



RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**From Hebron to Houston...** Hebron native Theresa Oei had a memorable season as one of the New England Patriots' cheerleaders. The unique experience was capped off with a trip to the Super Bowl in Houston earlier this month – where she got to witness first-hand the Pats' dramatic come-from-behind victory. She's seen here with some of her fellow cheerleaders at a rodeo-themed party in Texas during Super Bowl week. From left are Mary Babbitt, Zoe Bucuvalas, Oei, Kelsi Gotauco, Tatiana Cifuentes and the team's mascot, Pat Patriot. For more on Oei, see the story on page 18. Photo by Dwight Darian.

## Malloy Budget Proposal Leaves Officials Reeling

by Elizabeth Regan

Officials east of the river are on edge now that Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has announced a proposed state budget that would divert funding a majority of towns in favor of the poorest cities.

Malloy's plan also asks municipalities to pick up the tab for one-third of the Connecticut State Teachers' Retirement System, to the tune of \$408 million in 2018 and \$421 million in 2019.

Malloy released his proposed two-year, \$41.51 billion state budget last week.

The governor's budget benefits urban centers with the highest concentrations of poverty by reformulating the way the state administers aid through its largest education grant program, known as Education Cost Sharing (ECS). The budget would also change the way special education funds are disbursed.

"We are a small state, and our towns are interconnected," Malloy said in his budget speech. "Growth in Hartford means growth in Bloomfield and Windsor. More jobs in Waterbury means more jobs in Cheshire and Beacon Falls. A more vibrant New London means a more vibrant Ledyard and Montville. We can rise together; or we can fall together."

The new formula for education funding determines wealth based on factors including the strength of a town's grand list, median household income and the number of residents on the state's Medicaid program for children.

By those calculations, East Hampton would lose \$1.63 million in education funding in 2018-19. The figures were outlined in a summary by the Connecticut School Finance Project, an organization established in 2015 that bills itself as an independent, nonpartisan nonprofit.

East Hampton also would be forced to budget for a \$1.53 million payment toward teachers' pensions.

Based on the total municipal aid package for East Hampton indicated in Malloy's proposal – which includes some modest increases for programs designed to offset property tax increases – the town would end up with a \$2.38 million budget shortfall compared to the current year.

East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said the Education Cost Sharing reduction and pension payment would have a "devastating" impact on the town's children and those throughout the state.

At an East Hampton Board of Education budget workshop this week, Smith estimated the change could result in as many as 15-25 layoffs throughout the school district.

"I'm not saying that as a threat," he told the school board and a small audience. "I'm saying I don't know where else to go."

According to Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, it's too early to tell what the final state budget is going to look like and what the true impact will be on communities.

A final budget must be approved by both houses of the state General Assembly and then signed by the governor. The current legislative session ends on June 7.

Malloy's proposal would leave Portland with a slight increase in education aid once the new special education grant is taken into account, according to the Connecticut School Finance Project, but would hit the town with a \$966,127 bill for the teachers' pension program.

Bransfield said the town's lean budget makes

See Budget Proposal page 2

## Bacon Alum Illustrates First Children's Book

by Julianna Roche

Before she even reached her 15th birthday, Amanda Alter had undergone nearly a dozen surgeries to remove an arteriovenous malformation (AVM) from her lip – a birth defect which she said had the appearance of a growing tumor.

"I've always been a very quiet girl and have kept to myself," she said, attributing her "toned-down demeanor" and growing up "feeling closed-off" to the abnormality.

To cope, Alter said she started to find solace in illustrating.

"I've been drawing since I could pick up a pencil really... It's always been my thing," she added.

After graduating from Bacon Academy in Colchester, however, Alter went on to obtain her bachelor's degree in graphic design from Southern Connecticut State University in 2012.

"I wanted to do something artistic with my life [but] feel like I could also contribute something to society," she said.

In 2014, however, Alter crossed paths with one of her father's closest friends – Sharen S.

Peters – who just happened to be writing her first children's book and in search of an illustrator.

Alter explained that Peters had seen illustrations she'd done in a newsletter for Congregation Ahavath Achim, her father Rabbi Ken Alter's synagogue in Colchester. When she inquired about them, Ken Alter put the two in touch.

"We had a short conversation and I asked her 'Are you interested in illustrating?' and she said she always wanted to do illustrating, and that's how our relationship was created," Peters said.

Over the next three years, Alter worked closely with Peters to develop illustrations to go along with a poem she'd written about a lonely doll who finds happiness through making new friends – which ultimately became the basis of her book.

The children's book, *I'm Just a Little Someone* was written for ages 3 to 6 and was released earlier this month. It is available on Amazon and also sold in select Barnes & Noble stores.

Peters "had read me some of her poetry and

they are really personal stories," Alter said, adding that she felt a kinship with the writer right off the bat because of their similar childhoods.

"She had such a rough childhood, a lonely childhood, so she really wanted to reach out to lonely children out there and let them know they're not really alone... that's the base of her storytelling," Alter said.

Though Peters began writing as a young girl, she said "undertones" of sadness and loneliness have carried through her writing even into adulthood.

"Even through today," Peters, 65, explained. "Because loneliness does not just begin and end in childhood. ... It can follow you throughout your life."

Alter said the entire illustration process took three years to finish – time she spent researching illustrators' processes and drawing both full spreads and spot illustrations to fill the 32-page book.

"It was a really hard process for me because it was my first time," she explained, adding she "had to learn everything from scratch."

See Bacon Alum page 2



Amanda Alter

**Budget Proposal cont. from Front Page**

it difficult to come up with additional cuts while maintaining services.

“The only way you fund [the local budget] if the state doesn’t send money is through property taxes,” she said.

In terms of the Portland tax rate, the teachers’ pension payment is equivalent to just over one mill. That’s \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Smith wasn’t sure East Hampton officials would see it the same way.

“Even though people in Hartford are saying Malloy has passed on the burden to local taxpayers, I’m afraid most communities are going to say, ‘We can’t absorb those [costs] as local taxpayers, so schools are going to have to cut their budgets,’” Smith said.

The impact of Malloy’s proposal on East Hampton’s education budget amounts to an 11 percent increase over the current year, according to Smith.

“You’re not going to see double digit increases to the taxpayer; you’re going to see double digit decreases to students,” he said.

While the state has a “minimum budget requirement” that penalizes school districts for reducing their budgets year to year, Malloy’s proposal exempts the teachers’ pension payment from that calculation. It also allows districts to reduce education spending by the same amount their ECS grants were cut.

The budget situation in East Hampton is complicated by the rollout of the bifurcated budget approved in November.

Bifurcating the budget means voters will see two budget figures on the ballot when they go to vote on the local spending plan: one amount for general government and a separate amount for education.

George Rafael, director of government finance and research for the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, said it’s unclear on which side of the budget the teachers’ pension payment would appear.

“The way it reads is the municipality shall make this payment, so I believe it’s coming out of the town side,” Rafael said.

That still doesn’t clarify if the town can bill the pension payment to the board of education, he added.

Either way, East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said the governor’s proposal would be a “game-changer” for both education and municipal operations.

“At the end of the day, yes, we have a bifurcated budget. But we’re all in the same boat together,” he said. “If the board of education is getting less money from the state and they need some additional funds, there’s just less to go around.”

While Maniscalco couldn’t guess what the state budget would ultimately look like once lawmakers were done with it, he said he knows there will be cuts.

“It’s just a question of how much and where,” he added.

Fear and uncertainty surrounding Malloy’s proposal was evident among many other area officials who appeared frustrated by whether or not the changes would become a reality and – especially in cases of the regional school district – how the funding would be applied.

Superintendents in Andover and Hebron both said this week they couldn’t provide specifics on the impact of Malloy’s proposal on programs or staffing, since they’d yet to meet with their respective boards of education. They agreed, however, the impact would be felt all around if the governor’s proposal moves forward.

Andover would be looking at a \$665,899 decrease in combined ECS and special education funding from the current year and a \$445,479 budget increase from the teachers’ pension payment, based on Malloy’s proposal.

The impact to Hebron would be a \$1.54 million decrease in education funding in 2018-19 and a \$1.41 million payment toward teachers’ retirement.

Hebron Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tassel said this week that any reduction in revenue has the potential to significantly impact educational programming in Hebron and across the state.

“At this point, it’s difficult to project what reductions could happen because of our uniqueness with two school systems existing within the same community,” he added.

Hebron, Andover and Marlborough each have their own elementary schools; however, students from the three towns all filter into the RHAM middle and high schools.

“The ECS revenues that the Town of Hebron receives is to support the town in providing educational opportunities for both RHAM and the Hebron Public School students,” Van Tassel explained. “When we are able to determine the specific impact the \$2.9 million will have on each entity, we’ll have a better idea of what sizeable reductions would need to be made.”

Van Tassel remained hopeful, however, that the state legislature would provide other proposals outside of education that will address the state budget deficit.

“I’m not certain that the governor’s budget proposal was intended for municipalities to focus solely on their school systems in addressing the shortfall of revenues,” he said. “In Hebron, the [Board of Education] has been fiscally responsible in putting forth austere budgets that have met the approval of our families and the greater community. Being asked to shoulder a greater burden is difficult to consider – especially since we’ve been making informed decisions for years.”

Andover Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen also said it was unclear what Andover Elementary School would lose and what reductions will “belong” to RHAM.

“Suffice it to say, that even with the reductions at a lower number, we will have to examine all our current programming,” she said. “The Board of Education budget for 2017-18 already reflects a zero percent increase due to the reduction of two staff positions, so I don’t doubt that reductions from the state will have a meaningful impact.”

In Marlborough, the hit to education funding would come in at \$690,438, while the town’s contribution to the teachers’ retirement system would be \$868,290.

Marlborough Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly said it’s going to be “difficult” for the small town if Malloy’s plan comes to fruition.

“I think the most difficult thing is that we won’t know before the [Marlborough town] budget has to be presented in March and actually voted on by the people,” Kelly said. “The state won’t tell us what they’re going to actually do until June, so that’s very disturbing.”

“I really don’t know if our town could handle it,” she added. “It’s just way too much money and we were already in trouble because of RHAM’s budget.”

Though Kelly said she wasn’t sure exactly what RHAM’s budget would be, she has heard it will “come in high.” (RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski is due to present the proposed 2017-18 regional schools budget Monday, Feb. 27.)

“The Board of Finance is going to have a terrible time,” Kelly added.

According to the Connecticut School Finance Project analysis, Colchester would see a total shortfall of \$2.28 million in education funding based on ECS and special education grants. The town would be responsible for a \$2.15 million payment toward teachers’ pensions.

Colchester Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein described the potential impact of Malloy’s proposal as severe.

“We’re talking cuts by the magnitude of \$2.5 or 3 million in a time when the past several years, the budgets have already been increasing very minimally, if at all,” Goldstein said.

Amid uncertainty about how the state budget will ultimately shake out, Goldstein indicated the Colchester school board is putting together its own proposed budget without yet factoring in Malloy’s proposed education funding figures.

“But the changes or reductions proposed by the governor would really transform the district,” he said.

*Reporters Geeta S. Sandberg and Julianna Roche contributed to this story.*

**Bacon Alum cont. from Front Page**

To start, Alter said she purchased a “state-of-the-art tablet,” which she used to first sketch the illustrations by hand. Next, Alter explained, she’d scan that image into her computer and use PowerPoint to develop the rest.

Although it was her first time illustrating a book, Alter said Peters granted her creative freedom. For example, the setting of the story is in a toy store – which Peters said was Alter’s idea.

“When you hire an illustrator, you really don’t want to tell them your vision because you’re hiring them for their creativity, for their creative mind,” Alter said. “Fortunately she didn’t really tell me exactly what she had in mind; she just let me go for it.”

According to Peters, the book is a mirror of her own personal journey – how despite having a very lonely childhood, she eventually found happiness in meeting her husband and adopting a dog named Rebel (who takes on the role of a male doll and a stuffed toy dog in the story).

Peters added that “all of the toys and stuffed animals, those characters that you see in the book were actual stuffed animals of mine.”

*I’m Just a Little Someone* is the first book in

a series Peters has developed called *Friends for Life*, a collection she hopes to add four more books to – with each story focusing on a different issue such as having a disability or being teased. And Alter is expected to continue illustrating them.

“My goal now is to take my books and use them as a vehicle [for] parents, teachers, counselors... to share my story so that other children who feel like they’re alone or have no friends, they can feel hope that somebody else is out there,” Peters said.

Alter felt similar sentiments.

“I’m really grateful for the experience and it taught me so much,” Alter said. “It also opened a door for me... Now I have something behind my name, something solid in my portfolio. It was very exciting creating something like this.”

\* \* \*

Alter and Peters will discuss *I’m Just a Little Someone* Sunday, March 26, from 10:30-11:30 a.m., at Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester. All are invited.

*From the Editor’s Desk***Observations & Ruminations**

by Mike Thompson

After last Thursday’s mega-snowstorm, followed by a lesser but still annoying snow event on Sunday (with the added bonus of a nice sheen of ice), I’m sure I wasn’t alone in welcoming the news this week that Major League Baseball pitchers and catchers reported to spring training.

They report every year at this time; it’s always the middle of February – a time when typically we’re in most need of a reminder that winter doesn’t last forever. Warm weather will eventually return, bringing with it the boys of summer.

Yes, baseball is truly a grand game, and I very much look forward to its return. I will also continue to very much hope MLB doesn’t wind up killing it, as part of a misguided attempt to save it.

The current MLB commissioner, Rob Manfred, has made it one of his main goals to speed up the game; improve the pace of play. He’s convinced baseball is losing its grip on the younger generation because games are just too darn long; younger folk lose attention, go on to other things. He’s quite right that baseball, as is the case with anything, needs to make sure it appeals to younger generations or else it will eventually die out.

He’s quite wrong, I think, with how to go about it.

Over the past few seasons, MLB has adopted a few initiatives designed to speed up the game, such as a pitch clock – to ensure pitchers don’t take forever in between throwing pitches – or another clock that limits how long pitching coaches can conference with pitchers on the mound, or barring batters from stepping outside of the batter’s box.

Those changes, I admit, haven’t messed up the game too much. Unfortunately, Manfred seemingly isn’t content to stop there, as occasionally you’ll hear about other ideas MLB is floating about that I think would hurt the game: things like eliminating the four-pitch intentional walk (instead, pitchers would just signal to the umpire when they want to intentionally walk somebody), or limiting the number of times a manager can go to his bullpen during a game.

Both of those ideas are bad, but last week I read of something MLB is considering that is so insipid it could basically ruin the sport I love so much.

This season, MLB plans to test a new rule in the lowest levels of the minor leagues that would alter the way extra-inning games are played. Simply put, starting in the 10th inning, each inning would start with a runner on second base and nobody out. The chances of scoring in that situation aren’t automatic, but I’d say they’re very, very high. So there probably won’t be a whole lot of “extra” in extra innings. I imagine no more than two innings, tops, before somebody scores and the game is over.

It’s a stupid rule change. But MLB’s chief baseball officer Joe Torre – who, since moving from the dugout to baseball’s front office has disappointingly become little more than a “yes” man for whatever inanities MLB throws out way – is all for it.

“It’s not fun to watch when you go through your whole pitching staff and wind up bringing a utility infielder in to pitch,” Torre told Yahoo Sports last week. “As much as it’s nice to talk about being at an 18-inning game, it takes time.”

Ironically, Torre argued that this change, which would mess with the fundamentals of the game, would actually signal a return to baseball.

“It’s baseball,” he said. “I’m just trying to get back to that, where this is the game that people come to watch. It doesn’t mean you’re going to score. You’re just trying to play baseball.”

Funny; it seems to me that what the game is now *is* the game people come to watch.

Now, I know I can be set in my ways sometimes. I’m not always the most accepting of change. But this would just be a horrible idea. It would dilute the game after the ninth inning. It would ruin in-game strategy. It’s not just playing by a different set of rules, but by a *stupid* set of rules. Yes, it would almost certainly make sure extra-inning games end faster, but at what cost? How far are you willing to ruin the game in order to satisfy the audience members of Short Attention Span Theater?

And that’s the thing: it wouldn’t satisfy them. If baseball is far too boring for you, then you’ll have been long gone by the time the 10th inning rolls around anyway. Those of us who watch baseball games in the 10th inning like the game the way it is; otherwise, why would we still be watching?

Indeed, that’s the problem with a lot of these “improve the pace of play” initiatives. MLB isn’t winning over new fans. It’s not like people who were turned off by sitting through a three-hour baseball game will suddenly tune in if they think the game will last two hours and 45 minutes instead.

No, I think the move that would make baseball more appealing to younger generations is the move MLB is least likely to make: stop starting the games so late. Postseason games in particular almost always start after 8 p.m. Eastern time. If you’re a 12-year-old kid with school the next day, how many innings can you possibly make it through before it’s bedtime? I know MLB wants those prime-time TV ratings, but by doing so they risk alienating themselves from younger audiences.

The same goes for Saturday games. Over the past few years, I’ve noticed most teams have moved all their Saturday games to the evening – thereby greatly decreasing the chance they’ll be family events. Even during the summer, 11 p.m. can be kind of late for a little kid to be at the ballpark. Return those games to the afternoon.

Simply put, I feel the best way to make baseball more appealing to the younger generation is to make it more accessible to the younger generation. It’s not by speeding up the game, or adding more action. Kids would be more likely to watch a baseball game if they felt they’d actually be able to watch it – and not have to go to bed in the third inning.

I realize this would likely put off TV executives, at least in the short term, as they love those prime-time ratings. But this would be a good way to grow baseball that wouldn’t involve messing with the fundamentals of the game. All that would do is annoy – and possibly alienate – existing fans. It wouldn’t draw in any new ones.

Like I said before, it really is a grand game. Please, MLB, don’t ruin it.

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See you next week.

# Colchester Finance Board Discusses Norwich Student Tuition Plan

by Julianna Roche

At a meeting earlier this month, the finance board spent more than an hour discussing Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu's Norwich student tuition plan for FY 2017-18 – which he presented as part of his budget package on Jan. 24.

According to the plan, which Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein outlined during the meeting, Bacon Academy will welcome a total of 25 students from Norwich next year, including the 10 current Norwich freshmen (who will be sophomores) and 15 incoming freshmen.

With each individual student's anticipated tuition cost set at \$14,716 – which is paid by the City of Norwich – Goldstein said there will be a total of \$367,900 in tuition revenue, with plans for \$228,098 of it to go back to Bacon and \$139,802 to the district.

The decision to enroll Norwich students had originally stemmed from the school's need to address fiscal issues and curriculum enhancements, which have been difficult to sustain in the last several years with the dropping enrollment and economic climate.

In 2012, Bacon's then-principal Mark Ambruso and Mathieu met with the Norwich superintendent of schools to discuss the idea, before the education board finally voted unanimously in December 2015 to move forward with accepting Norwich students to Bacon.

The agreement between Colchester and Norwich took effect this year and allowed 10 freshmen students from Norwich to enroll at

Bacon, paying an annual tuition of \$14,254 per student.

While Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov applauded the plan as an "outside-the-box idea for getting additional revenue coming in," he and other board members expressed some concern and hesitation with where the money would be going and what exactly it would be used for.

According to Goldstein, the funds will be used to "support the school district with emphasis on Bacon Academy," but "not to bring in any new programs."

"We realized this is revenue that should support what we have here now or maybe bring back something we lost in past cycles," he continued.

Goldstein also explained that giving \$228,098 of the total tuition back to Bacon made sense, considering the high school "is why this money is coming in" and that it was the "magnet" drawing more students into the district.

According to Mathieu's budget proposal, that revenue would then be used for a number of purchases including new computers, a vinyl printer, projector and furniture to improve the graphics lab, as well as new technology and/or furniture for the world language lab, Alternative Education, and the Library Media Center (LMC).

Also from the revenue, \$35,000 would go to completing the Wi-Fi connection throughout the school to ensure a reliable wireless environment

and starting in the 2017-18 school year, \$35,000 would pay for all Advanced Placement (AP) tests for all students in all AP classes.

Tarlov, however, questioned whether the funds should instead be used to offset the proposed cuts in Mathieu's budget, and argued that there needed to be "discussion" as to whether the money should "be used to support those programs instead."

Goldstein said that while the school board and Mathieu were "open to a further discussion" about it, he considers the purchases as items "the taxpayer will need to support because those are items we need as a district, specifically at Bacon."

A second concern was also issued by board member Andreas Bisbikos, who asked Goldstein "how set in stone" the plan is, especially considering that elected officials and budgets can change from year to year.

"As Andreas said, my primary concern [is] you won't be here forever, Jeff [Mathieu] won't be here forever," Tarlov told Goldstein. "At this point there's a spirit of collaboration [with the plan]."

He added, however, there needed to be a written policy regarding how the funds should be split and how potential uses of the funds are proposed and approved, "cause we're talking a lot of money here."

Furthermore, Tarlov said he was "uncomfortable" that the \$228,098 worth of revenue is currently an off-budget line item – meaning taxpayers will not be able to vote on how the

money is used at the budget referendum on May 2.

"From a taxpayer-relief perspective, the \$139,802 is helping me as a taxpayer [but] the \$228,098 is not being voted on," Tarlov continued, adding the finance board also doesn't "technically vote on it."

Finance board vice chairman Thomas Kane shared similar concerns, saying he was "struggling" with the \$228,098.

However, Kane suggested one solution would be to use tuition funds the same way the non-expended funds are used towards a list of capital projects at the end of each school year.

For example, he said, the board would come up with a non-negotiable list of projects or purchases the school needs and "as the money comes in, you tick off the items."

Kane furthered, however, that the funds could "never [be] used for offsetting operational costs."

Though Goldstein said the board had not yet discussed potential needs for 2018-19, he called Kane's suggestion "a great idea."

"This is the first year," he said. "If there's a better way to handle it... I'm happy to discuss it."

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The next Board of Finance meeting is Wednesday, March 1, at 7 p.m. in Town Hall. The next Board of Education meeting is Tuesday, March 14, at 7 p.m., in Colchester Elementary School's cafeteria.

## Andover Receives Preschool Funding

Gov. Dannel Malloy this week announced that nearly \$1.6 million in state funding is being awarded to nine communities across Connecticut – including Andover. The funding will expand the availability of preschool in public schools in the communities.

In Andover, the funds total \$140,000, which will allow 13 new preschool slots at Andover Elementary School.

The funding comes as part of the latest round of the state's Smart Start initiative – a program that is designed to expand access to pre-K in public schools, particularly among low-income children. The funding consists of money for capital improvements, as well as money for operational expenses from the Tobacco Settlement Fund, which is the result of a lawsuit Connecticut and 45 other states filed years ago against the tobacco industry.

"We must ensure that children are equipped with the tools they need to succeed in life – regardless of income or zip code," Malloy said in a press release from his office. "Expanding the availability of preschool options in our state will prepare them for college and careers in a global, 21st century economy."

"Early education can greatly improve student success," Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman said in the release. "These investments strengthen our preschool system, create opportunity for our

young people, and help build the education pipeline that contributes to Connecticut's improving test scores and rising graduation rates."

In addition to Andover, towns receiving Smart Start funding are East Hampton, Cheshire, Cromwell, Enfield, North Branford, Plymouth, Somers and Thomaston.

Funding for the capital improvement grants is expected to be approved at an upcoming meeting of the State Bond Commission, Malloy's office said, with funding anticipated to be available this spring. Operational expenses for classrooms beginning in September will be available in July.

Smart Start preschool classrooms must provide high-quality early education including a minimum of school-day and school-year programming; classroom sizes must not exceed 18 children; and priority enrollment must be given to children from low-income families, children with special needs and children who are dual language learners. In addition, the program must be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), be approved by the federal Head Start program, have documentation that they are in the process of obtaining accreditation from NAEYC, or have a plan to ensure that the program will be accredited within three years of receiving funding through Smart Start.

## East Hampton Police News

1/31: After an investigation into an evading one-car vs. utility pole crash on Waterhole Road, Anna Zaler-Sattler, 57, of 100 Fox Ridge Dr., Colchester, was issued a summons for traveling too fast for conditions and evading responsibility, East Hampton Police said.

2/6: Steven J. Ziemba, 49, of 24 Berlin St., Middletown, turned himself in pursuant to an outstanding warrant, and was charged with possession of narcotics, possession of drug paraphernalia, operating under the influence of intoxicating alcohol and drugs, and failure to drive right, police said.

## Marlborough Police News

2/7: State Police said Heidi Mclean, 52, of 6 Rivendell Rd., was arrested and charged with violation of probation/conditional discharge.

2/8: State Police said Nicholas S. Clement, 23, of 111 Jerry Daniels Rd. was arrested and charged with violation of probation/conditional discharge.

## Hebron Police News

State Police said Theresa Nome, 56, of 24 Crouch Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive right.

## Colchester Man Faces Burglary Charge

by Julianna Roche

Colchester resident William J. Bromley, 47, of 23 Louis Ln. is facing charges after police said he broke into a residence with intent to burglarize it while the owner was inside the home on Feb. 11.

According to Colchester Police, at approximately 3:30 a.m., they responded to a report of an unknown male actively forcing his way into the back door of a resident's home on Louis Lane.

Police said the homeowner confronted

Bromley as he was wandering through the residence, before the suspect fled on foot.

Police arrived on scene and located Bromley a short distance away from the residence before taking him into custody and charging him with second-degree burglary and fourth-degree criminal mischief.

According to police, Bromley was held on a \$10,000 bond and was scheduled to appear at the Norwich Superior Court on Feb. 13.

## Portland Police News

2/9: Noah Lapointe, 20, of 22 Cree Rd., East Hartford, was charged with violation of a protective order, Portland Police said.

2/11: Ryan Pittito, 18, of 36 Belle Vista Heights, was charged with possession of alcohol by a minor, police said.

2/12: Adam Doran, 20, of 59 Freestone Ave., was charged with operating under suspension, insufficient insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

## Car Strikes Guardrail on Middletown Road, Colchester

by Julianna Roche

Colchester Police responded to a single-vehicle crash after a town resident lost control of her car last Friday, Feb. 10.

According to police, at approximately 4:11 p.m., a Subaru Forester driven by Emily Smith-Collette, 18, of 23 Old Country Rd., lost control on snow and slush on the road before striking a guard rail at the intersection of Middletown Road and Ashley Lane.

Smith-Collette was transported by Hebron Ambulance to Marlborough Clinic for possible injuries, while the passenger in the vehicle, Nicole L. Letterman, 18, of 363 Chestnut Hill Rd., had no reported injuries, police said.

Smith-Collette was also issued an infraction for traveling too fast for conditions, according to police.

# East Hampton School Board Grapples with Budget Proposal

by Elizabeth Regan

Against the backdrop of a state budget proposal from Gov. Dannel P. Malloy described by town officials as “devastating” – and uncertainty about what state lawmakers are going to do about it – the Board of Education continues to plug away at its own school spending plan.

The numbers out of Hartford show the East Hampton Board of Education stands to lose \$3.15 million based on Malloy’s proposed budget. When state aid is calculated for both the education and general government sides of the budget, the town would see a total shortfall of \$2.38 million. (A related story about the impact of Malloy’s proposal on East Hampton and other *Rivereast* towns appears on the cover of this week’s issue.)

But a final budget must be approved by both houses of the state General Assembly and then signed by the governor. While the current legislative session ends on June 7, the process could take even longer if lawmakers adjourn without a budget. In that case, a special session would be held to hash out the details before July 1.

In the meantime, Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith has advised the school board to continue with the local education budget recommendation on the table since before Malloy announced his budget proposal.

Smith recommended a \$30.15 million education budget in January. The school board members have been considering an additional \$83,000 to \$282,000, based on input from the community.

Smith’s recommendation came in 3.75 percent higher than the current budget. It could go as high as 4.65 percent over the current budget

if school board members choose to add all of the additional priorities under consideration.

The school board has gotten behind a plea from administrators, teachers and parents to restore a Center School teaching position lost to retirement last year. The position was not included in Smith’s recommended budget.

Grade five class sizes range from 26 to 28 students currently; one additional teacher would result in class sizes of 22 to 23 in 2017-18, based on enrollment projections.

Center School Principal Mary Clark told school board members Monday that so many students in a classroom makes it difficult for teachers and aides to provide the personalized learning environment the district strives to provide and comes with a host of “logistical, instructional and even safety challenges.”

The teachers’ contract negotiated between the East Hampton Education Association and the district specifies “reasonable efforts shall be made” to ensure classes don’t exceed 25 students.

“We have done everything we can creatively to meet the needs of our students, but I’m concerned about that becoming an acceptable number as we move forward, and even just the norm,” Clark said.

The school board last week also entertained an impassioned request by high school cheerleading coach Holly White to add an assistant coach to the budget. An assistant coach would enable a junior varsity team that could serve more participants at the appropriate skill level. She said it is a safety concern when there is only one coach to oversee multiple students practicing dangerous stunts.

In addition to cheerleading, the cross country team and the girls’ volleyball team have requested an additional coach to supervise a junior varsity team.

Thomas Crean, father of two cheerleaders, told school board members earlier this month that adding a cheer coach is an issue of equality.

“I’m always telling my girls they are just as equal as any boy that goes to this school,” he said. “I don’t understand how we can say to these girls, ‘Do your best out there, but you’re not equal to the boys. You don’t get an assistant coach.’”

While the school board will not approve an education budget until late this month, there appeared to be consensus on adding a fifth grade teacher at Center School. There was also broad support for adding the junior varsity option for cheerleading, volleyball and possibly cross country.

The remaining priorities not included in Smith’s original proposal now being considered include \$15,000 for an increase in the hours for part-time East Hampton High School choral director Ehren Brown, \$83,000 for salary and benefits for both a high school guidance counselor and business teacher and \$4,000 for middle school extracurricular clubs.

Smith’s original recommended budget includes about \$150,000 in new positions, programs and supplies. He said the expense is balanced by expected savings from teacher retirements. While those retirees will be replaced, the positions will likely be taken by less experienced teachers at a lower pay grade.

The 3.75 percent increase over this year’s budget in Smith’s proposal is largely due to

skyrocketing health insurance costs, the superintendent said.

To offset those and other contractual expenses that alone came in at 5.25 percent over the current year’s budget, Smith’s recommended budget cuts one Memorial School teacher, a math interventionist at the middle school and a paraeducator from an as-yet-undetermined school. It also reduces the middle school assistant principal from a full-year to 10-month position.

While the school board has not complained about most of the additions or cuts in Smith’s recommended budget proposal, there is one item that does not appear to enjoy full support from members: a school resource officer.

Smith recommended including \$75,000 in the proposed budget to cover 70 percent of the salary and benefits for a new East Hampton police officer. The school resource officer would be based in one of the schools and would be available to the wider East Hampton community during school vacations and as needed.

School board member Joanne Barmasse said she would consider the idea if the cost was flipped so that the district only paid for 30 percent of the position, while other members said they didn’t think the upcoming budget year is the right time to add a school resource officer. Still others said they needed a presentation from East Hampton Police Department Chief Sean Cox before they could make a decision.

The school board will meet Feb. 28 to vote on its education budget proposal. The school board-approved spending plan, along with the general government budget, will be presented to the Board of Finance on March 13.

## East Hampton Councilman Hopes to Bring Clock to Village Center

by Elizabeth Regan

Town Council member Josh Piteo is hoping a \$22,698 clock will help bring new life to the village center.

The 15.5-foot tall clock, produced by Electric Time Co. of Medford, Mass., will be funded through donations. This list of donors will be engraved onto plaques on the cast aluminum post.

“I’ve always had it in the back of my mind that a clock would revitalize the center,” Piteo said.

Piteo’s proposal would put the clock on the west side of Main Street, he said. Digital mockups of the clock show it on the corner of Barton Hill Road.

Piteo described his vision for the towering timepiece as a reference point. People might make arrangements to “meet by the clock,” for instance, or they could find the business they’re looking for “two doors down from the clock.”

Piteo cited Madison, Conn. as an example of an attractive, bustling downtown area given additional gravitas by a clock.

“We have a great town center and we want to do something that’s going to spruce it up and make it an exciting area,” he said.

Piteo’s focus on Main Street goes back at least 20 years. From 1999 to 2001, he spearheaded a campaign to beautify the village center with engraved bricks. The following year, he started on a failed effort to raise money for a 12-foot clock by selling seven-inch replicas.

Now, in the town’s 250th anniversary year, Piteo has decided it’s time to try again. Donors contributing \$149 will get their names engraved on the clock. There’s room for about 160 names on the four panels.

He called the clock a “snapshot in time” that will celebrate the town’s history, show how far it’s come, and stand tall into the future.

Donations will be held in a town account. The Town Council voted unanimously in De-



**Town Councilman Josh Piteo is hoping to bring a new clock to the village center.**

ember to authorize the purchase of the clock once sufficient funds are raised.

Piteo has emphasized no taxpayer money will be used for the purchase or installation of the clock.

Donations may be made online at [eh250.org](http://eh250.org) and at the town hall on 20 East High St.

## East Hampton Receives Preschool Funding

Gov. Dannel Malloy this week announced that nearly \$1.6 million in state funding is being awarded to nine communities across Connecticut – including East Hampton. The funding will expand the availability of preschool in public schools in the communities.

In East Hampton, the funds total \$150,000, which will allow 15 new preschool slots at Memorial School.

The funding comes as part of the latest round of the state’s Smart Start initiative – a program that is designed to expand access to pre-K in public schools, particularly among low-income children. For East Hampton, the funding includes \$75,000 for capital improvements, as well as \$75,000 for operational expenses from the Tobacco Settlement Fund, which is the result of a lawsuit Connecticut and 45 other states filed years ago against the tobacco industry.

“We must ensure that children are equipped with the tools they need to succeed in life – regardless of income or zip code,” Malloy said

in a press release from his office. “Expanding the availability of preschool options in our state will prepare them for college and careers in a global, 21st century economy.”

“Early education can greatly improve student success,” Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman said in the release. “These investments strengthen our preschool system, create opportunity for our young people, and help build the education pipeline that contributes to Connecticut’s improving test scores and rising graduation rates.”

In addition to East Hampton, towns receiving Smart Start funding are Andover, Cheshire, Cromwell, Enfield, North Branford, Plymouth, Somers and Thomaston.

Funding for the capital improvement grants is expected to be approved at an upcoming meeting of the State Bond Commission, Malloy’s office said, with funding anticipated to be available this spring. Operational expenses for classrooms beginning in September will be available in July.

# Hebron Native Spends Season as Patriots Cheerleader

by Geeta S. Sandberg

For Hebron native Theresa Oei, the New England Patriots' winning season was particularly exciting.

Sure, there were droves of fans cheering for the team, all hoping they'd bring home their fifth Super Bowl ring, but Oei – she was *literally* cheering, as a member of the Patriots cheerleading squad.

A graduate of Yale University who studied molecular biochemistry, Oei currently lives in Massachusetts, where she works as a biochemist at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. She shared with the *Rivereast* last spring that she applied for a spot on the cheerleading team not really expecting to get selected. Rather, she thought trying out would be something fun to do, and a way to bring some dance back into her life; she started studying classical dance and Irish step dancing when she was a little girl, she explained – but opportunities to incorporate it into her life had waned in recent years.

But while she may not have expected it, she did indeed get selected. In fact, Oei was among just 33 of the 420 applicants to get chosen for the team – and it led to a memorable season capped off with a trip to the Super Bowl earlier this month.

"It was a lot of fun and in terms of the games, it was pretty neat seeing everything live and feeling the excitement," Oei shared.

Being on the team was a part-time gig, so Oei was able to continue her work at the Broad Institute, but the squad was present at all of the home games, the championship games, and attended a number of area events.

"They've been fun," Oei said of those events, explaining that, for example, the cheerleaders were asked to attend company parties, visit hospitals and attend some of the Patriots' alumni games; she worked a 5K event for Pancreatic Cancer on Boston Common; worked with the Patriots Women's Association serving meals with the group Bridge Over Troubled Waters that provides programs for homeless youth in Boston; and worked an event at a car dealer-

ship where wide receiver Julian Edelman and defensive back Patrick Chung were also present – although she said in general the cheerleaders and football players don't really interact.

"Sometimes we're at similar events, but everyone's doing a job, and they have a very different schedule in terms of practice and things like that and everyone's really focused," she explained.

Oei added, however, that you get to know some of the players' personalities "just by watching from afar."

"I always liked No. 97 [defensive end Alan Branch]," Oei shared. "When they're warming up before a game they play pop music as the crowd is trickling in, and he's always dancing."

She also mentioned tight end Martellus Bennett, who grabbed a pair of pom-poms and danced with the cheerleaders following the AFC Championship win (video of which can be found online).

As for some of her favorite moments from the season, Oei said, "I think one of the ones that will always stand out with me is the Breast Cancer Awareness game [Oct. 16] when we were on the field with 150 survivors. We had pink uniforms and sort of stood in the pink ribbon shape on the field."

Fans in the audience were also given pink signs, and at the end of the first quarter the signs were held up so that the entire stadium was awash in pink; the signs some of the fans held on one side of the stadium made the breast cancer awareness ribbon with the Patriots logo inside.

Oei added that game also happened to be quarterback Tom Brady's first home game following a four-game suspension.

"They played a little video montage to the song 'Coming Home' [by Diddy featuring Skylar Grey] and then he ran out on the field for the first time and it was pretty emotional," Oei said. "Everyone there was so excited to have him back."

That game also provided Oei with the chance to form a connection between her life as a cheer-

leader and that of a biochemist.

"You certainly see the importance that science can have on our progress against these diseases," Oei said. "One woman said, 'I just pray you and my daughter [as the next generation] will see the end of this disease,' and knowing that end will come from scientific advances and that's something I can be a part of was a neat moment."

Not to be forgotten, another memorable experience for Oei was of course, Super Bowl LI. The team arrived in Houston Feb. 2, and that evening they attended a rodeo-themed party where the Kraft family – team owners – as well as players and their families were present.

"So we were there greeting people and we learned to line dance with a bunch of locals and that was really fun," Oei shared. Then, the night before the big game Feb. 5 there was another party the cheerleaders attended that was hosted by Maxim, where they got to dress up and walk the "red carpet."

As for the game itself, "We were all very excited. I think by the end of it we were all just screaming."

After trailing the Atlanta Falcons 28-3 midway through the third quarter, the Patriots managed to tie the game 28-28, forcing the first-ever Super Bowl overtime. The Pats ultimately claimed their fifth Super Bowl championship with an overtime touchdown that brought the final score to 34-28.

Even when the Patriots were down by 25 points, Oei recalled, "I don't think we ever really doubted [they'd win]. Everyone was really sort of rooting for them. It was one of a kind for sure, and the stadium itself – at the beginning it was much more quiet but as it got toward the end everything got super loud and there was a lot going on."

Following the team's historic comeback win, Oei shared she also attended the after party that included performances by Pitbull and Lil Wayne in the NRG Center next to the stadium.

"Everyone sang and danced and had a great time," Oei stated.



(Photo by Dwight Darian)

Theresa Oei

She said she was at the party until about 3:30 a.m., "then I went back to the hotel and packed and got to the airport for the next morning" – thus ending a memorable season as a member of the New England Patriots cheerleading team.

As for what's next for Oei, she shared she's currently in the midst of applying to PhD programs at various schools including MIT, Harvard – she actually got her acceptance call while on the plane back from Houston – as well as Stanford University and Yale.

Since she's not sure where she'll be next year, at this point Oei doesn't know if she'll try out to be a cheerleader again next season, "but if I stayed in the area I would certainly think long and hard about coming back," she concluded.

\* \* \*

Auditions for the upcoming season are coming up, and information on how to apply can be found at [patriots.com/cheerleaders/auditions](http://patriots.com/cheerleaders/auditions).

# Courant Argues Against Proposed Portland Ordinance

by Elizabeth Regan

The concepts of free speech and paper pollution collided head-on at a public hearing Wednesday on a proposed ordinance to curb the delivery of advertising circulars some residents said are being thrown carelessly into their yards.

Resident Mary Pear told about a dozen people at the hearing, including representatives from the *Hartford Courant's* circulation department and a lawyer for the newspaper, that she witnessed the practice firsthand one Thursday morning.

"A driver in a pickup truck quickly moves down the street," she said. "From the back of the pickup truck are two persons: one heaves a plastic bundle to the left of the street and the other heaves a plastic bundle to the right. When it hits its mark, it lands in the middle of the driveway. However, more often than not, it lands on your lawn or in the road."

Resident Angela Hammond stood up to say she has called the *Hartford Courant* numerous times to stop delivery with no resolution.

Hammond described the deliveries as a nuisance, an environmental issue and a safety risk.

She joined several other residents in complaining that the bagged circulars accumulate in some yards, giving a signal to potential thieves that the home is empty.

"[The drivers] don't look to see if one is still there from the week before, so you see them piling up," Hammond said.

According to Hammond's neighbor, Nicole

Basilicato, one of the deliveries got stuck in her snowblower this week.

The ordinance being discussed was based on a draft that would make it illegal for anyone to leave "advertising matter" or "newspapers" on any private properties without the permission of the owner.

The draft ordinance would not apply to material sent through the United States Postal Service, like the *Rivereast*, or when distribution is required by federal, state or local regulations.

*Hartford Courant* legal counsel William Fish of Hartford-based Hinckley, Allen & Snyder took to the podium to frame the proposed ordinance as a free speech violation.

"Numerous courts all around the country have regularly held that speech, which is protected, also includes the right to distribute the speech," Fish said. "If you don't get to actually distribute speech, it's not really protected."

He cited numerous legal decisions that have upheld door-to-door distribution of such printed materials as pamphlets from Jehovah's Witnesses, pro-life literature and even phone books.

Fish said the ordinance is also improper because it singles out advertising and newspapers while leaving political, religious and non-profit groups free to leave written material on private property.

Instead, he said residents should go through the customer service process to stop the unwanted deliveries. And while he acknowledged complaints that some of those requests fall

through the cracks, he said those are the kind of "mistakes" that happen when the company is responsible for the delivery of 200,000 circulars across 100 towns.

"A mistake doesn't make an ordinance that is unconstitutional magically constitutional," Fish said. "It's a mistake, it shouldn't happen, and steps need to be taken to correct it."

Brian McEnery, the *Courant's* director of distribution for home deliveries, told the angry crowd he would personally check to make sure a 'stop' has been recorded in the system for anyone who has called to halt delivery of the *CTShopsHere* advertising circulars.

"What we have been finding in some cases is that the stops are there, but the delivery person, for whatever reason, is not following the delivery list," he said.

McEnery said he has been in contact with the contractor covering Portland to resolve the issue. He called it "unacceptable" that residents have been asking multiple times for the deliveries to stop with no results.

Contractors are also supposed to remove papers that are piling up, he added.

"We've got what we think is a good process in place of how we handle this, we just need to work and make sure we're executing the way it should be so it's not necessary to have an ordinance," McEnery said.

Robert Reneson, the owner of the delivery company contracted by the *Courant*, could not

attend the hearing but submitted a letter that was read out loud at the hearing.

Reneson said he has been a Portland resident since 2008, with ties to the town that go back to his childhood.

"I want to assure anyone who has reservations about my commitment to this working, if you request the delivery of the *CTShops* to stop, it will be stopped," he wrote. "The last thing I want is to ignore issues residents have regarding any deliveries we make."

Several residents, like Basilicato, called out McEnery for "passing the buck" to the *Courant's* contractors in a way that doesn't reflect well on the newspaper.

Bruce Tyler described the *Courant's* defense as "constitutional protection for incompetent management."

"Fix it, and don't hide behind the first amendment," he said.

McEnery said he expects to get the resident complaints from Portland resolved within two weeks.

Meanwhile, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield told selectmen she will bring the draft ordinance to town attorney Kari Olson of Murtha Cullina for what will likely be "substantive changes" to address legal issues.

She said she would continue to work with representatives from the *Courant* and with Reneson and will report back to the selectmen at their March 1 meeting.

# Marlborough Superintendent Trims Proposed Budget Increase

by Julianna Roche

At a Board of Education budget workshop Wednesday night, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz proposed changes that would bring the budget increase for FY 2017-18 down to a 2.48 percent increase.

Sklarz had initially pitched a 4.98 percent budget increase in December.

The new proposal included eliminating the special education coordinator position altogether and reassigning those responsibilities to the school psychologist and speech/language therapist, which would save the school \$45,000.

According to the proposal, a 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) school psychologist position would be reassigned to 0.8 FTE psychologist and 0.2 FTE special education coordinator, while the 1.0 FTE speech/language therapist position would be reassigned to 0.8 FTE speech/language therapist and 0.2 FTE special education coordinator.

"What happened this year is the person we had in that position [special education coordinator] left us and we hired somebody [stay until the] end of the year," Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly said Thursday.

Rather than hire a new special education

coordinator for the 2017-18 fiscal year, Sklarz's proposal simply shifts the psychologist and speech/language therapist's responsibilities.

"We're at a point in the next year or so where we're going to be looking at .8 FTE in some subject areas," he said, adding "we've got to take this opportunity and see what we can do."

Reducing positions to .8 FTE is not without its concerns however, he furthered.

"When we reduce positions to .8 [FTE], we risk losing people," he said, adding that after speaking with other superintendents however, it's clear "we're all struggling with the same issues."

"We're making a statement [that] as difficult as it is, we need to make reductions," Sklarz continued.

According to the superintendent's proposed changes, an additional \$8,604 will also be saved by reducing technology updates to the school, adjusting the budget for 2017-18 to total \$7.4 million, as opposed to \$7.45 million.

The budget total however, does not include a capital improvement fund balance – which Sklarz has been talking about establishing with First Selectwoman Amy Traversa and Board of

Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton over the last couple months.

In mid-December, Knowlton had originally described the fund to be used "as a future maintenance fund" where reserves would likely be placed in at the start of each school year to be used towards building and maintenance projects.

"We've reached a point now where there's a reality check," Sklarz said about the budget, adding that as it continues to be discussed, the board "just need[s] to think about going one step at a time" and "strategically reduc[ing] our budget costs."

"It's now the board's responsibility to look at everything and see if we want to reduce it further or if somebody might want to add something in," Kelly said, adding that will take place at the next regular Board of Education meeting, which will be held Thursday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. in the elementary school's media center.

\* \* \*

Several residents also spoke about their concerns heading into budget season during the public comments portions of the meeting Wednesday night, including Board of Finance

Vice Chairman Cliff Denniss, who spoke about Gov. Dannel Malloy's proposed budget cuts and how they will affect Marlborough. (A story about the impact of Malloy's proposal on Marlborough and other area towns appears on the cover of this week's *Rivereast*.)

"[The impact] is about \$1.2 million," he said. "If you haven't already, I urge you all, members of the public, to write, call, contact your legislators and continue to do so up until the end."

Resident Rich Storrs echoed Denniss' sentiments, and told the Board of Education that its "job is to do what's best for the students... regardless of what state legislators are doing."

"You all have a responsibility to do what's best for the town and our students," he furthered.

Board of Selectman member Dick Shea – who stressed he was speaking as an individual – said "we're going to have to work with what we have now" regarding the budget.

He stressed that Malloy's proposal is just that – a proposal – and said, "you can be quite certain there will be a lot of changes and we won't know the final number until sometime in June."

## Obituaries

### Marlborough

#### Gordon A. Watkins Sr.

Gordon A. Watkins Sr., 89, of Marlborough, formerly of East Hartford, beloved husband of 68 years to his all-time sweetheart Lorraine (Simon) Watkins, passed peacefully at home Tuesday, Feb. 7, with his wife by his side. Gordon was born May 20, 1927, to the late Leroy and Alta (Wadhams) Watkins of Bloomfield.



Gordon was a Teamster Local 559 Tractor Trailer driver for over 40 years driving for First National Stores and Wonder Bread Company. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was an avid Red Sox and UConn sports fan, although his heartfelt joy came from sharing time with his family.

Before and after retirement, he and Lorraine took on many sights, traveling the U.S. extensively in their camper. One of their favorite places to vacation year after year was at the family cottage on the beautiful rock bound coast of New Harbor, Maine.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his three sons Gordon A. Watkins Jr. and his significant other Kathleen Mihalyak of McCormick, S.C., Leroy B. Watkins II and his wife Patricia Watkins of Marlborough, Jeffrey S. Watkins and his wife Heather Watkins of Broad Brook; seven grandchildren, Brian Watkins of Steamboat Springs, Colo., Burton and Keri Watkins of Glastonbury, Krystal Watkins of Somerville, Mass., Karley and husband Rob Root of Coventry, Dawn and husband Jonathan Vieira of Dartmouth, Mass., Austin and Violet Watkins of Broad Brook; four great-grandchildren, Lillianna and Christian Vieira of Dartmouth, Mass., Ava and Bennett Watkins of Glastonbury; and several special nieces and nephews and special lifelong dear friends. Gordon also spoke fondly of his memories and remaining relatives in Goshen.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his sister Helen Woodhull.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Monday evening, Feb. 13. A funeral service was held Tuesday, Feb. 14, in Marlborough Congregational Church, South Main Street, Marlborough. Burial was private at the convenience of the family in Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675-8517.

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

### Andover

#### Joyce Delores Orcutt

Pastor Joyce Delores Orcutt, 81 passed into the spiritual world Thursday, Feb. 9, at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Brattleboro, Vt. Joyce was born in Glastonbury Aug. 2, 1935, the daughter of Armand and Ethel (Hare) Roberts. She attended Our Lady of Sorrows and Manchester High schools in Connecticut.

Born with a gift, at a very young age Joyce became aware of her psychic abilities after a beautiful spirit spoke to her and after a visit to Salem, Mass., where she was introduced to a highly-acclaimed medium who helped her realize her psychic abilities. From then on, Joyce devoted her life to spiritualism and healing. Her young life was filled with many unique experiences, and at the age of 9, accompanied by her father, Joyce survived the 1944 Hartford Circus fire, one of the worst fire disasters in the history of the United States.

Joyce married Edward (Eddie) Orcutt on March 9, 1953, at St. James Church in Manchester, and would have celebrated 64 years of marriage in March of this year. In 1977, Joyce attended nursing school and worked as an LPN for two years before her health caused her to give up nursing.

She and Ed moved to Andover, where they lived for 41 years. In 2001, Joyce and Ed moved to Winchester, N.H.

They raised four children of their own, Lora Lee, Kathleen, Edward Jr. and Frank, while sharing their home with numerous other children. Because of Joyce's love of children she became a Cub Scout, Girl Scout and 4-H leader. For the last 40-plus years, Joyce was a medium and pastor at First Spiritualist Church of Willimantic. In 2002, she taught courses in spiritualism at Manchester Community College and through the years she and Ed traveled to many states doing message work and healings. During her spiritual life, Joyce was vice president and president of Connecticut State Spiritualist Association, president of Pine Grove Spiritualist Camp, president and vice president of the Wigwam, long trustee of Connecticut Camp Association and honored by NSAC.

She was predeceased by her parents, her brother, Armand Bill Roberts, and her oldest child, Lora Lee Orcutt Liappes.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her son Edward Jr. and his wife Leann, daughter Kathleen Cardillo and her husband Richard, son Frank and his wife Vona. She leaves much love and blessings to her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and her many friends.

Quote from Joyce: "Greatest joy of my life has been being a spiritualist...If you asked about my joy, it was and is sharing God and Jesus's teaching...to me if you took the teachings of Jesus and left out the man made stuff you would have spiritualism..."

A memorial service will be next Friday (2-24-2017) at 11:00 A.M. at Kidder Funeral Home, 1 Parker Ave. Northfield, Ma. The Rev. Susan Frenzy will officiate. Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

To send condolences or for directions, visit [kidderfuneralhome.com](http://kidderfuneralhome.com).

### Marlborough

#### George W. Gallian

George W. Gallian, 79, of Marlborough, beloved husband of Loren La Terra Gallian, died peacefully Wednesday, Feb. 8, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit. Born July 10, 1937, in Bronx, N.Y., he was the son of the late George and Rose (Amend) Gallian.



George proudly served his country in the Army during the Korean War. He had worked as a Hartford city firefighter, fighting the Hartford Hospital fire in 1961, and had jumped from a too-short ladder into the ninth floor window on the fire floor. He also deterred a nurse from jumping from a window and she survived. Later on, he worked extensively in the automotive industry in sales, service and body shops, particularly managing Turnpike Motors in Newington for many years. George was a licensed insurance appraiser in several states, becoming an adjuster also prior to his retirement.

He was a past member of the VFW Post in East Hampton and the American Legion Post in Marlborough. He was an avid fly fisherman, camping, hunting and fishing frequently in up-state New York as well as in Connecticut with his son-in-law and grandsons. George and Loren enjoyed vintage auto shows, flea markets and the fabulous Italian food of Arthur Ave. in the Bronx. He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. George had a special fondness for Golden Retrievers, having had two, Samson and Gatsby.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his two daughters, Luanne Savva and her husband Charles of Southwick, Mass., Lisa Kraft and her husband Kenneth of Southwick, Mass.; a sister, Linda; four grandchildren, Nikolas (Jamie) and Christopher Savva (Danielle), Kaitlin and Taylor Kraft; and three great-grandchildren, Kaileigh, Brianna and Bradley.

He was predeceased by three sisters, Marie, Georgianna, Viola, and his in-laws, Joseph and Jane La Terra.

We would like to thank the phenomenal staff of Middlesex Hospital's CCU and Hospice Unit, who were so very kind and caring of George and his girls.

George's family will receive relatives and friends on Sunday, Feb. 19, from 2-4 p.m., at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue, P.O. Box 808, Hudson, MA 01749-0808 or to the 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).

### Hebron

#### Dwight W. Ufferfilge

Dwight W. Ufferfilge, 72, of Hebron, the beloved husband of Judith A. (Krause) Ufferfilge, died Tuesday, Feb. 7, at Hartford Hospital.

Born in Teaneck, N.J., he was the son of the late William and Pauline (Mittermier) Ufferfilge and had lived in Hebron for 41 years. Dwight was a U.S. Navy veteran and a proud member of the Seabees. While a resident of New Jersey, Dwight served as a member of the Westwood and Washington volunteer fire departments. More recently he was a self-employed home inspector and was passionate about learning and teaching others about the foundation issues in the state of Connecticut. Dwight took great pleasure in telling tall tales, speaking with all sorts of people, as well as building, fixing, and remodeling various things.

In addition to his wife of 48 years, he is survived by his adoring children, Tara Arner and her husband Michael of Tolland, Lauren McGill and her husband Kevin of Bolton, and Carrie Asklar and her husband Kevin of Marlborough; his grandchildren, "The Rabbits-7," Katherine and Jason Arner, Kylee, Keaton, and Gavin McGill, as well as Lani and Olivia Asklar; his brother, Roger and his wife, Barbara, of Florida; and several nieces and nephews. Besides his parents, Dwight is predeceased by his brother William Ufferfilge.

Funeral services will be private at the convenience of the family.

Memorial donations may be made to the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447.

John F. Tierney Funeral Home, Manchester, has care of the arrangements. For online condolences, visit [tierneyfuneralhome.com](http://tierneyfuneralhome.com).

Amston

Donald James Begansky

Donald James Begansky, 67, of Amston, passed away at home with his family by his side Tuesday, Feb. 14. Born in Hartford Feb. 16, 1949, he was a son of the late Theophil and Nina (Denisky) Begansky.



After serving in the U.S. Air Force, Don attended American River College. He retired in 2014 after a career as a respiratory therapist. Donald took great pride in caring for children at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Donald was ever devoted to his sons, taking an interest and being involved in any activity they pursued. He enjoyed spending time with his family. In his spare time, Donald loved music. He enjoyed playing drums, gardening and camping.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his loving wife Robin; three sons, Matthew and wife Briana of Minneapolis, Minn., Jacob Begansky of Portland, Ore., Michael Begansky of Amston; a brother, Theophil Begansky Jr. of Bonita Springs, Fla.; two grandchildren, Oliver and Elliott; and numerous extended family and friends.

Calling hours will be held today, Feb. 17, from 5-7 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will be celebrated Saturday, Feb. 18, at 2 p.m., directly at the First Congregational Church of Portland, 554 Main St., Portland.

Burial will follow in the Swedish Cemetery in Portland.

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

Colchester

Leon Levine

Leon Levine, 84, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, Feb. 12. Born Sept. 15, 1932, to the late Samuel and Gertrude Levine, Leon was a native of Colchester.

He graduated from Bacon Academy in 1950 and worked on the family chicken and egg farm. He married Anita (Schwartz) in 1952 in Brooklyn, N.Y., and recently celebrated their 64th anniversary. They started their own farm, which soon had 35,000 egg-laying chickens, the largest farm in Colchester. In 1965, he entered the upholstery business, eventually launching Leon's Upholstery in New London in 1980, which is still in business today.

After playing basketball, baseball, and soccer at Bacon, Leon spent the rest of life perfecting his golf game, including two holes-in-one. Leon and Anita travelled widely, including South America, Central America, Italy, Israel, Jordan, France, Eastern Europe, England, Spain, Portugal, Hawaii and China. They were in Tiananmen Square during the 1989 uprising.

Leon was a member of the Board of Trustees of Congregation Ahavath Achim in Colchester and was Past President, Man of the Year, and Paul Harris Fellow of the Colchester Rotary Club.

In addition to his loving wife Anita, he is survived by his brother Melvin of New York City; three sons, Mark (Sara Imershein) of Washington, D.C., Neal (Lorraine) of Punta Gorda, Fla., Barry (Tracy Bone) of Bethesda, Md.; six grandchildren (Danielle, Mimi, Sam, Joseph, Abigail and Olivia) and two great-grandchildren (Mikayla and Nicholas).

He was predeceased by his brother Herbert.

Funeral services and burial were observed Tuesday, Feb. 14, under the direction of the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

Donations in his memory may be made to the National Parkinson Foundation, 200 SE 1st St., Suite 800, Miami, FL 33131, Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County, Maryland or Temple Sinai of Washington, DC.

Colchester

Herbert Wallace St. Peter

Herbert Wallace St. Peter, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the age of 60. Born July 29, 1956, in Norwich, he was the son of the late Gerald and Viola "Ginger" (Rogers) St. Peter.



Herb grew up in Colchester and attended Bacon Academy with the Class of 1974. He enlisted in the U.S.

Navy and served proudly at the end of the Vietnam War until his honorable discharge in January 1978. Herb gave his all in whatever he did – from his die-hard work ethic with Local 230; to his love for his family, especially his grandchildren; and just his zest for life, living each moment to its fullest.

He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by all whose lives he touched; as he leaves his three children, Heath St. Peter (and his wife, Lauren) of East Haddam, Faith Farina of Moodus and Kelly Dessureault of East Hampton; seven grandchildren, Logan and Garrett Meseroll, Kallysta, Lucas and Nathaniel Farina and Edward and Matthew Dessureault; four siblings – sisters, Cheryl Montgomery (and her husband, Mike) of Lebanon and Meredith Cable (and her husband, Jon) of St. Cloud, Fla., and two brothers, Gerald St. Peter (and his wife, Cathy) of Colchester and John St. Peter of Winsted; and so very many friends.

A Celebration of his Life will be observed from 5-9 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 18, at the American Legion, Neptune Avenue, Moodus.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

Cobalt

Cathy A. Wing

Cathy A. Wing, 64, of Cobalt, passed at her home Tuesday, Feb. 14. She was born Sept. 3, 1952, in Newark, N.J., the daughter of the late John Harra and Carmella (Dolly Romano) Harra. Cathy loved being from New Jersey. She was a true Jersey girl and always said with pride "Jersey has the best bread!"



In 1995 she was married to Stephen G. Wing. Upon marrying Stephen she welcomed an extended family that includes her mother and father-in-law Margaret (Peg) and Theodore Wing, sister and brother-in-law Kathleen and Dante Aiudi and their son Dante Aiudi Jr., and her beloved stepson Michael Weed.

Cathy was a manager at Aetna Life and Casualty for 39 years, where she met many of her closest friends, especially Britt Nystrom and Cathy Goodrow Hartley, along with their families and the extended group of Aetnoids.

Cathy believed in giving back. She volunteered at various local non-profit organizations. She loved her time at The Homeroom in Middletown, where she helped local youth with their homework. She also served as a board member of Junior Women in East Hampton where she raised funding for local events and charities. Cathy also volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and was nominated to the board before retiring to help raise her beloved grandchildren, who she often brought to the food bank to make donations.

Cathy was a vibrant and rebellious woman who loved her family and friends fiercely. She believed in family, equality, hard work, and fighting for her beliefs. She loved politics, dancing, the gym, Betty Boop, wine, bright lights and entertainment, amazing food, fancy clothes, cooking, being the perfect hostess, traveling, bowling, music, pop culture, and her good friend Elizabeth Arden, who she swore attributed to her youthful glow. She was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in October 2016. Her plight was short and gruesome at times but she continued to fight until the day her light was extinguished on Feb. 14, 2017.

She leaves her beloved husband, Stephen G. Wing of Cobalt; her daughter Lalena and her husband Michael Salafia of East Hampton; her stepson Michael Weed of Cromwell; and her grandchildren Skyler and Michael Salafia Jr. of East Hampton. She also leaves her sisters Janet Graham of Orange, Calif., and Deborah and her husband Joseph Lek of Little Rock, S.C., and her brother John S. Harra of Las Vegas, Nev. She is survived by her mother, Carmella Harra of Middletown, and her in-laws, Margaret and Theodore Wing of Middletown.

She is predeceased by her father, John Harra.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Monday, Feb. 20, from 10-11 a.m. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. in the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., I-91 Tech Center, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

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