

RIVEREAST

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East Hampton Old Home Days will make its return next week. The three-day Glorious Celebration features a host of activities and events, culminating with the Old Home Day Parade on Saturday, July 9. Seen here, performing in last year's parade, is the color guard from the East Hampton High School marching band.

Old Home Days Returns Next Week

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton's Old Home Days returns next week – and during the 38th annual Glorious Celebration, a portion of Route 196 will be officially dedicated to “Mr. Old Home Day,” the late Russell Oakes.

Oakes was the Old Home Day Parade chairman for over 20 years and a former president of the Old Home Day Committee. He died last year at the age of 75.

The dedication will take place during this year's Beach Party USA-themed parade on Saturday, July 9, according to state Rep. Melissa Ziobron, R-34.

She said the details of the dedication were still being worked out at press time.

Oakes died Jan. 7, 2015, and, shortly after his passing, Ziobron reached out to his wife, Sheila, with the idea to name the portion of Route 196 between Route 66 and the Village Center in his honor. Ziobron submitted the bill later that month, and it was signed into law in June, as part of an omnibus transportation package.

Testimony from the East Hampton Old Home Day Association to the state legislature's Transportation Committee related the significance of the location.

“Russ loved seeing our town come together with floats from our organizations and businesses,” the association said in written testimony. “There was no greater Old Home Day joy for Russ than to watch the hundreds of men, women and children line the streets of the parade route to watch the longest-running parade in Middlesex County.”

Oakes' wife, Sheila, said her whole family – including five sons and one daughter – is eagerly anticipating the dedication. Her children and grandchildren will be coming in from far and wide to help pull off the event Russell Oakes loved so much – and to enjoy each other's company.

“We're very excited this year,” she said.

The 1.5-mile Old Home Day Parade, the weekend's signature event and Russ Oakes' pride and joy, will be held Saturday at 11 a.m. It includes more than 70 floats, antique vehicles, bands and numerous community groups. This year's Beach Party USA theme was chosen by the public, after the committee narrowed the list down to 11 finalists.

East Hampton Old Home Day Association President Pam Joslyn Greenwald, who has been at the helm for six years, said she was honored to be chosen as the parade's grand marshal this year. She will ride in the association's float – a pontoon boat – at the front of the procession. She will be joined by association Vice President Linda May, Treasurer Nancy Ninesling and Secretary Jennifer Collingwood.

Sheila Oakes will be overseeing the 18th Annual Glorious Gallop, a 5-kilometer race that takes participants from Seven Hills Crossing, down Mott Hill, around Lake Pocotopaug, to Center School. It will be held Friday at 7:15 p.m.

Oakes counted more than 100 people signed up as of Wednesday. Registrations will also be accepted the day of the event.

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Johnson Sentenced for Again Violating Probation

by Elizabeth Regan

Robert L. Johnson, sentenced Wednesday to 25 months in prison for violating probation for the third time, told a Middlesex Superior Court judge he's a different man than he was when he sexually assaulted a 14-year-old girl in 1999.

Johnson, 59, said he's changed in both body and mind since then, citing years of court-ordered therapy and a decreased libido.

“I don't have the same drive I had 17 years ago when this happened,” he told Judge David P. Gold.

The former Portland resident was arrested almost a year ago for violating the terms of probation by giving a horse riding lesson to a girl under the age of 16 at his farm in Miller, Missouri, where he moved in 2013. Regulations governing probation in Missouri specify he cannot have contact with anyone who is 16 years old or younger without prior approval from a treatment team, according to the arrest warrant affidavit.

“I do understand I made a mistake in my decision to teach that minor female that one time,” he said in court. “And it was only one time.”

Wednesday's hearing marked Johnson's third sentence for violating probation since he was

convicted in 2001. A jury found him guilty of fourth-degree sexual assault, risk of injury to a child and illegal sexual contact for fondling a 14-year-old girl's buttocks on multiple occasions in 1999 and her breasts at least once, according to court documents. He was the owner of Quarry Town Stables in Portland at the time.

He served nine months in prison out of his original six-year sentence for the sex offense and was put on probation for ten years.

Johnson was found guilty of violating probation in 2007 for not complying with sex offender treatment, which extended his probation through Jan. 9, 2015. The affidavit shows he was found guilty again in 2011 after he went to the same horse show his victim was attending. He served 21 months in prison and his probation was continued.

Gold said he is the fourth in a line of judges who have heard Johnson's case over the years. He described the original sentence handed down by Judge Patrick J. Clifford in 2001 as “a very modest period of incarceration” that was supposed to be an incentive for him to follow the terms of his probation.

“You didn't do that,” Gold told Johnson. “You've actually served much of the original

sentence on an installment plan. You keep going back.”

The arrest warrant affidavit details a treatment progress report from Johnson's time in Missouri, written by Richard W. Jenkins, which expressed “grave concerns” about his behavior. Violations include the purchase of massage oils at an adult store and testing positive for alcohol during a drug test.

But Jenkins described the horse-riding lesson given to an underage girl as the most outrageous violation.

“It is obvious to me that Robert has no intention to follow supervision requirements as long as they interfere with what he wishes to do or feels that his actions will not be discovered,” Jenkins wrote. “Therefore, I have concluded that he is a danger to this community and strongly recommend that he be returned to the state from which he came in order for them to deal with his failure to comply to the rules of supervision appropriately.”

According to the affidavit, police in Lawrence County, Missouri, were informed in May 2015 that Johnson was training children to ride horses. A probation officer confirmed to police that Johnson was not authorized to be around

minors.

The officer then contacted the mother of a 12-year-old child Johnson was training. She said she wasn't aware Johnson was a registered sex offender; she also provided video footage of her daughter's lesson.

Senior Assistant State's Attorney Russell Zentner asked for a 36-month sentence, based largely on Johnson's repeated and “blatant disregard” for the court's edicts. Zentner also cited a website for Johnson's business, Johnsons Performance Horses, on which group photos including children are posted. Zentner said the photos give the impression Johnson teaches minors.

Johnson's attorney, Richard E. Cohen of Granby, asked for an 18-month sentence. He said the probation violations were “not of an egregious nature.”



Johnson

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Old Home Days cont. from Front Page

She said she’s working on passing off event coordination to a new generation of organizers, but she hasn’t been able to let go yet.

“Eighteen years; I can’t believe it,” she said.

But the Glorious Gallop is still young compared to the 38-year-old Glorious Celebration.

This year’s three-day event includes a wide array of free musical entertainment ranging from Celtic to Caribbean. Carnival rides, food vendors and activities like the Hula Hoop Rodeo will fill the three-day extravaganza.

New this year is a focus on local crafters, according to Joslyn Greenwald.

There will also be a new enticement in the form of \$20 All-You-Can-Ride wristbands at

the carnival on Saturday. The wristbands cost \$15 on Thursday night and \$20 on Friday night.

The 38th annual Old Home Days Glorious Celebration will be held on Thursday from 6-10 p.m.; Friday from 6-11 p.m; and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. The fairgrounds are located at Center School, 7 Summit St.

Parade parking and shuttle buses will be provided from East Hampton Middle School on Childs Road, off Route 66. Return shuttles will be provided at the end of the parade on Main Street in the Village Center.

For more information, visit ehohd.org, or search “East Hampton Old Home Days” on Facebook.

Johnson cont. from Front Page

In his request for leniency, Cohen cited Johnson’s “well-known and acknowledged” passion for riding horses and teaching others to ride, as well as for promoting the humane treatment of animals.

It’s that passion, Cohen said, that got Johnson “into trouble in his present offense.”

Johnson stood before the judge to outline a series of events that he said contributed to his lapse in judgment when he decided to give a riding lesson to a girl under the age of 16. First, he said the Missouri Division of Probation and Parole denied his request to attend an out-of-state horse festival where he planned to teach seminars about horse safety.

The prospect of sharing his knowledge and skills in horse training – to “be someone again in the horse world” – was exciting to him, he said. But when the denial came through, his excitement turned to anger, frustration and depression.

At the same time, he said, his group therapy sessions were starting to preach about following one’s dreams.

“We are supposed to be passionate about what we do and motivated to follow that passion,” Johnson explained to the judge.

So when a mother approached him about training her daughter to handle a difficult horse, he said he made a decision to follow his passion for riding instruction.

“I broke down and I made that decision,” he said. “I’m sorry for that decision. I know it was wrong, moreso because it hurt my wife and my family.”

He said the girl’s two parents, an assistant trainer, and another student were present at the lesson.

“She was never in any danger of me,” he said, adding that no other accusations of misconduct have been made.

“I was in a bad place in my mind when it happened,” he said.

Johnson decried the Missouri Division of Probation and Parole for not evaluating him, according to conditions of his probation established in Connecticut, to consider if he should

be allowed to have supervised or unsupervised contact with females under the age of 16.

He said he had been allowed to provide supervised riding lessons in Connecticut to “over 70 female minors” and that he traveled out of state “without any improprieties.”

The state of Missouri, according to Johnson, “makes it impossible for a person to prove they’re reformed.”

Two of Johnson’s friends stood before the judge to vouch for his character and work ethic. They described him as an accomplished horseman who is now unable to make a living because of probation restrictions in Missouri. They told the judge Johnson has paid for his crime and they believe it’s time for him to move on.

Gold acknowledged that almost 20 years have elapsed since the incident and that Johnson has not committed any sex offenses in that time. He also gave Johnson credit for admitting he violated his probation this time around.

Gold also remarked on the fact that Johnson had told him his number one priority as a riding instructor is to keep people from getting hurt.

“That’s exactly what the court is trying to do,” Gold said.

The 25-month prison term is a flat-time sentence, meaning it will be served in its entirety. Gold did not give Johnson probation.

In April 2010, a jury in a civil case found Johnson guilty of sexually assaulting a male student in the 1980s. The victim, Andrew Srb, was awarded the Quarry Town Stables property and over \$1.2 million in damages in the decision. Srb claimed that Johnson raped him several times while he worked at the stables when he was a teenager.

After Srb was awarded the property, Johnson admitted to vandalizing the property, including smashing windows, spray-painting hateful messages, and spreading horse manure and garbage throughout the buildings. Portland Police said at the time that Johnson was not charged with vandalizing the property.

The farm has since been sold.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I was disappointed when the news came down Monday afternoon that the annual Riverfest fireworks show was being canceled this year, due to – what else? – budgetary reasons.

The show’s co-hosted by the cities of Hartford and East Hartford. It’s billed as the state’s largest fireworks display, and has been a tradition now for 36 years.

But, as you read about the Portland fireworks in last week’s *Rivereast*, money’s a factor. Hartford and East Hartford estimated their share of the costs for the show – for police and fire protection – totaled \$100,000. And this year, the state added a little wrinkle; it decided to pull the state police coverage it typically has provided for this event, so that added another \$20,000.

That \$120,000 – half of Riverfest’s overall budget – proved too much for the two cities to bear.

“Following up on our recent conversations, we are writing to let you know that, with regret, our cities will be unable to bear the costs of staffing Riverfest,” Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin and East Hartford Mayor Marcia Leclerc wrote in a join letter Monday to Michael Zaleski, president and CEO of Riverfront Recapture, the group that puts on the fireworks show every year. The pair added, “We understand that our inability to bear these costs likely means that the event will be canceled.”

And indeed, the show – which was scheduled for Saturday, June 9 – was scrapped. However, a food truck festival planned for July 7, 8 and 9 at Mortensen Riverfront Plaza in Hartford will go on. Now, regular readers of this column know I am a fan of food – and greasy food truck food in particular is right up my alley – but I’d rather have the fireworks.

It’s a shame that, after all these years, the show could not go on.

* * *

Every so often you’ll see one of those “best places to live” or “best places to work” types of lists pop up. They could be from famous places like *U.S. News and World Report* or CNN, or they could be from companies or organizations you’ve frankly never heard of. I came across one of the latter last week, but it was still fairly interesting.

From niche.com – a company that collects expert reviews and insights in order to, as it puts it, “make choosing a neighborhood, college, or K-12 school a more transparent process” – comes a list of the Best Public High Schools in Connecticut. And while some of these “best of” lists use all of perhaps three factors to reach their decision, niche.com points out that it actually uses several ranking factors – including state test scores, college readiness, graduation rates, SAT/ACT scores, teacher quality, student and parent reviews, and more. (The statistics the site uses are obtained from the U.S. Department of Education, and niche.com says they represent the most recent data available, usually from 2013-14, as self-reported by the school district.)

So it was with curiosity that I looked at the list, ranked in order of quality. I wanted to see how my hometown, Manchester, fared (spoiler alert: not that great, coming in at No. 104), but I also wanted to see how the four public high schools in *Rivereast*-land were scored.

Before I dive into the nitty gritty, though, I’m going to ask one thing of the area school superintendents and board members: don’t kill the messenger! This isn’t my list, it’s niche.com, and I’m just posting it because it’s interesting info. You may disagree entirely with your school’s ranking; I know my brother likely would. While I’m a proud East Catholic High School alum (go Eagles!), I have friends and relatives who went to Manchester High School, and he had a great experience, and it helped him become the great guy he is today. So take it all with a grain of salt.

Anyway, of the four public high schools the *Rivereast* covers, RHAM scored highest, at No. 42; it graded its academics at A-, health & safety, resources & facilities and extracurriculars & activities also all got A-grades, and teachers and sports & fitness each received B+ grades. In the “parent/student surveys on overall experience” category, RHAM got a 4.1 out of 5.

Really, the only place the regional high school didn’t score that well on was student culture & diversity; RHAM got a C- in this category, which wasn’t hugely surprising. (As you’ll see, none of the *Rivereast* high schools

scored great in the diversity category, but I don’t think that’s really the fault of the school so much as it’s simply indicative of the towns themselves. These aren’t urban towns, and there isn’t as much diversity as you’d see in, say, a Hartford or Bridgeport, or even East Hartford or Manchester.)

Next on the list was East Hampton High School, at No. 59. EHHS scored a solid A for extracurriculars & activities, an A- in academics and health & safety, a B+ for teachers and sports & fitness, and only a B- for resources & facilities (a grade I suspect might change when the new high school opens). Like RHAM, it scored well in the “overall experience” survey, notching a 4.1. Also like RHAM, though, it didn’t do that great on student culture & diversity, scoring a C+.

Bacon Academy came in at No. 98. The school got B+ grades for academics and extracurriculars & activities, Bs for teachers, resources & facilities and sports & fitness, and a C for student culture & diversity. On the “overall experience” survey, Bacon scored a 3.8.

Portland High School came in at No. 125, with a B+ grade for health & safety, extracurriculars & activities and sports & fitness, a B for teachers, and a B- for academics and resources & facilities. It scored a C- for culture & diversity, and also a 3.8 on the “overall experience” survey, though it should be noted that, for Portland, there were only seven respondents to the survey.

And that last part is the thing; don’t like where you school is ranked? You can help do something about it by filling out a parent/student survey; those don’t just affect the “overall experience” number but are weighted into the other graded categories as well.

If you want to take a look for yourself – or are, like me, curious about how schools in other towns fared – head over to k12.niche.com/rankings/public-high-schools/best-overall.

* * *

Lastly, it’s now July, which means you should be getting your car tax bill. You may, indeed, have already gotten it. But the state Department of Motor Vehicles is asking that you not just blindly pay it; make sure the tax bill is indeed for your town.

Because it may not be.

The DMV, the Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers and the Connecticut Tax Collectors Association are asking residents receiving motor vehicle tax bills to review them carefully to ensure the correct information is listed on the bills from their municipalities.

This follows DMV’s conversion of data from an old registration computer system to the new one last August. DMV and the two associations have estimated that about 50,000 vehicle owners could be affected.

“We are advising residents early so that they look immediately at their tax bills and make any necessary changes before paying them,” DMV Commissioner Michael Bzdyra said in a press release. “All of us are being pro-consumer in this effort and wanting to prevent inconveniences for taxpayers.”

According to the DMV, data in the old system was compiled from customers over decades, and could have old addresses never changed by someone who moved or incorrect information given when registering a vehicle. DMV said it has collected registration information for decades “in a variety of inconsistent ways.” The department said the new computer system attempts to standardize information so that there is consistency in DMV records, as well as those given to towns for tax-billing purposes.

DMV said it and municipalities across the state are also working to resolve inconsistencies among some residents having mailing addresses as well as separate “domicile” listings for a different municipality where their vehicle is garaged (in other words, someone who lives in one town, but keeps a vehicle in another town where it is most often used).

DMV advised residents who have received a tax bill from a municipality in which they did not reside or in which they did not have a vehicle (both as of Oct. 1, 2015), to contact their assessor to request a transfer to the correct town or city of residency.

Those who need information to make a registration address change at DMV can go to ct.gov/dmv/changeaddress or call DMV at 860-263-5700.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Council Balks at Compensation for King

by Elizabeth Regan

The Town Council rejected a request by former Chatham Health District director Thad King for financial compensation after a conflict of interest investigation by the state Department of Public Health forced his resignation.

King is asking the council to authorize a payment of \$27,042 for water testing fees that were never billed to the town and to increase his pension by more than \$800 per month by eliminating the early retirement penalty.

The embattled health director resigned in December as part of a settlement agreement with the state stemming from his work as a private certified water operator at the same time he was serving as director of the Chatham Health District.

King started as a sanitarian in East Hampton in 1990 and rose to local director of health in 1994. In 2002, he became the first director of the nascent Chatham Health District. The district is made up of the *Rivereast* towns of Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland, as well as East Haddam.

The settlement agreement, signed in December by King and the Department of Public Health's then-commissioner Jewel Mullen, required him to pay \$100,380 in restitution for what the agency called "the improper and/or fraudulent" use of the state health department laboratory for private business purposes.

A majority of the restitution amount revolves around water testing fees for the town of East Hampton that King said he submitted to the state laboratory while serving as head of the Chatham Health District.

The state public health department maintains King submitted water testing samples using his account as Chatham Health District director and was therefore never billed for them. The state laboratory provides testing for health districts at no charge, according to state statute.

King said he set up separate accounts with the state lab for private billing purposes and used those accounts "for submitting many, but not all of the samples." He said he provided the information the state needs to bill his customers for the testing.

King has said the state originally claimed he

owed \$77,580 for the East Hampton fees, but his own analysis of the state's listing and the associated reports showed the cost to the town was just over \$48,851. Further research by King showed the town had already paid \$24,500 for tests the state listed as unpaid, he said.

His final analysis determined the Town of East Hampton owes \$27,042 for testing it received but was never billed for.

DPH spokeswoman Maura Downes said Wednesday she couldn't comment due to "ongoing settlement negotiations with Mr. King and his attorney."

In a letter to the Town Council dated June 7, King said the work was done solely for the benefit of East Hampton, not for his personal gain.

"DPH began back-billing from 2003 because they assumed I was being paid a fee for the water testing analysis," he wrote. "The town never paid me personally, or as a representative of my department, or as an employee or as a contractor for any laboratory testing analysis."

King also said the amount the state is asking for in restitution is too high because it includes some tests that have already been paid for and it's based on an incorrect fee structure.

Ellen Blaschinski, branch chief with regulatory services at the state public health department, said in a June 8 email that "DPH is not seeking any settlement from the Town of East Hampton related to this matter."

She added that the agency is willing to work with the town to verify King's request for payment and that "DPH will work to ensure that payment is made to DPH directly" if the town decides to provide the money.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said the agency verified the \$27,042 figure over the phone – "but they will not say the Town of East Hampton owes them money."

Melissa Engel was the lone vote in support of King at Tuesday's meeting of the council.

"I feel these fees were our fees to pay. I know DPH has said we don't need to because they're obviously really wanting to make Thad King poor. However, that work was done for the Town of East Hampton," Engel said. "Mr. King in no way benefited financially or personally. He did not run away with any of our money. I would hold the DPH as responsible for poor bookkeep-

ing and accounting practices as I would anyone else."

She said the other punishments enacted as part of the settlement agreement are severe enough without making King pay tens of thousands of dollars.

The agreement stipulates King may not work as a health director anywhere in Connecticut. He may only serve in a non-director capacity within a health jurisdiction as long as the position is "not funded, in whole or in part, with funding from or flowing through DPH."

Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson explained her vote against King's request by saying he assumed "full responsibility for the total reimbursement amount" when he signed the agreement with the state public health department.

Engel said that may be true, "but that's because they were trying to screw with Mr. King."

The agreement also specifies King and the department will work together to determine if any of the fees had already been paid and that proof of such payment would be deducted from the total reimbursement amount. The document further authorizes King to "seek contributions" from any of his clients to apply toward the amount he owes the state.

The council voted 5 to 1 against a motion to pay \$27,042 to the state. Councilor Josh Piteo abstained based on what he said was a lack of information from other parties, including DPH.

Councilors also took up a request to amend the town's retirement plan to allow King, 57, to receive full pension benefits despite being forced to retire five years shy of retirement age.

"Amendments to the plan for the early retirement hardship have been passed at least three other times recently for municipal staff and this request is consistent with what has previously been provided," he wrote in an April letter to the Town Council.

He cited over 25 years of "commendable service," many of them uncompensated, as reasons the council should consider the hardship waiver.

King said in his letter that he performed certified water operator duties for East Hampton at no additional cost while he served as the district's health director. The savings was in

excess of \$342,000 over 20 years compared to current contract rates, according to King.

East Hampton Human Resources Coordinator Lisa Seymour said in April that King's current pension arrangement grants him a monthly payment of \$4,222. Waiving the early retirement penalty would mean he receives \$5,056 per month.

That's a difference of \$834 per month, or roughly \$400,000 total based on the average lifespan.

Councilors voted 6-0 against King's request, with Piteo abstaining.

Engel said after the meeting that she cannot support changing the town's pension plan for one person.

"If we did that for one, we'd be doing it for many other people," she said. "I could see that situation coming around again."

She also balked at the price tag to the town if the council approved the request.

King was reached by phone Wednesday for comment.

"I did my work as the director of health for the commissioner and the district and the town faithfully as well," he said. "I'm just disgusted with the politics and the personal nature of all this. And that's all I have to say."

At the time of King's investigation and resignation, state statute said health district directors must devote their "entire time" to the job, which precludes any outside work. Changes to the statute, signed into law this year, now require health district directors to serve in a "full-time capacity," allowing for other work or volunteer commitments outside regular hours. The law goes into effect today.

The law also requires the DPH commissioner to notify a health district's Board of Health in the case of suspected impropriety by a municipal or district health director. The board then has 90 days to evaluate the director and report its findings back to the commissioner. That law goes into effect Oct. 1.

Some members of the Chatham Health District Board of Health have said they felt blindsided by the state's investigation into King and its results, which they did not feel were effectively communicated to the board.

RHAM Administration Delays Grading Changes

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Following parent concern expressed last week at the RHAM Board of Education meeting about Standards Based Grading, the school board decided to delay its implementation until more information is received by the board and communicated to the public.

And now, RHAM administrators have announced that postponement will be for the entire 2016-17 school year.

At the meeting June 20, a number of parents spoke out against the change, which would impact next year's seventh graders and would move away from the traditional letter grading system to number indicators that represent how well each student meets grade level standards: 1 for below standard, 2 for nearing expectations, 3 for meeting expectations, and 4 for exceeding expectations.

Parents said, among other things, that they were worried the change would be detrimental – not in the best interest of the students, as

administrators have said – and would encourage mediocrity and a lack of motivation. Several also said they felt the initiative had not been properly communicated to parents.

A June 24 press release from Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski's office stated that, based on the school board's decision to delay the implementation, "and after a lengthy discussion" with Middle School Principal Michael Seroussi, the decision was made to postpone the change for the entire year.

"Attempting to provide the information requested, and the time needed for additional communication to all the stakeholders would be difficult given the fact that many interested individuals will be on vacation and the short period of time before school opens in August," the release stated.

Neither Seroussi nor Siminski were available for comment.

The school year is scheduled to start Aug. 31.

East Hampton Emergency Dispatch Now in Glastonbury

The town has announced police, fire and emergency medical dispatch services are now being handled through the town of Glastonbury.

The services had been provided by Colchester Emergency Communications, commonly known as KX. But, late last December, KX notified East Hampton and all its member towns it would be dissolving effective July 1.

After a search for other providers of police, fire and EMS dispatch, the town entered

into an agreement with Glastonbury, saying the regional effort "would be the most effective method" of providing emergency dispatch to residents.

The switchover to Glastonbury dispatch was to occur at 11:45 p.m. last night (June 30), after press time. From this point on, all 911 calls will go through Glastonbury. All non-emergency numbers will stay the same.

The town said residents should not notice a lapse in service.

East Hampton Police Investigating Car Break-Ins

East Hampton Police are investigating a rash of car break-ins that allegedly occurred in town last weekend.

Police said the burglaries were reported in the Spice Hill area, where 11 cars were broken into between Saturday night and Sunday morning.

"We want to remind everyone not to leave

any valuables inside your vehicles and make sure your vehicles are locked at all times," police said in a press release.

Anyone who may have information regarding the break-ins is urged to call the East Hampton Police Department at 860-267-9922. An anonymous tip line is available at 860-267-9066.

Chainsaws Reported Stolen in Marlborough

State police are asking the public for information on a Jones Hollow Road burglary that allegedly occurred Thursday, June 16, at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Police said two Stihl chainsaws were stolen from a garage by a white male suspect wearing a dark-colored shirt and shorts. The suspect fled the scene on a green moped, traveling south on Jones Hollow Road toward the center of Marlborough.

Anyone with information is asked to call Trooper Michael Dowling at 860-465-5400 or the resident state trooper's office at 860-295-9098.

Fire at Veterans Park in Hebron

The state police is asking the public for information related to a fire at Veterans Park on Wednesday, June 22. The fire occurred at the skate park.

Anyone with information is asked to call Trooper Lukasz Kowalczyk at 860-465-5400 ext. 4052.

Hebron Police News

6/20: State police said Emanuel Lauria, 54, of 175 SE St. Lucie Blvd., Stuart, FL, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct; voyeurism/peeping Tom; first-degree assault of an elderly person; and third-degree assault. The next day (6/21), he was arrested again and charged with violation of a protective order.

6/25: State police said Dylan Hollister, 19, of 92 Smith Farm Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with DUI and failing to grant the right of way.

Colchester Police News

6/24: State police said Thomas Litwinko, 20, of 14 Diane Ln., Colchester, was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary and third-degree criminal mischief.

Portland

Allan F. Cross

Allan F. Cross, 76, a Portland resident, passed away Monday, June 27.

Allan, the son of T. Stanley and Emily G. (Applebee) Cross, was born May 28, 1940, in New London. He attended schools in Waterford and New London. Upon graduation from high school, he joined the US Air Force, serving for four years, earning the rank of E-4 and received an honorable discharge. He married Joan K. Eldridge Jan. 19, 1962, and they had one daughter, Lisa M. Richardson. After his discharge, he lived five years in Mansfield, then moved to Tolland. He was hired by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and remained with P&WA for over 30 years achieving the position of General Supervisor in Quality Control.

He was predeceased by his wife of 27 years in 1988 and subsequently married the former Janice (House) Winicki, to whom he was married for 25 years.

All had many interests and hobbies including photography, electronics, computers, genealogy, aviation and traveling in an RV. He held a TV Technicians license from the State of Connecticut, a Commercial Radiotelephone License and a Commercial Pilot's License.

All had a lifelong interest in aviation and was a member of the Experimental Aircraft Association for more than 25 years. He served at various times as the local Chapter 166 Secretary, newsletter editor and subsequently as webmaster. All had many talents and loved building things. He took immense pride in his amateur built aircrafts, a Glasair II. He flew the aircraft which could cruise at 180 miles per hour and attain speeds over 200 miles per hour.

Allan and Janice enjoyed traveling in their RV all over the U.S., Canada and Alaska. They often traveled to and spent their winters in Ft. Myers Beach, Fla., and summer vacations in Wells Beach, Maine.

All served his community as a volunteer firefighter for 30 years, briefly with the Eagleville Fire Department and 25 years with the Tolland Volunteer Fire Department. He was also the local coordinator for the AARP Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) for more than 10 years. He and others working with him prepared income tax forms for the elderly in the Portland-Middletown area.

He leaves his wife Janice; a daughter, Lisa M. Ricardson, her husband Scott and grandson Connor; two stepsons, David Winicki, his wife Deborah from Stafford Springs, and three grandchildren, Hannah, Jonathan and Christian; and second stepson, Kevin Winicki, wife Dianne from Colchester and three grandchildren, Meredith, Benjamin and Harrison.

In addition, he leaves a brother, Erving W. Cross and wife Helen of Wilsonville, Ore., and a sister, Katherine M. Breeden and husband Gary of Suffolk, Va. Also, a niece, Lynne King and husband Kevin of Germantown, Md.

A memorial service will be held Wednesday, July 6, from 10 a.m.-noon, at Biega's Home for Funerals, 3 Silver St., Middletown.

Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society in lieu of flowers.



Portland

Diane Carey Otterbein

Diane Carey Otterbein, formerly of Portland, loving wife of John W. Otterbein for 65 years, died peacefully at Manchester Manor Nursing Home Thursday, June 23, surrounded by family.

She was born in Middletown Oct. 16, 1928, the daughter of Harold and Gertrude (Carey) Santangelo. A graduate of Weylister Junior College in Milford, she went to work with her father at the Santangelo Agency, a longtime insurance and real estate business on Main Street in Middletown. After marriage, she devoted her life to being the best wife and mom she could be and if grades were handed out for that, she'd have received all A's. Later in life, she was a longtime volunteer at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown.

Always pleasant and even-keeled, stylish and dignified, she was forever a kind, gentle and beautiful soul whose husband countless times talked of how lucky he was to have her as his wife.

Besides her husband, she leaves a son, Jeff, and his wife Becky of Manchester; her granddaughter, Stacy Firth, and her husband Jason of Vernon; and her grandson, Michael Otterbein, and his wife Courtney of Oakville, Canada; four great-grandchildren, Ben and Grace Otterbein, and Olivia and Ronan Firth. She also leaves her treasured sister Nancy (Santangelo) Emond (about as close as sisters could be; they could burn up the phone lines!) and her husband Norm; her sister-in-law Phyllis (Otterbein) Sbona; and five nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her son John W. Otterbein Jr. and died on what would have been his 65th birthday.

The family would like to thank the staff at Manchester Manor for its loving care in her 2 and a half years there, as well as Masonicare Hospice for its compassion and concern in the final days.

Funeral services were held Monday, June 27, directly at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial was in Indian Hill Cemetery, Middletown. There were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter, 200 Executive Blvd., Suite 48 Southington, CT 06489.

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



East Hampton

James Joseph Clynes

James Joseph Clynes, 92, of East Hampton, formerly of Southington, beloved husband of Rhoda (Leonard) Clynes, died Thursday, June 23, at his home. Born Sept. 24, 1923, in Middletown, he was the son of the late James H. and Josephine (McAloon) Clynes.

James was a longtime resident of Southington before moving to East Hampton in 1992. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy during both World War II and the Korean War. He had worked as a district manager for Northeast Utilities until his retirement after 40 years.

James served as a state representative in the 81st District in Southington for 10 years, serving as co-chair of the finance committee. He was past president and a member of Kiwanis Club in Southington, a member of KofC in East Hampton, a member of the Elks Club in Southington, and a member of the American Legion in Florida.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his son, James W. Clynes and his wife Lisa of Southington; a daughter, Nancy Ninesling and her husband David of East Hampton; a sister-in-law, Marjorie Clynes of Florida; six grandchildren, Ryan, Kacie, Zach, AJ, KJ and Alyssa; two great-grandchildren, Taylor and Jack.

He was predeceased by his brother, William Clynes.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Sunday, June 26. A funeral liturgy was held Monday, June 27, in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial followed in St. Patrick Cemetery with military honors.

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

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Portland

William E. Coleman

William E. Coleman, 76, of Portland, husband of Mary Jane (Delehant) Coleman, passed away Sunday, June 26, unexpectedly at his home, in the arms of his beloved wife of 52 years. He was the son of the late Harold J. and Mary (Cosgrove) Coleman.

Born on June 29, 1939, in Middletown, he was a lifelong resident of Portland. He was retired from Pratt & Whitney after 33 years of service. Anyone that knew Bill, quickly realized that the most important thing in his life was his family, especially his seven grandchildren, whom he adored.

Bill coached little league and CYO basketball teams when his children participated and he was an active member of St. Mary Parish in Portland. Bill's favorite pastime, when he was not running around being the number one supporter at just about every single one of his grandchildren's events, was his hobby of thoroughbred handicapping. Some of the most exciting times in the Coleman household were the big race days and opening day at Saratoga. Bill would spend hours scientifically picking the winning horse only to have it stumble coming out of the gate. Yet, after every race day he always seemed to break even, so we were told.

A very special place for 50 years and where many precious memories were made were the dunes at the Cape. Spending summers and long weekends at his home away from home at the "E Z DUZ IT" homestead in Dennisport, Cape Cod. Bill and his family have many special memories hosting family and dear friends at the Cape.

Besides his wife, he leaves his children, Michael and wife Diane, Jack and wife Lauren, William and wife Jeanette, and his daughter Sue and Gloria. He also leaves his grandchildren Kelly, Katie, Marlene, Jacob, Liam, Aden and Molly.

Bill was also blessed with such special brothers- and sisters-in-law, cousins and many cherished lifelong friends.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 2, with a Mass at 10 a.m. at the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Ave, Portland. Burial will be in Center Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends may call today, July 1, from 4-7 p.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, any donations may be made to the amazing Portland Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480 or to the Church of St. Mary, 45 Freestone Ave, Portland, CT 06480.



Colchester

John Thomas Kennedy

John Thomas Kennedy, 78, of Colchester, formerly of Florida, passed away Thursday, June 23, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester. Born June 11, 1938, in New Haven, he was the son of the late John and Christine (McCormack) Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy had served with the U.S. Navy in the late 1950s and over the years had worked as a property manager amongst other occupations.

He leaves his daughter, Robin Fontana and her husband, Salvatore, of Colchester; two sons, Roger of Colchester and Kevin of Middletown; five grandchildren, Anthony Fontana and his wife, Kelly, Jonathan Fontana, Stephen Fontana and Brianna Fontana and Tiffany (Kennedy) Ray and her husband, Colton; two great-grandchildren, Thomas Fontana and Colby Ray; and many extended family members and friends.

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

Portland

Helen S. Chandler

Helen S. Chandler, 97 of Imperial Harbor Estates, Bonita Springs, Fla., formerly from Cromwell, widow of Frank C. Chandler, passed away June 26, surrounded by her family. She was born in Hartford April 21, 1919, one of six children, the daughter of Julian and Bronislaw Smigel.

Helen worked for many years as a factory worker. Moving to Florida in 1981, she and her husband had a lawn service business. Helen enjoyed square dancing and round dancing with her husband, traveling, cooking, gardening and going to the casino.

She leaves two daughters, Elizabeth Bordonaro, Lorraine (Michael) Perrotti, one son, Ronald Chandler, all of Bonita Springs, Fla.; two grandsons, Michael (Nancy) Bordonaro, Dean Bordonaro; one granddaughter, Loretta (Richard) Faraci; five great-grandchildren, Jennifer, Michael and Taylor Bordonaro, Anthony and Nicholas Faraci; two great-great-grandchildren, Cameron Oliver and Caysen Jones. She also leaves a sister, Anna Jacobson from Port Charlotte, Fla.

She was preceded in death by three brothers, Walter, Stanley and Joseph Smigel; one sister, Julie Kokoszka; a son, Raymond F. Chandler Sr.; a grandson, Raymond F. Chandler Jr.; and two sons-in-law, Thomas and Anthony Bordonaro.

Funeral services will be held in Connecticut at a later date.

The family suggests that memorial contributions be made to Joanne's House at Hope Hospice, 27200 Imperial Pkwy, Bonita Springs, FL 34135.

Shikany Bonita Funeral Home, 28300 Tamiami Trail South, Bonita Springs, FL 34134.

Colchester

Jack E. Berman Graveside Services

Graveside Services for Jack E. Berman, 82, late of Colchester, who passed away Thursday, June 23, will be observed at 10 a.m. today, July 1, directly at the Ahavath Achim Cemetery, Taintor Hill Road, Colchester.

May his memory be for a blessing. Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Leona Joyce Lapiene

Leona Joyce Lapiene, 68, of East Hampton, died Wednesday, June 22, at her home. Born Jan. 28, 1948, in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Norman S. and Florence (Hitriz) Lapiene.

Leona retired from Pratt & Whitney after a long career as an aerospace inspector. She was an active member of Haddam Neck Covenant Church and took on various duties.

She is survived by her four brothers, Carl, Robert, Clifford and Dennis Lapiene; three sisters, Carol Geigner, Kathleen Herbert and Christine Pesce; two brothers-in-law, David Herbert and Michael Pesce; four sisters-in-law, Arlene Lapiene, Dianne Lapiene, Nancy Lapiene and Laura Lapiene.

She was predeceased by a brother, Norman Lapiene, and a brother-in-law, George Geigner.

A memorial service will be held today, July 1, at 11 a.m., in Haddam Neck Covenant Church.

Leona will be missed by all her family and friends. To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.