

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

Volume 41, Number 24

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

March 10, 2017



Portland High School student Mary Clark and Classical Magnet School's Greg Taylor and Vanessa Lagerstrom, pictured from left, pose behind the scenes at Perfect Prom of Connecticut's Evening of Enchantment Fashion show last Saturday night.

Helping Teens Find That 'Perfect' Dress

by Elizabeth Regan

Eighteen high school models took to the runway Saturday night, adorned in just about every color of the rainbow and all kinds of sparkle, to promote an inclusive, "perfect prom" experience.

The Evening of Enchantment Fashion Show at Portland High School featured 54 gowns from Portland resident Jill Deane's expansive collection. Deane has been loaning formalwear to girls throughout Connecticut since 2009 to make sure the cost of a dress doesn't stop them from attending the prom.

The fashion show was held to showcase the Perfect Prom of Connecticut offerings while raising money for an entirely different display of color and shimmer: the annual Portland Fireworks.

Deane said this week the fashion show brought in about \$2,500 of much-needed funding for the popular fireworks display. The fireworks were cancelled last July for lack of money.

The master of ceremonies for the prom-themed fashion show was Kevin Armstrong, a staffer in the town's technology department. Dressed in a pinstriped tuxedo and hat, Armstrong introduced each model and described dresses ranging from sleek satin to empire-waisted chiffon.

Deane said Armstrong had to study the design terminology to become familiar with the correct pronunciation of words like brooch, applique and tulle. The latter, she explained to him, sounds like "tool," not "toolee."

Models from Portland High School, Haddam-Killingworth High School and Clas-

sical Magnet School had free rein to select the three dresses they wanted to wear on the runway, according to Deane. It's an approach that mirrors her guiding philosophy each year as she helps girls find their dream gowns in her pop-up prom boutique.

"You can model whatever it is you like, whatever is your style, whatever you feel comfortable in," she told the girls. She advised them to have fun, too, which was especially evident during a retrospective segment featuring dresses from the 1950s through the early 2000s.

Deane said her backstage pep talk to the models included a warning that the audience was likely to laugh at many of the bygone styles, which they should not take personally.

"The '80s and '90s were some tough times," she said with an experienced smile, nodding to a lineup dominated by ruffles, sequins and bows.

Armstrong had his own costume change for the flashback segment, trading in the pinstripes for a pale blue tuxedo with a ruffled shirt. The look was doubly retro: It first emerged in the '70s before experiencing a resurgence in the mid-'90s – at Halloween parties, anyway – thanks to the movie *Dumb and Dumber*.

One of the throwbacks was Deane's own prom dress, modeled by Portland High School freshman Avery Coe. The long, off-white dress had a satin band around a high waist and delicate lace along the neckline.

"I cried when she put it on," Deane said.

Deane's date to that 1982 prom was Dan, who would eventually become her husband and with

See 'Perfect' Dress page 2

Maple Fest Returns Next Week

by Geeta S. Sandberg

In his song "Love And Maple Syrup," singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot asserts "love and maple syrup shine like embers warm, like thoughts divine – they tell us it is spring."

Indeed, maple syrup can only be made once the temperature rises enough for the sap to start running through the trees, so it's no wonder the sweet substance is associated with the changing of the seasons.

In Hebron, although there were plenty of winter-like days to come after it, the temperature crept up enough for the sap to start flowing in February, and Ron Wenzel of Wenzel's Sugar House was outside Wednesday, Feb. 22, collecting sap along with his wife Joyce, brother Keith and sister-in-law Sue.

The group collected an average of two gallons of sap per tap, for a total of more than 800 gallons.

"That's a lot," Ron Wenzel shared that day. "In 400 buckets? That is not a bad day at all."

Wenzel was also able to go out the Sunday prior, when he collected another 500 gallons – all expected to boil down into about 20 gallons of maple syrup, which will be available for

purchase next weekend when the Hebron Maple Festival returns for its 27th year.

From its onset the festival has provided the opportunity for attendees to learn about the process of making maple syrup by visiting area sugar houses – including Wenzel's and Woody Acres Sugar House right in Hebron – and while the event has changed in recent years and is now jointly hosted by the Windham Chamber of Commerce and Windham Arts, that's no less the case.

"The focus is still maple sugar making, agriculture and all that," Diane Nadeau, president of the Windham Chamber of Commerce, shared this week.

However, she added, the event also offers much, much more.

"We have live music this year with a band playing," Nadeau said. "We have a lot of different food items – everything maple you can think of – plus we have some other very interesting foods like barbecue, seafood and tacos."

Maple foods include maple cotton candy, maple cookies, maple cream puffs and cannoli, crêpes with maple syrup, maple cake and sugar

See Maple Fest Returns page 2



The sap buckets were out on East Street in Hebron last month, collecting the nectar for sweet, sweet maple syrup. Maple will abound in town next weekend, when the annual Maple Fest returns.



Jill Deane, left, said the sight of Portland High School freshman Avery Coe, right, in the same dress she wore to prom in 1982 brought her to tears.

'Perfect' Dress cont. from Front Page

whom she went on to have five children in seven years.

It was her eldest two daughters' prom dresses that inspired the whole Perfect Prom adventure. Deane said they thought about donating the gowns once the girls were done with them, but they decided to start a new outreach effort instead.

Her daughters put out the word on Facebook, asking for additional dress donations and then letting students know about the opportunity to borrow them at no cost.

In its first year, the program provided gowns for six girls. Now, Deane schedules 100 appointments a year.

For one weekend each spring, the Waverly Center becomes a dress shop as Deane decorates the space to evoke a high school prom and unpacks her collection of 350 dresses. Five changing areas provide ample space for girls to try on as many dresses as they need to in order to find the perfect gown.

The dresses range in size from 0-24, or extra small to XXXL.

The girls start by browsing the racks themselves, then Deane's volunteers – composed of her family members and friends – continuously deliver personalized suggestions based on their years of Perfect Prom experience.

So often, Deane said, girls end up walking out with dresses they never would have chosen by themselves.

"A lot of girls come in and think they don't look good in a certain color or they only look good in a certain style," she said. "We bring them gowns and we tell them, 'just try it on.'"

Most girls go through 10 and 15 gowns before settling on the winner, according to Deane.

"We're there to make sure everybody leaves with a gown," she said. "And everybody does."

The dresses are secured with a \$75 deposit that is refunded once the dress is returned.

But Deane emphasized the goal of her organization is to make it possible for all girls to go to the prom.

"If someone needs to leave a lesser deposit or is unable to leave a deposit, they just have to let me know," Deane said.

Perfect Prom of Connecticut accepts donations of new and used dresses. Each donated garment is dry cleaned before wear and again

after it is returned, thanks to the donation of dry cleaning services from Best Cleaners in Glastonbury. Deane said the program would not be possible without the generosity of the dry cleaning company, which has been donating its services since the program's inception.

Deane said the fashion show will be the first of many. She credited donations from the community – like Modern Formals of Middletown, which outfitted Armstrong and the four escorts, and Dave Kuzminksi of Connecticut Valley School of Music and Dance, who donated the sound system and runway – with helping make the event such a success. A volunteer team covered aspects like hair and makeup, gown alterations, decorations, raffle donations and ticket sales. Two student volunteers, Amelia Cooper and Molly Kid, worked closely with Deane as part of their senior capstone project.

Deane plans to continue helping girls find their perfect prom dress as long as she can. After that, she added with an affectionate laugh, "My kids better keep it going."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield acknowledged Deane's commitment to the community when she presented Deane with a certificate of appreciation at the end of the fashion show. She applauded the enthusiastic volunteer for her "passion, dedication, love and strong will."

Both Bransfield and Deane acknowledged the impact of the prom as a rite of passage for students.

"It's quite an important time in a young woman's life," Bransfield said. "To be able to be dressed beautifully and to enjoy a memorable night of her own. And it's all possible because of the things Perfect Prom is able to do."

For Deane, it's all about giving girls a welcoming place where they can feel good about themselves.

"It just brings me great joy to see them come in and feel like a million bucks. It's great," she said.

The Perfect Prom shop will take over The Waverly Center, 7 Waverly Ave., on April 1 and 2 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., by appointment only. Those interested in scheduling a visit should email Deane at jillydee64@yahoo.com. She said spots are filling up fast.



Ron Wenzel, left, and his sister-in-law Sue pour sap into buckets in preparation for transport back to Wenzel's Sugar House – where boiling of the sap would soon begin.

Maple Fest Returns cont. from Front Page

on snow, while other treats to eat include an artisan cheese tasting, smoked kielbasa, personal pizzas to order, fries with gravy and cheese, hot dogs, hamburgers, fried dough and more.

As far as activities, the two-day event will feature an art and crafts fair in the Douglas Library, and an outdoor business expo.

There's plenty for kids to enjoy too with a scavenger hunt, face painting, children's storytelling and a kid's crafting booth. There will also be a contest for the funniest cat and dog, and visitors are encouraged to bring a photo to enter.

Unlike in past years, when the event took place up and down Main Street, the main Maple Festival events will now occur in one location: the town green and the Douglas Library parking lot.

"There are not any activities at RHAM High School," Nadeau explained. "But that is still the official parking for the event because there's really none downtown, so we recommend everyone park at RHAM and get shuttled to the event."

She added as people exit the shuttle, they will then come across an information booth where there will be a schedule of events, maps to the sugar houses and maple syrup for sale.

Nadeau added although the "main festival" is in the above area, many other businesses in town are also holding activities and specials to coincide with the event.

FennAgain's Restaurant, for instance, will have a sampling of maple liquor and bourbon and a maple-themed menu. Country Carpenters will hold their annual colonial life demonstrations, showcasing activities such as blacksmithing, historic firearms and candle making. And Gilead Congregational Church will host a craft fair.

In addition, the Knights of Columbus are hosting a pancake breakfast Saturday morning,

and on Sunday a St. Patrick's Day themed tractor parade will kick off down at Ted's IGA.

AHM Youth and Family Services is also introducing the first-ever Nature and Adventure Day which will include a variety of indoor and outdoor activities on Saturday including a reptile and amphibian display, and a display to learn about animal bones and furs. Children will be able to make their own plaster cast animal prints, and visit with "Cookie" the barred owl. There will also be guided trail hikes with topics such as native flora and animal signs and footprints discussed on the walks.

Speaking to next weekend's event, Nadeau shared, "Our hope is that it doesn't snow 10 feet. A little is okay, but not a lot of snow, no rain – that's the biggest thing."

She added that at the end of last year's event, comments were gathered from some attendees and taken into account this year, "So we think since we're taking all those comments into consideration it will be better for all the guests that are coming; we have a lot more vendors this year so I think it will be great."

She also thanked the area businesses who stepped up to be sponsors "to help meet our budgetary goals to have the festival – without their support it wouldn't be happening."

Weather was also on the mind of Town Manager Andrew Tierney this week, who said "I'm praying for good weather."

"I'm looking forward to it," Tierney said. "Hopefully we get a good turnout and get it back up to what it used to be. I know it's a little different with the Windham Chamber of Commerce and Windham Arts but they're doing a good job at keeping it alive so we've got to support them."

The 27th Annual Hebron Maple Festival takes place next Saturday and Sunday, March 18-19. For more information go to hebronmaplefest.com.

\$33.65 Million Budget Presented in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland's \$33.65 million proposed budget, which represents a 3.59 percent increase over the current year's budget, takes into account some of Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's threatened changes to municipal aid – but not all of them.

The proposal was presented Tuesday at a special budget hearing by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly.

The general government budget proposal comes in at \$12,977,579 million. That's 2.82 percent – or \$356,497 – over the current budget. The Board of Education proposed budget is \$20,677,019 million, an increase of 4.07 percent, or \$810,179.

If the budget is approved, the mill rate of 32.51 would rise by 0.48 mills to a total mill rate of 32.99 mills. A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the proposed mill rate, taxes paid on a home assessed at \$200,000 for the 2017-18 fiscal year would be \$6,598. That's an increase of \$96 over the current year.

Notably absent from the town's calculations is a \$966,127 payment for public school teachers' pensions that Malloy now wants the town to pick up. While the state currently funds the entirety of the Connecticut Teachers' Retirement System, Malloy's recommendation would make each municipality responsible for about one-third of the cost.

But Malloy's proposed budget has to go through the state General Assembly, where it is likely to change.

Bransfield said she thinks that while the state may indeed end up passing along some of the cost for teachers' pensions, the local contribution is likely to get whittled down through the legislative process.

Bransfield said it is "premature" to include Malloy's almost \$1 million request – which she described as an "exorbitant, colossal" increase – when the state is still months away from finalizing its own budget.

She said the Board of Selectmen will continue to assess the state budget situation as the board's deadline for adopting a spending plan approaches.

On Wednesday, state lawmakers pulled a bill that would have authorized cities and towns to wait until as late as June 30th to begin their budget adoption process while lawmakers in Hartford hammer out a state spending plan.

According to *CT News Junkie*, the process in Connecticut is for the governor to propose his two-year budget on the first Wednesday in February; the legislature's Appropriations Committee and Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee then have until the end of April to propose theirs.

That's when the governor's office and lawmakers start to negotiate – which can last until the end of the legislative session on June 7, or beyond.

In Portland, town charter guides a process that has the selectmen adopting a local budget on April 12, with a referendum scheduled for May 8.

Critics of the legislature's slow slog through the state budget process say that this year especially – in the midst of the potentially devastating local impact of Malloy's municipal aid package – cities and towns could end up overtaxing or undertaxing residents because they have no idea how much revenue they'll be getting from the state.

Bransfield said she will be working with selectmen to refine the budget as they await more solid information on how Malloy's teachers' pension plan will play out.

She credited legislative updates from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and Council of Small Towns with helping the board to "better gauge how we should proceed."

Bransfield began a one-year term as CCM president in January.

While Portland fares better than most *Riverast* towns when it comes to the way education funding is allotted in Malloy's proposal, Bransfield and O'Reilly said they had to make some accounting changes related to the governor's new plan for administering special education funds.

When the Board of Education formulated its budget proposal back in January, it assumed about \$290,000 in grant funding for children whose special education needs exceed 4.5 times the average per-pupil spending. It's known as the Excess Cost grant.

But Malloy's new plan eliminates the Excess Cost grant. Instead, Malloy created a new spe-

cial education funding mechanism, separated it from the larger Education Cost Sharing grant, and directed it to the town's general fund.

Under Malloy's plan, the state won't be sending \$290,000 to cover excess costs – but it will be giving Portland \$1.14 million in a new special education fund for all physically and developmentally disabled students.

The grant is going to the town, not the schools, so the town is responsible for allocating the money back to the school – which must be accounted for in the budget.

Finance Director Tom Robinson explained that in order to get expenses to match revenue, he needed to add \$290,000 to the proposed education budget.

That means the proposed budget approved by the Board of Education in January with a 2.97 percent increase now amounts to a 4.08 percent increase.

O'Reilly said education costs in the coming year are driven by increased costs related to special education, the lease program for office copiers, and the recently negotiated bus contract. It also includes repairs to aging buildings.

On the general government side, a capital lease program will cost about \$262,000 in bank payments during the upcoming fiscal year. At a total cost of \$1.61 million over six years, items being financed include vehicles for the fire, police, and public works departments as well as a fingerprint machine, paver, wood chipper, and a large printer/scanner.

East Hampton Officials Debate What to Include in Town Hub

by Elizabeth Regan

The building committee in charge of a project to build a town hall and police department in the burgeoning Edgewater Hill development on Route 66 is looking for clarity on exactly which offices will be located in the municipal complex.

The committee hit the ground running in February and will meet weekly in order to bring a project to voters at referendum in September.

The Town Council voted last week to direct the building committee to consider the Chatham Health District and regional probate court – but not the East Hampton Board of Education – for inclusion in the municipal complex. But statements by officials since then indicate the matter is still open for debate.

The Town Council has long held that all current town hall offices would move to the new complex. That includes the parks and recreation and youth and family services departments currently housed in an annex on Middletown Avenue.

Adding the health district and probate court was supported by five out of the six councilors at last week's meeting. Ted Hintz Jr. voted against the motion.

The health district, currently in the Middletown Avenue annex, serves the *Riverast* towns of Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland, as well as East Haddam.

Chatham Health District needs about 2,500 square feet of space, according to an assessment conducted by Friar Associates in 2015. Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said the health district pays \$35,000 a year in rent.

The probate court resides now in Marlborough, on the edge of a district that also includes East Haddam and Portland. Judge Jennifer Berkenstock last month told councilors she would be happy to make the move to East Hampton.

"I would much prefer to have the court in a central location," Berkenstock said. "East Hampton is right in the center."

She said the court would need 1,860 square feet of space in the new building, which is the amount they have currently. Maniscalco said the court pays \$25,000 per year in rent.

Councilor James "Pete" Brown indicated the move is strategically important as the state continues to push the concept of regionalization. Some critics fear further changes could result in even larger districts that would continue to erode local control.

"I want to get probate court back in Middlesex County. It's in Hartford County right now. And I don't want anyone up in the state thinking... 'Let's leave them in Hartford County and we'll consolidate over there,'" Brown said.

Other councilors, like Mark Philhower, looked at the prospect of expanded regionalization another way: It could result in a new mixture of towns in which East Hampton might not be the most central and practical location. The same concept holds true for the health district.

Officials said there is no clear direction from the state at this point about if and when further consolidation might occur.

"[The state] condensed them down, and they might condense them down once again," Philhower said. "So we might build this building and have no tenants, and spend an additional minimum of \$3 million."

Philhower, a heating and cooling contractor, used a cost of \$350 to \$500 per square foot to estimate it would cost between \$3 and \$4.4 million to include the health district, probate court and Board of Education in the complex.

The project is estimated to cost from \$12-\$18 million without the additional departments.

Councilors appeared to agree, the Board of Education is an unnecessary addition to the new complex.

Despite Town Manager Michael Maniscalco's emphasis that the current Board of Education building on 94 Main St. is not handicapped-accessible, councilors indicated it's good enough for now.

The 1866 building originally served as a school and has also served as the town hall.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith has said he would prefer to stay in the current building.

Another argument against bringing the Board of Education into the complex is that, unlike the health district and probate court, it would not generate revenue through rent.

Council member Josh Piteo said the general government and education spaces should remain separate.

"If the Board of Education still wants its current location even though it's not (ADA) compliant, I think they should stay there and on their dime and, in four or five years or whatever, they can decide what they want to do with that building," Piteo said.

But during the meeting's public comment period, after councilors had cast their votes to add the health district and probate court to the roster of tenants, some residents spoke in opposition to the decision.

Mary Ann Dostaler said the council should be focused solely on necessities.

"When you are looking at including programs in the new building that are not required to be provided by the town of East Hampton – probate court and Chatham Health – those are wants, not needs," she said. "And it really defies logic as to what could justify the cost increase that would be borne by residents to pay for those."

Former council chairwoman Barbara Moore, on the other hand, criticized the council for not including a new space for the Board of Education.

"There's a lot of shortcomings [in the current structure], including the phone system, the air conditioning, the heating, numerous things. I'm not sure it's a good idea to keep that building," she said.

Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said after the meeting that the council's decision could change.

"Good points were brought up and several council members have expressed a desire to revisit that," she said. "It's not over yet."

Building Committee Chairman Glenn Gollenberg, the architect for the high school renovation project who has 40 years of experience, said it's imperative to know what's going into the building.

The committee hopes to interview several architecture firms later this month. Proposals are due March 21.

At least 13 firms have expressed interest in the project, according to Maniscalco.

Gollenberg said those firms need to have a full understanding of space needs in order to submit a proposal, while the committee needs the information to conduct thoughtful interviews.

"We can ask 'Have you designed police stations?' [or] 'Have you designed boards of ed.?' " Gollenberg said. "We can talk to them about what they see as the issues of having them both on the same site. Those are the kind of questions that are brought to the forefront when you know what's going in the building. We're not just saying 'design us a building,' we're saying 'here's what's going to go in it, what are the issues you would see?'"

At Wednesday night's building committee meeting, Maniscalco told members that roughly 20 percent of the cost of building a new space for the Board of Education could be reimbursed by the state if strict guidelines are followed.

He said an application would have to be submitted by June, based on his discussions with the state Department of Administrative Services. The approval process would take about a year, with construction to begin after that.

The delay would have an impact on the project's timeline. If the project is approved at referendum this September, project managers Steve and Lisa Motto have said the project – without state funding – would be complete within 24 to 30 months.

Other guidelines specify the Board of Education would have to be completely separate from any town offices and no spaces may be shared, according to Maniscalco.

"I don't know if this really works for us," Maniscalco said.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said this week that it could be beneficial from a communication standpoint to share space with the town hall and police department.

"However, the current building we are in meets our needs and I would hate to create additional expense to the town just for convenience at this point," he said.

He also pointed to the building's history as part of the heart of East Hampton.

"I'd hate to abandon the village center," he said.

Hebron Town Manager Presents 6.74 Percent Budget Increase

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Town Manager Andrew Tierney presented his initial budget proposal last week, and it clocks in at \$38.62 million, for a 6.74 percent increase over the current year's budget.

The spending package also calls for a whopping 13.78 percent tax increase.

But Tierney cautioned against people getting too anxious yet; he mentioned those numbers are likely to change.

"People are already starting to get nervous," he shared Wednesday. "It's very important that people understand that the senate and the legislature had no finalized budget at the state [when the Hebron budget was prepared]. Per charter we had to present a budget with the numbers given to us, but that is not going to end up being the final numbers – I'm sure those numbers are going to change."

The \$38,615,970 spending package is a \$2,438,021 increase over the current year and includes \$9,333,802 for the general government, \$11,743,132 for the Hebron Board of Education, and \$16,176,907 for the town's portion of the RHAM Board of Education Budget — an increase of \$907,136 or 5.94 percent.

If the budget were to pass as presented, it would equate to a mill rate for personal property and real estate of 40.55 up from 35.64. For a homeowner with a home assessed at \$250,000, this would equal \$10,137.50 in taxes, an increase of \$1,227.50.

The Hebron schools' budget was approved in January and equates to a .13 percent or a \$15,822 decrease from current year spending. The RHAM budget, meanwhile, was presented last week and amid uncertainty from the state as to how much aid is going to be cut from the school district — or what new costs it might be responsible for — the presented budget didn't include any state reimbursement, resulting in a proposal with a 6.21 percent increase.

In January, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy released a proposed two-year, \$41.51 billion state bud-

get that changes the way special education funds are disbursed and includes a reformulation of the way the state administers Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant funds; the new formula results in more ECS funds going to cities and less to smaller towns. The budget also asks municipalities to pay for one-third of the Connecticut State Teachers' Retirement System.

Hebron's budget proposal includes a contribution to teacher retirement in the amount of \$1,362,120, along with a \$1,282,463 decrease in ECS and special education funding.

Also significantly impacting the budget proposal is a decrease in the grand list due to the October 2016 revaluation. As a result of that process, which is used to value all of the property in town on an equalized basis, the Grand List decreased \$30,937,720 or 4.1 percent; that translates to an increase of 1.49 mills — before the rest of the budget is even taken into account.

Due to another change from the state which increases that town's share of the Resident State Trooper program, the budget also includes a \$100,537 decrease through the elimination of one of the town's two troopers.

Tierney stated in the budget summary he presented to the Board of Selectmen last week, "This was a difficult decision but the State of Connecticut has once again increased the town's share which has made it impossible for the town to continue funding two positions."

A reduction in a half-time clerical union position was also recommended for a decrease of \$29,184.

"This reduction in staffing will not directly affect any employees, as there is currently a vacancy in the Finance Department and it is anticipated the position will be filled from within," Tierney explained. "There will be cross-training involved in this staffing position."

Other reductions include \$20,166 from reducing the hours of the fire marshal, and a \$10,000 reduction as a result of removing Open

Space Maintenance funding from the town's operating budget and instead funding it through revenue received from a cell tower that's located on town property. (The tower generates \$35-40,000 per year and the rest of the revenue goes to the Parks and Recreation Department.)

Several continued initiatives are also included in the budget proposal, which Tierney said "in-flate the budget expenditure level but are completely offset by revenues."

These include: stipends for EMS responders, sharing the building inspector with Marlborough, and a turf management agreement with RHAM. Other initiatives include the continuation of a comprehensive zoning regulations review, and year three of funding for a computer replacement plan.

Meanwhile, new initiatives in the recommended budget include a part-time mechanic per a request from the Fire Department, and \$243,056 for the first year of the debt amount due for the Connecticut Natural Gas expansion project that will bring an 8-mile gas line extension through the center of town.

Tierney said the budget also includes "substantial increases" to capital projects "without a tax impact." The Capital Improvement Program Committee requests for 2017-18 amount to \$1.2 million and include projects such as road resurfacing and road improvements for \$268,775; the replacement of 42 self-contained breathing apparatus units for the fire department for \$234,000; replacement of a roadside mower for \$105,000; and replacement of the Douglas Library's roof and HVAC system for \$98,500 and \$90,000, respectively.

Proposed funding for the CIP projects includes \$404,133 in an anticipated contribution from the fund balance, \$59,216 in balance from previous appropriations, and a \$770,911 general fund contribution — the same amount as the current year.

In order to minimize the tax increase while addressing capital improvements, Tierney shared two supplemental appropriations are under consideration: the aforementioned \$404,133 contribution, and a \$203,429 contribution to offset some of the debt service increase from the CNG project. Those appropriations head to town meeting next Thursday, March 16.

Tierney is also recommending a \$100,000 contribution to Open Space, a \$50,000 contribution for future revaluations, \$44,260 for capital expenditures costing \$5-\$25,000, \$3,050 for capital non-recurring items, and a \$10,000 contribution to debt management which will "help to level off the tax impact in future years when new debt hits the budget."

And while the budget increase and tax increase may seem large now, Tierney again emphasized he expects the numbers to change. He also shared that at a Conference of Connecticut Municipalities meeting he attended Wednesday morning, he learned state Sen. Cathy Osten would be presenting a bill that would allow towns to supercede their charters when it comes to the budget requirements contained therein, in order to provide more time to acquire more accurate numbers from the state.

"It was discussed at CCM that this is a really unique year and the legislation could maybe buy some time. You don't want to overtax the town so if we set the mill rate then the state budget comes in a lot cheaper, now you're overtaxing the people of Hebron or you have to do a supplemental tax bill."

He concluded, "We want to do what's practical but by sending the budget message that we did, people are nervous they're going to get taxed by that amount."

Budget discussion will continue at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting Thursday, March 16.

Hebron Town Manager Review Results in Raise

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The results of Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney's annual review were shared recently, and the outcome was once again positive.

Tierney, who is now in his fourth year as town manager, was "commended" by the selectmen for a job well done in a March 2 press release.

"Specifically, Mr. Tierney met or exceeded the categories on the rating instruments," the release states. "The board also recognizes that Mr. Tierney works hard for the town and puts in the hours needed to manage Hebron."

As a result of his review and "in recognition of his positive impact on Hebron," Tierney was given a 2 percent raise for the 2017-18 fiscal year — bringing his annual salary to \$123,844 — and a one-time bonus of \$2,500.

Board of Selectman Chairman Dan Larson elaborated on Tierney's work this week, sharing "as far as we're [the selectmen] concerned he's done an exemplary job. He's had a lot of things on his plate: the natural gas project, the issues that arose with Mr. [Thad] King leaving Chatham Health and Andy literally took Chatham Health and got it straightened out — he worked diligently on that."

The regional health district underwent a reorganization last year following the resignation of embattled director Thad King. Follow-

ing King's departure, Tierney took over as chairman of the nine-member health board that governs the district.

Along with the above Larson said, "We have the self-funded insurance consortium he's been working on too, so it's been an extremely busy year with all these other things along with the day-to-day operations."

Larson concluded the selectmen were "very happy with what he has done and we don't see any changes — he's just a really enthusiastic, driven individual who really seems to have Hebron's best interest at heart."

Speaking to the results of his review this week, Tierney shared, "It was a favorable review and I appreciate that. This is my fourth year as town manager not counting my time as interim [town manager] and we had a lot of big projects move forward."

He added, "I couldn't do it without the dedication from the staff in my office and the department heads in Hebron and all the employees — that makes it easier to get good reviews year after year."

In addition, Tierney shared, "I work well with the Board of Selectmen and think I do with the Board of Finance as well, and hopefully we can continue that for the benefit of the taxpayers."

Pair Flee Police in Canoe in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

Two men allegedly abandoned a stolen vehicle and proceeded to evade police after stealing a canoe, which they paddled across Marlborough's Lake Teramuggus in last Wednesday, according to state police.



Afrika

Police said Shaameek Obajakuta Afrika, 45, of 17 Denison St., Hartford, was one of two suspects to flee the scene on foot during a stolen motor vehicle stop on Jones Hollow Road on March 1.

The pair reportedly abandoned the vehicle at approximately 11:24 p.m., which police said

provoked an extensive search of the suspects.

According to police, a K-9 unit led officers to the lake, where they spotted Afrika and the second suspect paddling a stolen canoe in an attempt to escape.

Police said once ashore, Afrika was arrested and taken into custody; however, the second suspect managed to run from the scene.

Afrika was subsequently charged with interfering with police, third-degree criminal trespass, conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny, fourth-degree larceny, possession of drug paraphernalia and violation of safe boating regulations. His bail was set at \$15,000 and he was scheduled to appear in Manchester Superior Court on March 2.

Police are still searching for the second suspect. Anyone with information is asked to call state police Troop K in Colchester at 860-465-5400.

Colchester Town Officials Call for Greater Transparency

by Julianna Roche

In the last two weeks, a call for greater transparency has risen to the forefront of discussions among town officials regarding the 2017-18 fiscal year budget.

Typically, when information is difficult to acquire from federal or municipal bodies, citizens can submit a Freedom of Information request – a system created to give citizens access to public information, a right that is protected under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

A tense exchange between Board of Finance member Andreas Bisbikos and First Selectman Art Shilosky during a public hearing on Feb. 28, however, made it clear that private citizens are not the only ones who often have difficulty obtaining public information.

During his budget presentation at the public hearing, Shilosky explained that for the 2017-18 fiscal year, \$15,100 would be set aside to purchase OpenGov's Smart Government Platform – an online, integrated program which helps state and municipal governments organize, plan and communicate important information to the public, including town finances and budget-related data.

Both the boards of finance and selectmen had spent the last several months discussing the software and its benefits – including that it would provide greater transparency by giving citizens easy access to the town's financial data and reports, which are presented in an interactive and engaging way with visualizations and graphs.

According to its website, in addition to providing citizens with access, OpenGov claims it helps town officials "save hundreds of hours" processing information requests, while still

complying with transparency mandates.

During the public hearing, Bisbikos explained issues with requesting information himself. He explained that on both on Nov. 29 and Dec. 5, he had asked Financial Director Maggie Cosgrove and Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov for a list of each grant that both the town and the education board had received in the 2016-17 fiscal year for his finance board records, as well as its dollar amount and purpose.

"As an elected official, I have to make very important decisions regarding our budget and these grants are not just \$2,000. There are \$1 million associated with some of these grants," Bisbikos said.

After hearing no response from Cosgrove and Tarlov, Bisbikos explained he submitted a FOI request to Shilosky's executive assistant Tricia Dean, who acknowledged the request and then directed him to Martha Ingves, secretary to Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu and the FOIA coordinator for the education board and Colchester Public Schools' related matters.

On Feb. 1 – nearly two months after his initial inquiry – Bisbikos met with Tarlov and Shilosky. He said Shilosky sincerely apologized and provided him with all the grant information related to the town the following day.

According to the Colchester Board of Education's FOI request log, Bisbikos also submitted an official request on Jan. 26 regarding education grants and following a lack of response, on Feb. 21 he filed an FOI complaint to the FOI Commission.

During the Feb. 28 public hearing, Bisbikos

expressed frustration and questioned why he had still not received any information from the superintendent's office.

"Are you hiding something?" he asked Board of Education members present. "Are you padding the budget? How would I know if you are or that you're not?"

Shilosky then interjected and said "If you want to blame somebody, blame me."

He further explained that Cosgrove "was too busy at the time preparing the budget for the Board of Education, the budget for the town... I said [to Cosgrove that] you do not have the time to answer [Bisbikos'] questions."

Bisbikos countered the first selectman then, asking "so what you're telling me is that one person controls all the grant information?" which drew gasps from residents in attendance.

Shilosky, however, responded that was not the case, which led Tarlov to end the conversation and ask the board to move on.

During a budget workshop the following night, Tarlov then issued a statement of apology for not better controlling "the situation," which he argued was "a conversation that got out of hand at the end."

"As chairman I should have stopped [Bisbikos and Shilosky] much earlier," he said. "I'm accountable to control that situation, whether it's citizens or board members."

The chairman noted that he agreed with Bisbikos, however, and said he shared in "his frustration in trying to get information in a timely fashion," adding he too considers himself the "I want it now" type of guy.

"However, in that frustration, we sometimes

overstep our sanity, our calmness, and we say things that we probably shouldn't be saying," he furthered, adding he thought comments made by Bisbikos were "aggressive."

This week however, Bisbikos told the *RiverEast* that when he arrived at the March 2 budget workshop, he and each Board of Finance member had a printed out copy of grant money related to the education board waiting for them.

He furthered that he felt that he "had to show that [he] was angry or nothing would have happened."

"If I didn't get a little angry and shake the tree, none of the fruit would have [fallen]," Bisbikos continued. "[And] if I don't publicly apply that pressure, it's going to be the same thing year after year."

Bisbikos noted that he hoped "this doesn't happen again," and that he believed the OpenGov software Shilosky included as part of the town's 2017-18 fiscal year budget would help prevent transparency issues moving forward.

"There's transparency software for reasons just like this," he said.

Finance board member Andrea Migliaccio shared similar sentiments this week, adding that it "is not just Andreas" who shares in the "frustration with obtaining information," but other board members as well.

"I think the [OpenGov] software is one idea our town could employ to work on transparency," she said, adding the hope is to have it "up and running for next year's budget."

She furthered, "We see the value in it. We just hope it's employed."

Mathieu Announces Retirement as Colchester Superintendent

by Julianna Roche

The Board of Education announced this week that Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu will retire later this year.

Mathieu, whose retirement takes effect June 30, has served as Colchester's superintendent since August 2012, an educator for 33 years, and an administrator in the district for 25 years – including 13 years as Bacon Academy's principal.

"It's been a great career and the timing [for retirement] is great," he said, adding that he leaves behind "a wonderful administration team."

"We are incredibly grateful for Jeff," Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein said, adding that Mathieu has left the board in "a spot of strength" with a "very talented and capable" administration team he feels "very confident in."

Mathieu, who completed his superintendent of schools certification (the 093) in 2006, described the superintendent position as "a dream come true" when he was first hired in 2012.

"Colchester is just a wonderful, wonderful

place to work [and] the staff is exceptional," he said this week, also noting in his letter to the board that his time in Colchester "has been truly rewarding and during which [he has] made lifetime friendships."

Mathieu furthered he felt "genuinely blessed" with the "thousands of students who have enriched [his] life" and that he would "retire a better person because of his experiences here in Colchester."

Though Mathieu said Wednesday there were many accomplishments he was proud of, his greatest achievement was being a part of "assembling a staff, having a vision and working with everyone to move the district forward."

He explained that during his first year as assistant principal in 1992, "the middle Bacon Academy" [soon to be the new middle school], there were only 420 students in the high school. The very next year, after the school moved into the new Bacon Academy on 611 Norwich Ave., there were 460 students.

"Then, at the height of when I was principal, there were 1,032 students," Mathieu said.

Mathieu said in his letter he is also "immensely excited" to see the continual evolution of Innovation Nation, the district-wide theme which was introduced this year and focuses on integrating educational technology into classrooms and offering a more individualized style of learning.

"All the staff in Colchester have always put the students first and have never lost sight of that importance," he continued, urging the board to never "lose sight of this vision and what is best for the students."

According to Goldstein, while the board is "not going to rush" the hiring process, he said it does know at least that "what's important for us is the path of Innovation Nation... that's the path we want to stay on and we're going to look for a person who will lead us down that path and work with us."

As for Mathieu, he said he just hopes he "leave[s] Colchester a better place," and added he is looking forward to playing golf and spending time with his family this summer – which will be his "first summer off since high school."



Mathieu

Police Pursue Robbery Suspect Across Three Towns

by Julianna Roche

State troopers chased a fleeing suspect in a stolen motor vehicle for 26 miles across three town lines before he was apprehended on Friday, March 3.

According to police, at approximately 10:01 a.m., the suspect – Peter Smith, 45, of 24 Wolcott Hill Rd., Wethersfield – was reported to be driving a stolen motor vehicle following an alleged robbery in Norwich.

Police said Smith refused to stop the vehicle and continued to evade state troopers, traveling on the limited access highway and state roads through Colchester, Marlborough and Hebron, before returning through Colchester again.

Stop sticks were subsequently deployed at several locations in attempts to stop the ve-



Smith

hicle, according to police, which deflated one of the stolen vehicle's tires; however, Smith continued to drive on the vehicle's rim heading southbound on Route 354.

Police said the suspect was eventually boxed in by troopers before he intentionally rammed his vehicle into two state police cruisers and was subsequently stopped on Witch Meadow Road near the Salem town line.

According to police, Smith was taken into custody without further incident and held on a \$100,000 bond. He was scheduled to appear at Norwich Superior Court on March 6.

Smith was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license/registration, reckless driving, increasing speed in attempt to escape/elude an officer, first-degree criminal mischief, first-degree larceny, interfering with an officer: non-assaultive, assaulting public safety/emergency/medical personnel, drinking while operating a motor vehicle and first-degree reckless endangerment.

Police said all troopers and other police sustained no injuries.

Colchester Man Charged with Sexually Assaulting Minor

by Julianna Roche

A Colchester man is charged with repeatedly sexually assaulting a minor in Plainfield and Killingly – abuse which began when the victim was just 6 years old.

According to a news release issued by police, the Plainfield Police Department, with the assistance of the Colchester Police Department, arrested Randall Lee Craig, 39, of David Drive on March 1 at approximately 11:50 a.m.



Craig

Police said Craig, who formerly resided in Plainfield, was the subject of a lengthy investigation conducted by the Plainfield Police Department. Officers said the investigation led to the discovery that Craig had sexually assaulted the juvenile for numerous years in both the towns of Plainfield and Killingly.

As a result of the investigation, an arrest warrant application was submitted and subsequently granted on Feb. 28.

Craig is charged with two counts of first-degree sexual assault and two counts of risk of injury to a minor. Police said he was also charged with second-degree failure to appear based on an additional active arrest warrant.

Craig was held on a \$500,000 bond, which he was unable to secure, and was scheduled to appear in court on March 2.

Traversa Presents \$4.94M Marlborough Operations Budget

by Julianna Roche

With uncertainties surrounding how state cuts could affect Marlborough in the upcoming year, First Selectwoman Amy Traversa opted to present only a town operations budget Wednesday night to the Board of Finance – rather than a complete town budget which also factors in both the local Board of Education and the town’s portion of the RHAM schools’ budgets.

The proposed town operations budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year, she said, totals \$4.94 million, a 3.69 percent increase from last year, with \$2,157,725 in debt service; and a \$893,675 capital – a budget Traversa described as having “no fluff.”

Following the presentation however, Board of Finance Vice Chairman Cliff Denniss expressed confusion about what the actual percent increase was to the town operations budget – as it was not originally included in the first selectwoman’s presentation.

“From this budget, this year, I think I’m missing a very important part,” he said, asking “what is the actual increase?”

Assistant Treasurer Hayley Wagner said she believed it to be 3.69 percent figure Traversa verified Thursday.

Traversa told finance board members the presentation included “strictly the town operations budget,” and that there “was no way” to factor in the local Board of Education or RHAM

school board budget yet – both of which have already been presented by their respective superintendents – because of the uncertainty with how cuts to state funding will affect the town.

However, on Thursday, Traversa said if she were to take into account the RHAM and local school board budgets, along with Gov. Dannel Malloy’s proposed sweeping changes to the town’s funding from the state, the overall Marlborough budget would see a 7.77 percent increase over current year spending to total \$25.58 million. She emphasized, though, that’s a “very preliminary number.”

She added at Wednesday’s meeting, however, that she considered the proposed town operations budget to be “frugal” and that items included in it were “what is needed to run this town.”

Included in the budget were increased bridge and culvert maintenance, equipment repairs and building maintenance, and an added part-time social services assistant, who Traversa explained, was the only staff change they were looking at.

“I don’t think we can put this off any longer,” she said, adding the assistant would work at the senior center, but would be available to more than just seniors. “We have a rising population [with needs]” and “an increasing population of seniors [who] have greater needs.”

According to Traversa’s proposal, the town will also be responsible for 100 percent of the cost for the resident state trooper, rather than 85 percent. She furthered there were 2.25 full time equivalent (FTE) constables budgeted for 2017-18; however, right now there is one vacant full time constable position, which has been difficult to fill.

“Pickings are slim,” she said. “It’s very, very difficult to attract constables or cops of any kind right now... there’s not enough people to fill those slots.”

Following Traversa’s presentation, Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom said he believed the town should “take a serious look at the vacant constable position and the public works [highway fleet and foreman] position,” which was vacated by Craig Johnson just several months after he was hired.

“I would ask that [filling] those be put on hold right now [and] we wait to see if they even need to be filled,” Hjulstrom said.

Traversa said that was a possibility, but that it was “part of a larger discussion” and “not the initial recommendation today.”

Additionally, the 2017-18 fiscal year budget includes \$33,500 set aside each year for the next four years to help lease and replace a new \$150,000 Volvo loader for the Public Works Department. The current loader, Traversa said,

is nearly 20 years old and in desperate need of replacement.

“We’re [also] looking at another Volvo because all of our [loader] attachments are Volvo,” she said, adding the loader is “the one piece of equipment that gets the most use” during all “four seasons” in town.

As the budget presentation came to a close, the first selectwoman expressed the spending package represented “the best we could do with what our needs are” and that “we and our constituents need to accept everything has changed” due to Malloy’s proposed sweeping changes to state funding.

“Unless you’re moving to Florida, you’re not getting out of [Malloy’s proposed changes] right now,” she added.

“We’re all just plain scared to death,” Board of Selectmen member Dick Shea told the *Rivereast* Thursday morning, adding he was “probably more pessimistic than most.”

“My feeling is that we’re kind of in a state of shock and denial and no one really believes that the governor is going to make those cuts,” he said. “But we also realize we may have no choice [but to make cuts] because the state has just kept going to the well and now there’s nothing left.”

Shea added, “We’re going to have to hold our breath and wait and see.”

State Funding Will Expand Andover Preschool Opportunities

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Good news was shared at Wednesday’s Board of Education meeting, as members learned about a grant the school was awarded in January that will expand preschool opportunities.

Andover was one of nine communities awarded nearly \$1.6 million in state funding through the Office of Early Childhood.

According to a Feb. 13 release from Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, the funding will create 146 new preschool slots between the nine towns and is designed to expand pre-kindergarten access in public schools, particularly among low-income children.

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

Known as the Smart Start grant, the award will provide Andover with \$75,000 in Capital Improvement Funding and \$65,000 annually in Operations Funding for the next seven years, for a \$530,000 total.

Assistant Principal and Director of Special Education Suzanne Guglietta explained at the meeting the funds for capital improvements would be used for projects such as renovations to the preschool bathroom and classroom, out-

door construction of items such as a covered pavilion and an outdoor learning center to evoke scientific inquiry, expanded curriculum and supplies, and new technology such as digital cameras and iPads, an interactive robot and a “Code-a-pillar.”

Some of these items were explained during a presentation on the grant by Guglietta. For example, the Code-a-pillar is a toy made up of sections that connect together and can be arranged in different ways to make the Code-a-pillar perform various tasks such as moving forward, to the right or left, or in a full circle. In essence, the toy provides an elementary example of coding.

“Imagine doing coding in preschool,” Guglietta stated.

The annual operations funding, meanwhile, would be used for instructional and non-instructional salaries for the expanded program, as well as funds for scientific-inquiry-based field trips, parent engagement activities, and technology and scientific-inquiry based professional development.

Guglietta called applying for the grant “truly a collaborative effort” and said she’d continue working with the teachers to figure out what the ordering might look like to put the funds to use once they’re received. She added the capital improvement funds were expected sometime in the spring while the operations funding

wouldn’t come out until July.

* * *

Also Wednesday, schools superintendent Sally Doyen shared an opportunity for the school to receive assistance with small to medium facility projects from the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG).

“We have been spending a lot of time identifying and organizing facilities projects and needs we’re going to have. I completed a five-year capital plan as part of the budget and from that I could tell very easily that there’s substantial work we need to be focusing on,” Doyen explained. “Looking at that list one of the things that was obvious to me is all the time it takes to do these, and all of these projects are very time consuming. So the question was, ‘how do we begin to get a handle on these?’”

Doyen said she contacted CRCOG and learned the council has a process through which they could assist with some of the projects. That process, she shared, includes two components: First is a procurement aspect where the group works with the school to determine what a particular project is going to entail.

“So the first step is to completely define the project,” Doyen said.

After that, the projects are then competitively bid through CRCOG.

“So they oversee the hiring and specifica-

tions,” she continued. “When I was [schools superintendent] in Portland we used this and I know since then they’ve done a tremendous amount of work in many school districts in the state; they do a lot of bathroom renovations, replacing ceiling tiles, window and door replacement, carpeting” and other such projects.

Doyen said working with CRCOG would be helpful in starting some of the projects needed to get the expanded preschool program ready for the 2017-18 school year.

“We are going to be under a time crunch with getting this work done in order to complete it by the time school starts, which is our intent and the intent of the [Smart Start] grant,” she stated. “The operations piece is different but the capital component is supposed to be completed by the time school starts in August.”

Doyen added there is no cost to work with CRCOG for facility project assistance.

“I would like us to move ahead. This is something we need to do. We know we have the grant funds for Andover and they’ll help us tremendously,” she concluded.

The board voted unanimously to allow Doyen to proceed with the process.

* * *

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19, at 7 p.m., in the Andover Elementary School library.

Obituaries

Hebron

Benjamin C. Staba

Benjamin C. Staba, 97, of Hebron, passed away peacefully at his winter home in Tavares, Fla., Sunday, Feb. 26. He was born to John and Agnes Staba in Hebron on Dec. 13, 1919, in the same home that he lived in his entire life.

Ben attended a one-room school, taught by his sister Henrietta. He graduated in 1936 from Bacon Academy in Colchester and joined the Navy in May 1942, in Boston, Mass. He was an Aviation Metalsmith First Class and stationed on the Princeton, then the USS Wasp CV-18. After being honorably discharged in 1945, he attended the University of Connecticut under the GI Bill. Ben then worked for United Aircraft for 33 years as a chemical metallurgist. Ben loved his job.

In his younger days, Ben enjoyed the outdoors along with a large garden, which he shared with family and friends. He also enjoyed beekeeping, which he did for over 70 years. He enjoyed riding his Harley and spending time with his family, especially with his grandson, Bruce. He also enjoyed worked part-time at Hilltop Marine alongside his son-in-law, John, and daughter, Barbara. Ben volunteered at the Hebron Harvest Fair for many years. He was a founding member of the Hebron Historical Society (HHS). Ben, with his wife Barbara, and sister, Henrietta, helped restore the Hebron Old Town Hall and Burrows Hill School.

Ben leaves behind a daughter, Barbara (John); son, Andrew; grandson, Bruce (Meg); and great-grandson, Joseph.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 67 years, Barbara; his siblings, Julia, Jennie, Henrietta, Joseph, and Edward.

A memorial service will be held in spring in Connecticut.

Memorial contributions can be made to: Hebron Historical Society, Hebron, or Cornerstone Hospice, Tavares, Fla. Services entrusted to Baldwin Brothers Cremation Society, Tavares, Fla.



East Hampton

Sandra Honig-Haftel

Sandra "Sandy" (Schindlinger) Honig-Haftel, 74, died peacefully Monday, March 6, surrounded by her family. A resident of Venice, Fla., she and her husband, Carl Haftel, also maintained a summer home in East Hampton.

Born in 1942 in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, N.Y., Sandy moved with her family (mother, Margaret Rosenfield Schindlinger, and father, Sidney Schindlinger) to Far Rockaway in the Bayswater area. A graduate of Far Rockaway High School, at the age of 16 she pursued her undergraduate degree at the University of Vermont. Graduating at 19, she began her career editing science textbooks at Holt Rinehart and Winston in New York City. She moved from Holt Rinehart to Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and then to Scholastic Books, where she was promotion manager of the Teen Book Club.

Sandy met and married her first husband, Donald Honig, and in 1972 welcomed her daughter, Cathy (LaBella), into their world. Sandy and the family moved to Middletown, when she accepted a position with Xerox Education Publications. Her first marriage ended amicably, and in 1983, she married Carl Haftel, a builder/developer. They welcomed their son, Michael, into the world in 1983.

An advocate of lifelong learning, Sandy's career bridged the worlds of academia and private enterprise. Her resume in higher education includes teaching positions at Elms College and adjunct assignments at the University of Hartford and the University of New Haven. Her Connecticut employers include Xerox, Fuller Brush and Hartford Steam Boiler.

Sandy received her master of business administration degree from the University of Connecticut in 1976 and her doctorate in management systems from the University of New Haven in 1991. She was recognized with a Distinguished Alumni award by UNH in 1999. She and the family moved to Wichita, Kansas, in 1991, where she was an assistant professor of entrepreneurship and management until 1996.

She authored many academic and business teaching papers, including a documentation of the "First Pizza Hut in Moscow," which was published as a textbook case study. One overseas assignment took her to Slovakia, on a U.S. Information Agency grant, to teach entrepreneurship to former communists. Until her death, she was actively involved with the two family businesses: Monarch Builders and Developers and Balm Associates.

Sandy is survived by Carl Haftel, her husband of 33 years; their son Michael, of San Francisco; daughter and son-in-law, Cathy and Michael LaBella of Cobalt; grandchildren, Hannah and Coby LaBella of Cobalt; and her brother, Jerome Schindlinger and his wife, Judy. She is also survived by Arnold Haftel, Sylvia and Seymour Haftel, Joan Myers, many nieces and nephews and her neighbors at East Hampton's Laurel Ridge community.

Funeral services will be held today, March 10, at 2:30 p.m., at Congregation Adath Israel Synagogue, 48 Broad St., Middletown, with burial immediately following in Adath Israel Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations are requested to be made to Congregation Adath Israel, the Chevra Kadisha Fund, P.O. Box 337, Middletown, CT 06457.

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



Portland

Jack Farrell

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved husband, father and Pop Pop (Pops) Jack Farrell, 81, of Middletown, formerly of Portland, Thursday, Feb. 16, at Middlesex Hospital. He was born in Middletown, the son of the late William Harold and Madeline May (Walsh) Farrell.

Before his 23-year career with the State of Connecticut as a public works assistant project manager, Jack owned and operated numerous businesses, including a construction development company, restaurants and night clubs continuing in a three generation family tradition. For several years, Jack worked part-time as a night counselor at The Reid Treatment Center, where he used his life's experience to listen, aide and support people struggling with addiction.

In addition to his wife Barbara, he is survived by his sons, Billy and John Farrell, both of Middletown; his daughters, Mary Beth Farrell of Middletown, Peggy Heil and her husband Norb of East Hampton, Katie Farrell of Malden, Mass., and Barbara "Beeper" Farrell of Wethersfield; his brother and sister-in-law, Harold and Sheila Farrell of Cromwell; two grandchildren, Jakkelyn Dickey and her husband Keith of Killingworth and Norb Heil III of Portland. Also, two great grandchildren, Judah and Reed Dickey, as well as many nieces and nephews. Pops also leaves behind many grand dogs, especially his faithful sidekick, Omar Francis Farrell.

A perpetual student of life, he was always evolving, always accepting and always in the pursuit of complete understanding of people from all walks of life. He believed "there is a reason they put erasers on pencils" and "you can't put an old head on young shoulders." Jack will always be remembered as leaving behind a legacy of love and compassion to his family and loved ones. An avid sports fan, he was an advocate of all things true, good, and beautiful.

His funeral liturgy was held Thursday, Feb. 23, at St. Mary Church, Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Friends visited with his family Wednesday, Feb. 22, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown.

Those who wish can make memorial contributions to The Jimmy Fund, c/o Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, P.O. Box 849168, Boston, MA 02284-9168.

East Hartford

Michael W. Dooley

Michael W. Dooley, 69, of East Hartford, husband of the late Joyce (Porzio) Dooley, died Tuesday, Feb. 28, at Riverside Health Care. He was born Jan. 7, 1948, in Pawtucket, R.I., son of the late Albert and Bertha (Bouthiette) Dooley.

He had lived in Manchester many years before moving to East Hartford. He was a machinist at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and retired as an industrial painter.

He is survived by his two sons, Timothy Dooley and his fiancée Melissa Meyer of Colchester, James Dooley of Marlborough; two brothers, Noel Dooley of Colchester, Joe Dooley of Marlborough; and three sisters, Sarah Whitmore of Springfield, Mass., and Judy Annati of Ellington and Pegg Brouder.

The funeral service will be held Saturday, March 11, at 11 a.m., in the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. Burial will follow in Marlboro Cemetery, Marlborough. Friends may call at the funeral home one hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the CT Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

For online condolences, visit mulryanh.com.



Portland

Ethel C. Korman

Ethel C. Korman, 87, of Portland, wife of the late Max Korman, died Tuesday, March 7, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born Oct. 13, 1929, in Norwich, daughter of the late Israel and Rose (Fishbone) Chait.

She had been a resident of Portland most of her life and resided with her son Arnold. Her famous saying to her son was "NO MORE MID-NIGHT SNACKS."

She is survived by her loving family: five sons, Frank Korman of Phoenix, Ariz., Arnold Korman of Portland, David Korman of East Hampton, Gary Korman of Glastonbury, Michael Korman of Portland; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held Thursday, March 9, in the Congregation Brothers of Joseph Cemetery, Preston.

Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, is in charge of arrangements.

East Hampton

Karen K. Connelly

Karen K. Connelly, 54, of East Hampton, died Sunday, March 5, at her home. Born June 8, 1962 in Alexandria, La., she was the daughter of Frances (Delfs) Connelly and the late Edward J. Connelly.

Karen was a 1980 graduate of East Hampton High School and had been self-employed for many years, running her own housecleaning and housesitting business. Karen had a passion for animals and had worked with horses for many years with Stanley Dancer.

Besides her mother, Karen is survived by her three brothers, Rick Connelly of Lebanon, Robert Connelly and his wife Nancy of New Hampshire, Doug Connelly and companion Bonnie Peterson of East Hampton; nieces and nephews Andrew, Laura, Jennifer and Cyrus; and many aunts, uncles and cousins with whom she was very close.

Funeral services will be held today March 10, at 11 a.m., in the Zion Lutheran Church, 183 Williams St., Portland. Burial will follow in Lake View Cemetery in East Hampton. Friends may call at the Zion Lutheran Church today from 10 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Protectors of Animals, 144 Main St., East Hartford, CT 06118.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I didn't watch President Trump's speech to Congress last Tuesday night. I was busy with other things – specifically, writing my "Observations" for the paper. From what I read afterward, though, it was an impressive speech.

The more cynical of those who saw it argued that all it showed is that he can do a good job of reading off a teleprompter (and I admit, Trump's employment of a teleprompter amused me considering how harshly he slammed Obama last year for his teleprompter usage), but by and large the media pundits seemed to agree Trump looked like an honest-to-goodness president, and not a blustering, angry overgrown 12-year-old. It was a highlight – heck, probably *the* highlight – of his young presidency.

Could this have been the turning point? Had the moment his supporters were promising us since last summer finally arrived? Had Trump become presidential?

Well, fear not, ladies and gentlemen. By the weekend, The Donald was back to being his old, nutty, decidedly un-presidential self. And once again, it was Twitter that did him in.

Oh, the goodwill last Tuesday's speech had generated for Trump had already begun to fall apart. Thursday brought new allegations that our new attorney general, Jeff Sessions, had apparently met with the Russian ambassador after all, despite suggesting otherwise to the Senate during his recent confirmation hearing. After sweating things out for a bit – and despite a vote of confidence from Trump himself – Sessions decided that maybe, just maybe, a member of Team Trump who talked with Russia last year might not be the best person to impartially investigate whether Team Trump had connections with Russia. He opted to recuse himself, though that wasn't enough to appease many Democrats, who called for his resignation altogether.

So the positive vibes Trump had generated with his speech were already pretty faded by the time Friday rolled around. Russia was back in the news. The idea of members of his administration being less-than-truthful was back in the news. So Donny did what Donny does best: distract, distract, distract.

With perhaps his most ludicrous allegation yet.

Saturday morning, Trump – from his Florida "weekend White House," where he reportedly flew in a huff on Friday – tweeted that President Obama, in the weeks before the election, had bugged Trump's phones. "Terrible! Just found out that Obama had my 'wires tapped' in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism!" the president tweeted, and added half an hour later, "How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!" (Yes, Trump misspelled "tap.")

Like many of Trump's accusations, there seemed to be not a whit of evidence to back this claim up. But that didn't stop him from calling for a full investigation.

So, let's see: paranoid-sounding, baseless allegations fired out on Twitter in the early morning hours in a poorly-spelled rage? It's Trump 101! Any thoughts that he had turned

over a new leaf with his speech to Congress were quickly dashed. As icing on the cake, about an hour after his wiretapping claims came a tweet from Trump about the "pathetic" ratings of *The Celebrity Apprentice*.

Yup, Trump was back. It was kind of comforting in its own sad, sick way.

* * *

Think of it as *Antiques Roadshow – East Hampton Edition*.

Later this month, the Chatham Historical Society will host its 22nd annual Antique Appraisal Day. The event will take place Saturday, March 25, from 9 a.m. -1 p.m., at the East Hampton Library Community Room, 105 Main St.

There will be four appraisers on site: Bill Barrows of Thomas Barrows and Sons, Ltd. of Portland, Larry Shapiro of Glastonbury Appraisals and Michael Westman and Justine DeMetrick of Newport, R.I.

Verbal appraisals will be given on glassware, china, artwork, furniture, musical instruments, military pieces, dolls and jewelry, as well as European, Asian and Island items.

While the four appraisers are all donating their time, there is a suggested donation of \$6 per item. This annual event is a major fundraiser for the continual upkeep of the society's two museum buildings and 1840 one-room schoolhouse on Bevin Boulevard.

So if you've got an old family heirloom up in the attic you've always wondered about, why not swing on over to Belltown on the 25th and have a professional take a look at it? You may be surprised at what they find.

Coffee, tea, cookies, fruit, cheese and assorted desserts will be available for purchase. For more information, call 860-267-8953.

* * *

No one should be surprised to learn I'm a bit of a foodie. For close to a decade now, I've been routinely regaling (too strong?) you all with stories about various food adventures of mine. So an event the Portland Historical Society is throwing this weekend sounds pretty interesting.

Have you ever wondered what it was like to cook in the 18th century? In those pre-electricity days, the historical society shares, a burning hearth provided heat, housed multiple fires for cooking and baking, and served as the nucleus of family gatherings.

At the society's Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History this Sunday, March 12, from 2-4 p.m., a volunteer "colonial cook" will demonstrate how to feed the fire, manipulate the coals and manage the heat to prepare the perfect pye. (That's not a typo; that's the original spelling of 'pie').

According to the historical society, pies came to America with some of the earliest settlers and were seen as an economical and sustainable food source that helped to fill the stomachs of hungry immigrants. They weren't simply for dessert; rather, they were often made savory rather than sweet. Pies were a convenient way to both keep and transport food.

All are invited to Sunday's demonstration to learn more about the "pye" and the skill of baking with coals. This event is free. The museum is located at 492 Main St.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Police News

2/26: Teresa Marie Tomasino, 24, of 9 N. Maple St., was arrested pursuant to an active warrant and charged with second-degree failure to appear, East Hampton Police said.

2/27: Tucker Miner, 18, was issued a summons for breach of peace and second-degree criminal mischief, police said.

3/2: Joseph A. Sorvillo, 30 of 16 Brook Tr., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Also, from Feb. 19-25, officers responded to 10 medical calls, seven motor vehicle accidents and five hazardous conditions complaints.

Colchester Police News

3/1: State Police said Benjamin Gonzales, 37, of 361 Linwood Cemetery Rd., was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a child.

3/4: Colchester Police said Jacob E. Jenkins, 32, of 38 Jenkins Rd., Penobscot, Maine, was arrested and charged with failure to display a license plate, possession of drug paraphernalia, illegal possession of a narcotic and possession of a controlled substance.

3/4: Colchester Police said Megan Dyer, 27, of 473 Lebanon Ave., was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Portland Police News

2/21: Sean Paradis, 21, of 5 Buttonhook Lane, was charged with possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, Portland Police said.

3/1: Walter Emmons, 57, whose last known address was 20 Evergreen Ave., was charged with three counts of third-degree burglary, three counts of third-degree larceny and three counts of third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

3/3: Christopher Radman, 39, of 8 Prout St., was charged with sixth-degree larceny, third-degree criminal trespass, probation violation/violation of conditional discharge and two counts of failure to appear, police said.

Marlborough Police News

3/5: State Police said Derek Rockholz, 35, of 6 Edison St., Norwich, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol, failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple-lane highway, and distracted driving.

Hebron Police News

3/6: State Police said Kyle Dellert, 32, of 58 Carolyn Dr., was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order.