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News Bulletin

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

Volume 41, Number 38

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

June 23, 2017



Caroline J. Crean proudly displays her diploma for family sitting in the front row of the auditorium during Monday's East Hampton High School graduation ceremony.

EHHS Grads Made 'Great Things Happen'

by Elizabeth Regan

The graduates of the East Hampton High School Class of 2017 were hailed for "making great things happen" and encouraged to keep a positive mindset as they commence the rest of their lives.

With Monday's graduation ceremony held indoors due to rain and an impending thunderstorm, family and friends gathered in the auditorium and three separate overflow rooms to watch 132 seniors receive their diplomas.

As one of several speakers, class salutatorian Jessica Marchant told her classmates "life is a mindset."

Having the right outlook, she said, is what makes it possible to excel at new opportunities; having the wrong one leads to regret about what might have been.

"It is now in our hands to determine how we see the world, and how the world will see us," Marchant said.

Principal John Fidler related a scene that unfolded the previous week as students from East Hampton High School went to New Haven to volunteer at the Special Olympics Summer Games on the two hottest days of the spring.

Describing the students as undaunted by the stifling weather conditions, he said there were smiles all around during their quick lunch break in the shade.

"Just another day for a Bellringer," Fidler remembered commenting to the students.

That's when he said senior Gyanna Russell, without missing a beat, chimed in: "Out there making great things happen."

Fidler called it a perfect moment – "and so fitting for this class."

Fidler pointed to the thousands of dollars the class has raised for charities, the countless hours they have volunteered, and the numerous recognitions they have received for academic, athletic and cultural pursuits.

He outlined a list of notable seniors and accomplishments that included a "nationally recognized musician, an all-state athlete, regionally recognized vocalists, incredible performances by our music and drama program during the year, and our culminating senior capstone exposition."

Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith brought up some of those senior capstone projects as a sign of the class's support for "those less fortunate." He also mentioned a group of students – Gyanna Russell among them – who helped push a stalled car out of an intersection on Route 66 near the spot from which they were waving cardboard placards in support of the recent budget referendum.

He credited the graduating class with a "spark of heroism" that has been fanned by parents, teachers, coaches, mentors, counselors and advisors who have helped students accomplish things they didn't realize were possible.

"The human mind is so powerful and human willpower so forceful that once you commit to doing something, you cannot be stopped," Smith reminded students.

Valedictorian Lap Hei Lam applauded his classmates for the sense of energy and inclusiveness that made him feel welcome when he moved to East Hampton from New York City when he was in middle school.

Despite being excited about moving from a
See EHHS Grads page 2

RHAM Graduates Embark on 'Hero's Journey'

by Julianna Roche

Though thunder could occasionally be heard rumbling in the distance, the rain held off last Saturday as members of RHAM High School's Class of 2017 crossed the softball field dressed in royal blue robes and colorfully decorated caps – their tassels swaying off to the right.

As the soon-to-be graduates took to their seats, class president Jason Marinan took to the podium, welcoming the sea of students' families and friends, who sat in white chairs filling the grassy field facing the stage.

"For anyone that doesn't already know or has failed to realize, this school and this class in particular has an immense level of spirit," Marinan remarked, before recalling the time when a fellow student was late to their first-period accounting class, citing "bad traffic" as her reason.

Their teacher Tim Landry, Marinan explained, then proceeded to lecture the class that "Hebron does not have bad traffic... you don't know what bad traffic is" – which drew laughter from the crowd.

"The fact is that growing up in our three little towns of Hebron, Andover and Marlborough,

there is much of the world that we have yet to experience," he continued. "We're about to go out on our own and discover things we don't yet know about the world and ourselves, and I think that we will all very soon discover what real traffic is, but I hope that none of you are frightened by that."

Marinan then thanked the RHAM community, asking graduates to give them a round of applause for having "done a truly incredible job of preparing us for real traffic."

Commencement speaker Matthew Troy (RHAM Class of 2005) – who now works as a cinematographer and adjunct film professor at New York University – also spoke to the support of the RHAM community.

A storyteller by trade, Troy proceeded to give the students a "lesson in storytelling," recalling the story model of the "hero's journey" – the heroes, he said, "being all of you."

"The hero starts at home in the world of the known [and] you've been relatively safe up to this point because you've had family and friends as your foundation," he continued. "But there will come a day that our hero has a call to ac-

RHAM Graduates page 2



Members of RHAM High School's Class of 2017 erupt in excitement to celebrate graduating with beach balls, Silly String and fog horns.

EHHS Grads cont. from Front Page

city he described as “unfriendly and rushed” to a small town, he said he was nervous he wouldn’t make any friends or fit in.

“I was afraid I was going to be treated differently because of my ethnicity,” he said. “But to my surprise, this class was not like that at all.”

Describing the class as energetic and welcoming, he said they didn’t hesitate to reach out to a stranger like him.

“Energetic” was a popular description of the class among those who donned their gowns and mortarboards on Monday.

Lauren Peltier – who will study nursing and psychology at Central Connecticut State University – said she’ll miss seeing the same faces every day as part of an especially fun and enthusiastic class.

“We like to make jokes about most things that go on,” she said.

She brought up class pranks as one example of the class’s penchant for fun. One part of the prank included taking over junior parking spaces so the underclassman had nowhere to leave their cars except on the side of the road.

“We were going to try to make our class prank more fun, but it ended up not working because the administration found out about it and shut it down,” she said.

There was some disagreement about whether or not the release of adult inflatable dolls filled with helium should be considered a class prank or the work of rogue seniors.

Lindsay Dickerman, who will attend Villanova University as an astrophysics major, held the latter viewpoint.

“That should not go down as our class prank,” she said. “That was just a few individual students.”

Dickerman said other aspects of the prank included spray-painting 2017 on the front lawn surrounded by an outline of white flowers.

Jake Sevigny, however, insisted the inflatables were “a small part” of the senior prank.

Sevigny will be heading to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for U.S. Army basic training this summer.

The pranks were just one way members of the Class of 2017 bonded in their last year at East Hampton High School, according to Dickerman. She listed a host of senior activities, ranging from the class trip to Washington D.C. to the large-scale water gun game called “Assassin” through which seniors target each other with water guns.

“I think we’ve gotten much more united this year than ever,” she said.

During Marchant’s speech, she said senior year was when the Class of 2017 became a family. She also invoked the Washington D.C. trip as time they managed to bring their school spirit 350 miles from home.

“I think that goes to prove, no matter where we go, we will always carry our Bellringer pride,” she said.

The members of the East Hampton High School Class of 2017 are:

Sebastiano Gabrielle Agnello, Bailee Lynn Ahrens, Angeline Grace Alaconis, Caitlyn Marie Anderson, Sarah Jane Barney, Celia Rose Basso, Emma Suzanne Begin, Molly Elizabeth Bentley, Lailah Rose Bergin, Troy S. Boryslawskij, Emily Ann Boyd, Hunter M. Brazal *+^, Molly Sue Brewer, Ashley Lillian Buciak, Angela E. Buonocore, Daschel Quinn Burchsted-Glynn ^, Faith Madison Burt, Tyler Benford Caye, Alicia Marie Christensen, Alyssa Christine Chunko +, Nicholas Alexander Claude, Riley Brennan Close, Kristiana Cloutier +, Abby Colleen Conklin, Maggie Alyssa Cooke, Caroline J. Crean, Alexander J. Curylo, Lindsay Marie deBrito, Jenna S. DeCoursey, Jenna Rose DeMartino, Nicholas Kenneth DeMore, Alexandre Ronald Devin, Michael Allen DeZinno, Lindsay Kate Dickerman *+, Daniel William Doherty, Makenna Lynne Doherty, Rebecca Doney *+^, Bailey Case Evans, Michael Thomas Fazzino, Jacob Gunnar Field;

Shelby Anne Gancarz, Erin Elizabeth Gannon, Adam Matthew Ghezzi, Gordon Michael Gingras, Alessandra Louise Giza +^, Benjamin David Goldring, Saige Carmen Grace-Lange, Sebastian R. Grylka, Christine E. Guerette *+, Carter Bruce



In an East Hampton High School tradition, graduates leaving Monday night’s ceremony rang out their high school years and rang in the rest of the lives.

Gustine, Emily Shin Young Hackett +, Jordan Lynn Hall, Zachery C. Hansen, Alexis Marie Harris, Masie Leigh Hartt, Damon John Hill, Shaun Lee Hill, Collin M. Hirschowitz, Mohmand Hussaini, Haley W. Jackson, Luke Donald Johnson, Elizabeth K. Jones, Garrett Stephen Jordan +, Emilee Michele Karalus, Rachelle M. Kochuk, Ryan D. Kreder, Corey Krutzky, Jakub Filip Krzeminski, Brandon Jon LaChance+, Lap Hei Lam*, Rachael Hope Lazor, Kayla Mari Lazzari, Signe J. Lee, Rachel Elizabeth Lincoln, Harley-Marie Lyford, Natalie Irena Mamczynski, Jessica Renee Marchant *+, Niklas Paul Marsh, Isabella Amparo Martinez, Daniel Harrison Maynard, Francis Joseph McGuire, Thomas Joseph McGuire, Sagan Jaymes Medved, Hunter J. Meisinger, Jordan Gregory Michnowicz, Luiza Milewska, Sara April Nichols, Kieran Casey Owen;

Adam Mitchel Paquette, Robert Louis Parenteau Jr. ^, Emma MayRose Peltier +^, Lauren Elizabeth Peltier, Liam Robert Perkins, Jenna Dorothy Pethybridge +^, Matthew Thomas Pierko, Skylar

Rae Pignatella, Jared M. Pinckney, John Nils Pionzio III, Zachary Thomas Player, Talia Mara Porch, Sarah Nicole Proto ^, Victoria Lynn Rau, Joseph Raymond, Kristen Nicole Repoli, Geoff Henri Ricciardelli +, Madison Paige Roberts, Hipolito Rodriguez, Brooke Elizabeth Roussel, Emily Katherine Rovillo *+^, Anthony Quinn Roy, Gyanna Lucia Russell, Emily Frances Salisbury *+, David Joseph Sattler ^, Lauren Nicole Segovia, Jacob F. Sevigny, Michael Anthony Sorvillo, MadisonElizabeth Starr +, Amy Twila Stockburger +, Victor Anthony Strong, Megan Carolyn Sulzinski, Amanda L. Thisdale *, Kienan Hayden Tierney, Sarah Jane Vickery, Cassandra Alyssa Villani +, Abigail D. Vingris, Reese L Wall, Pierce Daniel Walton, Christopher John Westbrook, Vienna Christine Whalen, Erin M. Wilson, Justin Robert Young, Alyssa R. Zimmitti and Jordan S. Zimmitti +

*Top 10 students
+ Ferrigno-Bell Chapter National Honor Society
^ Tri-M

RHAM Graduation cont. from Front Page

tion. Some great challenge is presented and you are called to begin your journey.”

Troy explained that each hero has “a supernatural guardian” to help during those times, adding in Disney movies, “it’s usually the spirit of a past loved one, but in reality, I think those supernatural guardians – they’re sitting all around you today. These teachers behind me, guidance counselors, loved ones out there in the audience... they’ve opened your eyes to the world and now you are about to discover where you hope to find your place on this planet.”

Troy furthered that each “hero” will be faced with challenges and failures, urging students to not “become paralyzed by self-doubt” and instead use them as learning experiences to help drive “a hunger, a desire” for taking what they learned and changing it from “the journey” that led them originally to “where it can take [them] next.”

As he closed his speech, Troy then presented the group of soon-to-be-graduates with 10 disposable cameras, urging the students to use them to capture their own photos of graduation day, which would eventually become a part of their own “hero’s journey” story.

Salutatorian Paul Tamburro and valedictorian Meghan Howard took the stage next, each speaking to the importance of accepting others and being kind – a message, Tamburro said, was “particularly relevant given the current political division and many challenges facing our generation.”

“It’s important to remember how our actions affect others during this tumultuous point in American history as we contend with new issues such as climate change, evolving foreign policy and globalization,” he furthered. “Considering how every action, from a simple vote to an offhand remark, might affect others, will help us contend with these issues in the best way possible.”

Howard too, spoke of the divided political climate, adding she “may never understand how we could have elected the kind of man who would recklessly endanger the future of the entire planet” or “deny innocent people entry to the country out of fear of their religion or treat them with contempt for the color of their skin.”

Despite initially drawing a mixed reaction from the crowd, the message of Howard’s speech ultimately resonated with the audience, as she concluded this was “contrary to the values of RHAM” where students “have learned to stick together and accept people from all walks of life.”

As the speeches and musical selections by the RHAM High School wind ensemble came

to an end, Board of Education Chairman Danny Holtsclaw presented members of the Class of 2017 with their diplomas.

When the final group of soon-to-be-graduates made their way across the stage and back to their seats, the barely contained excitement among the rows of students finally erupted – with loud cheers, fog horns, beach balls and Silly String bursting into the sky, as Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski requested they flip their tassels to the left, signifying the official graduation of the Class of 2017, which includes:

*James Ansel Abrantes, Lindsey Rose Anderson, *Abigail Rose Andrulitis, *@ Sophia Eleni Arruda, *@ Olivia Mary Babick, Cole Emily Barker, Camden Alexander Barrett, @ Brooke Marie Barry, Jack Michael Bator, @ Jenna Lynn Bator, *@ Nicole Marie Bellhorn, Sarah Jane Benvenuti, Sidney Lyle Benvenuti, Nora Rita-Louise Bernaiche, Samuel Thomas Bielaczyc, Mark Anthony Billard, Gabriella Ann Billitter, Zachary Ethan Blume, *@ Eryn Mackenzie Booth, Deanna Josephina Bosse, Taia Lynn Bowen, Jeremy Robert Boy, *@ Ailish Ann Bozzo, *Emily Renee Brault, Corey William Briscoe, Madeline Constance Brooks, Rachel Anne Brooks, Brendan Robert Burke, Timothy Michael Burruano, Lauren Elizabeth Burton, Katie Ann Bushey, @ Christopher Daniel Butler, @ Kyra Louise Byrne, Anthony Brett Calkins, @ Kaitlyn Marie Cama, Olivia Bliss Cappello, Allison Catherine Carey, Rocco Nicolas Carlini, @ Lauren Nicole Cavaliere, *Rachel Marie Chapman, *Thomas Benjamin Childress, Brian James Clemens, @ Patrick Robert Clifford, Jillian Michaela Colwick, Justine Kristen Colwick, Jason Kenneth Cook, Gordon Levi Cooke, Kayla Joyce Cooper, Antonino Costa, *@ Adam George Cox, Alexandra R. Crampton, @ Sarah Anne Cryer, @ Molly Mackenzie Cunningham, *@ Natalie Nicole Danek, Christopher Anthony Delgado, *@ Lauren Marie Delissio, Brandi Lee Devin, Austin Brian Dion, Sarah Meghan DiPasquale, *Alexis Anne Doran, Thomas Michael Doyle, Liam Edward Duffy, Ariana Chantal Duisenberg, Sean Joseph Dupuis, Ryan Richard Durkee, Matthew George Ely, Jorge Luis Escobar,*@ Malia Rochelle Farrar, Daniel Anthony Fetta, @ Madeline Anele Tucker Fitzgerald, Dylan Matthew Foley, *@ Olivia Rose Folkes, @ Catherine Lee Folsom, Cody James Foran, +Aaron Joseph Frankel, Madeline Rose Freer, @Emma Ann Fuini, *John Francis Furey;

Tristan Michael Gallo, Stephen Cameron Ganci, Dylan William Gaudreau, Ethan Avery Geiger, Anthony James Gelsomini, @Abigail Kate Georgiades, Rebecca Leigh Gibson, Sam William Gilmour, Makayla Dominique Goldberg-Rodriguez, Ethan James Goncalves, Alyssa Beth Gonsor, Kiersten Lexi Granata, Sarah Nicole Green, Austin Connor Greenlaw, Reagan Edie Gunas, *Emma Catherine Hagearty, Erin Jocelyn Hainey, Troy William Hall, *Jennifer Erin Hallbach, Steffany Lauren Hamilton, Sydney Brooke Hamilton, William Charles Hartan, Caitlin Elizabeth Hartman, Tyler Joseph Hassett, *Ryan Michael Hazel, Sara Nicole Heitman, *@ Andrea Lyn Hemberger, Nolan Joseph Hemberger,



RHAM High School’s Class of 2017 strode proudly across the softball field last weekend, just before receiving their diplomas and graduating.

*@ Lucy Ann Henderschedt, *@ Caleb Scholes Henderson, Lauren Nicole Hentschel, *Kyle Michael Hespeler, @ Lauren Rose Hickey, Brian Andrew Hill, Kayla Lena Hodgdon, @ Rachel Isabella Holley, Shilo Brandy Hollister, *@ Claudia Grace Holtsclaw, **@ Meghan Elizabeth Howard, +Antony M. Iannuzzi, Alexa Lynn Jacobson, Robert Millar Jacobson, John Milo Kalandyk, Kristina Diane Kasper, *Meghan Elizabeth Kelly, Danielle Louise Klouse, Olivia Rose Knightly, *Paisley Anne Kostick, @ Hanna Elizabeth Kron, Mitchell Stephen Krupp, Mackenzie Mae Lalashuis, Madison Ruth Lapierre, *Molly Madeline LaPoint, *Rebecca Ellen LaPoint, James Robert Larned, Nathaniel Jeremiah Larson, Logan David Lavallee, *Cole Gerard Leahy, Jacob William Lee, +Ryan Steven Lindley, Adam Joseph Lisee, Derek Thurber Lund;

Samuel Gordon Macmillan, Javier Maldonado-Alessandro, @ Aidan Sophia Malitsky, @ Madison Delaney Manarky, Dylan Patrick Manning, *Stella Marie Maranos, Joseph Patrick Marinacci, Jason Patrick Marinos, Tatum Shea Marocchini, Matthew John Martin, @ Sydney Jane Maska, Hunter Linwood Massey, Ashley Nicole Maudsley-Wilson, Joshua Norman Mawdsley, @ Mackenzie Emma Maynard, Sean Michael McBrine, @ Maggie Elizabeth McClurg, *@ Colleen Margaret McCormack, *Megan Ann McGuire, Demi Lee McNulty, Sydney Madison Melocowsky, Benjamin Bernard Micoletti, Ariel Mae Miner, Connor John Missal, Kyle Antonio Monteiro, *Margaret Joy Moore, Shane Levi Morin, *Leeanne Elizabeth Nastro, *@ Kyle Matthew Nelson, Corynne Nemic, Eugene Grant Nichols, Erik Andrew Nome, @ Liam Hayden O’Brien, *@ Caleigh Marie O’Connor, William John O’Connor, Evan David Oakes, Miranda Margaret Olbrias, Samantha Jean Olbrias, Taylor Hope Olden, Aliza Grace Orler, *Jacob Charles Ouellette, Joshua Ryan Paradie, Joseph Eugene Pastore, Tre Spencer Patrizzi, Gino Thomas Perrone, Bethany Anne

Peterson, Lexie Ann Piepmeier, Alexander Gregory Pike, Christian Joseph Pirozzolli, *@ James Joseph Potticary, Ashkon Brandon Rajae, David William Ramsay, Alec James Rivos, Haley Ann Rodeghier, Kayla Lynn Romeo, Nicolas Conner Ross, *Claire Marcia Russo;

Jacob Daniel Sanstrom, Rebecca Santo Christo, Jack Wesley Sargent, *@ Kayleigh Anne Sauyet, Riley John Schaeffler, @ Emily Kathryn Seethaler, Colby Ellis Seidel, Carly Elizabeth Silva, Amber Marie Simpson, Dalton Thomas Skoly, @ Brilee Kay Smith, *@ Caleb Joseph Smith, @ Macey Emma Smith, Samantha Lynn Sokola, Matthew James Solecki, Erin Marie Stankiewicz, Robert Marlowe Sudduth, *@ Gabrielle Reece Sweeney, Justin Michael Talaga, ***@ Paul Dominic Tamburro, *@ Kylie Morgan Tardif, Spencer Aaron Terranova, Matthew Charles Thompson, John Christian Tillinghast, Amanda Nicole Toce, Christopher Michael Trouern-Trend, Adam Joseph Trueman, Christopher Andreas van Heel, *Kristi Ann Van Meter, Nicholas Salvatore Vendrillo, Kendra Jade Veneziano, Benjamin Anthony Vernali, Patrick Hugh Vernali, *Jennifer Mena Vincenzo, Ronald Patrick Vitarelli, Benjamin Daniel Walsh, Matthew Joseph Wantek, Joseph Christopher Wasil, Michael James Wazer, Jocelyn Grace Webb, @ Katherine Carol Weir, Jake Michael Welch, Robert Arthur Wharton, Nicole Katherine Whitfeldt, @ Elizabeth Anne White, Kyle Steven White, *@ Shannon Rose Williams, Emily Christine Wilsey, Aaron Robert Wood, Crandall Roderick Yopp, Julia Elizabeth Young, *Matthew Alexander Ziron.

Valedictorian
Salutatorian
* Member of National Honor Society in good standing
@ Green Cord/100 or more hours of community service
+ Enlisted in the Military.

PHS Class of '17 Sent On Its Way

by Elizabeth Regan

The Portland High School Class of 2017 doesn't give up.

The 97 seniors who graduated last Thursday made the most of academic and athletic opportunities and have always been comfortable leaning on each other for support, according to senior class advisor Dana Rizzo and Student Senate Advisor Michelle Stotler.

"Since they've been freshmen, there's been a lot of changes in faculty and administration. And they've stuck together," Stotler said before the ceremony as they lined up to lead the graduates to the outdoor podium.

According to Rizzo, students are well prepared for each unique path they are about to embark upon.

"They adapt to change well, so they'll be fine in the future," Rizzo said.

As celebrated by class valedictorian Christopher Wiezbicki during his address at the graduation ceremony, there were many examples of perseverance through the years.

Wiezbicki recapped the sophomore year triumphs of golfer Nick Piersall and cheerleader Erin Muskatallo, who were named to all-state teams, and wrestler Rodric Grant, who won a state title.

"We also saw Makayla Stefanski be as clutch as ever when she kicked the game-winning goal to bring Portland back-to-back Class S state titles," Wiezbicki said.

The class's sense of camaraderie and humor was evident as Wiezbicki commented on the junior year dance moves of Austin Rambarose, the student who whipped, nae nae-ed and dabbed unlike any other. His observation was met with grins and laughs from the red- and black-gowned seniors on the dais.

"Despite what some of you may say, I know every single person here enjoyed high school in some way. I saw a smile on every one of your faces at some point. And look what we accomplished together," Wiezbicki said.

While the next phase of his life will take him to the University of Connecticut as a political science major with designs on law school, he said members of the graduating class have plans in areas ranging from the medical field, to engineering, to accounting, to teaching.

"Jeff Albert is going to be an industrial technician, whatever the heck that is," he added.

Salutatorian Nicole Ferguson described a class that persevered in its use of popular vocabulary, entering high school to "yolo swag" and leaving in an era of "dank memes." They learned how to adjust to climate changes that ranged from freezing in physics class to roasting in the music wing.

Through it all, she said the most valuable lessons came in unexpected forms.

Ferguson described science teacher Wayne Kukucka's "selling presentation on the culture of Mardi Gras" and the way Joanne Choquette interspersed bits of German in her Spanish instruction. She brought up science teacher Joanne Merola's bee-keeping tips and Patricia Blodgett's belief that "attitude is everything" when trying to teach math early in the morning.

She credited the close-knit community of teachers and students with fostering a broad education that will serve them long after graduation.

"Whether pushing ourselves athletically, academically, or otherwise, we've learned that we are capable of so much more than we thought possible," Ferguson said.

MaryAnne Rode, the Board of Education chairman and the mother of graduating senior Kevin Rode, told the students she remembered many of them from preschool and their early days at Valley View School.

"Remember that first day when you went off to school? You were probably both excited and a little scared, but you climbed on that bus, or you walked out that door, and you did what you needed to do," Rode said. "Sure, there were mistakes along the way, and times when things didn't always work out. But you didn't give up. You kept pushing forward. And look where you ended up."

After the seniors received their diplomas and were treated to a rendition of the Alma Mater by members of the high school capella choir, they turned the tassels on their mortarboards toward the rest of their lives.

For graduate Tyler Ghent, that means joining the United States Air Force to serve his country and as a "stepping stone" toward a career as a firefighter.

Ghent committed to the Air Force during his junior year, he said. He will leave for basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, in late August.

He said he will miss Portland's small, tight-knit community while he is gone, but has every intention of returning.

"Basically my entire family lives here. I can't be too far. I'm a homebody, I guess," he said.

Graduate Joy Vincenzo cited the same small-school sense of community as the thing she will miss most when she enters the University of Vermont on the pre-dental path this fall.

"I think the adjustment is going to be really hard because I've grown up with these kids since kindergarten," she said. "But that's why I'm planning on rushing a sorority – so I can have a more comfortable, small feel."

As the students connected with family and friends for hugs and photo opportunities after the ceremony, there was an air of optimism and



Jubilant members of the Portland High School Class of 2017 throw their mortarboards in the air at the end of last week's graduation ceremony.

youthful experience underneath the partly sunny skies.

It was like Wiezbicki said: "Even when life knocks us down, we have to get up and continue to strive for what we want to achieve. Winners overcome every obstacle life throws at them. And every person in this class has the ability to be a winner."

The members of the Portland High School Class of 2017 are:

Michael Adams, Jeffrey Albert >, Emmalicia J. Arroyo, Tonje Aslaksen, Jonathan Craig Backus =, Colton Joseph Balskus, Joshua Michael Benoit, Kyle J. Benoit, Brittany Berg, Jacob Roman Bradway, Matthew Breece >, Hannah Breton, Jacklyn Beth Brown, Andrew Clark, Mary Elizabeth Clark, Nicholas S. Coman *, Amelia Jill Cooper >, Jillian Lindsay Crawford #, Abigail Elizabeth Dalton, Jordan Elizabeth Davignon, Echo Elizabeth DeJong, Christopher M. Dinnis #>, Stephanie Marie Duckworth, Emma Lynn Fantoli, Julianne Elizabeth Felt, Nicole Marie Ferguson *#>+, Matthew James Fitzsimons, Tyler Thomas Ghent, Rodric Grant, Jordan Q. Hardcastle, Kelsey Marie Harmon, Larson Higa, Juliet Eva Hrynyszyn, Greyson Ryder Innes, James Patrick Kelley, Micayla Ann Kelley >, Molly Elizabeth Kidd >, Jacob M. Kostraba >, Alexander Joseph Krasniewski, Hunter Lyons Lammers, Brittany Nicole Lane =, Claire LaPointe, Raymond Lavoy, Madison Frances Leary #>, Colby Leighton, Julia Marie MacKinnon *#>.

Brooke Ann Marino, Daniel Alexander Mark, Ethan Markesich, Jordan Merrill, Caroline Anuhea Mertel >, Rebekah Lynn Mizener >, Bobby Morgan, Allison Lee Murray, Erin Maureen Muskatallo #>, Jessica Nolan, Jonathan Edward Nordquist, Daniel J. Norton, Delenn Megan Oakliff, Kenneth Pho, Alyssa Lindsey Picano, Nicole Taylor Picard >, Nicholas P. Piersall, Melissa Amber Powers, Rachele Prudenza, Austin Aaron Rambarose, Tucker Remillard, Kevin Alexander Rode #>, Kevin M. Rodriguez, Benjamin Rogoff, Taylor Leigh Ryan, Leonardo Daniel Salcedo, Joshua Scrivano #>, Damien M. Scrivens, Brandon Smith *, Angel L. Solis, Erin Dubuc Springer >, Amanda Staron, Nathan Steele, Makayla Eileen Stefanski, Brandon Szabo, Nicolette Kelsey Talerico >, Andrew Tammano >, Ulani Ann Teape, Wayne Therrien, Roland J. Thivierge, Micaela Toomey *, Emily Tran *#>, Haley Margaret Turecek *#>, Alexander Vernali, Joy Marie Vincenzo *#>, Mira Nolan Watkins, Jill Michelle Weber, Austin Maurice White, Christopher B. Wiezbicki *#>+, Grace Charlotte Winakor, Kelsey Alicia Zajac #>

* Top Ten of the class
National Honor Society
> Tri-M Music Honor Society
+ Valedictorian
++ Salutatorian
= January graduate

Andover Board of Selectmen Appoint New Town Administrator

by Lauren Yandow

The Board of Selectmen has appointed Joseph D. Higgins as Andover's first-ever town administrator.

Back in November, Andover voters overwhelmingly said 'yes,' by a 1,330-448 tally, to changes to the town charter that would introduce the new position.

According to First Selectman Robert Burbank, Higgins officially signed the standard contract Monday afternoon; the agreement was drawn up and recommended by the town attorney.

As town administrator, Higgins will receive an annual salary of \$85,000. He'll handle day-to-day town operations and take over all administrative duties from the first selectman.



Joseph Higgins

Over the past 16 years, Higgins has worked for the state. During his most recent role, he was a project manager for the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services. Prior, he worked as a sanitary engineer for both the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Department of Public Health.

Higgins said after working with the state for many years he decided to go in a new direction that would further allow him to work with communities.

Higgins said Thursday, "I've always liked to work with the public and I wanted to find a way to take on a new administrative and managerial role." In order to do so, he went on to get his Masters of Public Administration. He graduated with the degree in 2015.

Higgins holds both a Masters of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the University of Connecticut. He resides in the Dayville section of Killingly and is a board member on the Town of Killingly's Water Pollution Control Author-

ity.

When asked about his new role in Andover, Higgins said, "I'm really looking forward to it."

As posted on the town's website, andoverconnecticut.org, the revised charter reads that the town administrator "shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Town of Andover responsible to the Board of Selectmen for the supervision, direction and administration of all Town of Andover departments, agencies and offices except the Board of Education and town agencies whose head of members are elected by popular vote."

Burbank will retain the title of first selectman, a title he's held for the past 11 years. He said this week there are some standard responsibilities he'll continue to maintain after the new town administrator takes office – but those duties will be limited, and he'll no longer have office hours.

As first selectman, Burbank will remain the town's official chief of police (the town will continue to have its resident state trooper) and

will continue to be the chairman at Board of Selectmen meetings.

In place of his current \$50,000 salary, Burbank will instead be paid an annual stipend of \$2,500.

Burbank added he plans to continue working to keep townspeople informed while contributing to the town's overall wellbeing in any way possible.

As for Higgins, he said that while searching for a new career path, he looked at positions in other towns but Andover felt like "the best fit" for him. He added, "I'm looking to do my best to make Andover the best town it can be."

Higgins is scheduled to start his position as town administrator on July 17.

New Portland Gun Store Emphasizes Customer Service

by Elizabeth Regan

A new gun shop in Portland aims to give customers a level of service that owner Rob Pizzi Jr. said is lacking in larger, big box establishments.

Central Connecticut Arms on Route 66 in Portland opened last month with a showroom full of handguns, long guns, ammunition and accessories.

Pizzi, an Army veteran who has worked in the car business for almost 30 years, said the lessons in customer satisfaction he learned selling cars and managing dealerships is what sets his new venture apart from the rest.

"I know how to build a rapport with customers and listen to their wants and needs. These are all the things I think are missing from the gun industry," he said from the gun shop last week.

Pizzi's trajectory in the gun business began when he walked into an unnamed but well-known sporting goods store to buy a gun, he said. He waited about a half hour for help from a salesperson who ended up being inexperienced, unknowledgeable and only interested in selling what he wanted to unload instead of what Pizzi wanted to buy.

"The moment I walked out the door, I said 'I'm gonna be a dealer and someday open a gun shop,'" Pizzi recounted.

After getting his federal firearms license and selling guns out of his Wallingford home for about five years, Pizzi realized it was time to expand operations. He set his sights on Portland after looking into the demographics of the area and finding a dearth of gun store options east of the river.

He said a lot of gun owners and prospective buyers have to travel over the Arrigoni Bridge to get to dealers in more populated areas of the state.

"If I can keep some of that traffic on this side of the bridge, we might have a winning solution for people," he said.

Pizzi said he keeps more than 300 guns in stock at all times. Right now that inventory includes about 140 Glock pistols, because those

were the most popular sellers when he was serving a clientele based in New Haven and Fairfield counties.

He has since learned there are different priorities in his new location.

Describing Portland and the surrounding area by its area code, he said "people in 860-land don't like plastic. They like metal. They like revolvers, they like Smith and Wessons."

Another difference between the southwest part of the state and the more central and eastern markets is a focus on hunting that comes with larger expanses of private land.

"Every day, I'm trying to learn more and more about the people in the area so I know better what to stock to serve their needs," he said. "I want to be able to engage everyone that comes in and not just try to sell them something I have on the wall because I want to sell it. That's not part of my business model."

Pizzi's interest in guns grew alongside his grandfather, a World War II veteran who fought in the Invasion of Normandy.

"I wanted to emulate my grandfather, so what did I do? I joined the Army when I was young; I got into guns and hunting and fishing and all that. I always had a passion for it," he said.

Now, Pizzi sports a "We the People" tattoo on his right arm and an American-flag holster on his belt.

He gives a 5 percent discount to active duty and retired service members and first responders.

"They paid enough," he said. "We all paid enough, us veterans, so I want to give back a little bit."

Pizzi's growing clientele includes Portland resident Henry "Hillbilly" Orlich. On a visit last week, Orlich said he's been stopping by every couple of days since he found out about the new business.

"The selection's always changing," he said.



Owner Rob Pizzi Jr., of Central Connecticut Arms in Portland, opened his gun shop on Route 66 with the goal of delivering a personalized experience customers won't find at big box sporting goods stores.

"There's always something new, something different, something better."

Before Central Connecticut Arms came to town, the nearest gun store Orlich liked to deal with was roughly 40 miles away in Milford.

"Not only is it better that this one is local, but [Pizzi] is kicking their butt. The pricing and selection has been much better," Orlich said.

For Pizzi, one of the best parts of his new endeavor is watching customers come into the shop every day looking like his children used

to look on Christmas morning.

"That's the look I get when people walk in the door for the first time. Their eyes light up, they're all smiles," he said.

Central Connecticut Arms is located at 130 Marlborough St. in Portland. It's open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. More information is available at centralctarms.com and 860-788-3974.

Top RHAM Students Head to Massachusetts

by Julianna Roche

Both of RHAM's top students from the Class of 2017 will soon call Massachusetts home, as valedictorian Meghan Howard heads to Wellesley College in Wellesley and salutatorian Paul Tamburro is bound for Harvard University in Cambridge this fall.

The pair – while having chosen schools in the same commonwealth – plan to major in very different fields, with Howard focusing on neuroscience and Tamburro leaning towards social sciences or some form of social studies, history or government major.

"I really enjoyed every social studies teacher I had [at RHAM]. It's a really amazing department," Tamburro said, adding an interest in history runs in his family, with his "mom really into" it and a grandpa he described as a "history buff."

Howard meanwhile – who attended both RHAM and Greater Hartford Academy of Math and Science (GHAMS), a magnet school in Hartford – said the two classes she enjoyed most were psychology at RHAM with teacher Larry Fagan, who passed away last February from brain cancer, and a seminar she took at GHAMS which focused on the science of superheroes and pop culture.

"It was like two of my passions combined," she said, adding her favorite superheroes are Scarlet Witch of *The Avengers* fame, and Wonder Woman.

In addition to science and superheroes, Howard was also involved with the National Honor Society (NHS) at both RHAM and GHAMS, the math team – where she was captain senior year, Model UN, and Leos Club throughout high school.

Tamburro – also a NHS and Leos Club member – said as an avid trombone player, he was involved with "a lot of musical groups" throughout his four years at RHAM, including wind ensemble, jazz band and pep band. He and a few friends even started the school's first jazz quintet – called Quintessential, which he said plays gigs in town.

"Definitely a lot of my best memories have

been in band, going back over the years," the salutatorian said, adding that specific moments that stood out were when the band played at Rentschler Field at the University of Connecticut or when they took a trip to Disney World.

Tamburro said another favorite memory was attending high school dances.

"I'm a terrible dancer, but I go all out at homecoming and prom," he laughed, adding that it's been tradition to challenge social studies teacher Brendan Burgess to a "dance-off" each year.

This year though, "I think he won," Tamburro joked.

While Howard said she usually doesn't "really do dances," she attended GHAMS' prom this year and she actually "had a lot of fun."

"I didn't realize how many friends I had in one place," she explained. "It was kind of sad to all be together for the last time."

Howard said she'll also always remember her English teacher Deb Anger fondly, who she described as "fantastic."

"She's just so sweet and genuine and really cares about her students," the valedictorian explained.

"RHAM is just a very supportive community," Tamburro said. "We've been through a lot of tragedies; we've lost maybe six people since we were freshmen – teachers, multiple students in car accidents – that has been a tragic aspect of it, but I think we've really come together and been able to work past that."

Looking forward, both Howard and Tamburro expressed nerves and excitement about starting college in the fall – noting that they planned to take lessons learned at RHAM along with them.

"I made a lot of great friendships here that I hope to maintain," Tamburro said. "I think I've learned through high school the value of having friendships and not making school your only thing."

Howard agreed.

"I tended to be more antisocial, but I feel like in my later years, I learned that relationships



RHAM Class of 2017 valedictorian Meghan Howard, left, and salutatorian Paul Tamburro will attend Wellesley College and Harvard University, respectively, this fall.

are important and you really do need people to back you up," she said, adding she was "excited to meet a bunch of new people" at Wellesley.

"Some people might criticize Wellesley for being an all-women's college, [but] in reality, the bonds you form are even closer," she said, adding that the school's "especially strong alumni network" would also help "open up opportunities" for her.

For Tamburro, Harvard's diverse student population, as well as the school's proximity to Boston, were among his many reasons for choosing the school.

"You're [also] encouraged to go different routes and try new things," he added. "It's comforting to me because I don't have a strong background in things like science. ... I've invested a lot of energy in music, but I'm excited I won't be judged for not having experience [in other areas]."

As both students embark onto the next chapter of their lives however, Tamburro, smiling, said he would remember one lesson learned during his time at RHAM above all.

"It's important to just have fun and enjoy what you're doing," he laughed. "Sometimes that comes across in my dancing."

East Hampton Council Gives Maniscalco 3 Percent Raise

by Elizabeth Regan

The Town Council Tuesday authorized a 3 percent raise for Town Manager Michael Maniscalco.

Maniscalco's salary of \$128,831 will go into effect on July 1. It's an increase of \$3,752 over his current pay.

Councilors gave Maniscalco five additional days of vacation, bringing the total to 20. They also increased from 10 to 20 the number of unused vacation days the town must pay him for at the end of the year.

Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said after the meeting that Maniscalco is "well-deserving" of the raise.

"We all agreed on that," she said of the council vote, which was 6-0 in favor of the contract changes. "[Maniscalco] works very hard for this town and it's important to do right by him."

Maniscalco's accomplishments include completing the natural gas conversion project \$36,000 under budget, saving \$228,777 in health insurance for the coming year and overseeing the transition of police and fire dispatch from Colchester Emergency Communications to the Glastonbury Police Department. He also serves as vice chairman of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments.

The salary increase is a bigger jump than last year, when he received a 1.5-percent raise and a two-year contract extension.

Maniscalco provided councilors with data from the Connecticut Town Manager's Association showing an average salary of \$137,137 for town managers in municipalities with populations of 11,000 to 15,000, based on 2016 salaries. Those five towns are Coventry, East Hampton, Granby, North Branford and Tolland.

The data shows Maniscalco's current salary is the second lowest out of the five comparable towns, a trend he said has held steady since he took his position in 2012.

The highest salary among the five towns

came in at \$160,699, according to the 2016 data; it went to Granby's town manager. The lowest salary, of \$116,850, was paid to North Branford's town manager.

Maniscalco was noncommittal about the raise after Tuesday's meeting, saying "it is what it is."

"I'm glad the council had all the information in front of them and I would hope they used it in making sure they were as fair as possible," he added.

He had thanked councilors during the meeting for completing the evaluation in accordance with the process and timeframe outlined in his contract.

Written evaluations compiled and presented to Maniscalco earlier this month came in with an overall rating of 2.6 on a scale of 1 to 5. A rating of 1 means "needs improvement" while a 4 is "superior."

Maniscalco's contract requires the council to prepare an annual written evaluation, to meet and discuss the evaluation, and to give Maniscalco a chance to respond in writing.

Councilors received, but did not discuss, Maniscalco's written response at their meeting Tuesday. They quickly moved on to a salary discussion behind closed doors, which was a departure from the public way the evaluation had been conducted over the past month.

As he has for over two years, Maniscalco invoked his right under the state's Freedom of Information Act to insist discussion on his evaluation be held in public.

Noticeably absent from this week's meeting was councilor Ted Hintz Jr., who has been critical of Maniscalco's performance and of the evaluation process.

Anderson said Hintz did not tell her he would be absent from the meeting, though he had emailed her that morning with some questions

about how the meeting would be conducted.

Hintz said Wednesday it is "nobody's concern" why he did not attend the special council meeting.

"I had something that required my attention and it's frankly no one's business," he said.

A Republican Town Committee meeting was also held Tuesday evening. Chairman George Coshow confirmed Hintz was at the two-hour-long town committee meeting.

Hintz was elected to serve his third term on the council in 2015.

Hintz's complaints about Maniscalco's performance revolved around the councilor's belief that the town manager communicates "inconsistently amongst town council members" and that he does not effectively manage his staff when it comes to promoting customer service.

Most of Maniscalco's written response, which he read to the council at their meeting, was directed at Hintz's concerns.

In addressing the alleged lack of communication regarding issues including the Board of Education lawsuit against the town, police department union negotiations and the proposed municipal complex, Maniscalco indicated there's an underlying issue at play.

He said he would "proffer" that Hintz's concern is "not about communication but about whether there is political agreement by the individual council member making the comment and the council majority."

The town manager said he sends all communications "of significance" by email to make sure they're recorded and sent to all members.

"Individual council members regularly do email, call and visit the town hall. I welcome their input and view their comments as additional eyes and ears that are helpful for me to complete my job," he said.

Hintz had expressed concern in his written

evaluation of Maniscalco that there have been complaints from the public about a lack of "cooperation and accommodations" in various departments.

"I believe the duty of all town employees and departments is to serve the public," he wrote. "I do not feel the town manager expresses that to his employees nor exhibits it from what I've seen."

Maniscalco said in response that it's not a customer service issue; instead, it's a matter of staff members enforcing rules and regulations when council members come to them with "personal projects."

Maniscalco told councilors in his written response to the evaluation that he felt it is unfair to allow personal disregard for him by any council member "or political gain for any individual" to reflect in his evaluation.

Hintz did not return a call for comment about Maniscalco's written response to his performance evaluation.

Seven staff members were in the audience at Tuesday's council meeting as a show of support for Maniscalco: Youth and Family Services Director Jodi Brazal, Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli, Building Official Glen LeConche, Collector of Revenue Kristy Merrifield, Library Director Ellen Paul, Human Resources Director Lisa Seymour and Police Chief Sean Cox.

Afterward, the group told Maniscalco they purposely kept their plans to attend the meeting a secret. Then Brazal thanked him for all he does for his staff.

"Just know we're all here for you," Brazal said.

Maniscalco on Wednesday called the gesture "an incredible surprise."

"I really do think the world of them and I think they're doing a great job," he said.

AES Students Movin' On Up

by Lauren Yandow

Students of Andover Elementary School lined the halls, cheering on the members of the sixth grade Class of 2017 as they walked to their "Step-Up" ceremony Tuesday.

The 43 graduating students entered the ceremony, where they were met by an audience of loved ones. The auditorium was decorated in smiles, a few tears and school-colored red and white balloons.

The ceremony opened with a student-led Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Principal John Briody giving a welcome speech, to what he calls a "group of young leaders."

During the address, Briody highlighted themes of friendship, respecting others and the curiosity to keep learning. Those themes would continue throughout the celebration in speeches given by students, teachers and faculty members.

Teachers presented a select few sixth-graders with awards in subjects they excelled in throughout the year. Speaking on each student's willingness to learn, teachers gave out awards in subjects such as Spanish, technology, music and physical education.

Some students were met with surprise when they were honored with an award voted on by their peers. The awards ranged from "most inventive" to "most kind."

Recipient of the Kindness Award, Caelyn Calhoun, said "I was really happy I was picked for the award." Fighting back some tears she continued by adding, "today is a bittersweet moment" because her experience at AES was "great and all the teachers were so nice." Caelyn's mother, Jessica, said she was feeling emotional as well, as Caelyn is her first daughter moving on to middle school. Jessica said she'll miss the way parents and students at AES rally around one another, saying, "I feel like this school has been such a good little family and I'm so very grateful."

As the ceremony progressed, a group of stu-

dents were recognized with applause for their work in a group they created called "Just Some Kids Making a Difference." Throughout the school year, the group decorated posters with compliments and uplifting words, before secretly posting them outside the door of a teacher or staff member.

Stepping up to the podium one-by-one, sixth-graders Brinna Brock, Elisa Hines, Orianna Kozak and Emma Rhodes lowered the microphone to speak to their classmates, faculty members and loved ones about their time at Andover Elementary. When it was her turn to speak, Brinna reflected on a memory from each school year spent at AES. She finished up by saying, "I'll take sixth grade with me forever and cherish the memories I've made here."

All four students thanked their loved ones in attendance and the mentors who've shaped them during their middle school years. Orianna spoke about an important lesson she's learned – to treat others the way she'd like to be treated. She said, "I will miss everyone at AES and I hope they will miss me too."

Continuing to spread a message of giving thanks, each sixth-grader was given a red rose to present to someone special in the audience as a way to say "thank you" for supporting them. The message, a lifelong lesson the school hopes to permanently instill in their students.

Graduating students, Matthew Bogdan and Quinn Van Cara were presented with the Superintendent's Award. The award is given annually to two exemplary students who have shown a "continuous improvement in learning." Matthew reflected on his time at AES saying, "We're a tiny school but we do a lot for the community. Overall, it's been a fun school to be a part of and it feels really good to be graduating and moving on to RHAM. It'll be a change but I think it'll be a good one."

Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen said afterward, "the ceremony was wonderful" and added she's proud of how the sixth-grade class



On Tuesday, Andover Elementary School sixth-graders attended their "Step-Up" ceremony, marking their "graduation" from the school. Pictured here is a group of sixth-graders posing for pictures with their peers during the celebration.

presented itself throughout the celebration. Doyen stressed the students' polite manner isn't solely a representation of the school but also the children's parents.

While some of the classmates are likely headed for private schools, those continuing their public education in town will join roughly 200 other students from Marlborough and Hebron in the fall at RHAM Middle School. Their adventure in seventh grade will start Aug. 30.

Members of the sixth grade graduating class are: Nathan Aguiar, Jacob Balula, Matthew Bogdan, Zachary Bogdan, Brinna Brock, Kiernan

Buswell, Caelyn Calhoun, Dylan Cordeiro, Jessica Day, Patrick Dunko, Kyle Eckert, Alaric Erami, Jessica Fagnoli, Lily Gross, Michael Hamburger, Elisa Hines, Cora Hixson, Dustin Hossain, Cayden Hunter, Konrad Jandzinski, Kinkade Knox-Silvia, Orianna Kozak, Evan Kreidler, Jesse Lane, Logan Lysiuk, Emma Maguire, Halie Oman, Alitza Ordenez-Nieves, Lilah Patrizz, Luke Polowitz, Cameron Rhodes, Emma Rhodes, Jessica Roache, Ethan Rosa, Jacob Skoog, Daniel Tamburro, Connor Townsend, Roan Trzaskos, Lucas Trzcinski, Quinn Van Cara, Zachery Verona, Chloe Weathers and Ryan Woods.

Bacon Grads Urged to ‘Color Outside the Lines’

by Julianna Roche

Despite the move indoors due to gloomy grey skies and a light drizzle, members of Bacon Academy’s Class of 2017 were all smiles while celebrating their graduation last Friday – proudly donning bright blue robes and caps as they marched into the David Shea gymnasium for what would be their last few moments as high school students.

The evening was filled with heartfelt commencement speeches by students and faculty, including one by the class salutatorian Nicole Ouellette, who led off with a speech about making memories and how “the human brain seems to have evolved perfectly to retain the most emotionally-charged, amusing and important memories, the ones that shape our lives and who we become.”

Ouellette went on to wish her fellow classmates a life filled with “happy memories,” adding she made some of her very best memories during her time at Bacon.

“There are countless remarkable and memorable experiences the Class of 2017 has shared, from field days at JJIS to roller blading in middle school gym, to jamming to ‘Fergilicious’ at prom just a few weeks ago,” she remarked. “The best memories are those that we make with the people we care most for, and I know already that some of the best memories of my life are the ones that I’ve already made with many of you.”

In her speech, Gilbert Lamb Memorial Essayist Laura Sokoloski urged students to “celebrate our own individual skills and interests, all that makes us unique.”

“For each of us there is something that strikes a chord in our soul and makes us envision the world as a different, better place,” she stated, furthering that “every day we wait, we waste... if we don’t step up and make that difference, then who will?”

Per Bacon Academy graduation tradition, what followed was a recording of farewell wishes and words of wisdom recorded by Colchester staff members. Some of their advice included: “Just do right – right may not be expedient, it may not be profitable, but it will satisfy our soul,” “Unplug. Be in the moment,” “Do what you love and you will love what you do,” and “Take control of your destiny; be a master and commander of who you are and what you are to become.”

Valedictorian Amanda Pinson spoke next about time and fear, urging her classmates to live in the moment and take risks, even if that means failure.

“Taking a risk is absolutely terrifying,” she said. “But there is nothing to regret about having tried, even if it also means not succeeding, because if you try and fail, you have made more progress than the person who decided not to try.”

Pinson furthered that if students were to take away one message from her speech, it should

be to “never stop searching for what makes your heart beat with excitement and fear, because a world filled with people who don’t settle and who pursue what they love is a world we all deserve and need to live in.”

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein and Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu – who is retiring from his position at the end of June – took the podium next to address students with similar whole-hearted messages.

Goldstein, a Bacon Academy graduate himself (Class of 1985), talked about important lessons learned in kindergarten and how there is one lesson learned he wants students to “totally ignore.”

“What kindergarten lesson should you obliterate from your memory banks?” he asked. “Always color between the lines.”

“Don’t let the lines on the page hold you back,” Goldstein expanded, “even if they are thick and black and they look like impossible boundaries that everyone knows only fools will cross.”

“In life, those lines can’t stop you no matter what you are drawing,” Goldstein continued. “Never be afraid to cross them because outside those lines, that’s where you will find the adventure. That’s where you will have great success and that’s where you’ll create your very own successful and colorful mosaic of life.”

As the evening’s speeches ended, each then-high school senior walked across the stage and was presented with their diploma. After finally returning to their seats, the Class of 2017’s graduation culminated in students tossing their blue Bobcat caps high in the air – celebrating their accomplishments over the last four years.

The members of the Bacon Academy Class of 2017 are: Vada Cheyenne Addis, Ethan Michael Alexander, Sydney D. Allen, Melissa Amaro, Ben Amor, Joshua James Atchison, Victoria Rose Baldyga, Savannah Barrett, Greg Baxter, Andrew J. Bear, Kyra Leigh Beattie, Leah Anne Beaton, Alexandra Jane Becker, *Daniel A. Berube, Morgan Renee Bingham, Caleigh Shaelynn Bittman, Zachery Joseph Bittman, Gabrielle Blanchard, Alexi Boix, Tyler Bolden, Bryce Bonnin, Anne Catherine Bornhorst, Johnathan Matthew Murphy Boski, Derek Matthew Bouchard, Christian Michael Bowers, Collin Patrick Brown, Harrison, Alexander Burr, Grace Cafro, Jonathan F. Caley, Allison Rose Camboulives, Jadan Canada, Natalie Ann Carroll, Andrew Richard Cavanaugh, Paul Ryan Chasse, Autumn Marie Chenette, Jordan Chicoski, Kristen Sue-Ann Cignatta, Eric Connors, Lauren Elizabeth Constant, Jessica Marie Cordatos, Sebastian Coutu, Nicholas Ronald Crowell, Hannah Kathryn Cuadro, Claire Culviner, Dylan Cunningham, Shailor Keegan Cutler;

Nicholas Andrew Davis, Madysen Avery Dean, Cara Isabelle Del Sesto, Ailene Deynes, Jailene Deynes, Andrew James DiBiao, Emily Rose Donahue, Lindsay Paige Downty, Patrick William Doyle, Ileanna Marie Duddie, Jaylene Duddie, Katelyn Dunbar, Scott Patrick Dunbar, Brian



Members of the Bacon Academy Class of 2017 excitedly throw their caps in the air as graduation came to a close last Friday, celebrating their accomplishments over the last four years as high school students and what’s to come in the next chapter of their lives.

Fitzgerald Egan, Emily Ericksen, Dillon Christopher Fancher, Alexis Faulkner, Christian Branden Favreau, Hailey Ann Fisher, Jeremy Owen Fister, Natalie Rose Fox, Connor Tiernan Francis, Emma Anne Fries, Gabrielle Lynn Gamache, Mikayla Ashley Gardner, Rhiannon Astasia Gates, Brendon Glover, Macy-Meng Brooke Gortler, Jacob Patrick Guerra, Lexis Gulizio, Luke Thomas Hajdasz, *Michael Daniel Hallee, Jackson Tyler Hanrahan, *Chase Thomas Hathaway, Elijah J. Healy, Samantha Ryan Hebert, Kaitlyn Marie Hogan, Taylor Paige Howes, Jacob Michael Islieb, Rebecca Blaisdell Johnson, Jacob Bielot Joseph, Jessica Christine Joseph, *Ally Theresa Julian, Hannah Michele Kardys, Ryan Patrick Kelsey, Brendan Cameron Kennedy, Jared John Kermode, Kelly Ann Kessler, Zachary Hugh Kirkwood, Renee Kizer, James E. Knowles, *Katherine Elizabeth Kristoff, Ryan Krystofik, Jared, Dieter Kunst, Amelia Helen Lacerte, Patrick Charles Lambert, Adrianna Lami, Megan Elaine Langevin, Rachel Barbara LaSaracina, Brandon Andrew Lebiszczak, Chandler Levesque, Julian Anthony Lindo, Kimberly Barbara Lizotte, Jordin Lynn Longo, Caroline Louise Lovering, *Jocelyn Isabel Luizzi, David Benjamin Lund, Amelia Rose Lynch;

Cormac Ross MacKinnon, Elizabeth Claire Manley, Alicia Nicole Marvin, Jack Healy Matheson, Ryan Paul McAuliffe, Colin McCarthy, Ashley Tyanna McDonald, Devin Michael McGowan, Liam P. McLoughlin, Jonathan P. McMahon, Audrey Mecca, Marie C. Menhart, Hannah Nicole Merrill, Madison Judith Miceli, Aaron L. Miller, Cassandra Taylor Moran, Anthony Douglas Moreira, Morgan Ashley

Muller, Bradley Murray, Mariah Kay Nelson, Savannah Lynn Nickerson, Elizabeth Grace Olivieri, *Nicole Dianne Ouellette, Robert Stewart Parker, Alexandra Jordan Peake, *Dharma Mae Perron, Sidney Lynn Petro, *Amanda Jean Pinson, Mishinnon Piper, *Sam Matthew Pipicelli, Marcus Richard Ploof, Thomas Robert Praisner, Hayden Barrington Prawl, Jayce Timothy Putzig, Zachary John Rankowitz, *John McGowan Reeve, Jillian Janik Reynolds, Jordyn Ashley Ringuette, Joseph Romanelli;

Kristina Ann Salone, Nicole Kathryn Santoro, Jayden Kai Schand-Harris, Matthew A. Shane, Casey Lyn Shaw, Spencer Slota, Alyssa Therese Smelser, Logan Béa Smith, Sydney Lilen Soja, *Laura Ellen Sokoloski, Thea Madison Sousa, Peter Austin Stanavage, Valerie Joy Stanton, Hannah Joanne Stella, Breanna Mackenzie Stewart, Le’Nora Elisia Stewart, Brianna Denise Stonick, Kayla Elizabeth Studwell, *Hanna Huali Suarez, Peter Alan Swain, Jordan Christopher Szostak, Raymond Anthony Talbot, Jordan Matthew Tallman, Justin Taylor, Cassidy Lee Tellar, Matthew James Tiziani, Evan Tortorigi, Noah Trigueros, Anthony D. Tyler, Rayaissa Tyles, Rylee Laurel Vadenais, Dimitrios Valkanos, Courtney Kristina Violette, Aidan Walls, *Samantha Catherine Walsh, Julian Emmanuel Ward, Kayla Marie Wasik, Courtney Anne Watts, Kaitlyn Rose Watts, Reed Donovan Wells, Brooke Michelle Whitty, David L. Wilcox, Jr., Jamie Nicole Willson, Christopher Kirk Wilson, Jr., Mya Wilson, April Elizabeth Wolf, Chloe Wood, Johnny Robert Wood, Karli Rae Wozniak, Nicholas William Wright and David Joseph Zachas.

**Member of the National Honor Society*

Marlborough Conservation Commission Approves Big Y Site Plan

by Julianna Roche

Bringing Big Y into the town center is one step closer to becoming a reality, after the Conservation Commission voted unanimously Monday night to approve site plans for the supermarket – under a few very minor conditions.

Following the public hearing on June 8 to discuss plans for the supermarket – which drew enough residents to fill the Marlborough Elementary School community room – the Conservation Commission convened this week, ultimately deciding the proposed location for the Big Y would not have any adverse effects on the five acres of wetlands which surround parts of the building.

Included in the commission’s approval of the site plan however, are several minor conditions which Town Planner Peter Hughes explained as “small things, mostly technical in nature,” such as employing management practices consistent with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Stormwater Quality

Manual, immediately reporting any problems involving wetlands or watercourses should they develop during the construction process, and that no equipment or construction materials should be deposited in the wetland area.

The original site plan for the supermarket had called seven acres of wetland into question, but was ultimately revised with added protective measures, including fixing the stone wall along South Main Street, moving that entranceway further from Route 66, and adding a retaining wall that extends along both sides of the store’s entranceway.

The next step, Hughes explained, is for the Zoning Commission to meet and finalize plans to move the project forward on June 29.

The site plans proposed by developer Allan Schwartz of Schwartz Realty – which were presented at the public hearing on June 8 – include a 55,000-square foot Big Y supermarket and pharmacy set to be built into the 3-5 East Hamp-

ton Rd. plaza, which he owns.

“Since Schwartz Realty bought the properties more than 18 months ago, the town has been working with them nonstop to get to this point,” First Selectwoman Amy Traversa said, “where redevelopment of this blighted property is just a breath away.”

Schwartz, a well-known developer in the area, is most recognized for his work in Glastonbury with developments such as Eric Town Square, a large Hebron Avenue plaza that has, among other tenants, Plan B Burger Bar; a plaza at 2450 Main St. that includes a Moe’s and Panera Bread; and a newer plaza at 41 Hebron Ave. that includes businesses such as Ben & Jerry’s and Noodles and Co.

The supermarket, according to the site plan, would be built on the 11.2-acre property; however, the back stretch along School Drive will not be affected by any construction and will be

retained as open space. The store will also have an entranceway with an “air door” to serve as an outdoor market and entrances located on both sides of the checkout area.

Schwartz said the supermarket is expected to bring in an added \$310,000 in annual revenue to town. The construction project and the store would also bring 275 part-time and full-time jobs.

“I am so excited that we are finally moving forward with revitalizing the town center with services, jobs and commercial tax growth that have been needed here for decades,” Traversa said.

The Zoning Commission will hold a special meeting to finalize site plans for the Big Y supermarket on Thursday, June 29 at 7 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School community room.

Members Appointed to Marlborough Charter Revision Commission

by Julianna Roche

It's been more than 30 years since the town charter has been revised – but the town took a big step toward changing all of that last week, when the Board of Selectmen appointed nine Marlborough residents to make up a Charter Revision Commission last week.

The commission – which was given a charge to review four central questions regarding the charter by Sept. 1 – is made up of three Democrats, three Republicans and three unaffiliated/Independent Party members, all of whom, First Selectwoman Amy Traversa said “aren't normal players on either side” of town politics.

“They're not the Democratic heavy-hitters and they're not the Republican heavy-hitters, but people who take a much broader view of the town,” she furthered. “They are active in town, but they don't necessarily have an agenda. It's a nice broad spectrum of people.”

Sixteen people applied for the commission, but nine were chosen: unaffiliated/Independent members Danielle Neary, Ken Anderson and Brendon Montstream; Democrats Julie Revas, Kathy O'Neil, and Ann Terezakis; and Republicans Gregg Mooney, Anthony Bassilakis and John Wohlfert.

While Traversa noted she was “really pleased” with the commission members chosen, she felt the timing of charter revision was “not ideal” and she would have preferred charter revision take place “after the budget is settled.”

“I committed to doing charter revision after the budget ... right now, we still don't have a

state budget [and] there's no indication when we'll have [it],” she furthered.

In late March, two Marlborough residents – Louise Concodello and Richard Denno – had organized a petition urging the selectmen to get the ball rolling on appointing a charter revision commission and during the May 16 Board of Selectmen meeting, the selectmen voted unanimously to establish the commission.

Per state statute, once the board establishes and appoints a commission, it has 30 days to appoint members, which must include anywhere from five to 15 electors of the town and no more than one-third of the members can hold a municipal office.

In a letter addressed May 17, Concodello – who had actually applied to be on the commission but was not among the nine chosen by the selectmen last week – explained the 445 petition signatures she and Denno had obtained were also certified by Town Clerk Nancy Dickson.

Revisions to the town charter were last made in 1985. While it was reviewed again by a commission formed in April 2001, the suggested revisions were never approved. Over the course of 16 months, the commission had drafted the charter revisions and submitted them to the Board of Selectmen in July 2002 with the vote on the revisions set to take place in the November election later that year.

At the time, however, the selectmen decided to compile all of the revisions into a single “yes”

or “no” vote during the election. The vote was ultimately turned down, meaning none of the revisions passed.

Traversa explained this is one of the four questions the commission is charged with reviewing.

“One of the problems for when it [the charter revision changes] failed the last two times, is that the Board of Selectmen insisted everything be either accepted or rejected,” she said. “It shouldn't be an all or nothing.”

The other three questions the commission is charged with reviewing – which were also included in Concodello and Denno's petition – include voting on the town budget by an all-day referendum rather than a town meeting, instituting automatic revision of the charter at prescribed intervals, and increasing the Board of Selectmen from three to five members. (Currently seated on the board are Evelyn Godbout, Dick Shea and Traversa.)

“Voting on the budget by town meeting is so antiquated. People's schedules don't allow for that any longer,” the first selectwoman said, adding that if voting on the budget were done by an all-day referendum, that would also allow voters to submit absentee ballots if they were unable to vote or were out of town, which they currently cannot do.

The commission will hold its first organizational meeting July 6, according to Traversa, and will have until Sept. 1 to “come up with answers” in order for the questions to be on

this November's ballot, as the town must have the ballots approved by the Secretary of State's office by Sept. 26.

The first selectwoman furthered that once the commission submits its answers in September, it will be dissolved and following the November election, a second charter revision commission will be formed to review the charter more in depth.

“If that doesn't happen, I'll start another petition,” Concodello said Thursday morning of the plan to form the second commission. She said there are “so many little things in the charter that need to be updated or clarified to correspond with general state statute and clarify how we do the workings in our town.”

While Traversa agreed a thorough revision to the charter is necessary, she explained that pushing forward those charges now, such as changing the budget vote from a town meeting to an all-day referendum was in the best interest of the town.

“If we pull out any more than four questions, it's not going to happen [this election cycle],” she said. “So we'll go through another one of these budget seasons [voting like this].”

According to state statute, a charter revision commission can be formed and work for no less than 90 days and no more than 18 months.

“A lot of decisions need to be made,” she said. “There are some things in the charter right now that fly completely in the face of Connecticut state statutes, which take precedence.”

Marlborough Residents to Vote on \$24.11 Million Budget

by Julianna Roche

On Monday, Marlborough residents will have an opportunity to vote on the most recently proposed 2017-18 budget of \$24.11 million or a 1.57 percent increase over current year spending.

This will be the fourth time the budget has gone before voters this year – and comes after Board of Finance members approved 5-1 last week (with Ken Hjulstrom as the sole opposing vote) to cut the local Board of Education budget by \$40,000.

The cut brings the total education budget to \$7,286,938, while the town operations budget stands at \$4,900,050. Non-recurring capital expenditure funds meanwhile, total \$12,265 for the local Board of Education and \$727,200 for town operations.

The previous proposed spending package of \$24.27 million was defeated by a tight 108-102 tally for the third-time at the last town meeting held in early June, sending board members back to the drawing board – again – to come up with a budget more likely to be passed.

“During this unprecedented budget season, I have encouraged voters to reject the town budget,” First Selectwoman Amy Traversa said this week, adding that the state has still failed to both produce a budget and “give any meaningful guidance to towns on what cuts they might be facing.”

In Gov. Dannel Malloy's current proposed budget, Marlborough faces a \$2.2 million dollar cut to state funding.

“What we are experiencing with our budget process this year is happening all over the state,” Traversa said.

Board of Finance members also voted June 14 to cap the motor vehicle mill rate at 32 mills – which is in accordance with state law – as well as adjust the estimate for the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department's fire utility vehicle, which is under the town operations budget, from \$53,000 to \$45,000.

The RHAM Board of Education's unanimous vote to cut \$355,410 from its budget also lowered Marlborough's portion to approximately \$8.89 million, helping to bring the total budget down.

The proposal to be voted on Monday calls for a 3.85 percent tax increase and features a mill rate of 35.51 mills, up 1.36 mills from the current 34.15, meaning that the average homeowner with property valued at \$250,000 would pay \$8,878 in taxes on it – up from the current \$8,537.

“The same mill rates will be set next week on the latest proposed budget, regardless if the budget passes or not,” Traversa explained. “Any adjustments required after we finally get a budget from the state will be made later this year.”

The town meeting will be held Monday, June 26 at 7 p.m. in Marlborough Elementary School's cafeteria. Check-in begins at 6:30 p.m.

Andover Finance Board Sets 32.50 Mill Rate

by Lauren Yandow

The Andover Board of Selectmen voted last week set a new mill rate of 32.50 for the 2017-18 fiscal year, an increase from the current 30.72.

Used to calculate the amount of property tax, mills determine what the owner of a property owes each year. A single mill is calculated by \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the new mill rate, taxes paid on a home assessed at \$200,000 for the 2017-18 fiscal year would be \$6,500. That's an increase of \$356 over the current year.

Andover's new mill rate was calculated based on Gov. Dannel Malloy's revised budget proposal, which was released in May. When finalized, the state budget could sway the town's new mill rate slightly up or down.

Uncertainty over the proposed budget comes as state officials struggle to balance the estimated deficit of over \$2 billion in revenue for the upcoming fiscal year. When asked about the governor's proposed budget, First Selectman Robert Burbank said, “I personally hope they get things together and work a budget that doesn't end up negatively affecting the town.”

But he said, he's optimistic the new mill rate will remain the same when the state budget is approved.

Andover's Board of Finance will make the last call on whether or not the final budget could impact the mill rate. Burbank said the

town will likely have enough money to fund the balance, unless the proposed budget shows a drastic change, which they don't anticipate.

The mill rate increase is only partially due to revaluation and an even smaller part is due to actual tax revenue, said Burbank. He added the majority of increases have been placed on property owners in Andover since the town has received less and less funds from the state – forcing residents to pick up more of the burden.

He said, “it's a juggling act that's difficult for all towns – to keep services the same when they have no control over certain things on a town level.”

When asked about how the finalized state budget could affect Andover, Burbank said, “there's always going to be things you can find to spend money on. For instance, a lot of people have recommended new facilities in the town. But, I'm not for it since there are too few grants available.”

When it comes to recommendations to the boards of selectmen and finance, he said, “I'll do as much as I can to recommend to the boards that we have taxpayers that would like to see budget kept as low as possible.”

According to Malloy's proposal, grant cuts will help maintain plans to increase aid to urban areas facing “major fiscal challenges” while maintaining larger categories of municipal aid.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I'll admit to being genuinely torn when I learned last weekend the local NBC affiliate, WVIT NBC-Connecticut, wasn't going to show Megyn Kelly's interview with Alex Jones.

Word of the interview had caused a ton of controversy across the country over the course of last week – especially in Connecticut, as one of Jones' most infamous acts is his utterly heinous claim that the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012 was all a hoax.

Many were disgusted Kelly and NBC were giving a platform to this crackpot, and urged the network to pull the interview that would just rub salt in the gaping wounds of the Sandy Hook families.

While NBC stuck with the interview, WVIT, after careful consideration, decided not to show it. In an internal memo to staff, WVIT's general manager wrote that the wounds of Sandy Hook are "understandably still so raw, we have decided not to air this week's episode of *Sunday Night With Megyn Kelly*."

And while WVIT's decision was certainly understandable – the Sandy Hook massacre was perhaps the darkest day in this state's history – I'm not entirely sure it was the right one. Sure, it's tempting as all hell to say Jones is a fringe looney tune and nothing more, but that's not really the case. Jones has a ton of followers. His *Infowars* show is watched by millions – and has been given press credentials by the White House. Yes, Jones shockingly has the ear, and support, of the president of the United States (okay, given Trump's fondness for the *National Inquirer*, maybe that's not so surprising).

Simply put, Jones isn't some overly-caffeinated oddball railing away at the government on some obscure Internet message board at 3 a.m. We may try to ignore him, but he's not going to go away. His show will continue to be watched by millions, who will continue to be inspired by Jones' absurd notions (such as the woman recently sentenced to prison for harassing one of the Sandy Hook parents, or the man who shot up a Washington, D.C. pizza joint because he thought the Democrats were operating a child sex ring out of it).

And since he's not going away – since, if anything, he's gaining power, thanks to the president we have the misfortune to be saddled with – I felt that, as a journalist, the responsible thing to do would be to expose him, hold his feet to the fire, let the whole country see what a nutjob he was.

Thing is – I wasn't sure Megyn Kelly was the person to do it.

Even setting aside her conservative Fox News credentials, there were reports in the days leading up to last Sunday's broadcast of Kelly and NBC News scrambling to do last-minute editing of the interview, following the national backlash – and of Kelly having a sit-down with the father of one of the children killed in the Newtown shooting. There was even audio Jones purported to have of Kelly wooing him with promises of an easygoing interview.

If this wasn't going to be the hard-hitting piece that was needed, then why bother with the interview?

When Sunday night came, I guess a lot of people maybe felt that way. For while the interview had garnered a bunch of attention, not just in Connecticut but across the country, that attention didn't translate into Nielsen ratings. *Sunday Night* finished fourth in its timeslot, losing out even to an *America's Funniest Home Videos* rerun. (In fact, just a few weeks in, NBC's much-ballyhooped – and very expensive – addition of Kelly to its roster has been something of a ratings dud.)

Still, I'll admit, had WVIT shown the interview, I would have watched it, for curiosity's sake. I did exactly that Tuesday night, as the interview is available in full on the NBC News website. And whether there was massive last-minute editing or not, Kelly did a nice job. Jones came across as a vile human being, which is exactly how I feel he needed to come across. Yes, I *wanted* him to come across as a vile human being, and maybe that colored my opinion some – but at the end of the day, at least the interview wasn't a glorified puff piece. Kelly pointed out the dangers of his lies – and she stressed repeatedly they're nothing but lies – and noted the times Jones has been forced to apologize, on

air, lest he get sued.

It repulses me that Jones has the following that he does. But he does have that following – and he's not going away anytime soon, no matter how much we may wish he would. In a column on the subject in last weekend's *Hartford Courant*, Colin McEnroe perhaps put it best when he wrote: "we can't have a policy of trying to keep [Jones] in a dark closet. In fact, one of our big jobs, as journalists, is going to be figuring out how somebody like Jones rose so high. Kelly's interview, albeit flawed, should be the first of many tries."

* * *

Another one of our big jobs as journalists is to point out when politicians are behaving badly. One Connecticut journalist recently did just that – and the politician in question responded by behaving even worse.

For her excellent state news blog *CT News Junkie*, Christine Stuart was recently covering a debate in the state House of Representatives on a bill that would bar the installation of certain solar facilities on farmlands. Stuart noticed the deputy House speaker, state Rep. Jeffrey Berger (D-73), apparently wasn't paying much attention to the debate. In fact, he was watching the HBO series *Veep* on his laptop.

Stuart snapped a picture of this and tweeted it out to *CT News Junkie's* nearly 36,000 followers.

This image of Berger watching TV instead of doing his job didn't sit well with a lot of people – including Berger. So he got even with Stuart by, later that night, hurling, of all things, a stuffed rat at her.

The *Journal Inquirer* reported Tuesday that "Towards the end of the night, Stuart went from the Capitol's press room to the floor of the House, where Berger, from his seat in the second row of the chamber, threw a stuffed rat in her direction. The plush toy landed near her feet."

The House speaker, Joseph Aresimowicz (D-30), apologized to Stuart the next day. Berger, meanwhile, only issued a statement this past Monday. "I can only chalk up this lack of judgment to being overtired from long session nights and frustrated with what was happening with legislation," Berger said, according to the *Journal Inquirer*. "This is no excuse, and I have a full respect for reporters doing their job."

Now, I realize reporters can have far worse things done to them as "payback" for them doing their jobs. Why, just last month a congressional candidate in Montana body-slammed a reporter on the eve of the election, simply for doing his job. (The reporter won anyway, because hey this is America 2017.) Still, here's a hot tip for Berger: Don't throw things at reporters. Hot tip #2: Maybe, just maybe, don't watch sitcoms on your computer when you're supposed to be working.

* * *

Thinking about saving for your retirement? Well, regardless of your age, you should be. And while it may seem like a daunting task, it needn't be so. I was recently alerted to an interesting-sounding program taking place next week in nearby Middletown that would help explain the matter.

On Tuesday, June 27, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Russell Library, 123 Broad St. in Middletown, Apella Capital and financial advisor Peter Leppones will present a seminar offering strategies and financial habits to help people get headed in the right direction.

Among the subjects broached in the seminar: Common "debt traps" and how to avoid them; How much to invest and what investment vehicles make sense for you; The importance of creating and sticking to a financial plan, regardless of your age; How fees (obvious and not-so-obvious) reduce your returns; If you and your family are protected with your current insurance coverage; and How to turn assets into income later in life.

All those seem like valuable pieces of knowledge to have. And while it's not happening exactly in the *Rivereast* coverage area, Middletown is close enough by, particularly for East Hampton and Portland folks, that it may very well be worth your time to take a drive over to Russell Library next Tuesday and check it out.

* * *

See you next week.

Hebron Woman Killed When Tree Limb Hits Car

State police said 76-year-old Ruthanne Margaret Hadley, of 233 Jagger Ln., Hebron, was killed Tuesday after a tree limb struck her car, state police said.

Hadley was driving north on East Street, near the Burnt Hill Road intersection, when a tree limb fell in front of the path of her 2017 Subaru Outback, police said. The limb struck the vehicle and Hadley, police added.

Police said Hadley then lost control of her car, going off the right side of the road onto a grassy area, striking a sign and proceeding to hit a group of trees before coming to a stop.

Hadley was pronounced dead at the scene, police said. Police added Hadley was wearing a seatbelt and the airbags inside the vehicle deployed in the crash.

East Hampton Police News

6/6: Kelly L. Debari, 51, of 136 Lake Dr., was issued a summons for criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said.

6/8: Richard Schulman, 53, of 65 Standish Rd., Colchester, was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

6/12: Jason Bedford, 47, of 111 Skunk Misery Rd., Higganum, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle under suspension, misuse of marker plate, operating a motor vehicle without insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

Also, from June 5-11, officers responded to 17 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and six alarms, and made 32 traffic stops.

Portland Police News

6/14: Eric O'Connell, 22, of 306 Old Colchester Rd., Salem, was charged with improper use of marker plate, insufficient insurance and failure to renew registration, Portland Police said.

6/14: Charles Belcher, 51, of 208 Main St., Apt. 55, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

Andover Police News

6/13: State Police said at approximately 4:07 a.m., they received a report of a stolen vehicle from a residence on Hutchinson Road. The vehicle – a grey 2016 Hyundai Sonata four-door sedan bearing CT license plates AF27020 – was reportedly stolen sometime between 10:30 p.m. on June 12 and 4 a.m. on June 13. The Hartford Police Department had originally discovered the victim's wallet on a city street in Hartford and contacted the victim – at which point they realized their vehicle had been stolen. There are no significant markers or damage that stand out on the vehicle and anyone with information is asked to contact Troop K at 860-465-5400.

Two-Car Crash Near Exit 13 on Route 2 in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

Two New London residents were left with possible injuries following a two-car crash on Route 2 last Thursday night, June 15, police said.

According to police, Wilma Hodge, 61, of 37 Orchard St., New London, was driving a Ford Escape XLT traveling eastbound on Route 2 prior to Exit 13 at approximately 10:09 p.m., while Jonathan J. Jonah, 45, of 61 Loomis Rd., Colchester, drove his Toyota Corolla directly behind her, police said.

Police said the Ford was in the right-hand

lane when the Toyota collided into its rear end, leaving both of the vehicle's passengers – Liandra M. Hodge, 26, of 37 Orchard St., New London and Omar A. Diaz, 28, of 158 Connecticut Ave., New London – with possible injuries and transported by Marlborough EMS to Marlborough Medical Center.

According to police, Jonah refused treatment on scene and was found to be at fault for the incident for failure to follow a reasonable distance apart.

Colchester Police News

6/11: State Police said Larry D. Thornhill, 54, of 8 Parkside Dr., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault.

6/11: Colchester Police said David L. Friedman, 49, of 24 Carvalho Dr., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and threatening.

6/16: Colchester Police said Joshua Ogden, 26, of 48 Novelli Place and Robert E. Robbins, 62, of 319 Shailor Hill Rd. were arrested and charged with reckless driving, breach of peace, and first-degree reckless endangerment, and first-degree criminal mischief, respectively.

Marlborough Police News

6/15: State Police said Adam G. Knoff, 34, of 95 S. Main St., Apt. 10, East Windsor, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive right.

Hebron Police News

6/16: State Police said at approximately 1:17 p.m. they received a report of a burglary from a residence on Chesterfield Road. Police said the homeowner came home from completing errands and discovered that two safes had been removed from the second story master bedroom closet. Inside the safes were a large amount of valuable items. Eastern District Major Crime Detectives responded to the scene and assumed the investigation. Anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper Frank Cuoco, badge number 500 at 860-465-5469.

Obituaries

Marlborough

Dennis J. Hawrylko

Dennis J. Hawrylko, 80, of Marlborough, beloved husband of the late Virginia McCullough, passed away peacefully at his home Friday, June 9. He was born in Queens, N.Y., Feb. 19, 1937, son to the late Joseph and Eugenia Hawrylko.

He was a graduate of Rutgers University and received his Masters from Western New England University. He served as a second lieutenant for the Army in Korea. Dennis worked as an engineer at Pratt & Whitney for over 30 years. He was also a member of the Governor's Foot Guard.

Dennis will be fondly remembered for his love of family, trains, and sailing, as well as his love for the town of Marlborough. Dennis spent much time working within the government and committees for the town of Marlborough. One of his proudest accomplishments was helping to organize the town's bicentennial celebration.

Dennis is survived by his daughter, Mary Olson and her husband Chris and their three children Emma, Katelyn and Lillie; his son, Matthew Hawrylko and his wife Christy and their three children Jake, Alicia and Jesse. He also leaves a stepdaughter, Kim Maynard and her husband Joe and their two children Scott and Meg; a stepson Tom McCullough; a daughter-in-law, Nora Dlugos, wife of his late stepson David, and their three children Rory, Caroline and Ellen; a brother, Gary and his wife Doris; a brother, Warren and his wife Lorraine.

Per his wishes, we will be celebrating Dennis' life with a private ceremony.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made in Dennis' name to The Marlborough Arts Center, 231 North Main St., Marlborough, CT 06447.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.

Amston

Eric Everett Hackney

Eric Everett Hackney, 51, of Amston, passed away at home Monday, June 19. He was born in New Britain July 1, 1965, a son of Everett Hackney of Storrs/Mansfield and the late Joyce (Miglietta) Hackney.

Eric worked for Intelix (Aluminum Products Manufacturing), as an engineer in maintenance. He was a long time member of the Masons, Pronaos Lodge, East Hartford. Eric was known for his love of cooking but most importantly, he will be remembered for the selfless way he took care of others.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his father, Everett; a brother, Darren and his wife Laura Hackney of Lebanon; a sister, Julie and her husband Robert Brown of Lebanon; a nephew, David Hackney and his fiancée, Michaela of Lebanon; and numerous extended family and friends.

Calling hours will be held Tuesday, June 27, from 5-7 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will be Wednesday, June 28, gathering at the funeral home at 9:30 a.m., followed by a chapel service at 10 a.m. Burial will follow in the West Street Cemetery in Columbia.

In keeping with Eric's desire to help others in need, donations in his memory may be made to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, 1033 Long Prairie Rd., Suite 5, Flower Mound, TX 75022-4230.

Portland

Jennifer Sue Galo

Jennifer Sue Galo, 42, of Portland, beloved daughter of Barbara and Skip Blodgett and loving granddaughter of Sally Ledger and the late Richard Ledger, all of Portland, passed away Friday, June 9, at Hartford Hospital after a short illness.

Jennifer was a very loving and caring young lady. Jenn will be missed.

Jennifer leaves to mourn her best friend Shelby, who misses her very much; Aunt Sue, her son and daughter, Wesley and Carrie; Auntie Donna and Rita and Rosanna; Cousins Desiree and Becky and a large host of friends, some furry.

Services are private at the convenience of the family.

East Hampton

John Monroe Alden Jr.

John Monroe (Jack) Alden Jr., 80 passed away peacefully Sunday, June 4, after an extended illness with Parkinson's disease. Jack was born Aug. 2, 1936, the son of John and Rosalie Alden of East Hampton.

He was predeceased by his wife Kathleen Draghi Alden following 52 years of marriage.

He leaves a daughter, Claudia Alden of East Hampton. Jack also leaves a sister, Joan Alden Alberghini and her husband, John Alberghini of Barnstable, Mass., and sisters-in-law Betty McKelvey and Marianne Cofield.

He was a 1954 graduate of East Hampton High School. He resided in East Hampton his entire life operating his own carpentry business. He was known for his custom renovations and creative furniture-making. He will be greatly missed.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at St. Patrick Church, 47 W. High St., Saturday, June 24, at 11 a.m., with burial immediately following at St. Patrick Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance Association Scholarship Fund, 4 Middletown Ave., East Hampton, CT 06424.

Portland

Louise G. Foster

Louise G. Foster, 84, of Potsdam, N.Y., formerly of Portland, passed away Monday, June 12, at her residence, while under the care of her family and Hospice and Palliative Care of the St. Lawrence Valley.

Louise was born Nov. 6, 1932, in Portland, to the late William Long and Louise Schmid Long. She was a graduate of Portland High School in 1951. In 1957 in East Hampton, she was married to Richard Foster. They lived all over the country as Mr. Foster served in the Armed Forces for years. They ended up settling in Potsdam, N.Y., where they raised their family. They moved to West Palm Beach, Fla., for a while. Louise moved back north after Richard passed.

She enjoyed bingo, going to the casino, crocheting, watching the grandkids and just socializing with everyone.

Louise is survived by sons Richard (Donna) Foster of Potsdam, N.Y.; Scott (Tonya) Foster of Potsdam, N.Y.; Joseph Foster and his fiancée Rae Collins of Massena, N.Y.; daughters Diane (Steve) Ling of West Palm Beach, Fla.; Dorothy (James) Brown of Ogdensburg, N.Y., and Donna Jarvis of Ogdensburg, N.Y.; sister-in-law Shirley Long; 15 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

She is predeceased by her husband, Richard D. Foster; parents; and her three brothers, William, Edward and Henry Long.

The funeral service was held Friday, June 16, at Garner Funeral Service in Potsdam, N.Y., with the Rev. Stephen Rucker as celebrant. Burial followed the service at Fairview Cemetery in Parishville, N.Y. Visitation was held at Garner Funeral Service on Friday, June 16, before the service.

Contributions in her memory can be made to Hospice and Palliative Care of the St. Lawrence Valley, 6805 US Highway 11, Potsdam, NY 13676.

Hebron

John R. Kreeger Jr.

John R. "Jack" Kreeger Jr., 79, a 47-year resident of Hebron, loving husband of 50 years of Lorraine (Fiala) Kreeger, died peacefully Wednesday, June 7. Jack was born Aug. 18, 1937, in Philadelphia, Pa., son of the late John R. Kreeger Sr. and Lillian Grace (Richards) Kreeger.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, serving his country from 1958-62. Prior to his retirement, Jack was employed for over 38 years with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford as a tool design engineer. He was a longtime member of the Gilead Congregational Church in Hebron. Jack was a member of Uriel Lodge 24 A.F. & A.M. and he is a lifetime member of the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department. Jack loved camping with his family and he was an avid model railroader. Jack was an assistant Scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 28 in Hebron.

In addition to his wife Lorraine, Jack is survived by his son, Peter Kreeger and his wife, Heidi of Manchester and children Danielle Warner of Manchester and Richard Warner of West Palm Beach, Fla.; his daughter, Christine (Kreeger) Salmoiraghi and her husband Kurt and their son Axel Salmoiraghi, all of Manchester; his brother-in-law, Robert Fiala and his wife Kathleen of Colchester; two nephews, John "Rusty" Constantine and his wife Eileen of Concord, N.C., and Brendan Fiala of Colchester.

In addition to his parents, Jack was predeceased by his sister, Joan Warren.

Family and friends attended a time of visitation at Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester, Tuesday, June 13, with a service that day. Burial was private in Gilead Cemetery, Hebron.

Memorial contributions may be made to Gilead Congregational Church or to the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department.

To leave an online condolence, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Portland

Margaret Brown

Margaret (Thompson) Brown, 88, of Glastonbury, formerly of Portland, passed away peacefully with family by her side on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29.

She was born in Rainelle, W.V., a daughter of the late James C. and Grace (Roberts) Thompson. She faithfully served her country during the Korean War in the United States Air Force from 1952-55. Margaret attained the rank of WAF Airman Second Class stationed at Headquarters Squadron Section in Roslyn, N.Y., where she was a senior cryptologist.

She and her beloved husband, Stewart, met in the Air Force and married April 18, 1955. Margaret and Stewart raised their family in Portland, before Stewart's untimely death at age 59.

After Margaret's 25 years at Northeast Utilities, she retired as a statistical analyst.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Stewart Emerson Brown, and their son, Timothy James Brown; brothers Woodruff, Robert and Eugene; and sisters Arlene, Virginia and Norma.

Margaret is survived by her loving children, Mark and Victoria Brown of Amston, Susan Page of Shelton and Joel and Meaghan Brown of Glastonbury, with whom she made her home. Margaret leaves behind her nine grandchildren, Jessica Page, Kelit Brown, Stephanie Page, Kelsey and Erik Brown, Alexandra and Ryan Brown and Cameron and Wyatt Brown. She also leaves behind sisters Barbara Blanchard of Florida and Claudia Mosca of Cromwell, and her brother James Thompson of Arizona.

Funeral services were Monday, June 12, at the Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury. Burial was private. Visiting hours were held Monday, June 12, prior to the service, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be made to the American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Dr., Wallingford, CT 06492 or The Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675 or the charity of one's choice.

For more information, to view her Everlasting Memorial Video Tribute or to leave an online condolence, visit glastonburyfuneral.com.

Glastonbury

Robert G. Schindler

Robert "Bob" G. Schindler, 90, of Ormond Beach, Fla., passed away peacefully Sunday, June 11, at Halifax Hospice Center, surrounded by his loving family. He was born in East Hartford Jan. 16, 1927, to the late Leroy G. and Althea (Roberts) Schindler.

Bob served in the U.S. Navy and moved to Glastonbury in 1955 to raise his family. He was a brakeman for Penn Central Railroad for 38 years until his retirement at the age of 63. Bob, a 32nd Degree Mason with Orient Lodge 62 East Hartford, was also a member of the Sphinx Shriners Cycle Unit. He moved to Florida in 1993 and lived a life full of fun and lots of laughter. He was always ready for the next adventure and enjoyed walking the beach, riding his bike, playing pool and bringing smiles to everyone with his "Schindler-isms".

He is survived by his wife, Joyce Hubbard Schindler; his son, John R. Schindler and his wife Lisa of Stowe, Vt., and a daughter, Laura Manager and her partner Jeff Merk of Portland. He also leaves five grandchildren, John R. Schindler, Jr. and his wife, Anna, Zachary T. Schindler and his wife, Gretchen all of Stowe, Vt., Michael Manager and his wife Jackie of Glastonbury, Christie Treat and her husband Jonny of Bolton, and Katie McNaughton of East Hampton. He also leaves behind five great-grandchildren Joey, Ellie, Sophia, Bobby and Owen, as well as his extended family, Scott and Denise Hubbard from Stafford Springs and Robert Hubbard from Enfield and countless friends that will miss him dearly.

He was predeceased by his former wife, Alice; his daughter, Debbie; his brother, Ron; and his sister, Norma.

A celebration of his life will be held Saturday, July 29, from 3-5 p.m., at his granddaughter's home, 2 School Rd., Bolton. Burial will be private.

Amston

Barbara Dorothea Leary

Barbara Dorothea (Balch) Leary, 95, of Amston, passed away peacefully at home Wednesday, June 14. Born Oct. 8, 1921, in Manchester, she was the daughter of the late Charles and Dorothea (Gutzmer) Balch.

Mrs. Leary was a resident of Amston for 65 years, where she loved to tend to her gardens and cook for her family, to whom she was ever devoted. When she was able, Barbara also enjoyed spending time at the ocean.

She leaves her son and daughter-in-law, Kevin and Janet Leary of Amston; her granddaughter, Colleen of Amston; brother, Norman Balch of Bolton; and many extended family and friends.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by a son, Stephen Leary; and a brother, Charles Balch.

A memorial service will be observed at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 1, directly at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St. (Route 85), Hebron. She will be laid to rest privately alongside her son at the New Hebron Cemetery. There are no calling hours. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the church.

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

