancers, actors, writers, comedians, musicians and some, myself included, are nerds. Despite our differences, we've made one unified class. The actors talk to the jocks, and the leaders sit with the writers at lunch. The one thing we've held in common is that we're friends."

Taylor told her classmates it is up to them to continue on their own unique path even when obstacles get in the way.

"Today, we have succeeded. We have made it through the tests, the drama, and we even survived a live construction zone. If we can succeed in all these ways, we can succeed again," she said.

A somber note amid all the celebration could be found in the class list printed in the ceremony program. It invoked the memory of Kyle Johnson, who was a fifth-grade student at Center School when he died in 2008 at the age of 10. Johnson was born with spinal muscular atrophy, a rare neuromuscular disease, on Sept. 17, 1998. He lived in East Hampton all his life.

The members of the East Hampton High School Class of 2016 are:

+ Alexis Marie Abbotts, Jocelyne Tayla Alfred, Drew Arcidiacono, Elizabeth Jane Barber, + Kathryn Naomi Barber, Crystal Irene Barone, + Alexander Gregory Basil, Raymond Marc Begin, Megan Lynn Bergeron, Nya Mae Black, Melissa Michelle Bosse, Emily Anne Brock, +\* Nicole Theresa Burns, Devin Michael Caramma, Taylor Jean Caruso, Heather Ashley Catalano, Tiffany Joy Caye, Mariah Frances Cecilio, Shane Michael Chester, Mason Thomas Cordeiro, Tyler M. Costa, Kyle Richard Cutler, Joanna Dabkowski, + Hannah Ellane Daddario, Samantha Lynn D'Anna, +\* Carli Anne D'Antonio, + Natalie Marie Dash, Jarrett Nicholas DeBowsky, Nicole Marie DeMartino, Tabitha Jillian DeMerchant, Alex Michael DePasquale, Ian Rodger Dill, Patrick Michael Doyle, + Daniel Noah Einsiedel, Paige Ann Einsiedel, Michelle Catherine Emmett, Adam Michael Eurbinn, Grace Elaine Exner, Grace Albee Fiala, Monica Farkas, Jaimie Marie Farren, Kyle Jared Fields, Matthew Thomas Flynn, Gabriel William Fuller, Devan Mazzotta Gareau, \* Sydney Meaghan Georgiades, Lucas William Gerolami, Valerie Katherine Girvin, Yana Sabsay Goral, Leo Joseph Harbec, James Steven Harris, Lindsey Kim Hopkins, Gabriella Nicole Huntley, +\* Carolyn Michelle Jedziniak, Alexander Matthew Karalus, Madison Lynn Kasperski, +\* Austin Michael Kelly, Hannah Sage Konior, Melissa Ann Kowalsky, Alexis Christine Krajewski, Thomas Joseph Kriss;

Nicole Barbara Landry, Samuel Daly Laraia, Nathan Alexander LeFoll, Meagan Alyssa Levine, Taylor Elizabeth Luke, Timothy James Lynch, Ryan Michael Lysak, Rowan McGuire Lytle, Emily Rose Maccione, + Mary Janice Markovitz, Brittany Taylor Marrow, Jenna Rose Marteka, Marlena Iris Martin, + Sarah Elizabeth Massie, + Kayla Meagan McLaughlin, Ehren Charles Meisinger, + Alyssa Rose Mercaldi, Randall Walter Michaud, Kaitlyne Rose Michnowicz, Tucker Scott Minor, Ryan James Misorski, Natalie Raye Moon, + Kaitlyn Mary Morris, Patrick Victor Morrone, +Ashlynn Laura Morse, Kyle Frederick James Nichols, Krysten Therese Nye, Destiny Ann Ocelik, Meghan Christine Orbann, Brian Scott Owen, Kristin Kathleen Owen, Mara Kelly Owens, + Claire Noel Pawlewitz, Rachel Elizabeth Pawloski, Sean Thomas Pedevillano, London Elizabeth Pelletier-Divino, Joshlynn Jireh Pena, Dalton Paul Peszynski, Ross Plyley, Tyler Austin Porter;

+ Kevin James Radavich, + Renee Antoinette Radavich, +\*Kathleen Jordan Randall, Ian Michael Reilly, Taylor Marie Rixon, Christopher William Rodrigues, Aaron Nicholas Romero, Emma Eileen Rushin, Alec Anthony Russo, John Richard Ryan, + Christopher John Ryan Jr., + Chelsea Grace Salafia, Mariano Stefano Santiago, Delaney McBrien Savage, Jacob Eliot Schmitt, Quinn Wesley Schragar, Michael Nicholas Sebastiao, Logan James Sharp, Stephan Joel Simon, + Alyssa Michele Sitro, Morgan Ryley Slossberg, Jesse Patrick Snurkowski, + Amanda Lynne Sorvillo, Chad Edward Stanton, Scott Arne Svalestad, \* Kate Alyssa Taylor, + Sierra Lace Taylor, Parker Zachary Thomas Thibault, +\* Jordan Wilkinson Thomas, Francesca Tomasi, Alexander Robert Ulm, Joshua Armand Violette, Haley Elise Wall, Dalton Edward Wall, Zachary Robert Warner, +\* Sarah Elizabeth Waterhouse, Amanda Duffy Weech, + Hannah Marie Welburn, Tyler White, Cameron Paul Wielock, + Katherine Elizabeth Williams, Tristan Raphael Winquist, Chandler Jason Wojick, Conner Tony Wojick, Emily Nichole Worman, and Owen Nicholas Wosleger.

In Memoriam, Kyle Johnson.

\* Top 10 students

+ Ferrigno-Bell Chapter National Honor Society

# Bacon Grads Encouraged to Follow Their Passions

by Julianna Roche

Last Friday, a processional of Bacon Academy's Class of 2016, clad in their blue robes and caps, strode proudly onto the football field for what ultimately became their last few moments as high school students.

Amid the evening's clear and sunny skies, students were left with similar messages from several commencement speakers – to find their passion, follow it, and remember to have fun along the way.

Salutatorian Colin Hiscox was the first to speak, urging his peers to do just that. "I think we should go out after today and have fun," he said. "It's true it might be difficult; it's true there will be mistakes; it's true that there will be barriers and setbacks and opposition. ... But life is what we make of it, and I think we should take tomorrow and make it what we want – within the law."

In her speech, Gilbert Lamb Essayist Lauren Hickey made reference to her own passion with the creation of Bacon Academy's Farm to School program, which helped bring local farm-sourced fruits and vegetables into Colchester schools' cafeterias. "Passion is the greatest source of power," she said.

As is with every Bacon Academy graduation, what followed was a recording of words of wisdom and farewell wishes from Colchester staff members to the background sound of The Beatles' "Hello, Goodbye." Some of their advice included: "Work hard, find what makes you happy, and pursue it with passion. Life's too short to have it any other way," "Your whole life is ahead of you, so make it count," "Be in the moment," "The most important person to make happy is the one you see standing in the mirror," "Go find something you love and are passionate about," and "Never be deterred by the rollercoaster that is life... because what goes down, always, always comes up."

The ceremony also included the presentation of the class gift, which was a refurbishment of the school's garden beds, and a \$1,000 charity donation to benefit the town of Colchester and its people.

Valedictorian Megan Stevens spoke next, speaking of the camaraderie with her classmates and how important it is to rely on each other. "Throughout high school, we have seen time and time again how much we can succeed when we combine our efforts," she said. "Whether it is through support from peers in the classroom, teammates on the field, musicians in the band, or artists in the studio, our class has learned that we can find success – however we measure that – if we turn to each other for ideas, for help, for encouragement."

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein and Superintendent of Schools Jeffery Mathieu then took the podium to address students with

similar heartfelt messages.

Goldstein, himself a Bacon Academy graduate (Class of 1985), left students with the message that "sometimes, nothing really can be something." He referenced the illustrated book *The Gift of Nothing* by Patrick McDonnell, in which Mooch the cat desperately wants to find a gift for his friend – Earl the dog. He wonders however, what he can buy for the dog that has everything and decides the answer is nothing. A simple story with a powerful message – the book ends with the two friends sitting wrapped paw-in-paw as they enjoy nothing but their friendship, which ends up being the greatest gift of all.

He went on to encourage students to find something they have a talent for and pursue it. "When you dedicate yourself to what's important to you, you can accomplish imaginable things," he said. Mathieu had a similar message, adding, "If your dreams don't scare you, they're not big enough."

Once the speeches ended, each then-high senior walked across the stage and was presented with their diploma. When they finally returned to their seats, the Class of 2016 celebrated their last few moments as high school students with a triumphant toss of their blue Bobcat caps in the air.

The members of the Bacon Academy Class of 2016 are: Daniela Violeta Albert, Dakota James Ambrosia, Colleen Emma Anderson, \*Olivia Paige Anderson, Jenna Rose Anfuso, Carrington Theresa Archambault, Emily Elizabeth Armstrong, Thomas Frederick Atkins, Teri-Lynn Bailey, Jacqueline Alice Bartha, Isabelle Marie Bauer, Taylor Lynn Bernier, Emily Irene Besaw, Jordan Michael Betz, Megan Billie, John Thomas Blakley, Kyle René Boucher, Juliette Bourcier, Christopher Austin Brainard, Erik Christopher Brookes, Jacob Andrew Brown, Lyla Brown, Brendon Walker Byam, Lilyanna Kristin Carmichael, Harley James Carroll, Tiffany Nicole Cates, Matthew Angelo Cavaliere, Jason Michael Cenotti, Kassidy Charron, Melissa Chasse, David W. Churchill, Christopher James Clark, Andrew Brian Collins, Michael Patrick Conway, Ryan Patrick Curtis, Heath Malcolm Cutler, Timothy Damaj, William Paul Dastous, Michael Scott Davis, Colby Corsten Decker, \*Haleigh Paige DelGaizo, Cecilia Louise Dell, Colton Edward Dennis, Erin Leigh DeTuccio, Courtney April Downer, Ryan James Dunn, \*Taylor Rose Duperry, Julia Anne Eifler, Emily Melissa Engel, Richard Joel Ensor, Katelyn Marie Fellows, Jacob Martin Fenster, Jacob Matthew Fortin, Felix John Foti;

Sadie Megan Gallagher, Bailey Salvatore Gallitto, Nicole Susan Gaudet, Elizabeth Mary Gawlak, Jason Andrew Geary, Gabriella Maria Geida, Mariah Lauren Gibbs, Luis M. Goitia, Alyus Benjamin, Anthony Gonzalez, Austin Michael Gudelski, \*Katherine Helen Hageman, Brian, Anthony Hamel, Jennifer Hancock, Seth Michael Hart, Madeline Anna Harvey, Connor Fitzgerald Henley, \*Lauren Nicole Hickey, Zachary Charles Hill, \*Colin Avery Hiscox, Ashley Brooke Deborah Holroyd, Martin Joseph Honsberg, Claire Helena Humphrey, Jaclyn Renée Jakubowski, Marjorie Xenia Jordan, Justin



The members of the Bacon Academy Class of 2016 march excitedly onto their football field for their commencement ceremony.

Thomas Kapoor, Peter Kazibwe, Tyler L. Keller, Sean Robert Kelly, Megan Ann Kilpatrick, Garrett Roger Kingsley, \*Kameron William Kirby, \*Katarina Konon, Dylan Matthew Kornbrath, Elizabeth Julia Kowalsky, Victoria Adriana Kozlowski, \*Zachary Alexander Kranc, Melissa Suzanne Kuster, Mikayla Rae Labbe, Abigail Michelle Ladegard, \*Ashley Irene Laliberte, Zachary Scott Lawrence, \*Brian Andrew Legato, Delaney Kate LePage, \*Robert Nicholas Lepore, Nicolle Love Letterman, \*Jillian Marie LeVasseur, Jacob Penfield Lewis, Tyler Reed Lewis, Rose Aline Lillpopp, Emily Elizabeth Lincoln, \*Alyson Mary Litwin, \*Ryan Allen Litwin, \*Shawn Jeffrey LoVetere, Diamond Lilian Lubsey, Lewis Warring Luster Jr., Connor James Lyons;

\*Michael James Maffuid, Jewel Noelia Maldonado, Zackary Manganello, Paul Thomas Marrotte, Laura Blaire Marvin, Megan Winona Marvin, Marie Gaëlle Mathieu, Jimmy Joshua Matos, Cassandra Renee Maynard, Ethan Jeffrey Maynard, Mallory Barbara Mazur, Kayla Anne McAuliffe, Kathleen Grace McCarty, Caitlin Marie McCurry, Victoria McGaw, Olivia Cecelia McKenzie, Maria Lee McNichols, Marc Nathan Miceli, Amanda Gabrielle Morabito, Ashleigh Nicole Moro, Emily Anne Mucci, Jenna Marie Muller, Noah Michael Nadeau, Daniel Curtis Narlock, Karina Marie Neal, Sarah Marie Nelson, Tommy Quoc Nguyen, Tyler Robert O'Connor, Cassie Morgan O'Leary, Trevor Thomas Okonuk, Holly Christine Ondras, Brett Alexander Overbeck, Bryanna Paquette, Noah Alexander Perkins, Caroline Fitzgerald Peter, Grant Harrison Peters, Taylor Marie Petro, David Louis Pinto, Laura Marie

Plourde, Austin Prevost, Cassidy E. Priore, \*Tara Prochorena, Nicholas Dimitri Provost, Danielle Elizabeth Psnis, Matthew Edward Rakowski, \*Ryanna Lee Rapuano, Joseph Martin Raulukaitis, Jr., Lauren MacKenzie Riley, Lauré Kathryn Rioux, Pamela Grace Rochette, Dante William Rodegher, BriAnna Rose Rubbo, \*Matthew Jonathan Rumbel, \*Melanie Jessica Rumbel, \*Michael Jeremiah Rumbel;

Erick George Savidakis, Jr., Brian Paul Scheid, \*Margaret Summeear Schenarts, Matthew David Schneider, Shannon Francis Scott, Jake Thomas Shumbo, Matheau A. Sicard, Abbey Marie Simonelli, Victoria Lynn Skoog, Myriam Lou Slatery, Amanda Lynne Smith, Lauryn Victoria Smith, Nicholas Daniel Smith, Emily Rose Smith-Collette, Colleen Rachel Sosnoski, Paul Russell Soucy, \*Megan Elizabeth Stevens, Abigail Fay Stratton, Stefanos Stravoravdis, Anna Nicole Sullivan, Rebecca LindseyAnn Taft, Dimitrios Joseph Tartsinis, Elizabeth Marie Tinnel, Andrew Trujillo, William Edward Urbowicz, Tristan Daniel Vasseur, Justin Ventura, Jacqueline Elizabeth Verian, Ann Vigil, Jake Michael Wagner, Nicholas Stephen Wall, Victoria Morgan Wallington, Jacob-David Walls, Ethan Eliot Walsh, Brianna Kathleen Weikel, Emma Madison Wertz, Sophia Elizabeth Whipple, Dominique Wiggins, Abigail Rose Willauer, Sarah Rose Willson, Amber Lynn Wohlstrom, Emily Winona Woodin, Jah-Dey Oakley Wright, Jah-Marley Shackiel Wright, Sierra Margaret Young, Gabriella Nicole Zumpano, Kristina Marie Zumpano.

\*Member of the National Honor Society

## Concerns Expressed Over Portland Elmcrest Proposal

by Elizabeth Regan

The developer for a plan to resurrect the former Elmcrest Hospital property is touting it as the quickest and most efficient way to save three historic homes located on the property.

Dan Bertram, principal of BRT Corporation of Danbury, hopes to construct 238 high-end apartments mixed with 75,000 square feet of shops, restaurants and offices. The development is named Brainerd Place after the 165-year-old Italianate home he would like to make a centerpiece of the development. He laid out his plan and answered questions at Tuesday's meeting of the Economic Development Commission, where about 100 people sat in chairs arranged in a circle in the middle school cafeteria.

Included in Bertram's project is the full restoration of the 1851-52 Brainerd House and the exterior renovation of the 1884 Sage House. The fate of the 1830 Hart-Jarvis House, which stands in the middle of what Bertram envisions as the parking lot for the shopping center, is less certain.

Bertram's original schematics released last year included 75,000 square feet of business space featuring a "big box" retailer such as a grocery store. But he has not been able to secure a contract with an anchor tenant, he said, and has revised his expectations to include a two-story, L-shaped building with multiple 5,000-10,000-square-foot shops on the lower level and office space above.

With the smaller footprint of the two-story retail and commercial building, Bertram said there may be room to move the Hart-Jarvis House to the southwest corner of the property.

Several residents at the meeting expressed concern about the deteriorating condition of the

homes, which are part of a historic district recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. EDC Chairman Elwin Guild and others asked what can be done now to protect the historic houses.

The property has already been vacant for more than a decade.

Bertram indicated that work to prevent further deterioration and to secure the property can begin soon if zoning regulations are changed and a tax abatement agreement is reached.

"Within 90 days, if we can get the zoning regulation changed and the tax deal together ... we can take the Brainerd House and Sage House and start protecting that ourselves, while we put together the plan for Hart-Jarvis House," he said.

Bertram has a text amendment application pending before the Planning and Zoning Commission. A public hearing on the requested change to the town's zoning regulations was held Thursday evening after press time.

The regulations must change before the zoning commission can consider any plan involving 238 apartments, which far exceeds the current number of units allowed.

By applying for the zoning change, Bertram has set the clock on the timetable for approval or rejection. Once an application is received, the zoning commission has 65 days to open a public hearing and 35 days thereafter to close it. The commission must make a decision within 65 days of closing the hearing. An extension of up to 65 days may be granted at the applicant's request.

Bertram's proposed change to the zoning regulations would allow the developers to build

up to 16 housing units for each 5,000 square feet of commercial space as long as they "incorporate the preservation of significant historic resources identified in the town's Plan of Conservation and Development."

A text amendment with the same ratio was brought forward by the zoning commission itself at an April public hearing. The commission withdrew its application, instead asking the Board of Selectmen to initiate a study about the potential effect of the change on the school system, police department, fire department, utilities and taxes.

Current zoning regulations put the maximum ratio at three housing units for every 5,000 square feet devoted to business.

Selectmen have not yet acted on the zoning commission's request for a study. They discussed a \$30,000 proposal by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, a nonprofit economic development firm, for an analysis of the fiscal and economic impact of the proposed development but did not bring it to a vote.

Bertram's zoning change would also specify that the number of housing units in a mixed-use development cannot exceed 240. The development would consist of studio, one- or two-bedroom apartments only, with the two-bedroom units accounting for no more than 55 percent of the offerings.

Bertram said only 30 percent of the apartments slated for Brainerd Place are two-bedroom units.

"We're making a very conscious decision to go after two demographics," he explained. The niche market consists of young professionals

and retirees: two sets of people willing to pay for less space with more modern amenities.

BRT's vice president of sales and marketing, Teresa LaCroce – who is also Bertram's sister – emphasized to the audience that the company is a family business. She said both she and her brother grew up in the business and have continued the tradition. Their sister, Julia Morris, serves as general counsel for the company.

"We have never started a project and left it unfinished," she said in response to a question from a leery resident. "It's a point of personal pride that we develop quality communities."

LaCroce said rents would range from \$1,000 to \$1,295 for a studio apartment, \$1,300 to \$1,500 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$1,900 to \$2,200 for a two-bedroom apartment.

The zoning commission approved a special permit for the site in 2009 with 149,127 square feet of commercial space and 82 housing units. Then the project stalled under a different developer due to the economic downturn. According to Bertram and other proponents of the current proposal, residential construction replaced commercial as the more lucrative option.

Property owner Fred Hassan, who acquired the property over a decade ago from St. Francis Care Behavioral Health, sat by Bertram's side at the meeting. The developer called Hassan a close and longtime friend of his family.

Hassan spoke little, but with emphasis, during the two-and-a-half hour forum.

"It's time to stop talking," he said. "Take a position and start doing something. We need your approval."



The 87-member Portland High School Class of 2016 gather outside the school one more time last Thursday, ready to graduate and go off into the world.



Board of Education Chairwoman Mary Ann Rode and her daughter Rachel share a moment at the commencement ceremony.

## PHS Class of '16 Urged to Take Chances

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland High School graduates are taking to heart valedictorian Erica DeBarge's advice to step out of their "comfort zones."

DeBarge spoke from the podium at Thursday evening's windy outdoor commencement ceremony to say she's seen courage in so many things students have done during their four years in high school. Sometimes testing the boundaries of their comfort zones involved trying out for the capella choir or the school play despite being terrified to audition, she said. Other times it involved taking a class, such as public speaking, to help overcome an area of weakness.

Several graduates shared their own comfort zones with the *Rivereast*.

For senior Carlton Overton, his comfort zone was the gymnasium, where he said physical education teacher David Kraszewski gave him a place to play ultimate Frisbee and get away from it all.

"He let me in gym almost every other period for the last four years," Overton said of Kraszewski. "He was my escape when high school was too much."

And now, Overton added, abandoning his comfort zone means enlisting in the U.S. Air Force. He said he will leave for basic training in August.

Stevie DeToro, a senior with a penchant for fashion, found her comfort zone amid the close-knit graduating class of 87 students.

"There's no one you don't know because it's so small," she said. "It's like a big family. It's comforting being here, and it's sad to leave everyone we've been with since kindergarten."

DeToro has designs on heading to New York City, to go into the fashion industry.

Jamie Burdett's comfort zone was in the music wing, where she's been in the chorus, under the direction of music teacher Samuel Tucker, for all four years of high school.

She'll be leaving that safe space to study nursing at Goodwin College in Hartford, but

she's taking her confident singing voice with her.

"Mr. Tucker really inspired me to be that free person and to just let it go," Burdett said.

DeBarge said during her speech graduation represents an opportunity to reflect on the courage they've shown, and to carry it forward.

"As we start all over again, we must not sell ourselves short. We should avoid the temptation of the easy path despite its comforting familiarity," she said.

A tribute during the ceremony to the school's retiring teachers showed the class's appreciation for three men who have also recognized it's time to step away from the security of the classroom.

Student Senate President Sara Donahue called out history teacher Tim O'Connell, special education teacher Nicholas Chaconis, and history and culinary arts teacher Charlie Ryan.

"These men have influenced not only the students, but the PHS community as a whole," Donahue said.

She described Chaconis, the long-time girls basketball and track coach known as "Cone," as someone whose voice and laugh carried throughout the hallways.

"Cone taught students and athletes to put in their best work and never settle for second best," she said. "As he told his players, 'Carry yourself with pride, win or lose, knowing you gave it your best.'"

According to Donahue, O'Connell is known for a sense of humor and contagious smile.

"For 48 years, students always did what he told them to do and they were never late to his class," she said.

Donahue gave Ryan the title of loudest teacher at Portland High, crediting him with unusual catchphrases like "skip out," "FOCUS," and "bark like a dog."

She also called attention to Ryan's years of service as the Student Senate advisor, through which he helped organize school activities in-

cluding dances, spirit week and pep rallies.

The three teachers got a standing ovation, along with copies of the school yearbook, presented by co-editors Emma Barresi and Rachel DiMare.

Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly told students to be passionate and persistent in identifying and reaching their goals. He said senior capstone projects on topics ranging from autism awareness to global warming showed him students are already putting his advice into action.

"I witnessed our graduates' ability to look beyond themselves, beyond what they have been taught in the school district, to follow, in most cases, an impassioned interest, to persevere with a project that had value to them and others," he said.

According to O'Reilly, members of the class of 2016 are prepared for success.

"I see vocalists, instrumentalists and visual artists who not only have great talent, but who also see the tremendous value of the arts. They are skillful athletes who embrace camaraderie and teamwork. They are passionate and caring human beings who uphold the far-reaching value that taking care of others, including less fortunate people, is an important thread in the fabric of community," he said.

In the end, as students received their diplomas, turned the tassels on their mortar boards, and left their seats in two straight lines, commencement exercises for the Class of 2016 were as much about recognizing the importance of the comfort zone as it was about the need to break free.

Senior Class President Anthony Archuleta credited the small, close community of graduates and a supportive teaching staff with making him feel accepted when he moved to town.

"I've lived in six different states and attended nine different schools and out of all of them, I have never felt more welcome than at Portland High School," he said.

The members of the Portland High School Class of 2016 are:

Stephen Daniel Alfano, Anthony Tyler Archuleta >, Joshua Gabriel Arroyo, Anthony Fredrick Bach, Emma Louise Barresi #>, Brycen Michael-Merve Bazalais, Morgan Paige Benham #>\*, Samuel David Bennett, Kyle Lucas Bermami >, Katherine May Bials #>, Madison Webster Bond, Elijah Kane Brazeal, Jamie Christine Burdett, Jade Summer Campy, Ashley Rose Cappello, Georgia Ann Carlson >, Devin Kay Carrier, Alexandra Jane Christensen >, Marissa Michele Colla >, Courtney Brooke Cote #>\*, Savannah Lynn Culley, Brenna Catherine Currier >, Elijah Kane Curry-Oakliff, Gianna Rose D'Angelo, Natalie Emanuel Daoud >, Tonytte Beaulah Davis, Erica Madeline DeBarge #>\*, Daniel Michael DeBarge >\*, Richard George DeCrescenzo, Evan Daniel Decina >\*, Stevie Lynn DeToro, Rachael Mackenzie DiMare >, Sarah Elizabeth Donahue #>, Rachael Anne Duckworth, Isabel May Dupuis, Lucas Landon Enright >, Peter Paul Ereshena, Nicholas Anthony Fazzino, Emma Jane Foley, Amanda Elizabeth Fontanez #>, Jacob Stephen Godwin, Isabelle Grace Guilmette #>, Meghan Kathleen Hickey, Caraline Mia Judge #>;

Ruth Lynn Kelley #, Karen Ann Kelly #>\*, Alexis Chanel King, Edward Joseph Krauth >, Jason Kenneth LaBella, Kim Su Labby #>, MacKenzy Nicole LaFave, Nicholas Owen Lee, Timothy James Leonard, Kiley Samantha Lord #>\*, Drew Michael McKosky, Sarah Jean Mizener, Jocelyn Mary Morehouse, Amanda Jacquelyn Murphy #, Rachel Amanda Osak, Carlton Lee Overton, Bethany Rose Pantoja, Ashlee Marie Paradis >, Michaela Rose Paternostro >, Jordan Shea Peralta, Ryan Gaetano Pittingo, Kyle David Prucha, Nolan Matthew Reimondo, Rachel Angelina Rode #>, Austin Alec Rodriguez, Gabriel Luis Rodriguez., Emma Sage Ruppert >, Devon Elizabeth Rutter, Brandon Raymond Sajdak, Kierstin Schafrick, Justin Andrew Staub, Evan Tallmadge Sweet, David Henry Tacey, Jenna Marie Thiffeault, Brooke Lynne Townsend #, Jonathan Patrick Twichell, Jordan Michael Vogt, Justin David Willette, Kevin Thomas Wilson, Jacob Adam Winakor >\*, Tyler John Wyslick >, Matthew William Wyslick >, and AnnaRose Maria Zampano #>\*

\* Top 10 percent of class

# National Honor Society

> Tri-M Music Honor Society

## Marlborough Drive-Thru Café Serves 1,000th Meal to Community

by Julianna Roche

In September 2013, the Rev. Bob Faulhaber Jr. (better known as "Pastor Bob" by his congregation) of the Congregational Church of Marlborough was approached by a church member, who also happened to be a chef, about finding a way to provide hot meals for those in the community who may need it.

Because the congregation was already involved with the Marlborough Food Bank, he knew it was possible to make it happen, but his concerns were how to serve hot meals at the church itself and would enough people in need actually come forward.

"We were worried they wouldn't come because it can be shameful needing a small meal, and it's a small community," Faulhaber said. "But the thought kept eating away at me."

Then, he realized they had a long driveway in the back of their facility that ran around the church. "I thought – what if we do this drive-thru style, you know, the same way you would

at a Dunkin' Donuts or McDonald's."

And so the Drive-Thru Café was born. Since then, on the last Sunday of each month at 5 p.m., cars line up behind the church hall, at which point drivers and passengers present volunteers with tickets in exchange for a hot, home-cooked meal at no cost. The volunteers stand by their slogan of serving "50 meals in 50 minutes."

In the month leading up to the drive-thru, the Marlborough Food Bank determines 50 Marlborough residents who will receive the tickets to make use of the service. Most go to food bank patrons, but according to Faulhaber, some also go to the senior citizens down the street at Florence Lord who are unable to drive.

Depending on the month, either members of the congregation or outside groups will sign up to volunteer, but the process remains the same. The drive-thru rotates between three or four different menus, and before the service, each

of the 10 signed-up volunteers are asked to make enough food – everything from meatloaf and gravy or macaroni and cheese, to vegetables or dessert – for six people, so the day of the service, the food is ready to go. The volunteers then enjoy the 10 leftover meals together following the service.

"Afterwards, the volunteers break bread together and talk about the experience," said Faulhaber. "You always walk away feeling good."

While the drive-thru has been a success since its conception, the next Drive-Thru Café on June 26 will mark a huge milestone for the congregation – they will be serving their 1,000th meal. For current volunteer coordinator Melanie Hathaway, it means a lot.

"As a member of the mission ministry, I find it's so meaningful for our church because we are so involved with doing this for the community, and we can do it in a respected and digni-

fied way," she said.

"For us, the congregation, it means we are doing something in a real way," added Faulhaber. "You can pray for the hungry, but you know what – that doesn't feed them."

Director of the Marlborough Food Bank Joanne Goode agreed. "The Drive-Thru has been a wonderful addition to our community effort to feed the hungry. It is an opportunity for any organization to prepare a meal to share with others. It's a great team effort as well," she said, and "families have loved the opportunity to enjoy a warm meal provided out of the goodness of others."

The last Drive-Thru Café of the season will take place at the Congregational Church of Marlborough, 35 S. Main St. on June 26 at 5 p.m. It will pick up again in September. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the drive-thru café can contact Melanie Hathaway at [mghath425@gmail.com](mailto:mghath425@gmail.com).

# Hebron School Board Adds Full-Day Preschool Section

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Board of Education last Thursday unanimously voted to add a full-day section of preschool to service a number of families currently on a waiting list.

The school currently offers one full-day session of preschool and two half-day ones. In addition, there is a second full-day preschool session offered through a School Readiness grant and governed by a School Readiness Council.

The full-day sections currently have 33 students enrolled, while the half-day sections contain 23. But despite the available options, Patricia Buell, director of educational services, shared there are still 18 students on a waiting list for full day preschool.

Adding another section, she said, would provide a slot for 15 of those students.

"There are many benefits to preschool," Buell

stated. "Curriculum has changed, the state standards have changed, children are learning to read in kindergarten and write, and perform math at a much higher level than they ever have before and our preschoolers need to come to school ready [as kindergarteners]."

She added, "So many students benefit from the academic readiness, and the social readiness of preschool – they learn how to get along with other children, they learn how to follow directions, play, and share. And then the behavioral readiness skills; not all children come to school having the behavioral readiness skills to be successful."

Buell recommended the addition, explaining she felt it aligned with the district's mission and goals.

"Our tagline is 'High Expectations, Bright Futures' and these are 3- and 4-year-olds that are starting with us and are benefitting from

our current program right now," she said. "I believe that this programming aligns with the Board of Education's mission and goals."

Adding another section would require hiring a preschool teacher and a paraprofessional and related costs for salaries and benefits, as well as the supplies needed to outfit the classroom. Buell estimated the cost of adding a section to be around \$100,000, however a large portion of that would be covered by tuition.

At the board's May meeting, board members elected to increase the cost of the district's preschool program to \$500 per month, or \$15,000 per year. At that rate, the district would receive \$75,000 from the 15 students who would fill the class, leaving a balance of \$23,253 to be covered by the board.

Schools Superintendent Tim Van Tassel noted the district hired staff for the upcoming school year at lower staffing levels – which means

lower salaries – so there'd be savings in those areas.

"As far as we're concerned we can afford doing this for our children," he said, "so I recommend it to the board as well."

Van Tassel also took a moment to address the belief some have stated that preschool is glorified daycare.

"It is so much more than just a daycare service that we are providing," he said. "This is a true academic program, and if you question it please come in. Come visit, see the program, see what's taking place in those classrooms. It's an amazing amount of work that's being done with those children."

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The next Board of Education meeting will be held Thursday, July 14, at 7 p.m., in the Gilead Hill School music room, 580 Gilead St.

# Mill Rate Change Means Tax Decrease in Hebron

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Good news for taxpayers – the Board of Finance set the mill rate for the 2016-17 fiscal year last week, and it's less than expected.

When the \$36.18 million budget for 2016-17 was approved at referendum May 3, the mill rate was projected to increase to 36.17, up from 36 mills in the current year. But at the finance board's June 6 meeting, the board voted unanimously to approve a mill rate of 35.64 mills instead.

Board of Finance Chairman Malcolm Leichter explained this week the difference had to do with changes at the state level. Earlier this year, the state passed Public Act 15-244, which prohibited municipalities from using a mill rate greater than 32 mills to tax motor vehicles. But last month, faced with budget problems at the state level, state officials raised that amount.

"They changed the cap for the motor vehicle tax from 32 mills – which would have put us into the reduced mill rate for motor vehicles – and they raised it to 37 mills," he explained, which means motor vehicles in town won't be

impacted.

In addition, Leichter explained the town would receive funds from the Municipal Revenue Sharing Account (MRSA), which the Board of Finance hadn't counted on when crafting the budget.

He explained MRSA sets aside a half percent of revenue received from state sales tax, which is then supposed to be returned to municipalities. However, "we were advised not to count on all those funds because of the situation that had come up with the state [budget deficit]" Leichter stated. "So when we developed our budget we conservatively estimated our revenues and we didn't include any of those."

But it turns out the town will receive some MRSA funds after all; at the last minute, the state appropriate around \$208,000 in additional revenues to the town.

"The net of it all – because we had estimated Education Cost Sharing for the schools at the full amount of the current year [and the state

reduced the amount the town received] – is we ended up with \$113,000 more in revenue than we expected there to be as of the referendum," Leichter said.

He added, "This is the first time that I can remember – at least since I've been on the board – that we've had a negative increase on the mill rate. ... Though you can't go on any big vacations with the money you're going to save, at least it was a reduction."

The mill rate is used to determine a resident's real estate and personal property taxes. One mill is equal to \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property. Were the mill rate to have passed at 36.17, a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would be responsible for \$9,043 in property taxes, up from \$9,000 under the current mill rate.

However, with the new rate for 2016-17, that same resident will owe \$8,910 instead.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney was also pleased with the reduction. "There's a reduction in overall taxes from last year and that was

our goal all through the budget season, so hopefully taxpayers are happy with the Board of Selectmen and myself; we kept our word to the taxpayers that we would lower taxes," he said. "I know it's just a little bit, but it's not an increase."

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Looking ahead to next year, Leichter added this week it was anticipated both the town and the school would have a surplus in their 2015-16 budget that would be placed in a reserve fund to help offset the impact of future budgets.

The Board of Finance "recognizes those are taxpayer dollars and our intent is to put them in a reserve to use them in the future," Leichter stated. "We were advised by town staff that it would probably be better to put those in a reserve fund [rather than return them to the town] and use them because the next couple of years will be very unknown and it could help defer some of the tax increase."

"We expect the state will cut more revenues," he concluded.

# \$42.79 Million Budget Passes on First Try in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton voters on Tuesday approved the town budget in a single referendum, something it took them three tries to pull off last year.

With about 27 percent of registered voters turning out at the polls, the \$42.79 million budget passed by a 1,282-846 tally – a margin of 436 votes.

School students could be seen in town waving "vote yes" signs and advocating for the people and programs that would be threatened if the budget failed, including several teachers and numerous sports at the middle and high school levels.

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said passing a budget in East Hampton the first time around is a monumental task even in a good year. But during this budget season, with debt from the \$52 million high school renovation coming due and the state's fiscal situation quickly deteriorating, the accomplishment is even more impressive.

"With all the challenges we had, I think our residents understood the need to meet our obligations and I was very pleased at the turnout and the margin between the 'yeses and the 'nos,'" Anderson said. "I think it was a good statement that the people made. I'm really looking forward to working on some of the other priorities we have and enjoying our summer."

Debt from the renovation project alone accounted for 1.44 mills of the 1.66 mill increase to the current mill rate.

A mill is \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the mill rate of 29.44 approved by the Board of Finance Tuesday following the referendum, a taxpayer with a house assessed at \$200,000 would owe \$5,888 in property taxes on the home. That's \$332 more than such a homeowner pays now, though the recently-completed town-wide revaluation has changed the assessed value of homes since last year.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said he was focused on offering as much positive communication as possible about the budget.

Smith cleared out his schedule the morning of the referendum to invite anyone looking for information about the budget to stop by his office, call or email.

Smith had originally proposed a 1.9 percent increase to the current year's education budget, repeatedly emphasizing that the proposal was as low as it could go without sacrificing additional teaching positions and programs.

Despite action by Town Manager Michael Maniscalco to flat-fund the school budget earlier this year, some money was restored and the spending plan for education ended up coming in at \$29.06 million, 0.98 percent higher than the current budget.

The town operating budget is \$10.27 million, an increase of 2.94 percent.

The combined general government and Board of Education budget proposal represents an increase of 4.25 percent over the current year's budget.

Smith, who took the helm of the district at the start of the new year, said he arrived in town with a commitment to present the most reasonable budget he could. To do so, he eliminated two middle school teaching positions in language arts and science as well as a paraprofessional before the budget even got to the Board of Education for their approval.

Still, Smith said the final budget went lower than he was hoping it was going to go. He cited savings from negotiations for dental insurance for making it possible to come in under a 1 percent increase without laying off additional staff or slashing programs. Additional cuts to school supplies were also made throughout the budget.

"It's just nice to get it done in one try," Smith



Students from East Hampton took to the streets on the day of the town budget referendum to rally for the 2016-17 budget in hope of avoiding staffing cuts and the elimination of all middle school sports as well as volleyball and golf at the high school.

said. "If we all continue to work together, that will be my goal every year."

The referendum vote included two advisory questions. When asked if the budget was too high, 963 voters responded 'yes'; 945 responded 'no.'

When asked if the budget was too low, 1,019 voters said no and 637 said yes.

According to the *Citizen's Guide to the East Hampton Budget* published by the Board of Finance, the average voter turnout for the past nine budget referendums since 2010 is 21 percent.

With Tuesday's approval, the budget has now passed on the first try three times in the past six years.

# ‘Three Amigos’ Leaving Portland High

by Elizabeth Regan

The halls of Portland High School are quiet now that three educators with booming laughs have closed the door on decades-long teaching careers.

Retirees Tim O’Connell, 75, Nicholas Chaconis, 63, Charlie Ryan, 62, attributed their longevity to a supportive school community and the ability to make and take a joke.

“You’ve got to have a sense of humor, or this is the wrong place to be,” Ryan said.

In an address at Thursday’s graduation ceremony, Student Senate President Sara Donahue recalled O’Connell’s contagious smile, Chaconis’s laughter, and Ryan’s unusual catchphrases – such as “skip out” and “bark like a dog” – as three constants that would greet students in the halls.

“Portland High School will not be the same without the Three Amigos,” Donahue said.

O’Connell retired last week after having reached the 50-year teaching milestone, with 48 of those years spent in Portland. Ryan had been in Portland for 31 of his 37 years in education. Chaconis started teaching 42 years ago at the high school and has remained there ever since.

The trio sat down with the *Rivereast* before the final bell rang on their teaching careers.

“The last couple of years, I started having children of past students,” Ryan, a social studies and culinary arts teacher, said.

Not to be outdone, fellow social studies teacher O’Connell put it this way: “I have a grandchild of a past student.”

Chaconis, a special education teacher and longtime coach of track and field and girls’ basketball, said he’s been grateful to have O’Connell and Ryan around so he can bounce ideas off them and seek advice when he needs it. It’s the same kind of encouragement evident throughout all the departments and levels of instruction, according to Chaconis.

“It’s a small school [where] we look out for one another,” he said. “And most of all, we look out for the kids.”

The trio of retiring teachers also shares a sports history.

O’Connell served for 19 years as the varsity baseball coach, four years as the junior varsity basketball coach and 25 years as the assistant wrestling coach.

Ryan was a football coach before he came to town and, as Chaconis pointed out, the head of a girls’ softball program in the mid-1980s and early ‘90s that nobody else would take on.

“We don’t want to forget the Bad News Bears of Portland,” Chaconis jabbed.

Ryan’s defense was a laughing one. “I had a

couple good teams,” he said.

Ryan brought up his 30 years as the Student Senate advisor to illustrate one of the most unexpectedly rewarding aspects of his teaching career. Taking on the role wasn’t something he came up with on his own, he said; in fact, it was former principal Don Gates who told him to do it.

The same principle – and principal – applied when Gates suggested Ryan get his certification in culinary arts as a way to combine his affinity for cooking with his ability to teach.

Both experiences have opened Ryan up to more students in different capacities than if he had stuck to history.

“I’ve had a wonderful time here, thanks to Don Gates,” he said.

Some of Ryan’s former students were among those who came back to retirement events this year to thank the three teachers for their commitment to generations of Portland children.

It was an honor that caught Ryan by surprise. “You don’t think you have that kind of impact on young people,” he said.

Chaconis, too, was humbled by the turnout. “People came back,” he marveled – even students he thought he’d been so hard on. “They said thank you, thank you for being there.”

For O’Connell, one of the most shocking aspects was that he could still remember the kids that came through back in the beginning of his career – like the woman from the Class of 1973 who emailed him prior to one of the retirement events to tell him she’d be there.

“Guess what? I recognized her right when she walked in the door,” he said.

It’s been a half-century that felt like much less, according to O’Connell.

“It seems like I just started a couple days ago,” he said. “I’ve enjoyed my time here. The kids are good in this town.”

Now, it’s simply time to leave.

“Nobody said ‘you gotta go,’” he explained. Then, after a beat: “They didn’t say ‘stay,’ though.”

O’Connell’s wry delivery elicited the kind of laughs from Chaconis and Ryan that the three teachers have become known for.

Chaconis pointed to his desire to spend more time with his wife, daughter and grandchildren as the reason for his own retirement decision. He wants evenings at the dinner table and weeks spent on family vacations, he said. He wants a chance to do projects around the house that he’s let go over the years while he instead devoted his time to the classroom, the basketball court and the track field.

“Life goes by fast,” Chaconis said last fall,



Portland High School history teacher Tim O’Connell, history and culinary arts teacher Charlie Ryan, and special education teacher Nicholas Chaconis have been sharing jokes with each other and the school community for decades. As of last week, the trio has retired with a combined total of 129 years of teaching experience between them.

when he announced his retirement as the coach of the girls’ basketball program he started 41 years ago. “I was fortunate to have good health over the years. I’ve never missed a game. That’s a credit to the people around me, starting with family. It’s a big commitment; it’s a lot of time. And I wouldn’t give a minute of it back. I was happy to do what I could to help the team.”

He started entertaining the idea of retirement with the birth of the first grandchild five years ago; now his youngest is a year old.

“Five years went by in a blink,” he said. “I had to draw the line in the sand and say this was my final year.”

Chaconis was effusive in his praise of all the elements of the scholastic community – from co-workers, administration and students all the way to the coaches of opposing sports teams – who made it possible to last so long at the job.

“It’s been a good run, and I thank them. I thank everybody,” he said.

Ryan cited a combination of factors behind his retirement. While he had been planning to teach for another year, a scheduled knee surgery with several months of recuperation helped him decide to call it quits in advance. Another consideration was his part-time job at the Glastonbury Hills Country Club, where he plans to devote himself to work and play in his re-

irement years.

“I was worried that if I stayed any longer I would become older and not be able to do some things physically. I’d like to play golf every day for five or six years,” he said.

But it was the death of a close friend that impressed upon him the ultimate importance of making the most of the time he has left.

“That kind of did it for me. You know, I want to do some other things besides just work,” he said.

The three teachers acknowledged their job has become more difficult as new expectations in areas such as curriculum, testing and evaluations continue to be passed down.

“Time passes. You’ve got to go with it,” O’Connell said. “You have to adapt to different situations, different kids. Different rules, different regulations. Different programs that come and go.”

With over 40 years of shared experience at Portland High School, the three teachers have shared good news and bad, births and death. They’ve seen things change and they’ve seen things stay the same.

“If you’re around long enough, you’ll see it all,” Chaconis said. “I think I’ve pretty much seen it all. Maybe that’s why it’s time. Someone else can see it all.”

# Book Celebrates Portland’s 175 Years

by Elizabeth Regan

A book by the Portland Historical Society is the latest chapter in a commemorative tradition going back to 1916, when the first volume was released in celebration of the town’s 75th anniversary.

Four books and 100 years later, Portland is celebrating its 175th anniversary with a 144-page publication that highlights Portland’s “interesting people and organizations.” One article, “Namesakes: Who’s Who,” tells the stories behind the names are used on town facilities.

According to Portland Historical Society’s Book Committee Chairman Robert W. McDougall, the book includes over 100 photos, maps, and graphics, as well as the names of over 1,000 individuals connected with Portland.

McDougall said even the advertisements are a source of information about the history of town businesses and the people behind them.

With the book hot off the press, members of the historical society gathered Tuesday morning to present a copy to First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

“I am so pleased that the Historical Society did such a fantastic job and I think everyone will be absolutely thrilled with the book. It’s a wonderful keepsake and a testimony to our

beautiful town’s 175th anniversary,” Bransfield said.

The 175th Commemorative Book will be officially released Saturday at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History.

A special exhibit titled “Portland’s Celebrations” will highlight artifacts and documents showing how Portland has celebrated special events in its history, according to a press release. The exhibit includes photos, banners, newspaper articles, booklets and memorabilia.

The multimedia exhibit will also feature short films for the 1941 centennial celebration and the 1991 150th anniversary parade. Artwork and poetry from Portland third-graders will give a fresh perspective to the town’s history.

The book will be available starting Monday at the town clerk’s office in the town hall, at the Portland Library and at Bordonaro’s Pharmacy, 283 Main St. Copies will be available all summer at the Callander House on 492 Main St. Books may be purchased by calling Claire (860-335-8581) or email at [portlandcthistory@gmail.com](mailto:portlandcthistory@gmail.com).

*The 175th Anniversary Book Kick-Off will be held Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History on 492 Main Street.*



First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield is presented with the 175th Commemorative Book produced by members of the Portland Historical Society and 175th Anniversary Celebration Committee. Left to right: Claire Frisbie; Mary Flood, 175th Anniversary Celebration Chairwoman; Susan Bransfield; Bob McDougall, Portland Historical Society Book Committee Chairman; and Deborah Ellsworth.

# Bacon Grad with Autism Speaks Through Her Artwork

by Julianna Roche

Over the past two weeks, Cragin Memorial Library's meeting room has been draped with canvases of abstract art that explode with bright colors and personality. The artwork is part of Bacon Academy's Unified Artist exhibit, which is on display through June 30.

The pieces, however, aren't done by your average artist.

They are by Lyla Brown, a young artist with autism spectrum disorder and a recent graduate of Bacon Academy, who works solely with crayon on paper. The pieces are also for sale, with proceeds going back to Bacon's Unified Arts program.

What's unique about Lyla is that she can't speak in complete sentences; she can only communicate through her art, which in itself speaks louder than it might even if said in words.

According to Lyla's father, Stacey Brown, her parents knew she had autism by the time she was 18 months old. And it wasn't until she was 8 or 9 that she was able to say any words at all.

"We basically had to raise a child with very limited communication skills," he said. "But there was always some kind of special intelligence there." For example, Brown recalled a memory just before Lyla's second birthday when she was sitting next to a bucket filled with refrigerator magnets of plastic letters of the alphabet.

"She was dumping out all the letters, then giving them to me one by one to put back in the bucket... then she'd do the same thing over again until I realized what she was doing," he said. "She was giving the letters to me in the order they appeared in the alphabet."

A youthful and happy looking girl with a dark head of curls, Lyla was part of Bacon Academy's life skills program, which helps students with disabilities learn skills which will help them transition from high school to their adult life.

Dave McLellan, one of Bacon Academy's special education and life skills teachers (who is also certified in visual arts), has watched Lyla grow not only as a student, but also an artist from the time she was a freshman.

"Lyla is a student on the spectrum with very limited communication skills... and the focus for her was to stretch her flexibility, willingness to communicate and willingness to not be so rigid in her routines," he said.

McLellan, who has been at Bacon for nearly 16 years, said when he first met Lyla, she didn't know how to communicate her emotions well, if at all. While working in the school store (which is run by the life skills program), for example, Lyla wasn't always able to interact

with her peers appropriately, but that's changed over the last four years.

"Now she'll say 'hello'... she uses a person's name, she assigns a name to a greeting. She'll actually ask for help and she'll come get you to show you her work. ... People who aren't familiar with this type of disability might not understand, but those are all huge steps, even if it's taken a long time," said McLellan.

Art, however, is something that's always come naturally to Lyla.

"Ever since she was a little girl, she always liked coloring," Brown said. "And art became a form of her being able to express herself, so we started to communicate with pictures."

He remembered once when Lyla was about 5 years old, she locked herself in their bathroom at home. The door had a latch that locked when moved from left to right, but there was no way Brown could explain this to Lyla with words. So he found another solution.

"We had two options at that point - we could either break down the door or we could try to explain it to her through pictures... so we did that," Brown said. "We drew pictures and slid the drawings under the door, until she could get herself out."

Lyla's art teacher at Bacon Academy, Jodi Mendlinger, said she also recognized Lyla's talent for art and the importance of using it as a communication tool.

"Lyla walked into my Drawing I class and handed me her crayon saying, 'Shape please,' asking me to draw shapes for her in her sketchbook, which she would then color in," she said. "Four years later, she is not only drawing her own shapes, she's added detailed images of people, activities, animals, mini landscapes, words and math equations. Lyla has a plan for each sketchbook page, innately using specific elements of art: line, shape, color, repetition, pattern - she's amazing."

McLellan agreed. "She started with these open, abstract designs which she drew very quickly, and really that's become her thing," he said. "I always knew she had a unique gift for color because she makes color choices that are more sophisticated than one would expect."

And it's true - when looking at Lyla's work, her innate sense of color and design are obvious even to the untrained eye, with color harmonies paired perfectly together, the way designers are trained to do it - shades of blue with oranges, reds with greens, and purples with yellows.

"Her designs have evolved into these very intricate compositions that are showing her daily life and experiences," McLellan said.

Take her piece "Tomorrow" (which just sold for \$120) for example, with a depiction of her



Resident Lyla Brown has her original paintings on display all this month at Cragin Memorial Library. She's shown here with one of her exhibit pieces, "1x9=19."

cooking in front of a stove with a spatula, or "1x9=19," which shows math equations she's studied, words she's learned, and one of her favorite animals.

Brown said when he first saw one of the exhibit pieces, he asked Lyla what a certain image was, to which she answered "Gra." Brown asked again: "Grass?" Lyla was silent.

"Then I asked 'grave?' and she said 'grave' back to me. My mother had passed away recently, and Lyla was reflecting that in her art," he said. "So her art represents things that are going on in her mind and drawing is the only real way we can see what's going on inside her head."

Lyla graduated with the rest of her class last Friday and will continue working through The Arc, her post-secondary work program. She'll also continue to meet with McLellan at least twice a week to continue practicing her craft.

"A true artist is an observer who shows you things that happen in daily life, and she [Lyla] truly has all the qualities of an artist, including

her sense and use of color," McLellan said. "What we hope is that, like with many artists on the spectrum, art is her talent. ... It's her gift, and we hope over the next few years she continues to do it."

Mendlinger agreed. "Hopefully Lyla will continue to create outside of Bacon," she said. "Then with help, exhibit and sell through venues such as gallery shows and online exhibitions. It would be magical if she could pick up a patron or two to reproduce her images on an even larger scale than we did for the Cragin show. Then perhaps we'll travel to see her work on the walls of MoMA."

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Lyla Brown's Bacon Academy Unified Artist exhibit, showcasing prints of images from her daily sketchbook, is in Meeting Room A at Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., through June 30. The large-scale prints, along with packages of note cards, are available for purchase by emailing [jmendlinger@colchesterct.org](mailto:jmendlinger@colchesterct.org).

## East Hampton Police News

5/27: Scott Callan, 46, of 132 Elliot Dr., Colchester, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

6/2: Steven T. Bortz, 26, of 175 Hill St., Waterbury, was issued a summons for failure to display front marker plate, misuse of marker plate, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating with a suspended license, police said.

6/6: Robert John Filippone, 69, of 54 Waterview Circle, was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order and interfering with a police officer, police said.

6/8: Patricia Bogue, 47, of 156 Halls Hill Rd., was arrested pursuant to an active warrant and charged with shoplifting (sixth-degree larceny), police said.

## Portland Police News

6/7: Jill Gould, 19, of 221 East Cotton Hill Rd., was charged with stealing a firearm, fifth-degree larceny and sixth-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

6/8: Daniel Lachapelle, 29, of 540 Main St., was charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive in proper lane, police said.

6/8: Austin Rodriguez, 18, of 19 Courtney Ln., was charged with possession of alcohol by a minor, police said.

6/10: Charles Belcher, 52, of 208 Main St., Apt. 15, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.

## Colchester Police News

6/4: Colchester Police said Jonathan Leblanc, 32, of 12 Summer St., Apt. 2, Enfield, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle while registration/license is refused, suspended or revoked; sixth-degree larceny; credit card theft; and illegal use of a credit card. Police also found Leblanc had an active arrest warrant in New York and charged him with being a fugitive from justice.

6/9: State Police said Patricia Stevens, 75, of 7B Westchester Hills, was arrested and charged with refusal to show license/registration, refusal to show or surrender insurance identification card, using a restricted left lane in construction, failure to stop on the right side

of the road in construction and interfering with an officer.

6/8: State Police said Sarah Granata, 22, of 24 Novelli Place, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, second-degree harassment, and third-degree assault.

6/10: Colchester Police said Anthony Alos, 31, of 416 Lebanon Ave., was arrested and charged with violation of probation/conditional discharge.

6/10 - Colchester Police said Rachel Lynne Allen-Foley, 28, of 75 Johnson Rd., Marlborough, was arrested and charged with fourth-degree larceny.

## Police Investigate Colchester Car Theft

Colchester Police are investigating a series of reported break-ins into unlocked cars on Westerly Terrace during the morning hours of Friday, June 3.

The suspect allegedly stole three GPS units from three different vehicles before locating a spare key in a vehicle and stealing the car. The stolen vehicle is a grey 2015 Mazda 6 four-door sedan, police said, adding that it has a Jesus Fish on the rear bumper and a cracked right rear brake light cover.

If anyone sees this vehicle or has any information regarding the incident, contact Colchester police at 860-537-7270.

## Cars Broken Into at Hebron Wedding

State Police said they are investigating a series of car break-ins that allegedly occurred during a wedding ceremony last weekend.

Police said the break-ins and thefts occurred between 4 and 5 p.m. in the parking lot of the Church of Hope. Police reported car windows were smashed and multiple items taken.

Police said the victims were inside the church attending a wedding ceremony when the incidents occurred.

Anyone may have witnessed the crime or has any information is asked to call the Hebron Resident Trooper's office at 860-228-3710.

## Man in Critical Condition After Fall Into Portland Quarry

by Elizabeth Regan

A golfer was airlifted in critical condition from Portland's Quarry Ridge Golf Course to St. Francis Medical Center Sunday evening after falling approximately 70 feet into the quarry that gives the course its name.

Portland Police Lt. Ron Milardo identified the golfer as Chris Pietrarroia. He said Wednesday evening that Pietrarroia remains in the intensive care unit.

According to Milardo, a man who had been golfing with Pietrarroia indicated the victim was searching for a ball at the time of the incident. Nobody witnessed the fall.

Portland Fire Chief Bob Shea said the ledge is about 300 feet from the edge of the 18th hole.

"He must have lost his footing or walked off it," Shea said.

The area is fenced and marked with danger signs, Shea added; the signs are often removed, however, and have to be replaced repeatedly by the golf course.

There was no identification on Pietrarroia at the time of transport, Shea said. He said he believed the man was around 30 years old.

An emergency call for an unconscious man floating in the water was received around 7 p.m., according to Shea. Volunteers from the Portland Fire Department responded in about three minutes to find two men in the quarry: the unconscious victim and the man who had pulled the victim out of the water and onto a rock outcropping at the base of the quarry.

Shea said he immediately requested mutual aid from the Middletown Fire Department's

high angle rescue team, which arrived in about six minutes. Two members of Portland's own low angle rescue team assisted two Middletown rescuers at the base of the quarry. They treated Pietrarroia, secured him in a specialized stretcher and lifted him straight up about 100 feet using a sophisticated roping system, according to Shea.

Shea said he did not believe Pietrarroia or the man with him were local to the area. "It was kind of uncharted waters" for them, he said.

Shea described the quarry as "basically a hole with flat sides."

It took about two hours to get Pietrarroia, the other man, and the rescuers out of the hole, Shea said.

"It was a lengthy, very delicate, very dangerous situation," Shea said. "We took every precaution and followed the lead of the team from Middletown."

The fire department also worked closely with medical providers on the LifeStar helicopter, according to Shea. The aircraft was able to land on the golf course fairway despite concerns about windy conditions.

Shea described the golf course as safe and well-maintained.

While he is not aware of any falls during his 24-year tenure with the fire department, he said there were some fatal incidents in prior years.

"We train in many areas and that's one that's had a few unfortunate situations over many years, but we haven't been there in a long, long time," he said.

## Instagram Argument Leads to Fight – and Arrests in Andover

by Geeta S. Sandberg

An argument on the photo-sharing application Instagram last fall led to a physical altercation at the Andover Dam – and several arrests.

The incident occurred after messages were exchanged on Instagram between two juveniles over a missing wallet, State Police said. According to the arrest warrant affidavit, following allegations one juvenile made to another of taking his wallet, the first juvenile threatened the second via messages that said things such as, "If I came through [right now] with my boys you wouldn't be able to talk" and "I'm gonna make your life hell."

The affidavit states the second juvenile, who denied having the wallet, then challenged the first to a fight by responding with a video in which he pans the camera around the Andover Dam shouting "come through, come through."

According to the affidavit, the juvenile who was accused of taking the wallet was hanging out with his friends at the Andover Dam Nov. 1, 2015, when they were jumped by the individual with the missing wallet and his friends.

The second juvenile told police after challenging the first, "I never thought he would actually show up."

According to a statement from another juvenile who was there that day, the juvenile with the missing wallet arrived at the dam with two cars full of people. The occupants of the two cars got out, started yelling at him and his friends and began chasing them around the dam. He stated he was tackled by one of the occupants, after which a couple more individuals joined in and began hitting him repeatedly.

Afterwards, members of the group that had

approached the dam took a metal bar and smashed the windows on two cars belonging to the individuals who were there, before leaving in their own vehicles.

Following the altercation, an investigation into the incident led police to the individuals involved, many of whom provided written statements saying they had gone to the dam after being contacted by the juvenile who'd lost his wallet and told he needed their help.

Arrested June 12 in connection with the fight was Terence James, 18, of Bolton, who was charged with breach of peace. He joined several others arrested earlier this spring in relation to the fight: Devin Bishop, 19, of Manchester, who was charged with first-degree criminal mischief, third-degree assault and breach of peace; Tristan Rascher, 20, of Bolton, who was charged with breach of peace and conspiracy; Holton Soucy, 20, of Bolton, who was charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace; Shane Osborne, 19, of Bolton, who was charged with first-degree criminal mischief, second-degree assault and breach of peace; Bailey Cooper, 18, of Bolton, who was charged with breach of peace and conspiracy; Nicholas Grimard, 19, of Bolton, who was charged with breach of peace; and four youths, 16 and 17 years old at the time of the incident, who were all arrested in December.

One of the youths was charged with third-degree assault, first-degree criminal mischief, risk of injury to a minor, inciting injury to persons or property, and breach of peace. Another was charged with inciting injury to persons or property and breach of peace, and the third and fourth were charged with breach of peace.

## Andover Selectmen, Residents Express Opposition to CNG Proposal

by Geeta S. Sandberg

It was standing-room only at the Board of Selectmen's meeting Tuesday night, as more than three dozen residents turned out, most expressing their concerns over the natural gas infusion station proposed for a piece of property on Route 6 currently used as a Christmas tree farm.

The company who brought forward the proposal, Global CNG Holdings LLC, first presented on the project at the Inland Wetlands Commission meeting in April. It's a proposal which would consist of the installation of a gas line, a gas metering station, a gravel access drive, a portion of paved drive, and an equipment area, and would bring approximately 240 tanker trucks to the area transporting compressed natural gas each day during peak season – typically the winter months.

Last week, Global CNG Holdings actually withdrew its application – but it's a temporary situation. In the letter submitted to Town Planner John Valente June 9 from the attorney representing Global CNG Holdings, it was explained the company was withdrawing its two pending land use applications to allow for "significant revisions" to the site plans and to revise some of the related reports.

"My client intends to resubmit both applications as soon as the revised plans and reports are completed," wrote attorney Leonard Jacobs. He said he anticipated the application would be resubmitted within 60-90 days but the timeframe "is not certain."

As a result, two public hearings scheduled on the proposal have been cancelled. The first was set by the Inlands Wetlands Commission for this past Monday; the second was set by the Planning and Zoning Commission, scheduled for Monday, June 20.

Since the proposal was first made public, many residents have expressed opposition to the idea, and anyone driving through town is likely to see "No – NGIS" signs in a number of yards. Last week, the Board of Education shared their opposition to the project, and voted unanimously to submit a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission voicing their concerns, which included the proximity to the elementary school and some of the town's emergency shelters – of which the school is one.

At Tuesday's meeting, those concerns continued to be voiced, with residents expressing environmental, safety, traffic and noise and light pollution concerns, as well as concerns over the town's ability to respond if there were an emergency at the facility.

Resident Dianne Grenier mentioned residents were being told the proposal "is a totally safe project" using state-of-the-art technology that complies with federal and state safety standards and regulations and while she said she realizes that's supposed to be comforting, "quite frankly, I believe that was said about the Titanic and the Hindenburg as well."

Resident Brian Briggs also spoke to a number of points during the meeting, including the potential for the pipelines to break down over time which could result in explosions and leaks that could release toxic chemicals into the air and affect future generations. Briggs also mentioned the company's assertions the town would save money by switching to natural gas, but said "building the infrastructure to do so would necessitate significant additional costs paid by individual community members as well as the town."

He also mentioned the potential for property values to decrease and residents who might move out of town.

Briggs concluded to applause, "Let me be clear, that the citizens of Andover will not sit by idle and let a small group of profiteers sell out our community. ... We expect board members to make an effort to stop the gas infusion station. If not, we will be reminded of the disregard of community participation and will vote accordingly in the next election, supporting those representatives who truly uphold the community as a whole."

When the meeting got underway following residents' comments, members of the board also voiced some concern, and ultimately voted – just as the Board of Education had done – not to back the project for health and safety reasons.

"People are scared," selectman Jay Lindy said as he made the motion to not support the project.

"I second this," added Jeff Maguire. "We still have to keep working on it but I think the first big step is putting out there: are we in favor or



**There was a full house at the Andover Board of Selectmen's meeting Tuesday, as residents gathered to voice their concerns over the natural gas infusion center proposed in town, and to listen to the board's discussion as to whether or not it was in favor of the project. Ultimately, board members voted to express their disapproval for health and safety reasons.**

not?"

Although there was some discussion as to whether or not the selectmen would be putting themselves at risk of a lawsuit by publically voting on the issue – the approval of which ultimately lies with the Planning and Zoning Commission – members said that was a risk they were willing to take.

"If Global CNG is going to sue – let them," Lindy stated.

"We have to say we're against this," Maguire added. "I don't care if they sue us – it cannot be allowed to be built here."

"You did vote us in," Cathy Desrosiers said to the audience. "We hear your voice and we need to support that."

The vote passed unanimously.

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Also Tuesday, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to set up a five-member Charter Revision Commission to consider amending chapters five and seven to create a chief administrative officer. If approved, the administrative duties of the first selectmen would be transferred over to the officer, forming a government structure similar to that in towns such as Hebron, Bolton and Columbia.

"I think this is a historic moment for Andover and let's vote!" said member Julia Haverl.

The commission will be required to submit a draft report on or before the next Board of Selectmen's meeting, scheduled for July 12 at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall community room, 17 School Rd.

## Obituaries

### Portland

#### William D. Stackpole

William D. Stackpole, 52, of Portland, entered into rest Tuesday, June 7. He was the beloved husband of Maryana Derdyuk Stackpole and father of Joshua Stackpole.

In addition to his wife and son, Billy leaves his parents Albert N. and Nancy Ann Barnes Stackpole Jr.; his sisters, Kathleen Stackpole, Beth Ann (James) Kelly and Karen L. Stackpole. Proudly, he was Uncle Bill to 13 nieces and nephews.

Bill retired in 2014 from Kaman Engineering where he worked for 30 years as a supervisor. He loved the ocean and salt water fishing and was a direct descendant of Mayflower Pilgrim Thomas Rogers and Schaghticoke Tribe Eunice Mauwee of Kent.

Visitation took place Saturday, June 11, at the West Haven Funeral Home at the Green, 662 Savin Ave.

To leave an online remembrance, visit [westhavenfuneral.com](http://westhavenfuneral.com).



### East Hampton

#### Marian Adele Lord

Marian Adele Lord, 82, of East Hampton died Sunday, June 12, at Cobalt Lodge. Marion was born in Middletown on Oct. 24, 1933, daughter of the late Ralph and Judith (Weir) Youngs.

She is survived by her high school sweetheart Ben Lord; her children, Sharon Furman and husband Tom, Jeff Lord

and wife Susan, Susan Mary Lord; grandchildren Melissa Couture, Meghan Lord, Elizabeth Hyde, Dan Hyde; great-grandchildren Willard Couture, Natalie Lord Vadney, Adeline Couture, Jack Lord Vadney and Isabel Couture.

Marian loved traveling, reading and spending time with her loving family and many friends. She will be especially missed by her dearest friends Elaine Sweet, Mary Flannery and Jacy Tyre of Florida.

Marian had many medical problems and was lovingly taken care of by her children and grandson Dan and son-in-law Tom. The family sends a special thank you to Cathy Lyman for assistance during this difficult time.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Saturday June 18, from 10-11 a.m. A memorial service will take place at 11 a.m. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424, who gave Marian many rides.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).



### Portland

#### Genevieve Mary Scirica

Genevieve Mary (Kowalski) Scirica passed away Thursday, June 2.

Born Feb. 12, 1924, in Wyandotte, Mich., daughter of Anna and Leon Kowalski, Mrs. Scirica lived a full and vibrant life. She worked in accounting for over forty years before retiring to Florida with her husband. She was an active volunteer in her church, her children's school and with ARC. She loved to dance and big band music of the '40s.

She is survived by her daughters Marilyn McGrath (William), Pamela Pallas (Abraham) and Louise Scirica; grandchildren Kim Trowbridge, Jill Tardiff, Molly Wright and Christopher Pallas, great grandchildren Rachel and Brianna Johnson, Elijah and Benjamin Tardiff, Charles and Jacob Wright and Josiah Pallas; and great-great-grandchild Kaleb Morales.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Luciano Scirica, her parents and her six siblings. The family will hold a private memorial service.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Mrs. Scirica's memory can be made to the Sisters of Mercy NE Retirement, 15 Highlandview Rd., Cumberland, RI 02864.

Dees-Parrish Family Funeral Home, 458 South Marion Avenue Lake City, FL 32025, is in charge of arrangements. Please sign online guestbook at [parrishfamilyfuneralhome.com](http://parrishfamilyfuneralhome.com).

### Hebron

#### Carrie Fulginiti

Carrie Fulginiti died Tuesday, May 10, surrounded by her family, in her home in Hebron. She was then reunited with her husband John Fulginiti, who died in 1995, in the New Hebron Cemetery on Sunday, May 15. She was 100 years old.

Carrie's life began in Shenandoah, Pa., Aug. 27, 2015. She was born to Carrie Eisenhower Lewis and Charles Sutton Lewis. She was one of 10 children. She had to leave school early to support her mother, father and many of her siblings in their Frackville, Pa., home. She worked as a seamstress in a shirt factory. It was during that time she met the love of her life, John Fulginiti. They had a love that could not be broken.

Carrie and John followed their daughter Dolores and her family to Hebron in the early 1960s. Not long before the move, she started her path to a lifelong career of hairdressing. They custom built their home and shops on Main Street in town. It was there they remained the owners and operators of the Hebron Town Barber Shop and the Hebron Salon of Beauty for over 30 years.

Carrie also loved to sew, knit and crochet. In her early years, she made the majority of her clothes, not to mention most of her daughter's. She even made the wedding dress her daughter wore in 1951. She also enjoyed cooking. Her family especially loved her pies. No one could make a pie like her, except possibly her mother.

Carrie loved to travel with her husband. They took many trips to California to visit family. Special trips to Italy and Hawaii were well-deserved for their hard work. They also loved going to Vegas, the dog track and casino at Foxwoods resort on occasion. Carrie loved playing the slot machines. In later years, the treat she looked forward to most was celebrating her birthdays there.

The most special birthday celebrated at Foxwoods was her 100th. Family and friends traveled from California, Boston and New York to share in the celebration. She was so proud to make it to 100 and enjoyed all the centenarian birthday wishes she received. When people would ask what her secret was to living to age 100, she would say, with an impish grin, "If I told you, it wouldn't be a secret."

Carrie leaves behind one daughter, Dolores Fulginiti Dzienis. Dolores flew to Connecticut to help care for her mother in February 2016, until her death. She also leaves three grandchildren, Donald Dzienis Jr. and his family, John Dzienis and Heidi Dzienis Lowe and her family which includes two great-grandchildren Ryan and Kelsey. The family would also like to recognize the caregivers inside and outside the family that helped Carrie in her final days. All your hours of care, love and concern made all the difference and we are forever in your debt.

She will be missed by all her family and friends. Carrie leaves a void that will be difficult to fill. She was one of a kind. One of the last things she told her family was "I did everything I wanted to do." Everyone should be so lucky. In the beginning, Carrie was dealt the cards of a hardscrabble life, but with the love she had for her husband and family, she made it a winning hand.



### Marlborough

#### Robert James Tourville

Robert James Tourville, formerly of Marlborough, passed away Friday, May 20, in Asheville, N.C.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday, June 18, at Edneyville Methodist Church.

Thos. Shepherd & Son Funeral Directors and Cremation Memorial Center is in charge of the arrangements. An online register book is available for family and friends by visiting [thosshepherd.com](http://thosshepherd.com).

### Cobalt

#### Mary S. Gozdeck

Mary S. Gozdeck, 101, of Cobalt, formerly of Wethersfield, beloved wife for 56 years of the late Venceslaus "Bruno" Gozdeck, passed away peacefully Friday, June 10, in Cobalt. Born in New Britain Nov. 24, 1914, daughter of the late Ignacz and Mary (Sczymczyk) Czyz, she was raised in Thomaston and had lived in Hartford and then in Wethersfield for over 50 years before moving to Cobalt in 2010.

Mary was a graduate of Thomaston High School and the Bay Path Secretarial Program. While in school, she played basketball and remembered these times fondly throughout her life. Mary was a faithful communicant of SS. Cyril & Methodius Church for many years and in recent years she watched Mass every day on television. Most of all, Mary will be remembered as a loving wife, mother, and grandmother, who cared deeply for her family. She was always concerned about other people and cared for her husband for many years until his passing in 1994.

She leaves three sons, Theodore Gozdeck and his wife Nancy of Vernon, Peter Gozdeck and his wife Barbara of San Diego, Calif., and Paul Gozdeck and his wife Beth of Naples, Fla., and Old Lyme; a daughter, Teresa Jordan and her husband Greg of East Hampton; 10 grandchildren, Thaddeus Gozdeck and his wife Karen, Kim Muzeroll, Rachael Sarmiento and her husband Victor, Deborah Crofts and her husband Michael, Mark Muzeroll, Brett Gozdeck, Kenneth Gozdeck and his wife Monika, Jennifer Freeman and her husband Ron, Andrea Hosier and her husband Tony, and Rebecca Smith and her husband Meshech; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Besides her husband, she was predeceased by two brothers, Henry Czyz and Dr. Stanley Czyz Blake.

Her family will receive friends Monday, June 20, from 9-10 a.m., at the Waszkelewicz South Green Memorial Home, 43 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10:30 a.m. at SS. Cyril & Methodius Church, 61 Popieluszko Court, Hartford. Burial will follow in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield.

The family has requested that memorial donations be made to Vitas Healthcare, Attn: Hospice, 628 Hebron Ave., Building 2, Suite 300, Glastonbury, CT 06033.

The family would like to extend a special thanks to the doctors, nurses, and staff at the Cobalt Rehabilitation Center for their expert and loving care of our mother over the last several years.

For online condolences, visit [southgreenmemorialhome.com](http://southgreenmemorialhome.com).



### Hebron

#### Jennifer Ann Ennis

Jennifer Ann Ennis (née Morley), 39, of Salem, passed away unexpectedly at home June 6. She is the daughter of Karen Morley of Hebron and Charles Morley of Hartsville, S.C. Jennifer was born May 11, 1977, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

She was married in Wilmington, N.C., to Christopher Brian Ennis of Salem on June 19, 2013. They were blessed with a beautiful baby boy, Jonah Michael.

She graduated from RHAM High School in 1995, and was excelling in the Three Rivers Community College Nursing Program. She maintained the Dean's list and had been inducted into the International Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She enjoyed volunteering for various causes such as Autism Speaks, Feeding the Children Everywhere, and many others.

She was loved by many and will be deeply missed for her kind, smart, thoughtful, wonderful, and generous spirit. Her influence will forever remain, and her beautiful life cherished, in the lives of all that knew her.

Funeral services, officiated by the Rev. Dr. Phil Booe, will be held Saturday, June 25, at 10 a.m., at Christ Lutheran Church, 330 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Christ Lutheran Church, Haiti Mission 2017, Hebron Interfaith Human Services, 20 Pendleton Dr., Hebron, CT 06248.



*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Some brief thoughts on the Orlando massacre, because I don't know what more I can say than hasn't already been said.

This was absolutely horrifying and disgusting. Was it an act of Islamic terrorism? Yes, but I think just looking at it as simply that is incorrect. This man acted alone. He pledged his devotion to Islam, yes – but he couldn't even decide how to go about it. According to FBI Director James Comey, the shooter, Omar Mateen, had in the past pledged his support to different Islamic groups – groups that do not at all share the same views or get along. Comey suggested Mateen may not have understood the differences between the groups. Was he extreme? Was he radicalized? Yes and yes. But it seems doubtful he had any links to any terror groups overseas – especially since he couldn't even get it straight who he was supporting.

No, Mateen acted alone – fueled by his hatred for homosexuals. (And was he one? Media outlets have quoted a couple regulars at the Pulse nightclub who said Mateen actually frequented the club, and on multiple occasions had gotten so drunk he needed to be escorted out of the building. MSNBC, meanwhile, interviewed a man who said he'd been contacted by Mateen via a gay dating app.) Bill O'Reilly was on Stephen Colbert's show Monday night and said it's time to “declare war against the Islamic jihad.” But to use this particular incident as a justification for war is flawed reasoning, since all indicators are he acted alone, driven more by his mental illness and his extreme homophobia than his devotion to Islam (which was a confused devotion at that).

This horrific crime underscores – again – the need for the country to do more about gun control. Expand background checks. Ban civilians from owning semi-automatic AR-15s (the gun used in Orlando, as well as in Newtown, in Aurora, Colo. – the list goes on). And for crying out loud, if there's a “no-fly list” then there should be a “no-guns list.” *And it should be the exact same list.* Because if you're considered a threat to fly, then you sure as heck should be considered a threat to own a gun.

Look, can you put additional gun control in place and still have criminals and attackers obtain guns? Of course. But the goal should be to make it as difficult to obtain them as possible.

And before anyone starts throwing around the Second Amendment, remember this: the amendment contains the key words “well-regulated.” So, let's have some more regulations.

One last thing on Orlando: Donald Trump continues to be absolutely disgusting and vile. Within hours – hours! – of the attack he was patting himself on the back on Twitter, telling his fans he appreciated their congratulations, and declaring “I was right.” Seriously – “I was right.” While other politicians were trying to say something supportive and productive, here was Trump saying “I told you

so! I told you so!”

How is this man the Republican nominee for president again?

\* \* \*

Onto another, more pleasant subject: baseball. As you may have heard, Ichiro Suzuki is, as of Tuesday night, sitting on 2,977 Major League Baseball hits. That's on top of 1,278 hits he compiled over nine seasons of playing baseball in Japan. So he has a combined total of 4,255 hits – just one shy of Pete Rose's MLB record.

So does that mean Ichiro is about to become the sport's all-time hits leader? Not exactly.

Ichiro is a tremendous player, a man who should go into the Hall of Fame on the first ballot (no doubt wearing a Seattle Mariners cap). He's very likely to end up with 3,000 MLB hits – heck, he could do it by August – which is pretty amazing considering he didn't play his first MLB season until he was 27 years old. He collected over 200 hits in each of his first 10 seasons in the big leagues, which is an amazing feat.

But the fact is, there are crucial differences between Japanese baseball and American baseball – and that's why it wouldn't be fair to take Ichiro's 1,278 hits in Japan and say they're equal to 1,278 MLB hits. They use a smaller ball in Japan, there's a smaller strike zone and the ballparks are smaller. Teams may only have a maximum of four foreign-born players on their roster – so the diversity of talent on a team isn't what players face over here.

And success for ballplayers in Japan hasn't necessarily always translated well over here; see former Mets infielder Kaz Matsui or former Yankees pitcher Hideki Irabu for examples. Both were stars over there, and put up fantastic numbers. Their stats over here, though, were rather pedestrian.

The annals of baseball history are also filled with players who seemed washed up in MLB, only to go over to Japan and revitalize their careers. Take Randy Bass, for example. He played six seasons for five different MLB teams, and was never an everyday player for any of them. He then went over to Japan and had immediate success; he clubbed 54 home runs in 1985 and the following year set the all-time Japanese record for batting average in a single season, at .389.

Tuffy Rhodes is another example. After hitting .224 with a combined 13 home runs over parts of six MLB seasons, Rhodes went to Japan and became a star. He hit 55 home runs in 2001, tying a single-season record that lasted until 2013.

None of this is to take away from Ichiro's success. Like I said, he's a tremendous athlete and deserves scores of accolades. I just don't think “baseball's all-time hits leader” should be one of them. Japanese baseball and American baseball are just two different animals.

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See you next week.