

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**He Could Go All the Way...** The RHAM youth football squads opened up their season last weekend, taking on the Ellington Roadrunners. Pictured is Jacob Rosen of the RHAM C squad, running in one of his five touchdowns in the game. For a recap of the four squads' games, see the story on page 8.

## Emotional Sentencing for Fatal Crash

by Elizabeth Regan

Jim Morris of East Hampton was by all accounts – and there were more than 100 of them submitted in writing to the Middlesex Superior Court – a man of uncommon goodness, humility and intellect.

It was an outpouring of support acknowledged by the judge, the prosecutor, the public defender and even the defendant herself when Jennifer VanWycke was sentenced Wednesday for killing Morris, 79, on an autumn morning just under two years ago.

VanWycke was driving her 4-year-old son to school Oct. 17, 2014, when she veered into the opposite lane of traffic and up onto the sidewalk where Morris was taking his daily stroll.

Prosecutor Brian Kennedy said VanWycke admitted to taking prescription oxycodone and crushing the pills to ingest them before the crash.

There were few, if any, dry eyes in the courtroom over the course of the 2.5-hour sentencing hearing as more than 40 of Jim Morris' family members and friends sat close together on the gallery's two long benches to watch justice unfold. Most of them – along with at least one judicial marshal and the court stenographer – could be seen wiping away tears at some point during the proceedings.

Judge David P. Gold called justice an "elusive" concept as he handed down a sentence of 10 years, suspended after 33 months, and five

years of probation. He said he knew it wouldn't satisfy those who wanted her to serve the full four-year sentence recommended when VanWycke agreed to a plea bargain several months ago.

"There will be no victors in today's proceedings," he said.

VanWycke, a 36-year-old with long, blond hair wearing a gray sweatsuit, had walked into the courtroom with trembling hands. She clasped them in front of her on the table when she sat down. Throughout the hearing, she would sit with her hand in front of her mouth or use a tissue to wipe away tears.

The 33-month sentence was the result of VanWycke's no-contest plea to second-degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle and risk of injury to a minor. She also pled no contest to driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, for which she received a two-day sentence.

VanWycke will be credited for the 15 months she's already served.

Neither Kennedy nor defense attorney Angela Anastasi objected to Gold's continued presence on the bench after the judge disclosed that he was once a student at the Stamford school in which Morris had been a Latin teacher for over 30 years. Gold said he didn't believe he'd ever been taught by Morris.

Jim Morris's widow, Kate, spoke during the

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## Another Fun, Successful Hebron Fair

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Hebron Harvest Fair returned last week for the 46th year bringing plenty of fun for the whole family, during what the Hebron Lions call "Connecticut's best four-day country fair."

On Thursday evening, things were just warming up, with fairgoers enjoying a number of events and activities including the start of the canine agility contest DockDogs, music by the acoustic duo the Sweet Tarts Band and the rock tribute band Vinyl Revolution, as well as the carnival and midway that beckoned guests with its neon lights and coaxing carneys.

Meanwhile, over in the "Family Edutainment" area, animal lovers of all ages were able to coo over the animals in the petting zoo – like three-day-old goats – while the children, including perhaps a future rodeo rider or two, could enjoy a pony ride.

There were more animals to be found in the animal barns, including a number of cows, sheep, pigs and smaller animals like rabbits and poultry – many of whom were judged during the livestock shows.

Fair Superintendent Mike Tarbell had shared last week it was important to keep the animals and "some of the other aspects that have been part of the fair since the beginning" as part of the event, to keep the agricultural roots of the fair intact.

And, considering Tarbell grew up in town and

was in high school when the very first fair took place, he knows exactly what that means.

"It was on Wall Street in [RHAM] High School," Tarbell said of that debut fair, adding since then "we've expanded on some of the same things that were always part of it."

Included in that list are the baking contests. This year, for the state baking competition, adult participants were tasked with making the best six-layer chocolate cake, while those entering in the junior baking contest had to create lemon-glazed blueberry hand pies. These, and many other baked goods, prized fruits and vegetables, and arts and crafts were on display to be admired.

Although the crowds weren't as thick Thursday as they were the rest of the weekend, just how many people were present could be seen at 7:30 p.m., when practically everyone, it seemed, gathered to watch the traditional demolition derby. The stands as well as the hill overlooking the mechanical pull ring were filled as people cheered on participants who took to the ring in their decked out vehicles – one even nodding to the recent *Pokemon Go* craze with a Pokeball and Pikachu painted on the hood and sides – and smashed into one another, hoping their ride would last the longest and garner them a trophy and cash prizes.

Thursday's derby was just the start of the

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There was plenty to do in Hebron last weekend, with the return of the 46th annual Hebron Harvest Fair. On Thursday, during the fair's opening night, friends and family wandered around the grounds, enjoying the sights, sounds, food and fun.



**Sentencing cont. from Front Page**

sentencing to convey how part of herself died with her husband. The petite woman looked at VanWycke when she explained the feeling of waking up in an empty bed “without a touch or a word,” or of trying to be strong for three children and nine grandchildren mourning their own unique loss.

“All because of your poor choices,” Kate Morris said.

Morris repeated the phrase at several points to illustrate the effect of VanWycke’s actions not only on her life, but on that of their family, their friends and the wider East Hampton community.

Gold later remarked, as he announced the sentence, that Kate’s words were what he would remember most from the hearing. It was a refrain that rang out almost like a church bell, he said: “All because of your poor choices.”

And equally profound, according to Gold, was another sentiment that echoed among those who gave statements at the hearing.

“Not one person spoke with any sense of vengeance. Most spoke of the desire to see you do better,” he told VanWycke. “It’s not something I witness every day at sentencing.”

Kate Morris put it like this: “My wish for you, starting today, is you’ll make better choices.”

Anastasi said VanWycke’s son, now 6 years old, is the only thing his mother has left.

“Jennifer made a choice, and she made a choice to get in the vehicle with her son and drive him to school. That’s a choice she’ll have to live with for the rest of her life,” Anastasi said.

But the measure of remorse, she added, is reflected by choices that individual makes in the aftermath of tragedy.

According to Anastasi, VanWycke accepted responsibility when she did not flee the scene; when she showed up at numerous hearings in the months leading up to her eventual arrest knowing she could be taken into custody at any time; and when she could’ve posted bail, but didn’t.

“She hoped to facilitate a solution sooner rather than later to give closure to the family,” Anastasi said.

Gold, who said he didn’t know if he’d ever seen someone forego bail when there was another option, further explained that VanWycke’s plea of no contest likely averted a long trial by jury with no certain outcome.

He cited a blood test that came back the first time showing no sign of drugs; only after the sample was retested did the prescription painkillers show up.

With one negative test and one positive, Gold said a defense team would likely raise questions about what the results would have been if there had been a third test, which may have left jurors with reasonable doubt about VanWycke’s guilt.

It is VanWycke’s acceptance of responsibility and sense of remorse, according to Gold, that distinguished her from the thousands of offenders he’s seen over his 16 years on the bench.

“Does remorse matter? Maybe not,” he said. “But the absence of remorse sure does.”

VanWycke had stood slowly, as if gathering thoughts or courage, when it was her turn to speak before the sentence was announced. She thanked the judge through her tears.

“I can’t apologize enough to his family,” she said. “I don’t know where to begin to apologize.”

She began to talk about the effect on his children and grandchildren when she broke off, sobbing uncontrollably.

“I’m so sorry to everyone,” she said. “I don’t have a family so I don’t know what it’s like.”

According to Gold’s summary of court records, VanWycke was born to a 17-year-old single mother. She never knew her father and he was never spoken of in their home. Her mother became addicted to drugs, often leaving VanWycke alone at a young age or bringing different men into the home.

Gold said VanWycke was sexually abused by more than one person and that “when report-

ing the abuse to her mother, her mother ignored it.”

“I don’t tell you this to engender sympathy from you for her,” he said, adding he would understand if the collective response from Morris’s friends and family was “so what.”

But what impressed him, he said, was “she didn’t bring this up. I did.”

Gold imposed conditions of probation to ensure the five years after she gets out of jail yield the kind of ultimate rehabilitation that Anastasi had said just doesn’t happen in the prison setting.

VanWycke will be required to have a substance abuse and mental health evaluation and not to consume any alcohol, according to Gold. She will have to submit to drug tests as well as body, home or car searches at any time. Measures will be in place to try to prevent access to narcotics like oxycodone or any other “highly-addictive prescription drugs that are now plaguing our communities.”

He also required, at the request of Kate Morris, that VanWycke make a \$1,000 donation per year to the East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance Jim Morris Scholarship Fund for the duration of her probation – or perform 150 hours of community service if she can’t afford to pay it.

Through it all, there is a wife without a husband, three children without a father, nine grandchildren without their “Pa” and an entire community without a wise shoulder to lean on.

“He was my hero, he was my biggest fan,” his oldest child, Beth Byers, said through tears. “He was magic, and Santa, and the kindest person you would ever meet.”

For the middle child, Mark, his father’s death meant many places not traveled and so many of his grandchildren’s milestones left unseen.

“He wasn’t done,” Mark Morris said.

The youngest Morris son, John, said the cottage his father built on Lake Pocotopaug was a source of pride and joy for the whole family, which is now spread across the country. For them, coming back to the cottage was always called going to “the lake.”

He took off his glasses with shaking hands as he struggled to tell the judge how his children couldn’t bear to return to that special place without their grandfather there.

“I hope and pray they’ll again be able to love the place that we call ‘the lake,’” he said.

What also saddened him was that the death of his father, a devout Catholic, has led his own children to question their belief in God.

“They just can’t make sense of why,” John Morris said.

According to Gold, that was a common theme in so many of those letters of support that “served to chronicle the life of a truly exceptional man.”

The letters asked why these things happen to “the best among us,” Gold recounted.

“For the answer, I think we’re going to have to look at a judge that sits on a much higher court,” he said.

While Gold recalled that almost everyone who wrote or spoke in Jim’s memory expressed a desire for a “just” sentence, he said there were many different meanings attributed to the word. Some spoke about keeping her from inflicting further harm on the community or making her an example for others, known in legal terms as deterrence. Others said she needs to be punished and given time to reflect, which is called incapacitation.

“In many ways, these concepts are as elusive as the concept of justice,” he said.

VanWycke has served almost 500 days at York Correctional Institution in Niantic since her arrest in May 2015, according to Gold.

“I ask you all: Has she learned her lesson yet?”

There was no answer. One was left to surmise it was not just because of the nature of the rhetorical question and courtroom etiquette, but also because nobody knows – nobody can know – for sure.

“That’s what makes sentencing a challenge,” he said. “What I’m obligated to do is look at the nature of the offense and the nature of the offender.”



**The traditional demolition derby was a hit at the fair last Thursday. Spectators gathered around the mechanical pull ring and watched as derby cars in three separate heats smashed into one another, hoping to last the longest in order to garner a trophy and cash prizes. For more fair photos, see [facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin](https://www.facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin).**

**Hebron Fair cont. from Front Page**

motorized event offerings at the fair; on Saturday and Sunday drivers also tested their ability during a number of tractor pulls and the double figure eight demolition derby.

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) ProRodeo also returned this year, with events Friday, Saturday and Sunday including steer wrestling, saddle bronc riding, bull riding, cattle roping, and ladies barrel racing.

Also returning for the second year was the beer and wine garden – with expanded seating this time around – that offered fairgoers of legal age the opportunity to sip on something other than slushies and soda.

And, with all the food the fair had to offer, beverages were definitely needed – whatever the drink of choice may have been. Visitors lined up at their favorite booths throughout the weekend, anxious to savor treats the fair is the perfect excuse to enjoy. Treats like bacon-wrapped grilled cheese, a turkey sundae that layers all the foods that might be found on a plate at Thanksgiving dinner, warm apple crisp topped with ice cream, fried dough covered in powdered sugar, and deep-fried Oreos.

Present at the fair, in the capacity of deputy fire marshal, was Board of Selectmen Chairman Dan Larson. Although he said he chose not to partake in all the fair had to offer – “it’s a bit too unhealthy for me,” he said – he added of

the fair overall, it was “very low key” this year.

“The rides inspections seemed to go flawlessly this year – a testament to good and careful planning – and emergency management did its thing manning the radios and taking care of all the miscellaneous things that came into its office,” he said.

Larson added, “I think it was a great time for all those who attended and they had great weather – it was definitely hot Thursday and Friday but that did not seem to dampen the spirits of the fairgoers and I’m anticipating that the Lions had another successful year.”

Tarbell affirmed that assumption, sharing this week things went “very well.”

“We had a great weekend,” he said. “It was a little warm, but all in all it was pretty well-attended. I don’t have any complaints.”

Tarbell said “somewhere in the range” of 105,000-108,000 people attended this year, “better than the last couple of years.”

He concluded, “I’m happy with everything.”

Since this was his second year overseeing the fair, the role will be handed off to another Lion for next year’s Harvest Fair, but Tarbell said the planning process is already underway, and the 47th annual Hebron Harvest Fair is slated to take place Thursday-Sunday, Sept. 7-10, 2017.



# Trees Dedicated to 9/11 Victim and First Responders in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

Standing among two bright yellow flowering Magnolias, Marlborough residents and town officials gathered on the Town Green last Friday, Sept. 9, for a special ceremony dedicating two trees – one to the first responders who lost their lives in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and one to Jim Hobin, a former Marlborough resident who was at the World Trade Center that morning and perished in the attacks.

Also present at the remembrance ceremony were state Sen. Cathy Osten, state Rep. Gayle Mulligan, Fire Marshal Joe Asklar, Resident State Trooper Jeff Dunshee, Fire Chief Kevin Asklar, EMT Mark Merritt, and Constables Randy Ransom and Jay Kehoe.

To lead off the ceremony, First Selectwoman Amy Traversa shared a touching quote by author Walter Anderson about dealing with grief and moving forward.

“Bad things do happen,” she recited. “How we respond to them defines our character and the quality of our life. We can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of our loss, or we can choose to rise from the pain and treasure the most precious gift we have – life itself.”

Several speakers followed Traversa, all of whom weaved themes of hopefulness and life into their speeches, including the Rev. Bob Faulhaber of Marlborough Congregational Church. During his speech, he described a piece of paper he said he has kept in his back pocket for years, which reads a quote he once saw hanging above the entrance of a garden shop and later wrote down to use in future sermons.

“It was so appropriate for today,” Faulhaber said, referencing the Magnolia trees. “[The paper] reads ‘the best time to plant a tree was 15 years ago; the second best time is today’... Fifteen years are now behind us, but we can do the second best thing – plant these trees today looking ahead with hope.”

Following Faulhaber’s speech, one of Hobin’s closest friends, Bill Mogensen, gave a moving account of the events that transpired the day of the tragedy. According to Mogensen, both he and Hobin coached their children’s Marlborough Youth Athletic League baseball teams, and their families were very close.

In the days leading up to the attack, Mogensen said, their families were preparing

to go on a vacation together, but at the last minute, Hobin, who worked as vice president of risk management at Marsh and McLennan in Hartford, decided to fill in for a co-worker at a meeting in the World Trade Center.

“We never heard from him again,” he said. “He disappeared from our lives. ... The experience was traumatic for the family. It impacted us like you can’t describe. We spent that day rather than pack to go on vacation, sitting in front of the TV with [his wife] Sheila, watching the World Trade Center disintegrate in front of our eyes.”

Mogensen said both families spent the next several days in New York City posting flyers and visiting any hospital they could to see if they could find Hobin, but they had no luck.

“Bad things happen to good people,” Mogensen added. “But sometimes good things happen from bad things. ... [9/11] was tragic, but what did come out of it was a coalescing of spirit in this country between the [first] responders and all of the younger generation that volunteered to go into service to fight this war.”

“It pulled the country together, so from that standpoint, good happened from a very bad thing,” he continued. “Remembering Jim each year, like we’re doing today, is a wonderful thing. We should keep him in our minds, in our memories, and we miss you Jim, and we know you’re here with us.”

Fire Marshal Joe Asklar gave a speech with a similar message about the first responders’ role on 9/11. According to Asklar, approximately 75,000 first responders were involved with the search and recovery at the World Trade Center, and nearly 400 of them lost their lives there that day. Asklar spoke of their commitment and reminded the public how much a small thank you is appreciated by first responders.

“All first responders, these gentlemen here,” he said, gesturing to the other firefighters in attendance at the ceremony, “we care for our community, for our citizens.

“Every first responder who went into the [World Trade] Center cared,” Asklar continued. “He cared for the people who were in there, for the people he didn’t know [and] they paid [for] it with their lives, with the ultimate sacrifice. ... It’s important to remember the sacrifice that these gentlemen make.”

The final speaker of the morning was Pastor Dan Earhart of the Fellowship Community



Resident Jim Hobin, who lost his life in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, was remembered at a special ceremony last Friday. At the ceremony, the Rev. Bob Faulhaber of Marlborough Congregational Church gave a heartwarming speech on finding hope after loss. Pictured, from left, are First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, Hobin’s good friend Bill Mogensen, Faulhaber and state Rep. Gayle Mulligan.

Church. New to the Marlborough community, Earhart, who moved to town from Indiana, said 9/11, while utterly tragic, brought forth the true essence of the human spirit.

“What separates us from the rest of the world, the rest of living creatures, is that when there’s fire, the animals run away, [but] when there was catastrophe [on 9/11], there were people running toward the danger to help others,” he said. “As we see these trees here, we’re reminded of an incredible father [and] husband who went to work that day... we celebrate and dedicate the other tree reminding us that of all the living and breathing creatures on this planet, there’s one that runs into danger, and the reason [first responders] do is because they understand that

there are things that are more important than just our lives.”

Following the speeches, four flags, including two American flags, a Town of Marlborough flag and a special 9/11 flag (loaned by Lori Tarka, a former American Airlines flight attendant who had known people aboard the hijacked flights) were all brought to half mast, while the public stood in silence to remember the lives lost during the tragedy 15 years ago.

The two Magnolia trees are now planted in Blish Park and according to Traversa, “each spring as the Magnolias bloom at Blish Park, we’ll be reminded of how we have all risen from the bleak sadness of that awful day.”

# Colchester School Board Holds First Meeting of New Year

by Julianna Roche

The mood in Colchester Elementary School’s cafeteria was buzzing with excitement Tuesday as the Board of Education held its first meeting of the new school year in a room packed full of administrators, teachers and even Bacon Academy students.

Following an executive session, the board unanimously voted to renew Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu’s contract for an additional year, as well as give him a 2.5 percent salary raise, which will raise his yearly salary from \$171,000 to \$175,275, Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said.

“It was unanimous to renew his [Mathieu’s] contract. We’re excited for the new school year and [this year’s initiative] ‘The Innovation Nation!’” Goldstein added. “That was all Jeff’s initiative and it’s really caught on already.”

During the meeting, Mathieu also introduced the district-wide initiative, which he said will focus on developing students into problem-solvers and leaders, as well as making learning more personalized, especially because of a diversifying student population and the future of jobs constantly evolving. Student learning will also focus on using more cutting-edge technology designed to promote creative thinking.

Colchester Elementary School Principal Judy O’Meara also added during the meeting that due to a school-wide gift from their Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), the school was also able to purchase items to put in their new “Innovations Room,” including two iPads, six Chromebooks, and “tech tubs” to protect and hold the iPads.

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Last month, Bacon Academy’s Principal Matthew Peel said the school has been reaching out to more colleges this year, such as Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) and Eastern Connecticut State University, to add more courses to their Early College Experience program – which gives graduating seniors a chance to earn college credit before they even start school.

At the meeting, Peel announced that Bacon was rated as the top school in the College Careers Pathways Enrollment at TRCC, with 212 Bacon Academy students earning college credit last year solely through their program.

“Last year alone through the Three Rivers program, we saved Bacon Academy families and students over \$500,000 [of potential college courses costs],” he said.

Peel also added that these courses are taught by high school teachers whose curriculums have been pre-approved by college adjunct professors.

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Colchester’s director of teaching and learning (and former Bacon assistant principal) Dr. Charles Hewes gave a presentation regarding student achievement results, which showed data analyzing student test scores from various assessments, including Smarter Balanced (grades 3-8), CT-SAT, CMT/CAPT Science, and AP courses.

Overall, the scores demonstrated that Colchester students continue to score above state averages on the Smarter Balanced ELA

assessment in all grade levels. Additionally, Hewes pointed out that nearly 90 percent of Colchester’s SAT scores showed students were at proficient, goal or advanced levels for their grade.

“Those are some remarkable scores,” Goldstein said.

“We’re very pleased with the student scores,” Hewes added. “Our programming in Colchester is very responsive to student needs... and increasingly over the last couple years, we’ve been trying to diversify and personalize students’ support system to again, identify what each individual student needs to be successful.”

Hewes also wanted to emphasize to the general public, specifically parents, that these types of student test scores are “just one single measure and they’re largely imperfect.”

“Tests like Smarter Balanced, or CAPT, or the SAT, are really just a survey of questions of everything kids are supposed to know... so it’s difficult to summarize grand successes and grand failures of students,” he said.

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District-classified awards were also handed out to Bacon Academy’s Ray Watson as Staff Member of the Year, Jack Jackter Intermediate School’s Gina Konon as paraeducator of the year and CES’ Stefanie Goodie as Teacher of the Year.

“Stefanie is such a great integrative arts person,” said O’Meara. “She works closely with teachers and other specialists to actually get art into other classrooms and infuse the arts into

all areas, including reading, math, social studies... she doesn’t just let things stop at her door... it’s an honor to have her on staff.”

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In addition to the work put in on the William J. Johnston Middle School over the summer, board members said phase three of the building project was approved and ready to move forward with. Each board member was also presented with a gift – a brick from the WJMS demolition which read “WJMS 1989-2016, Thank You.”

According to Goldstein, an extensive number of other capital projects were also completed over the summer – including repainting in excess of 20,000 square feet of hallway walls at JIIS, stripping, repainting, and refinishing the Bacon Academy gym floor, and replacing and installing a number of security cameras throughout all of the schools.

“It’s a great testament to Ken Jackson [Colchester’s director of educational operations] and to his team that they were able to accomplish so many things over the summer, in addition [to the WJMS project],” he said. “It’s great that we were able to accomplish that much with the resources we have. ... We had an exciting start to the school year and I think we’re all looking forward to it.”

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The next Board of Education meeting will be a joint “tri-board” meeting with the boards of selectmen and finance, on Tuesday, Sept. 20, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.



# Colchester Votes to Purchase Norwich Avenue Senior Center

by Julianna Roche

First Selectman Art Shilosky tapped his fingers twice Wednesday on a framed Helen Keller quote that sat facing the door atop his desk. It read: "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

"And that's exactly how it happened," he said of the previous day's 566-76 referendum vote, which finally gave the town the "go-ahead" to purchase the Colchester Senior Center building on 95 Norwich Ave.

"Making this happen – that was a team effort," Shilosky added. "That's how you need to get things done and everybody needs to work together regardless of their affiliations and all of that. Our goal was to get this done and they did it, so I'm happy."

According to Senior Center Negotiating Committee and Board of Selectmen member Rosemary Coyle, the talk of the purchase has been in the works since 2007.

"This is a good move for the community as well as the seniors, as our senior population is going to keep growing," she said. "My heart and soul has been in this issue for years. ... We're incredibly pleased and happy the people supported us, and everyone on the [Senior Center Negotiating] committee and the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees worked very hard to make this happen."

According to the Shilosky, all of the paperwork for the acquisition is complete, and on Sept. 30, the town will close on its purchase of

the senior center from its current owner, the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, by using \$283,240 appropriated from the undesignated fund balance. While the purchase price of the building is set at \$275,000, \$8,240 will also be needed for closing costs and legal fees, including title review, title insurance and any other costs related to the transaction.

The next step, Shilosky said, will be to create a building committee, who will oversee decisions regarding the new senior center, including securing a location for the building. While nothing is set in stone, he said they may simply build on the vacant lot directly to the right of Town Hall, which the town owns.

"That would save us some money so obviously we wouldn't have to go out and buy property," Shilosky explained. "We're hoping to make it work without having to increase taxes and it can happen, our financial planner explained to us... so that's the goal."

Additionally, the town's Director of Senior Services Patty Watts said a strategic plan is currently being worked on based on the vision of what the Senior Center Negotiating Committee hopes the new senior center will look like.

Watts and the negotiating committee have "visited nine other senior centers throughout the state [including Portland and East Hampton] to find different physical attributes that we would like to have and met with every [senior

center's] director," she said.

For example, Watts added, the committee's vision includes having more wide open rooms, wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, a proper industrial kitchen and more parking spaces – which has been an ongoing issue in the current senior center.

"I think everybody is understanding that this current facility is limited in size and we are growing, which is well documented," she said, adding that since she started working at the center three years ago, the number of registered senior members has jumped from 500 to 1,000. Additionally, she said, in the next 10 years, 40 percent of Colchester's total population will be seniors, aged 55 and up – which means of the 16,000 residents, nearly 7,000 will be considered senior citizens.

"They [the committee members] were very clear this was a critical first step, but having won the battle we need to go on to win the war," she said, adding officials expect the new senior center to be finished in the next three to five years.

The town's purchase of the senior center will not only allow its current seniors and veterans to continue receiving uninterrupted services while a new senior center is being built; it will also provide the Board of Trustees with the funds necessary to begin the restoration of Old Bacon Academy.

According to Bacon Academy Board of

Trustees board member Arthur Liverant, the restoration of Old Bacon Academy is the board's central mission, especially considering it's one of the most historically important buildings in Colchester being 213 years old.

In 1803, he added, the school was built using funds provided by the estate of Colchester resident Pierpont Bacon and his wife, Abigail Newton Bacon. Liverant said the board has had plans to use the remaining \$35,000 endowment to help restore the old school. Now, they will also be able to use the \$275,000 from the senior center purchase.

"I'm sure if Pierpont and Abigail knew their \$35,000 went to such a good cause, they would be happy," Liverant said. "The board is very pleased with the outcome of the vote. We can now start the process of restoration of Old Bacon, which is our prime mission, and we have big ideas for it."

In addition to restoring certain aspects of the building, he said the board also plans to update the building's mechanics to make it "more efficient." Other improvements will be made to the heating system and bathrooms, and an elevator will be installed. However, Liverant said, ultimately "the goal is that it would remain an educational facility for the Town of Colchester."

"This is a win for Colchester, a win for the town," Coyle said. "Because whenever you build a center like that, it really becomes a part of the town and I think people will see that."

## Two Pets Killed in Colchester House Fire, Others Rescued

by Julianna Roche

Two pets – a cat and a puppy – were killed in a structure fire last Wednesday on 94 Hammond Court.

At approximately 2:40 p.m., Colchester firefighters said they responded to the house fire, where they arrived to find heavy smoke coming from the second floor and a hoarding situation inside the home.

Despite the difficult conditions, fire officials said the crew was able to rescue and resuscitate three dogs and three cats, who were also trapped inside the home – but it wasn't easy.

"We had heavy smoke coming from the building and conditions inside that made it very difficult," said Deputy Fire Marshal and Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company Deputy Chief Don Lee.

"The guys actually had to remove and move stuff out of the way," he said. "They had to burrow under stuff in the way to even get to the stairs."

"There was nobody living in the house for approximately a month," added Fire Marshal Sean Shoemaker, who said from what he understood, the adult and teenager who previously resided in the home were "in the process of moving" and neither were present when the fire occurred.

Shoemaker would not identify the two. Land records indicate the house is owned by Mary E. Harlow.

According to Lee, though the fire was very labor-intensive, it was contained to one bedroom on the second floor, and firefighters had the blaze under control by 3:08 p.m. The scene was cleared by 4 p.m.

"The origin of the fire was in the second-story bedroom in the area of the bed," Shoemaker said. "The house was all closed up, so

while it was contained to primarily one room, from all indications it smoldered there for quite awhile before it was discovered.

"The house was completely charged with smoke from the second floor to the basement, with no open windows," he continued. "It wasn't until there was enough pressure built up in the house that it pushed out."

Shoemaker also added officials determined the cause of the fire to be electrical in nature, and said there were no obvious signs of criminal intent.

The Hammond Court house fire marks the third in just the last three weeks in Colchester – the others were Aug. 23 on Lebanon Avenue and Sept. 3 on Mill Street – and Shoemaker said while that's unusual, it's only coincidental. "None of these fires are connected, though they're all within the same geographical area," he said.

Approximately 12 members of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department were on scene for last week's fire, with no reported injuries.

Mutual aid was also received from American Ambulance Service, East Haddam Fire Department, East Hampton Fire Department, Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Hebron Fire Department, Marlborough Fire Department, Salem Vol. Fire Company, and Yantic Fire Engine Company No. 1.

"Overall, everything went well," Lee said. "We've been challenged with some very difficult calls over the last three weeks and they [the fire department] have done an outstanding job. Again, kudos to mutual aid, especially with helping us during the day, when we're very light on staffing. Without them, we'd be in a very tough place."



Upon arrival of the 94 Hammond Court house fire last week, firefighters were met with a second-story blaze – and what fire officials called a difficult hoarding situation – that left two pets dead and six rescued.

## New London Road Crash Leaves Two Injured in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

A two-car crash last week sent both motorists to the hospital, Colchester Police said.

Police said the crash occurred Tuesday, Sept. 6, at approximately 2:45 p.m., while both cars drove northbound on New London Road. According to police, a Kia driven by Landon D. Johnson, 34, of 15 Hillside Dr., Norwich, was traveling directly behind a Ford driven by John Lankford, 33, of 248 Buckley Rd., as both cars approached New London

Road's intersection with West Road. The Kia then rear-ended the Ford, police said.

Both Johnson and Lankford were transported by Colchester Hayward Fire Department to Backus Hospital for possible head, neck and back injuries. Johnson was issued an infraction for following too close to another vehicle and operating a motor vehicle in violation of a limited license requirement for corrective lenses, police said.



# Elmcrest Plan Up in the Air in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

The plan to turn revitalize the former Elmcrest Hospital property, which sits at the corner of Route 17A and Route 66, is at a crossroads.

Developer Dan Bertram, of the Danbury-based BRT Corp., has said it all along: He will not seek Planning and Zoning Commission approval for a mix of apartments, shops and offices around the site's three historic homes until he gets a full, seven-year tax abatement on all the improvements.

And if he doesn't get the tax break, he's said, he'll walk away from the project.

But now Tax Assessor Gail Pititto, in a letter to First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, has stated that she needs to see an approved site plan before she can advise the board on such a tax incentive.

The Board of Selectmen is charged with signing off on any tax abatement.

"The department can further review the proposal once approved PZC plans, estimated construction costs, signed lease agreements and projected income and expenses are provided," Pititto wrote in the Aug. 26 letter.

Discussion at an August selectmen's meeting, during which Bertram presented his second application for a tax abatement in as many years, revealed reluctance by some members of the board to give that kind of public incentive for development of the vacant Elmcrest site.

Bertram responded with a formal letter submitted to Bransfield on Sept. 12. He said he would attend the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Sept. 21 with the expectation of settling the matter once and for all.

He recommended that the town have legal counsel present, as would he, to make sure any conditions tied to an approved tax abatement application "are palatable to both parties and can be quickly incorporated into an executed agreement."

"If we cannot do that, we do not intend to proceed with the project," he wrote.

Bransfield said Tuesday she has shared Bertram's letter with the selectmen and is working with Economic Development consultant Mary Dickerson on the town's response.

"We're going to be very careful how we pro-

ceed," she said.

She emphasized that selectmen in June showed their willingness to entertain a tax incentive when they unanimously agreed to add "mixed-use development" to the list of qualifying projects in their policy on tax abatements. At the same time, they removed "permanent residential" construction from the list of projects that are eligible for a tax abatement.

"It's just very important that we know what the town is committing itself to and that any agreement that is forthcoming is with the full knowledge of the Board of Selectmen and the townspeople," Bransfield said.

According to Bertram, requiring an approved site plan is premature, while providing signed lease agreements isn't even possible.

"The exact economic terms of a lease cannot be established without knowing IN ADVANCE if there is a tax agreement in place with the town," he wrote, with emphasis.

Bertram told Bransfield the abatement would help mitigate the cost of historic preservation as well as construction of a development aimed at a niche market of Millennials and empty-nesters that features small units with "much higher-level finishes and amenities than the area market could otherwise justify."

The money saved in property taxes through an abatement would not serve to lower the lease payments for commercial tenants, he emphasized, responding to a concern voiced by Deputy First Selectman Brian Flood at a selectmen's meeting last month that savings from a tax abatement would give commercial tenants in the new development an advantage over other businesses in town.

In February 2015, the former Board of Selectmen – which changed over after last November's elections – authorized Bransfield to negotiate a tax abatement with Bertram, based on a site plan that included 150,158 square feet of commercial space, 81 residential units and 813 parking spaces.

The site plan was initially approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2009 under a different developer before the project stalled in the economic downturn. Bertram's

2015 tax abatement application said unspecified modifications to the plan were anticipated.

Bransfield said Tuesday she met with Bertram, his attorney and the town attorney shortly after selectmen authorized the 2015 resolution to discuss possible terms for a tax abatement agreement, but conversation never went further than that.

"We talked about some pretty wide parameters and we didn't get specific because we didn't have anything specific to react to," she said.

Bransfield explained she was waiting for more details on the proposed modifications before negotiating the terms of an agreement she could bring back to the Board of Selectmen.

The evolution of Bertram's proposed Brainerd Place concept has played out over the ensuing year and a half in front of both the Economic Development Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Last December, Bertram went before the zoning commission to request a regulation change to allow a higher concentration of residential units than had been permitted previously. The amendment – which the commission ultimately approved in July – makes it possible for a developer to build as many as 240 apartments in a mixed-use development, but only in cases where the development incorporates "the preservation of significant historic resources identified in the town's Plan of Conservation and Development."

In June, aware of Bertram's requested regulation change, selectmen rescinded the 2015 resolution authorizing the tax abatement after it became clear the dynamics of the developer's plan had shifted significantly. Some selectmen also expressed concern the resolution granted too much power to Bransfield in negotiating and approving the terms of the abatement.

According to Bertram's letter, the board's move to rescind the resolution was a "shocking action at a time when the project was finally gaining momentum (and building credibility with prospective commercial tenants)."

In a phone interview Tuesday, Bertram said "they are driving us away if they don't give us

a seven-year tax abatement."

State statute permits municipalities to forgive up to 100 percent of the property tax on new construction and improvements in a proposed real estate development worth more than \$3 million.

If there was never an intention to approve the maximum allowable abatement, which he specifically requested in the 2015 and 2016 tax abatement applications, he said "it should've been made clearer a lot earlier."

A conceptual version of the proposed modifications presented to selectmen last month as part of his newest tax abatement application includes 94,000 square feet of commercial space, 238 apartments and 828 parking spaces. Bertram said his company, in partnership with the Rochester, N.Y.-based DiMarco Group, would be investing more than \$30 million in the development.

Bertram said he thought the selectmen's initial willingness to enter into a tax abatement agreement with him back in 2015 meant the town "wanted a partnership." So, he said, he joined members of the municipal, business and volunteer communities in developing a shared vision for the property.

The result was a 111-page market study for the former hospital site, funded by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and coordinated by planning consultants from the Boston-based Cecil Group, that described the ideal development as one that "has a mix of uses, is compatible with the historic buildings and provides village center character and shared amenity like a town green."

Bertram said it was in keeping with that study, as well as the town's Plan of Conservation and Development, that he pledged to preserve two of the site's most important historic structures in place and to move a third to the southwest corner to act as a "Welcome to Portland" symbol for those coming over the Arrigoni Bridge.

But partnership is a two-way street. "The idea is, we need the full support [the Board of Selectmen] is capable of giving," Bertram said. "We're not trying to negotiate."

## Portland Past Celebrated at Parade

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland's history was on display along Main Street Saturday morning as revelers, led by a team of oxen, celebrated the 175th anniversary of a town built on brownstone.

The 175th Anniversary Parade kicked off to pouring rain and finished, two miles down the road, under sunny skies. The procession was an homage to all that makes the small, rural town unique – from the old mechanical sling that pulled rock from the quarries in the 1800s to a float filled with schoolchildren representing the "new journey" of the recently-reconfigured grade 2-4 Gildersleeve School.

The oxen, named Rock and Roll, represented Portland's strength and fortitude as its residents mined the signature sandstone for export to towns and cities from New York to California. The oxen were on loan from Nancy Kalal of Cranberry Meadow Farm in East Lyme. Town employees Paula Slym and Carol Revicki followed the team with shovels as the parade's official "pooper scoopers."

Jo-Ann Chatfield and her mother, Thelma Chatfield, sat across from the parade grandstand near Brownstone Intermediate School to celebrate the town they lived in for years. Born and raised in Portland, the women moved out when Jo-Ann bought a home in Middletown decades ago. Her brother still lives in Portland, she said.

"There was a real sense of community. There was unity," Jo-Ann Chatfield said of her Portland youth. It was a sentiment echoed by the Chatfields' friend, Grace Smith Larry, whose own memories go back to the first half of the 20th century.

Larry said the community around Lower Main Street back then was a mix of ethnicities ranging from Italian to Polish to African-American, like herself.

"And we got along good," she said.

Larry's parents owned Smith's Luncheonette on the corner of Lower Main Street and the old Bank Street, where residents could buy sundries or prepared food – almost anything they needed, really. The one-stop shop left some customers with no reason to hike up Main Street except to fill a prescription or go to school.

"Because of Smith's Luncheonette, we were self-reliant down there," Jo-Ann Chatfield said.

The three women said they were grateful the parade gave them a chance to reminisce and reconnect.

"That just stimulates a lot within you. You remember your history. Your roots," Jo-Ann Chatfield said. "We're home."

Other parade highlights combined old and new, like the 1922 Model T Strong and Hale "House Car" that sat on a flatbed driven by cable television star Wayne Carini of the Velocity Network's *Chasing Classic Cars*. Carini owns F40 Motorsports on Route 66.

Carini said in an episode of his show that he'd been chasing the car for 35 years when he finally purchased it from Edward Organek Jr. and Joseph Organek after the death of their father last year.

The unique hybrid of a Model T and what looks like a dollhouse was produced by Ford. It was used by the Strong and Hale Lumber Company as an advertising vehicle, according to the episode.

Parade organizer and Portland Youth Services Director Mary Pont said Carini had been hoping to drive the Model T in the parade until gear problems were discovered the morning of the parade.

Another link to the past was forged when a group of dancers took their batons out of retirement as alumni of the Marie LeRoy Keane School of Dancing. The school was a Portland staple for most of the latter half of the last century. More than a dozen dancers twirled their batons and shook green pom-poms in "Dancing is Keane" T-shirts.

About 60 groups, including 12 marching bands and fife and drum corps, marched or rode in the parade as perennial emcee Dave Kuzminski announced each passing group atop a grandstand decorated with an elaborate display of flowers arranged by the town's three garden clubs: the Brownstone Garden Club, Portland River Valley Garden Club and Portland Garden Club.

Marching units included the Portland Police Department; fire departments from Portland,



**Ernie Peterson of Portland hitched a ride on the old horse-drawn oil wagon as John Allegra, of Allegra Farm in East Haddam, held the reins at Portland's 175th Anniversary Parade Saturday. For more parade photos, see [facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin](https://www.facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin).**

Middletown and Middlefield; the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6121; the American Legion Ormont Post 69; and many local church, civic, sports, and business organizations.

The state of Connecticut was represented by the First Company Governor's Foot Guard as well as numerous elected officials. Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Rep. John Larson (D-1st District), Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen, state Sen. Art Linares, (R-33), and state Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) joined town clerk Ryan Curley as well as First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and selectmen Kitch Breen Czernicki, Michael Pelton and Ben Srb.

Pont said she was able to pull off the parade thanks to help from Sara Sterry Rutter, the long-time organizer of the town's annual Memorial Day parade.

"We had so many different people that came

to our town just to be a part of our anniversary and we had our citizens sitting on our beautiful Main Street watching the parade," Pont said. "How can it be better than that?"

After the parade, the town celebrated another anniversary as it unveiled the 20th annual Family Day festival. That's when Bransfield recognized the Portland Police Department with a certificate, to be turned into a plaque that will be placed in front of the Buck-Foreman Building, honoring them for their service to the community in protecting Portland's families.

"May you continue to be blessed for your bravery, your wisdom and especially your daily compassion," Bransfield said.

Linares and Carpino also stepped forward to honor the police force lined up before them.

"We just pass the laws; you guys enforce them," Linares said. "Our heartfelt appreciation for all that you do."



# It's All About the Guys at New Hebron Barbershop

by Geeta S. Sandberg

It's been quite some time since there's been a barbershop in town, resident Fran Periu said this week; more than a decade at least.

And it's not just Hebron that had experienced a lack of them, Periu asserted. Indeed, for a while it seemed barbershops might die out altogether, leaving the men to join their mothers and female counterparts when they venture to full-service salons – places that, more often than not, are tailored more to women than men.

"Guys want a different option," stated Periu. Which is why "I think we're seeing a resurgence in barbershops."

Barbershops like Havana Fran's, which Periu opened three weeks ago.

"I was working in a franchise-type barber-shop and decided I wanted to open one on my own," explained Periu, who's been a hairdresser since 1987 and attended barber school at Bravado in New London. "My goal is to have a full-service barbershop for guys who don't want to go get their hair cut and have women all around, and have to deal with the smells of the hair colors, the perm solutions and nail polish."

Havana Fran's is instead filled with the scent of aftershave, men's hair products, and the fragrance of the whiskey and mahogany woods candles burning on the mantle, set below two framed collections of vintage shaving tools, beside other décor including a model car and motorcycle. The barbershop also boasts gleaming wood floors, walls a masculine mustard yellow, traditional barber chairs and décor that brings to mind Havana, Cuba.

"I really wanted a vintage-style barbershop and that's why I went with the Cuban theme," Periu shared. "I'm Cuban, so with [the borders] opening up now, I thought it would be fun; the barbershop has like a 1950s pre-Castro air."

That can be seen in details such as the framed images on the wall including one for Sloppy Joe's Bar in Havana; an advertisement for "Rhum Quinquina" hair tonic; a Cuban cigar box; and the pineapple print fedora hung by the

door.

Periu added of her place, "I wanted to create a traditional-style barbershop, but take it up a notch" by offering more than just a quick trim.

Havana Fran's offers haircuts with scissors and clippers, buzz cuts, all scissor cuts, straight razor shaves, beard and moustache trimming and camouflage – a demi-permanent hair color (which is different from semi-permanent in that it contains a small amount of peroxide which opens the hair cuticle slightly so some color is absorbed; semi-permanent color only coats the hair) to tone down greys. She then tops things off with a hot towel.

In addition, Periu offers eyebrow waxing, manicures and pedicures in a private room in the back of the shop.

"I wanted the guys to come and have... stuff!" she stated. "If they want to have their nails done, their eyebrows done, but they don't want to go to a salon and be in the middle of women, we offer a private room in the back."

Periu also offers a variety of hair products for men, including Layrite, which she touted for being water-based.

"A lot of waxes and things are hard to wash out," she explained, but that's not an issue with Layrite since it's water-soluble. Periu also offers brands such as American Crew and Paul Mitchell.

And, just in case some of the men who venture through her doors are getting cleaned up to try to impress – or apologize to – a woman, she has a shelf of handcrafted jewelry for sale: a shelf she's dubbed "for when you're in the doghouse."

Although Periu added women are welcome to stop by for a trim, she said that, as a barber-shop, services such as blow drying, curling, and hair straightening aren't offered. And, ultimately, it's a place for the men Periu's worked to create.

"I think because they literally did not have a barber in town they were going to salons," Periu concluded of her customers, many of whom



**Hebron resident Fran Periu recently opened a barbershop in town – Havana Fran's – with the goal of providing a traditional style barbershop "but take it up a notch." Havana Fran's offers services such as haircuts, straight razor shaves, beard and moustache trimming as well as eyebrow waxing, manicures and pedicures in a private setting.**

herald from Hebron and neighboring towns such as Andover, Marlborough, Columbia and Lebanon. "Now they can have a haircut, watch ESPN or read guy magazines."

\* \* \*

Havana Fran's is located at 7 Liberty Dr., Hebron and is open 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday, noon-7 p.m. Thursday, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m.-noon Saturday. For more information, call 860-888-2428.

## Auction to Aid Struck East Hampton Police Officer

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton police officer Hardie Burgin is continuing his rehabilitation from home after being hit by a car early last week while directing traffic around a utility crew at the intersection of Maple Street and Route 66.

The impact broke both shoulders and left Burgin with back and leg injuries, according to former Town Council member John Tuttle. He said it is likely to take "the good part of a year" for Burgin to recover.

Tuttle is organizing a live auction at Angelico's Lake House Restaurant to help with medical expenses and lost wages.

"I just did this because I figured the officers in our community; they're always the first ones there in an emergency. And now Hardie needs our help," Tuttle said. "That's what we do in East Hampton: We help those in need."

The crash occurred around 8:17 p.m. on Sept. 4 as Burgin was assisting an Eversource line crew dealing with a power outage in the area of St. Patrick Catholic Church, according to a state police accident report.

Michael B. Fraulino, 29, of Portland, was driving a 2004 Toyota RAV4 east on Route 66 when he hit the officer, the report said.

Burgin was transported to Marlborough Medical Center and then airlifted to Hartford Hospital with suspected serious injuries.

State police said an investigation by the accident reconstruction unit is ongoing. No charges have been filed.

Burgin was released from the hospital last Wednesday. Tuttle said he is receiving ongoing

outpatient physical therapy treatment.

The 29-year-old officer is married with three children.

Tuttle said the donations have been pouring in for the auction since he first put out the call last week.

"Within days, we had probably 50 items for this auction, without even really trying. Of course, it's grown since," he said. "I've had this army of people that want to help. People recognize this is a good cause."

Items on the auction block include two highly-prized tickets to the Tony award-winning Broadway musical *Hamilton*. Tuttle said the tickets were donated by Scott Wasserman, an East Hampton native working in New York City as a composer. Wasserman has been a part of *Hamilton*'s music team since 2012, according to his website.

Tuttle has also secured four VIP Red Sox tickets for the 2017 season. The package includes pre-game field access and prime seats, he said.

The auction will be held at 6 p.m. on Nov. 12 at Angelico's.

Organizers are accepting donations of gifts, services, travel, event tickets, and adventure experiences.

Paul's and Sandy's Too has offered to be a collection point for auction items, Tuttle said.

Monetary donations are also being accepted through Liberty Bank at 2 West High Street. Contributions may be directed to the "Hardie Burgin Fundraiser."

### Portland Police News

8/26: Christie Hemingway, 42, of 1555-4 Portland Cobalt Rd., was arrested for driving under the influence and failure to drive right, Portland Police said.

8/29: After an investigation into an evading motor vehicle accident, James Peterson, 79, of 49 Tartia Rd., East Hampton, was issued a summons for evasion of responsibility, police said.

9/3: Zakary Cook, 21, of 33 Young St., was issued a summons for sixth-degree larceny, police said.

### East Hampton Police News

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### Hebron Police News

9/7: State Police said Ryan N. Moeremans, 30, of 40 Jeffrey Alan Dr., Manchester, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

9/8: State Police said Eugene Wright, 45, of 108 Clark Rd., Colchester was arrested and charged with violating a protective order.

### Andover Police News

9/9: State Police said Joseph Remesch, 59, of 187 Lake Rd., was arrested and charged with violating a protective order.

### Colchester Police News

8/28: Colchester Police said James Wallington, 49, of 38 Balaban Rd., No. 210, was arrested and charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, improper use of a marker/license/registration, failing to meet minimum insurance coverage requirements, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, and operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol.

9/4: Colchester Police said Jeffrey A. McGillicuddy, 51, of 542 Middletown Rd., was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and unsafe movement of a stopped motor vehicle.

9/6: Colchester Police are investigating a burglary/larceny into several vehicles that occurred on a construction site on Lake Hayward

### Marlborough Police News

9/11: State Police said William Trinh, 27, of 109 High Wood Rd., West Hartford, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple lane road/highway.

Road. According to police, equipment was taken from the construction site. The case is still open for investigation.

9/10: According to both Colchester Police and state police, a motor vehicle was stopped for various violations and upon further investigation, they found 60 bags of heroin and drug paraphernalia in the car. The car's passenger, James J. Oechsler, 27, 103 Levita Rd., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and illegal possession of a narcotic. The driver, Whitney H. Marotta, 28, of 155 Leonard Bridge Rd., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with traveling at an unreasonable speed, failure to renew a motor vehicle license, possession of drug paraphernalia and illegal possession of a narcotic.

## Two-Car Crash on Route 85 in Hebron

by Julianna Roche

A two-car crash in the center of town last week sent one to the hospital, State Police said.

The crash occurred Thursday, Sept. 8, at the four-way intersection of routes 85 and 66, police said. According to police, at approximately 7:45 p.m., a Honda Civic driven by Joshua M. Smith, 20, of 12 Oakland Rd., was stopped in the left southbound lane of Route 85 at the traffic light-controlled intersection, while a Ford F150 driven by Shaun D. Krzeminski, 28, of 36 Depot Rd., Coventry,

was traveling northbound on Route 85 approaching the intersection.

As Smith began to turn left onto Route 66, the Ford F150 continued to drive through the red light, colliding with the front left side of the Civic. Both vehicles were towed by Evans and Desmonds, and Smith was transported by Hebron Ambulance Service to the Marlborough Clinic for possible injuries. Krzeminski was found to be at fault for the incident and was issued an infraction ticket for failure to obey a traffic signal.



# Obituaries

## Portland

### Caroline Brazauskas

Caroline Dawn Culley Brazauskas, formerly of Portland, passed away suddenly Friday, Sept. 9, in Pulaski, Va. Born Sept. 14, 1970, in Putnam, she was the daughter of Russell Culley of Middletown and Carol Weaver of Portland.

She attended Killingly Public Schools and worked at Portland Care and Rehabilitation and Charter Oak Cleaning Company.

She is survived by her parents and her husband, Edward Brazauskas of Virginia. She is also survived by two sons, Brett Brazauskas of Virginia and James Brazauskas of Middletown; grandson, Elijah Wilson-Brazauskas; sisters, Laurie Gokey (Michael) of Middletown, Tanya Culley and Shannon Hodge (Thomas) of Portland; two nephews, Michael Gokey and T.J. Hodge (who is also her godson); and two nieces, Savannah Culley and Cassi Hodge. She was predeceased by her sister, Kimberly Ann.

Caroline loved life. Her family was everything to her. Her grandson Elijah was the light of her life. She was so excited to be a grandmother and traveled to Connecticut as often as possible to see him. She also loved her pets, Sassy the cat and her dog Ginny, who was by her side when she took her last breath.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests you visit the "Lay Caroline to Rest" Go Fund Me page at [tinyurl.com/zcp3yjt](http://tinyurl.com/zcp3yjt) to help bring her back to her final resting place in Connecticut.

A memorial service will be held at a date to be announced.

## East Hampton

### Dennis B. Coburn

Dennis B. Coburn of East Hampton passed away Friday, Sept. 9, at his home. Born Dec. 31, 1954, the son of Anthony P. and Mary T. (O'Connor) Coburn, he was raised in South Windsor, and was a graduate of East Catholic High School, Class of 1972. Dennis later attended Manchester Community College.

A gifted musician, he played piano and bass guitar, and composed as well. Dennis played with several neighborhood bands and performed at family and neighborhood gatherings. Music was his passion.

Employed as maintenance supervisor at the Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School in East Haddam for the last 16 years, Dennis was highly thought of and respected by both staff and students. The students dedicated their yearbook to him several times in appreciation for his dedication and support of their activities.

Dennis leaves his sister, Maureen E. Burke of Lakewood Ranch, Fla.; brother, Michael P. Coburn and wife Lorraine of South Windsor; sister, Patricia A. Rovero and husband Peter of Niantic; two nieces and two nephews. Dennis also leaves his extended family in the Poet's Corner neighborhood of Lake Pocotopaug, East Hampton.

His quick wit and dry sense of humor will be missed by all.

Family and friends may gather Saturday, Oct. 15, from 12:30-3:30 p.m., at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Food Bank, 43 West High St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

## Colchester

### Elizabeth Standish Bruce

Elizabeth Jean Standish Bruce passed away peacefully Thursday, Sept. 1. Born to Ethel and Charles Standish on October 1, 1935, she grew up on the family farm on Standish Road in Colchester, CT.

Known to all as "Betty," she was a superb homemaker and avid craftsperson. She also enjoyed music and dancing. Betty contributed greatly to her husband Robert's career in industrial and economic development, often collaborating on major projects for cities, towns, and industry groups. Together, they traveled extensively on these projects, up and down America's East Coast and across the Caribbean, and wherever they moved, she created a beautiful home for her family.

She is survived by her children, Elizabeth and James Hunt, Heidi Severns, Robert (Scotty) Bruce, Charles and Sharon Bruce, Roderick (Rory) and Tina Bruce; and her sister-in-law, Minnette Standish; and also by her 27 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and her nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Robert W. Bruce, and by her siblings, Arthur Standish, Barbara Smith Clarke, Gladys Ladegard, Donald Standish and Charles Myles Standish.

A private memorial was held for the family.

## Amston

### Joseph Stanley Andy

Joseph Stanley Andy, 97, passed away Saturday, Sept. 10, at the Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center in Marlborough. He was born Nov. 28, 1918, in Clinton, Mass., the son of Jozef and Anna (Dabkowska) Andrzejczyk, and raised in Poland before coming back to the States at age 19.

He is now reunited with his beloved wife Mary (Marcinczyk) Andy, who predeceased him in 2006 after 61 years together.

Joe was a World War II veteran as part of the Army's 3357th Quartermaster Truck Company and received a Purple Heart. He lived most of his life in New Britain, where he was employed for many years at Fafnir Bearing. He and his wife also owned the former Andy's Variety convenience store on Arch Street. After retiring, Joe and Mary moved to Amston, where he enjoyed gardening and raising pigeons, chickens and ducks.

He loved watching the news and having debates about politics, enjoyed smoking a good pipe tobacco, and dancing to polkas. Joe was a member of Holy Cross Church.

He leaves behind two daughters and sons-in-law, Christine (Bruce) Meacham of Milford, Mass., and Joyce Marie (Shelby Jr.) Barnes of Amston; eight grandchildren, Cindy O'Connor, Laura Meacham, Chrissy McCormack, Bruce Meacham Jr., Scott Meacham, Jennifer Willoughby, Jonathan Sherman and Amanda Sherman; a step-grandson, Brian Barnes; and eight great-grandchildren.

In addition to his wife, Joe was predeceased by a daughter, Carolyn Sherman, in 2010.

The family thanks the staff of Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center for taking such good care of him.

Calling hours for Joe were Thursday, Sept. 15, with a funeral Mass held at Holy Cross Church immediately afterward. Burial with military honors were at Sacred Heart Cemetery.

The New Britain Memorial-Sagarino Funeral Home, 444 Farmington Ave., has care of arrangements.

For more information, or to leave words of condolence, visit [newbritainsagarino.com](http://newbritainsagarino.com).

## Marlborough

### Patrick Joseph Sullivan Sr.

Patrick Joseph "PJ" Sullivan Sr. of Marlborough, the beloved husband of Christine (Witwicki) Sullivan, died Tuesday, Sept. 6. Born in Hartford, he was the son of the late Charles and Katherine Sullivan.

PJ grew up in Hartford, graduated from Bulkeley High and then entered the Marine Corps in 1967, serving four years. Here he served honorably in the Vietnam War, earning three Purple Hearts. After completing his time in the service, PJ became a police officer with the Hartford Police Department. He served here with many commendations for 38 years, until his retirement in April as Badge No. 1. PJ was a Hartford Elks No. 19 member for 35 years and served as a trustee. He was a diehard New York Yankee fan and political commentator.

A loving father, PJ is survived by his daughters, Kim Sullivan West of West Hartford, Kelly Allan and husband Robert of South Windsor; his son Patrick Sullivan Jr. and wife Siobhan of Glastonbury; stepdaughters, Melissa Russell and husband Robert of Burlington, and Kimberly Rethis of Newington; 11 grandsons and one granddaughter. He also leaves behind his best friend and partner in crime, brother Kevin Sullivan of Wethersfield; brothers Mike Sullivan and wife Tina of Georgia, Tom Sullivan and wife Carol of Indiana.

He was predeceased by his beloved sister, Marjorie Anthony; his brother and sister-in-law Charles and Maureen Sullivan.

He also leaves behind sister-in-law Elizabeth Kizka, brothers-in-law Will Witwicki and his wife Cindy and Peter Anthony; as well as many loved nieces and nephews. He will be missed by his dog Charlie and many great friends he leaves behind in the Elks' "Irish Corner."

Special thanks to his caretakers, Maggie, Tammy and Auggie.

Friends called Monday, Sept. 12, at the Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home, 34 Beaver Rd., Wethersfield. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, Sept. 13, in Saint Augustine Church, 10 Campfield Ave., Hartford. Burial followed the Mass in Marlboro Cemetery, School Street, Marlborough.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Wounded Warriors Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, KS 66675, or to the charity of the donor's choice.

To extend online condolences, or for further information, visit [farleysullivan.com](http://farleysullivan.com).

## Portland

### David Bronson

"A golden heart stopped beating, hard working hands to rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us he only takes the best." We all gained a guardian angel as the earth lost a caring husband, loving father and grandfather, cherished son and brother. David Bronson passed at his Concord, N.H., home Thursday, Sept. 8. His life claimed far too early and unexpectedly.

David was born July 9, 1953, in Orange, N.J. David attended schools in Portland, graduating in the Class of 1971. He graduated from New England College. David has called New Hampshire his home for the past 35 years.

David is survived by his wife, Patricia; parents, Charles and Nancy (Lefevre) Bronson of Cromwell; brother, William and his wife Linda of South Glastonbury; son, David and his wife Cara of Auburn, N.H.; step-daughters, Brittany and her husband Greg, Haylee and Emily; as well as grandchildren, Gavin, Teagan, Braydon and Cameron, all of New Hampshire. He also leaves nephews, Michael and Christopher and a niece, Heidi.

David was predeceased by his son's mother, Susan Pelton.

David's passion laid in his family. The light his grandchildren put in his eyes could be seen for miles. His laugh was unmistakable and contagious. He was hard-working and took pride in all that he did, and though he added to his to do list faster than he could complete them he never turned a task down. He will be greatly missed by family and friends. A private celebration of his life will be held Saturday, Sept. 17, at his home.

"A limb has fallen from the family tree. I keep hearing a voice that says, grieve not for me. Remember the best times, the laughter and the song. The good life I lived when I was strong."

## East Hampton

### Sandra Frances Burrill

Sandra Frances (Olschefskie) Burrill, 71, of East Hampton, beloved wife of Allan Burrill, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Sept. 13, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her loving family. Born Aug. 9, 1945, in Manchester, she was the daughter of the late Edward and Frances (Hollerith) Olschefskie.

Sandra had retired from Bank of America where she had worked as a mortgage processor. Sandra was a devout Catholic; her faith was a very important part of her life. She attended Mass at St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough. Sandra enjoyed gardening, baking, cooking, traveling, golf and just about anything that involved her family and friends.

She is survived by her loving husband Allan; her three daughters, Amanda Reed and husband Kevin of East Hampton, Debra Scougall and husband Gregory of Melbourne, Fla., Susan Kaminsky and husband James of Marlborough; three brothers, Robert and Maureen Olschefskie of Old Saybrook, Donald and Beth Olschefskie of Florida, David and Rhonda Olschefskie of Coventry; her twin sister Lynn and husband Edward Dailey of East Hampton; sister Janet and husband Robert Magnotta of Manchester; and her seven beloved grandchildren, Bryce, Morgan, Jared, Andrew, Daniel, Heather and Justin.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Sunday, Sept. 18, from 4-7 p.m. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Monday, Sept. 19, at 11 a.m. in St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough. Burial will follow in Lakeview Cemetery in East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., I-95 Tech Center, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, or to Weiss Hospice Unit, c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

## Courant

## Portland

### Ronald S. Rubler

Ronald S. Rubler, 79, of Portland, beloved husband of the late Gail (Thompson) Rubler, passed away Friday, Sept. 9, at Middlesex Hospital. He was born in Worcester, Mass., Sept. 19, 1936, to the late Joseph and Sally (Kuzokowski) Rubler.

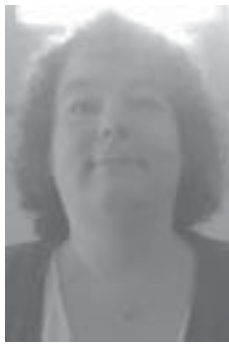
Ronald graduated from Tufts University in 1958, and worked for TWA for 30 years. He was a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy who piloted the P2V Neptune and served at the Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, Fla. Ronald was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, as well as a compassionate and devoted friend.

He is survived by his children, Mark Rubler of Amston, Kim Peterson and her husband James of Florida, Sue Clark and her husband Jay of Georgia, Karen Jenkins and her husband Gary of Georgia, Joe Rubler and his wife Laura of New Jersey, Brett Rubler and his wife Rosa of New Jersey; his 11 grandchildren, Jessica, Stephanie, Sarah, Meghan, Alyssa, Matt, Brian, Carly, Mason, Bella, Jake; and his two great-grandchildren, Isiah and Asher. He is also survived by his sister, Janice Nelson of North Carolina.

A funeral service was held Monday, Sept. 12, in the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury.

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

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



*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

I have to admit, I got a kick when reading the news a few weeks ago. Some of you may have heard about the national liquor store chain Total Wine & More's recent flaunting of state law. The chain, which has four stores in Connecticut, was selling its wine and liquor below the state's minimum pricing for such products.

The stores weren't being secretive about it either; according to the *Connecticut Post*, they took out full-page ads in newspapers across the state proudly proclaiming, in bold red lettering, how much below the "August CT Mandated Price" they were selling the alcohol.

Well, you might imagine such shenanigans didn't sit too well with the state Department of Consumer Protection. DCP promptly slapped Total Wine with a \$37,500 fine, and Total Wine agreed to stop selling below the state minimum.

That wasn't the part that gave me a nice little chuckle, though. In announcing the fine and the resolution — for the moment anyway — of the Total Wine situation, DCP Commissioner Jonathan Harris said, "I am pleased that, through the hard work of many people at DCP, we were able to resolve this issue swiftly, and I appreciate that Total Wine worked with us to come to an agreement."

The "hard work of many people at DCP"? Like I said, Total Wine wasn't being shady in its actions; it took out full-page ads proclaiming them!! So did the "hard work of many people" involve....buying a newspaper? Then driving to Total Wine to confirm that, yes indeed, the prices were as advertised? And again, there are only four of these stores in the state; this isn't exactly Dunkin' Donuts-level ubiquity.

It doesn't really seem like this should have been an "all hands on deck" situation, does it?

Now, as I said earlier, this only resolves the Total Wine situation for the moment. The chain had previously filed a federal lawsuit against the state alleging that, according to the news site CT News Junkie, "the state's 35-year-old practice of regulating liquor prices constitutes a price-fixing scheme." And that lawsuit is still pending. Edward Cooper, Total Wine's vice president of public affairs, told the site the chain will operate 150 retail stores in 21 states by the end of the year, and Connecticut "is the only one in the union that does business like this."

The minimum-pricing law is pretty self-explanatory; it prohibits stores from selling alcohol below the "bottle price" set by wholesalers each month. Over the years, the law has drawn criticism; Gov. Dannel Malloy, for example, has been a strong opponent and has attempted to get the law overturned, saying "we're penalizing our state residents by charging them substantially more for alcoholic beverages than surrounding states."

But the law also has many supporters — perhaps the loudest being the Connecticut Package Store Association, which has repeatedly argued eliminating the law would cause many small package stores to go out of business, while large chains like Total Wine domi-

nate the marketplace. Carroll Hughes, executive director of the association, told CT News Junkie 600 of the state's package stores would close, and at least 10 specialty spirit manufacturers would go out of business, if the law were changed.

The law has been challenged in the past and has remained, and it'll be interesting to see how this lawsuit turns out. In the meantime, Total Wine has been punished — thanks to the "hard work" of the folks at DCP.

\* \* \*

Did you hear about Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Rich Hill? Last Saturday, Hill, 36, was throwing a perfect game through seven innings against the Marlins. That's perfect, as in no hits and no walks allowed. Twenty-one Marlins up, all 21 down.

And then Dodgers manager Dave Roberts took him out of the game.

Hill, you see, had been dealing with blister problems for a while. In fact, since coming over to Los Angeles in a trade Aug. 1, Hill had only made three starts, due to the blister issues. Roberts and the Dodgers' training staff had noticed signs Saturday night the blister may be returning, so the skipper decided not to take the chance on injury, and yanked Hill two innings shy of a complete game.

There's of course no guarantee Hill's perfection would've continued. The annals of baseball history are filled with stories of no-hitters broken up in the ninth inning. With just one out left to get. But had Hill continued to not allow any walks or hits, he'd have joined extremely elite company. In all of baseball history — a history that dates back more than 100 years — only 24 perfect games have been thrown.

But the first-place Dodgers have the postseason in their sights this year — and are banking on Hill to be a big part of it. In between his lost time due to the blister issues, Hill has put together a fantastic season, going 12-3 with a 1.80 ERA. The Dodgers didn't want to risk losing that by having him possibly pitch injured in his quest for protection.

So, even though Roberts said pulling him made him feel sick to his stomach, and even though Hill clearly wasn't happy, I understand the reasoning. I'm not so sure though, if I were manager, that I would do that. Yes, Roberts was being responsible, but wow, talk about an agonizing decision. How do you tell someone that he has to halt his chance at baseball immortality? How do you do that to someone?

At age 36, he's likely never to get a perfect game. Heck, if he were 26, or 21, history says he'd likely never get one. When something's been done only 24 times since 1903, that means the odds are very much stacked against you being able to do it.

Of course, if the Dodgers come away with the pennant (an outcome I'm not actively rooting for, by the way, as my Metsies are still in the playoff hunt), I imagine that would go a long way toward erasing the pain of the perfect game that might've been.

\* \* \*

See you next week.