

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

Volume 42, Number 15

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

January 19, 2018



**Ready to Make Music...** The Mass-Conn-Fusion Duo will play at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 26, at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., Marlborough. The duo consists of Jim Healy, left, on the upright bass and Liz Roberts, right, on saxophone. Admission is \$10/person at the door. BYOWine, with other refreshments available. Doors open at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [marlborougharts.org](http://marlborougharts.org) or leave a message at 860-295-9565.

## Teachers Cut in Portland School Budget

by Elizabeth Regan

The Portland Board of Education on Tuesday unanimously approved a level-funded \$20.68 million education spending plan that cuts nine staff positions and threatens the high school tennis program.

Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly told school board members he will need their help making sure no further cuts are made as the education budget makes its way through the budget process. He said the Board of Selectmen and the public needs to understand the "zero increase" budget represents significant sacrifices.

"Less than zero is not an alternative, in my opinion," O'Reilly said. "It can't go further. It must not."

The Board of Selectmen is charged with approving the education and general government budget in April after a series of workshops, deliberations and a public hearing. The local budget proposal goes to voters in May.

The Board of Education's spending plan eliminates nine staff positions. The cuts are composed of three elementary school teachers, one secondary school teacher, one special education teacher, and one teaching position that hasn't been identified yet. The proposal also cuts two paraeducator positions as well as one assistant library position left vacant through a retirement.

The budget proposal reduces the technology department, athletic department and building

budget lines by 10 percent each, while special education is cut by \$12,000. A plan to purchase an \$18,000 floor scrubber that has been requested for years was scrapped again.

O'Reilly said it's not yet clear how the departmental reductions would be implemented. But he did specify that preliminary discussions with athletic director Chris Serra have already taken place about how to address the 10 percent cut to the athletic budget.

"It may mean we're going to cut something that doesn't have a very large enrollment, and tennis would be on the chopping block," O'Reilly said.

When asked by reporters if there are any other sports being threatened, he said tennis is the only one being considered.

O'Reilly earlier this month proposed a 2.34 percent increase over the current year, which included only four staffing reductions instead of nine. School board members at the time asked him to come back with a level-funded spending plan so they could see what it looked like.

In discussing the flat budget proposal, school board member Christopher Darby described it as a short-term way of addressing a larger problem. He said the school board needs to look into long term solutions to address continuing reductions in state aid that aren't showing any signs of abating.

He cited ideas such as looking into different

See Teachers Cut page 2

## Documentary Film Tells Story of Jewish Immigrants

by Julianna Roche

While not ideal for farming, the hundreds of acres of rocky soil running rampant across much of the region serve as a holding ground for a lesser known, but timeless story about courage and strength – and one which has endured over a century.

Last Friday morning, Jan. 12, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut Jerry Fischer shared that story with a packed room at the Colchester Senior Center via a special viewing of his documentary film, *Harvesting Stones: The Jewish Farmers of Eastern Connecticut*.

The film, which he worked on for more than 14 years, tells the stories of Jewish refugees who escaped religious persecution in the late 1800s by immigrating to America and ultimately becoming farmers in eastern Connecticut with support from affluent Jewish philanthropist, Baron Maurice de Hirsch.

"These are inspirational stories about the dreams they [Jewish immigrants] had for America, which came true," Fischer said of the film, adding that among those refugees was his grandmother Ida, who came to America in 1918.

Fischer – who grew up in Washington Heights in a small, two-bedroom apartment with his grandmother, brother and parents – explained that the idea for the documentary

came by way of the kosher hot lunch program sponsored by the Jewish Federation in both New London and Norwich.

According to Fischer, the program's director at the time suggested he meet some of the people who attended the Norwich hot lunch, whom she described as "not the type of Jewish people you know... [they're] coming to lunch in barn boots and barn coats, and overalls."

Since Fischer already had an interest in farming to begin with (he often worked at his uncle's training farm in Hightstown, N.J.), he felt he had discovered a story that needed to be told after meeting countless farmers who attended the program – many coming from families who had been helped by de Hirsch when they first immigrated.

The documentary delves into the story of de Hirsch, a German philanthropist who lived from 1831 until 1896. While working to create a 1,500-mile railway network in the Ottoman Balkans, de Hirsch decided to dedicate part of his fortune to providing welfare to eastern European Jews who were facing religious persecution and stark living conditions in Russia at the time.

Convinced that a modern-day education could improve the lives of the oppressed Jews, de Hirsch established his own organization in

See Immigrants page 2



The documentary *Harvesting Stones*, screened last week at Colchester Senior Center, delves into the history of Jewish immigrant farmers, many of whom settled in eastern Connecticut. As the film details, Jewish farmers often turned to poultry or dairy farming, as the rocky soil proved difficult for much else.

**Immigrants cont. from Front Page**

New York – the Baron de Hirsch Foundation – to help settle immigrants in the United States and educate them in agricultural training so they could become independent farmers.

Unfortunately, many Jews who had immigrated at the time were living in squalor in the city with no means of support and in crowded, dirty tenements. In the documentary, for example, Basia Wittenberg of Columbia recalled cockroaches crawling all over them in the middle of the night.

However, with the promise of “open land and space” by moving to a farm, de Hirsch offered Jews an escape from the cramped and depressing conditions of living in the city.

Even after his death, de Hirsch’s foundation continued to support Jewish farmers through its subsidiary project, the Jewish Agricultural Society, established in 1900, which helped families obtain mortgages and loans to purchase farmland.

“I shall try to make for them a new home in different lands where, as free farmers on their own soil, they can make themselves useful to the country,” the documentary quotes Hirsch as saying. “My own personal experience has led me to recognize that the Jews have a very good ability in agriculture and my effort shall show that the Jews have not lost the agricultural qualities that their forefathers possessed.”

Through interviews, home videos and historical footage, *Harvesting Stones* tells the story of those Jewish families helped by de Hirsch, many of whom reside on farms in areas like East Haddam, Colchester, Chesterfield, Lebanon and Norwich.

Among them interviewed is Frank Himmelstein of Himmelstein Homestead Farm, who explained that with help from de Hirsch, his grandparents Louis and Dora were able to escape from Russia to buy farmland on American soil and become the “Jewish pioneers” in Lebanon. The farm was then passed down to their son Meyer and eventually to Frank, who currently runs it as an organic vegetable farm.

Another Jewish farmer, Rena Linder, recalls how her father, Sam Friedman, also immigrated to America with his younger brothers after his

oldest brother was taken by soldiers in the middle of the night to serve in the army. Through de Hirsch, Friedman was able to purchase a farm in Colchester, which grew to become the largest Jewish farm in Connecticut.

A descendant of Jewish immigrants, Sam Kofkoff also inherited his farm in Bozrah – Kofkoff Egg Farms, which grew to host 40,000 chickens and become a national-award winning egg farm.

In addition to various recollections from Jewish farmers, Fischer’s documentary also features interviews with state Sen. Richard Blumenthal and well-known Manhattan district attorney Robert Morgenthau, both of whom have a rich Jewish heritage.

Those in the audience also recognized another familiar face during the *Harvesting Stones* viewing – the late Henny Simon of Colchester, who drew heartfelt sighs from around the room when she appeared on screen.

Simon and her husband at the time, Abram, emigrated to America in 1949 after she survived years of atrocities brought on by the Nazis in concentration camps. Once in America, she reunited with her father, who had arrived in the U.S. in 1948 from Shanghai, China, and with her husband, purchased a poultry and dairy farm shortly thereafter.

Simon passed away in a car accident in April 2017.

Many Jewish farmers quickly discovered the rocky soil of Connecticut farmlands to be “trying” and “difficult,” so most turned to dairy or chicken farming; while others turned their farms into summer resorts to help supplement their agricultural income.

The documentary concludes with an earnest account by descendant Jacqueline Jacobsohn, whose family had settled on a Hampton farm. In her statement, Jacobsohn speaks of the Jewish immigrants as “patriots” who had been kicked out of their own country, but sought refuge in America and with help from de Hirsch, “gave their hearts and hands to the land,” leaving behind a legacy of their own.

During the film viewing, Fischer spoke on the documentary’s enduring relevance even to today’s political climate with ongoing anti-im-



**Jerry Fischer’s documentary *Harvesting Stones*, screened last week at Colchester Senior Center, delves into the history of Jewish immigrant farmers, many of whom settled on land in Eastern Connecticut.**

migration efforts.

“Especially after what Mr. Trump said,” Fischer said, referring to the president having allegedly described Haiti and some African nations as “shithole countries” on Jan. 11.

“My grandma [was] coming from a shithole too, but she made a life here like most Americans,” Fischer added. “I believe [*Harvesting Stones*] tells a story important to all of us and it

is a story about allowing people to come to our country and have a chance to make a life for themselves.”

\*\*\*

For more information, or to purchase a DVD copy of the documentary, contact the Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut at 860-444-6333.

**Teachers Cut cont. from Front Page**

options for healthcare insurance providers and consolidation of services with outside organizations and school districts.

“I don’t like voting for a zero percent budget, but...it’s kind of our only alternative,” Darby said. “The state sort of backed us into a corner. At some point, I would hope the state gets its financial house in order.”

O’Reilly confirmed the district will investigate other options for its health insurance. Early estimates indicate the current \$2.71 million cost for health insurance may rise by about \$183,950, or 7.27 percent, if the school remains with its current provider.

Darby also questioned the decision to turn athletic director Chris Serra’s position into an administrative role, which occurred during the 2016-17 budget cycle.

“An administrative position is basically the equivalent of just about two full-time teachers,” Darby said.

Serra’s salary went from \$62,565 as the non-administrative athletic director to about \$88,000 when he took on the responsibility of developing curriculum and supervising physical education and wellness teachers from preschool through grade 12, according to *Rivereast* ar-

chives.

School board member Tim Lavoy said the decision to support a level-funded budget was “a tough call,” but added it probably would’ve been cut to zero by the selectmen if the school board didn’t do it first.

Concern by some members that selectmen could reduce the budget even more was met with cautious reassurance by Board of Education Chairwoman MaryAnne Rode. She said when the school board has presented a level-funded budget in the past, members have made it clear to selectmen that the district has nothing more to give.

“[Selectmen] have heard that, and they have respected that,” Rode said.

She suggested the school board might be taking a greater risk if members presented a bud-

get increase.

“[Selectmen] may dig deeper because they don’t fully understand; they don’t feel we’ve necessarily given all we can. They may make judgments about what more we could give them,” Rode said.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield has said she expects a level-funded budget on both the education and general government sides of the budget.

Officials have noted, however, that a level-funded spending plan would still represent a one mill increase to taxpayers due to reduced revenue from the state.

Portland is currently slated to receive \$855,953 less from the state than local leaders accounted for in the 2017-18 budget approved by voters last May. The state revenue estimates

were based on municipal aid figures included in Gov. Dannel P. Malloy’s proposed budget back in February, which ended up being much more optimistic than the package that he ultimately signed into law in October.

The funding reduction from the state this year compared to last is \$616,323, most of which affects education funding.

O’Reilly has said he anticipates a similar reduction for fiscal year 2018-19.

Additional state budget information and solid figures will likely not be available until after the General Assembly reconvenes in February.

Rode said she supports the level-funded budget out of necessity.

“I feel like it is really the only response in this particular budget year that we can have,” she said. “It’s the fiscally-responsible response.”

# Helping Kids at RHAM Deal with Trauma

by Sloan Brewster

Local educators are working on ways to help children maintain resilience in the face of trauma.

According to *Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope*, a 55-minute documentary shown at RHAM High School as part of a Jan. 9 workshop, repeated exposure to trauma causes toxic stress. Toxic stress, in turn leaves biological markers associated with lifelong health issues. The film highlights research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs asserts there is a relationship between toxic stress and health, future violence, victimization and perpetration, and opportunity and links it to specific diseases, including cancer and heart disease, as well as obesity, depression and suicide.

AHM Youth and Family Services director Michelle Hamilton – who co-organized the workshop with Diane Dugas, director of EASTCONN Center of Educational Leadership – said she wanted to get the information to the community. She wants AHM staff and area teachers to understand how trauma and experiences impact children and that teachers can do small things in the classroom to make a difference, she said.

“We’re a mental health intervention treatment and prevention youth services bureau and many of our staff see the need for more trauma informed care,” Hamilton said. “Informing our educators regarding ACEs, I think there may be, a light might click off in peoples’ heads.”

In the film, Dr. Jack Shonkoff, pediatrician in Cambridge, Mass., defines toxic stress as “the chronic activation of stress with no support.”

People who have experienced toxic stress, especially as children, can’t just pull themselves up by their boot straps and get better, he said.

According to several physicians quoted in the film, including Dr. Robert Anda, Dr. Vincent Felitti and Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, toxic stress wreaks havoc on the body. While children may forget incidents that lead to the stress, their bodies will not, the doctors said.

“We tend to divide the field of mental health separate from physical health, but the body doesn’t do that,” Harris said.

Using anecdote after anecdote, the physicians demonstrated the link between ACEs and future medical issues.

The film also looked at ways to help children build and maintain resilience, such as by having a stable caring adult to lean on. It depicts communities and schools where an intergenerational approach is taken to build parental capabilities to deal with children’s problems, including Strong School in New Haven, which utilizes techniques, developed by David Johnson, Ph.D., co-director of the Post Traumatic Stress Center in New Haven, to reduce stress and help children maintain resilience.

It’s about being trauma-informed, Anda said at the end of the film.

“It’s not what’s wrong with you; it’s what happened to you,” he said.

After the film, the audience moved to the cafeteria, where people broke into several discussion groups. Dugas facilitated the conversation.

“What does being a trauma informed community mean?” she asked groups to consider.

Each group had a large sheet of paper in the middle of its table, where members jotted ideas.

The group at the table where this reporter sat discussed building compassion and helping children who internalize emotional burdens open up. Folks at the table included local educators, a member of the Hebron Board of Education and three area paraprofessionals.

Members of the group recommended training the community in ACEs by forming a community action group and tapping faith communities, retired folk and others to help spread the word.

Barriers to success the group listed included funding problems and shifting perceptions.

“It’s almost like a paradigm shift,” Holly Maiorano, special education director for Andover, said.

When groups shared at the end, other groups, including one with Andover Elementary School Principal John Briody, said changing the mindset about the problem was imperative.

Other thoughts included eliminating the stigma attached to mental health and having

broader discussions.

“Inform the community with clear and plain language,” Dugas said. “Bring everyone in on the conversation.”

EASTCONN is already taking steps, she said.

“This has become such a movement since September that we do have an action group,” Dugas said.

The group is creating a map of resources that will be disseminated shortly, she added.

ACEs was born when Felitti was running an obesity clinic in 1985. He questioned why successful patients gained back the weight they had lost and found that many had histories of childhood sexual abuse.

He began to ask more questions, finding connections between other health issues and childhood sexual or physical abuse and other adversities.

Over time, that realization led to The CDC-Kaiser Permanente ACE Study and the ACE quiz, a series of 10 ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions. As ACE scores, or the number of ‘yes’ answers, increase, health problems go up and life expectancy goes down, researchers said.

“The first thing that we found is that adverse childhood experiences were common,” Felitti said in the film. “I was the first person to see this data.”

For more information, visit [resilience movie.com](http://resilience.movie.com).

## No More Overdue Fines at Hebron Library

by Sloan Brewster

Did it take you a little longer to finish that Stephen King book than you thought it would? Don’t worry – Douglas Library’s got your back.

Effective with the start of the new year, Douglas Library is no longer charging overdue fines.

The Board of Trustees considers fines an impediment to patrons, library director Amanda Brouwer said.

“I think that it does seem to be somewhat of a trend,” she said of libraries eliminating the fines. “We don’t want anyone that’s struggling with financial issues to think of fines as a barrier.”

The Lyme Public Library no longer charges fines for overdue materials, she said, adding that she thought libraries in New York City had also stopped charging for overdue materials.

In October, according to its website, The New York Public Library announced a fine forgiveness program for students, a measure previously taken by the Brooklyn Public Library and Queens Library.

Cragin Memorial Library in Colchester also eliminated fines, Brouwer said.

In making the decision to cut the fines, she said she talked to several library directors, including the director at Cragin.

“I actually put it out for all the libraries,” she said.

Some libraries had “their horror stories” about nixing the fines, she said. Others said they would be interested in seeing how it goes in Hebron.

It’s not unusual for parents to take out 30 or more children’s books at a time, she said. Parents and kids read a lot throughout the day and some children’s books are easy to run through quickly.

“You have nap time and you’re reading five to six times a day,” she said. “Say you’re a day late because your kids got sick.”

With 30-plus books, the bill could be pretty high.

“You don’t want the parent to say to the child, ‘It’s too expensive to go to the library,’” she said.

What’s more, it’s uncomfortable for staff to

have to tell patrons their accounts are blocked due to an unpaid balance and they can’t take out any materials, she said.

“Especially with kids, this should be a place where they go, where they’re comfortable, where they go to read,” Brouwer said.

Still, the library wants its materials back, she said, adding that she doesn’t anticipate people keeping items.

“I think respect for the library is ingrained in people,” she said.

Though the fines have been eliminated, there is a voluntary donation jar, which staff will offer as an option for folks.

Overdue fines were 10 cents per day for books, magazines, audio books and music CDs and \$1 for movies, Brouwer said. The recommended donation is equivalent to the overdue fine that would have been imposed.

“I think that that’s a different feeling that now you’re supporting the collection,” Brouwer said. “It’s a better feeling.”

Fines did not bring in a large amount of funds anyway, she said. Fines made up less than 1 percent of the library’s overall revenue, Brouwer said.

The library will still charge a fee if patrons lose or damage the item.

Parents upstairs in the Children’s Room enjoying Storytime with their children had mixed views on cutting the fines.

Jean Barth, of Farmington, who was there with her grandson Bodyn Daniels, of Amston, said she thought not having to pay a fine would be an incentive to folks to return overdue books, but Allison Batista, of Marlborough, who was there with her son Liam Batista, had a different opinion.

“It could be an incentive to be lazy,” she said.

Batista said a friend of hers checks museum passes out of a local library that doesn’t charge overdue fines if the passes are late.

“She never gets to check them out because [other patrons] have them for weeks at a time, so I don’t think it’s a good idea,” Batista said.

In other library news, for the past 16 months a group of people, including board members, staff members, members of Friends of the Li-



David Gilbert, of Amston, helps his children, Gabriel Gilbert, 3, and Eve Gilbert, 1, make gingerbread men during an arts and crafts program at the Douglas Library.

brary and the general public, has been working on a new strategic plan for the library, Brouwer said. The last time the library had a strategic plan was 20 years ago.

“It was something that we obviously needed to complete,” Brouwer said. “We’ve been working, brainstorming, going through the process. We had a facilitator come and help us put out a survey.”

Questions in the survey included what folks like about the library, what it could do better, thoughts on the hours of operation, and what people thought about programs.

“We’re doing good things and the people enjoy coming here and spending time here but there are obviously things that we could be stronger in,” Brouwer said.

Those include making sure the library is safe, keeping up with technology, improving the collection and offering programs that benefit all

demographics.

“So we’re as diverse as we can be,” she said. “We had talked about doing things like fix-it clinics, bringing people in that maybe hadn’t been to the library in a while.”

The biggest thing the library needs to do is create a dedicated teen space, Brouwer said. Teens, including from the Teen Advisory Board, were involved in the information collecting phase of the strategic plan process.

“We have a whole space for children but we don’t have a dedicated space for teens where they can be teens,” she said.

The current teen space sits in the middle of the quiet area, Brouwer said. There are ways to reconfigure the 16,800-square-foot library to allow teens their own area. Some ideas include partitions, glass walls and half walls.

To complete a project like that, though, the library would need more funding, Brouwer said.

# RHAM School Board Agrees to Window Settlement

by Sloan Brewster

The RHAM Board of Education has entered into a settlement agreement over failed windows at the high school.

According to a press release issued last week, the Missouri-based EFCO Corporation will supply and install an undisclosed number of windows during the 2018 summer vacation. The company supplied the windows when the new high school opened in 2003.

At its Dec. 18 meeting, the regional school board unanimously agreed to authorize Superintendent of Schools Patricia Law to execute a settlement with EFCO Corporation, the Missouri-based company that supplied the windows when the high school was built.

Law would not release terms of the settlement.

Issues with the failed windows included stains and discoloration from long-term residual condensation and internal signs of moisture and frost during the colder months.

"If you look at the windows they're still all cloudy," Law said in December.

Also in December, Law said she had signed the document and sent it to EFCO for its signatures. Aside from that, she was closed-mouthed about the details.

"There's a confidentiality clause with the settlement" she said. "It's resolving the issue of the cloudy windows."

She did say a press release would be forthcoming, once the agreement was signed by EFCO.

That press release arrived last week with few details.

According to the release, EFCO has agreed to supply and install new windows; the windows are to be put in during the 2018 summer vacation.

"We are very pleased with the agreement," Judy Benson Clarke, chairman of the school board, said in the press release. "We always

preferred a pragmatic, cost-effective resolution if that was possible, and this settlement accomplishes that."

Thomas Finn, Hartford-based head of the business litigation practice at McCarter & English and lead counsel to the school district, echoed that sentiment, according to the press release.

"We are pleased we were able to negotiate a resolution for the benefit of the district without the cost and delay of litigation," Finn said. "We are also pleased EFCO stood by its products and worked with us to accomplish this solution."

In 2014, then-schools superintendent Bob Siminski filed a claim that was accepted by EFCO when the problem with the windows was detected.

According to a press release issued in February 2014 by the Board of Education, the win-

dow failure was massive, with more than 160 windows needing to be replaced for more than \$125,000. But later that month, then-board chairman Danny Holtsclaw said a combination of board members, staff members and members of the community went through the school and identified all of the affected windows, placing tags on each one and highlighting them on the architectural plans.

There were actually more damaged than previously thought, he said then. The total was actually "in excess of 200."

"So that installation cost estimate will go up," Holtsclaw said then.

The windows came with a 10-year warranty, which was approaching its end when the issues were discovered, the 2014 release explained, but due to the number of windows affected, Siminski filed the claim – and it was accepted by the company.

# Meet the New Pastor of Church of Hope in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

The Rev. Jordan Brown started his first week as pastor of Hebron's Church of Hope with burst pipes.

"First week started with a bang," he joked. "Literally, my first day was Tuesday [Jan. 2]; that's when the pipes burst."

Brown grew up in Colchester, where his parents, who attend the church, still live. In his youth, he was not the religious person he is today.

"We weren't Christian growing up, or anything," he said. "I actually became Christian as a 16-year-old in high school. I had an uncle who was Christian, who shared his faith with me."

Brown began attending a church in Columbia, where he was a member from the time he was 16 until last year.

The Rev. Brian Keldsen, senior pastor at Baptist Fellowship, invested a lot of time in Brown and his wife, Rachel, whom he met at a church youth group, Brown said.

"He taught me a lot and gave me some opportunities to grow in my faith," he said. "He thought I was going to be a pastor before I ever did."

In those initial Christian years, Brown, a 2010 graduate of Bacon Academy, did not think leading a congregation was in his future. He had plans for a life in economics and finance, especially since he rocked a high school class project in which he had to create a company. His water bottle company was a huge success and he expected he was going places in the business world.

"I did not think that I was ever going to be a pastor," he said.

Then he spent a year studying the Bible, found he was gifted in leadership and decided God was calling him to the religious life.

He spent time with mentors and told them he was changing direction.

"They all said, 'Well, it's about time,'" he said.

Brown attended Cedarville University in Ohio, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in pastoral ministry.

"Once I preached for the first time in front of an entire church, it was this rush and this passion I had in me to preach the Bible to people," he said. "I couldn't turn back."

Brown and his future wife went to college together. When they came home, they got married at Baptist Fellowship. Brown served at the

church for five years, ultimately becoming youth pastor and, then, associate pastor.

He started to do website design for the church and graphics and community outreach, including leading a small Bible studies group.

"And that's when I began a relationship with" Church of Hope, a Congregational church located at the corner of routes 85 and 66, Brown said.

When Church of Hope's pastor, the Rev. Kevin Zufall, left in July 2016 for a church in the south, the Rev. Aaron Campbell was named interim pastor. For about a year, Brown filled in whenever the pulpit was empty.

"And at that time they had a part-time offer on the table but I was really looking for something full-time," Brown said.

In August, they offered him the full-time gig. "I said, 'Yeah, I'll talk with Rachel, pray about that,'" Brown said.

After hashing out the decision with his wife and God, Brown accepted. In December, the church voted to officially name him pastor.

"They voted 100 percent yes," he said. "So that was pretty cool."

Brown's first service as pastor was Sunday, Jan. 7, with nearly 50 people in attendance.

"And I served the Lord's Supper," he said. The Lord's Supper is also known as communion.

Brown's sermon revolved around the Book of Mark, chapter 1, verses 1 through 15.

"The big message was just kind of developing the story of the Bible," he said.

He started with God's creation of the world and of Adam and Eve and of their rebellion and the continued rebellion of humans as a whole. In the verses from the Book of Mark, John the Baptist preaches about turning from the ways of the world and foretells the coming of Jesus, Brown said.

"[Jesus'] message was to turn from the wrong, to cast out the wrong in our hearts," Brown said.

Terry Brehant of Hebron was at the service, and said Brown's message was well-received.

"He's a great teacher. Jordan's up there and he's teaching us, he's delving deeper in the scriptures," she said. "How I apply it is, it doesn't matter who I'm meeting, everybody needs to hear the Good News, and Jordan's teaching us that through scripture."

Brehant, who was married at Church of Hope – then known as First Congregational Church



**The Rev. Jordan Brown is the new pastor of Church of Hope. The Colchester native actually didn't come to Christianity until he was 16 years old.**

of Hebron – 30 years ago, then became a member of Baptist Fellowship. She returned to Church of Hope two years ago.

"When [my husband and I] walked in here we were like, 'we're home,'" she said. "This is where God wants us. This is where he wants us to serve."

Brehant led the youth group at Baptist Fellowship that Brown attended years ago.

"Terry and her husband actually knew me before I was a Christian," Brown said. "They got to watch me as a rebellious teenager turning into their pastor."

"It's just nice to see where God leads us," Brehant said.

Church of Hope, a member of the Conservative Christian Congregational Conference, is more than 300 years old. The current building

was built in 1883, after the earlier church burned down in a fire in 1882 on Main Street.

"This is actually the fourth building of the church," Brown said.

The longest-serving pastor was local dentist Dr. Benjamin Pomeroy, who served as pastor from 1734 to his death in 1785.

In the last few years, the inside of the church has been renovated; the pulpit and the organ, which was built in 1877 in Boston Mass., remain intact.

"One of the cool things about this church, in 1798 the Missionary Society of Connecticut was originated here by Pastor Amos Basset; that's the longest and oldest [missionary] society here in the U.S.," Brown said. "Their goal was basically just to reach 'heathens' with the good news of the Gospel."

# East Hampton Resident Releases Book

After 12 years of research and writing, East Hampton resident Al Vela has released a book, *Tracks to the Westminster Barrio: 1902-1960s*. The book is published by VERSA Publishing Inc. of Illinois and is available for sale.



Al Vela

Westminster, Calif., is a city near the beaches of Orange County, where Vela was born and went to school. The town began as a Presbyterian colony in 1869. A nearby German colony was Anaheim founded in 1857. These colonies came into being shortly after the peace treaty, Guadalupe Hidalgo, was signed between Mexico and the United States in 1848. Mexico lost a huge chunk of its northern territories: California, Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico.

In the 1890s, railroad companies like the Southern Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe recruited Mexicans in major cities like El Paso and Mexico City. The companies brought them into southern California by the trainloads, Vela said. Mexican immigrants were

the preferred workers not just for the railroad companies but other businesses such as working in the mines in the southwest. Many ended up working for Ford Motor Company in Michigan, the meat packing companies of Illinois and Indiana, and the iron mills of Pennsylvania, following the crop as far east as Florida, New Jersey and New York.

*Tracks* is a story of how Mexican families moved into the Presbyterian colony in the 1900s. This area became known as a barrio or colonia/colony. Restrictive residential covenants made it unlawful for Mexican Americans to buy properties in white neighborhoods. These real estate covenants were outlawed in the middle 1940s.

As late as the 1950s, there were as many as 53 colonias in Orange County. Not only were they segregated into the “other side of the tracks,” but also boards of education in the counties of Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange initiated policies of sending Mexican-American children to “Mexican schools,” Vela said.

“White society regarded Mexicans as of inferior intelligence, dirty, profligate, and lacking in morals based on so-called scientific studies,” he said.

Westminster Elementary School District

opened a Mexican school in 1929 in the middle of the barrio: Hoover School. Its stated aim was to “Americanize” Mexican-American school children, Vela said. In the book, Vela, born in 1938, tells of attending Hoover in kindergarten and first grade (1943-1945).

During World War II, the children of a local resident and his wife, Gonzalo and Felicitas Méndez, were refused admission at the white 17th Street School even though they lived within the school’s boundaries. Gonzalo’s three nieces and nephew – who all, Vela said, were white complexioned, blonde and of French-Mexican heritage with a surname of Vidaurri – could attend the school. Not so the three darker and noticeably Mexican Méndez children, he added.

The result was a civil lawsuit, *Mendez et al. vs Westminster et al.*, involving three other defendant Orange County school districts of Santa Ana, Garden Grove and El Modena.

Superior Court Judge Paul McCormick heard the case in 1945 and ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in 1946.

The school districts took the case to the Ninth District Court of Appeals in San Francisco where the seven judges ruled unanimously in favor of Mendez severely castigated the offending districts. The offending districts reluctantly

dragged their feet and were held in contempt of court in 1946. The Westminster Board of Education integrated the 17th Street School while the case was being heard in 1945.

According to Vela, lawyers for the NAACP were present at all court proceedings, as “friends of the court.”

“*Mendez v. Westminster* directly influenced the NAACP’s legal strategies applied in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954,” Vela said.

*Tracks* includes chapters on life in the barrio (recreation, sports, work, education and religion) as well as on the Mexican Revolution (1910-19) and the Cristero Rebellion (a religious revolt from 1926-29) in the central states of Mexico. Vela said it took him a year to research and write these two chapters using primary sources found in Mexico City.

“*Tracks* has been a 12-year labor of love,” Vela said.

In 2000, Vela earned his PhD from the University of Connecticut with majors in bilingual and math education. He retired from New Britain Public Schools in 1998. He graduated summa cum laude with a 4.000+ average in his doctoral studies.

For information on the purchase of *Tracks*, contact Vela at [siglerpark@gmail.com](mailto:siglerpark@gmail.com).

## East Hampton Schools Chief Presents \$31M Budget

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith on Tuesday presented a \$31.05 million education budget proposal which represents a 3.35 percent increase over the current budget, largely due to contractual and special education cost increases.

The superintendent’s recommendation eliminates a science teacher and a math teacher at East Hampton High School. That leaves six science and five math teachers in the building.

Even as the proposal cuts teachers at the high school level, it adds one for world language for grades 3-5 and applies roughly \$107,000 district-wide toward new programming, textbooks and curriculum revision in the subjects of reading, writing and math.

Smith said the world language teacher was the most requested addition to the budget when he asked for input from the school community. The second most popular addition was a cheerleading assistant coach at the middle school, which costs \$2,000.

Not included in Smith’s recommended budget are any revenue estimates when it comes to education funding from the state. Despite a trend of deepening reductions, the school spending plan does not assume a decrease in education aid.

This year alone, data presented by Smith shows the town is slated to receive approximately \$991,175 less in education aid than it did last year.

It’s currently unclear how much education aid the town can expect in the coming year. Officials are waiting for the General Assembly to reconvene in February for more information.

Smith said any shortfall in education funding would be added to the 3.35 percent increase.

“In order to be completely transparent, the budget does not contain items or funds as placeholders in the budget to buffer any potential cuts,” Smith said in his introduction. “This request has been arrived at after difficult decisions, including cuts in teaching positions at a time when next year’s district enrollment is predicted to be higher than the current year.”

The district is anticipating 20 more students next year, according to Smith.

Other changes in the budget include the re-assignment of two special education teachers to new programs in the elementary and middle schools. The programs are designed to meet special education students’ needs in the district so they can remain in – or return to – school with their East Hampton peers, while reducing expensive outplacement costs.

An existing guidance position would be re-assigned to the high school to focus on job coaching and college placement, according to the proposal.

If the budget must be cut beyond the 3.35 percent increase submitted by Smith, he said the proposed world language position and an existing high school English teacher would be eliminated. Other reductions would have to be determined.

About 1.5 percent of the proposed education budget increase comes from rising special education costs, Smith said. It’s the result of an unexpected increase in the number of students who require services outside the district this year.

School business manager Karen Asetta said last month the number of outplaced special education students is expected to rise to 14 students by February, which is five more than

school officials budgeted for during last year’s planning process.

Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff on Wednesday described rising special education costs as concerning.

“It’s not just East Hampton. It’s a huge concern all over,” he said.

Federal law gives all students with disabilities the right to an appropriate public education at no cost to the family.

The district currently receives partial reimbursement when special education costs exceed 4.5 times the average cost of educating a pupil in town. Asetta said the district received 72 percent of the total requested reimbursement last year.

According to Goff, “there needs to be some kind of relief or assistance” for the unanticipated tuition and transportation costs the district must absorb.

Smith attributed the rest of the budget increase – 1.85 percent – to fixed costs and contractual obligations. He said the actual amount of those fixed costs and obligations came to a 3.75 percent increase, but the figure was whittled down to 1.85 percent through staffing cuts and reductions to supplies, equipment and repairs throughout the budget.

In a dramatic shift from the superintendent’s proposal at this time last year, the spending plan now estimates a 3 percent decrease in health insurance costs compared to the current budget. The change is the result of a switch to the Connecticut Partnership Plan, which allows municipal employees to become part of the same plan offered to state employees.

Goff noted numerous priorities submitted by

the principals from each of the district’s four schools were not included in the budget, ranging from a gifted and talented teacher in the elementary schools, to a digital library in the middle school, to culinary arts training at the high school.

The district presented a seven-page document outlining all the administration requests, including 11 that made it into the superintendent’s recommended budget and 63 that did not.

Smith emphasized the spending plan should not just be a maintenance budget, but should “leap ahead in providing programming and offerings to make our students the most competitive graduates in college and the workplace.”

That’s why he made the difficult decision to eliminate teaching positions in his initial recommendation, he said.

“I’m trying to design a budget that allows the district, even in difficult fiscal times, to make progress and move forward in important ways,” he said.

Data compiled by the district shows East Hampton is on the lower end of comparable towns when it comes to spending. For the 2016-17 school year, the district, at \$14,971 per student, ranked 15th in per-pupil expenditures out of 22 towns with similar demographics. Some of the nearest towns included: East Haddam, \$19,125 per student; Glastonbury, \$16,085; Rocky Hill, \$15,044; Colchester, \$14,925; and Cromwell, \$14,475.

School board members will discuss the budget over the next several meetings in anticipation of a Feb. 26 vote. The next meeting will be held Jan. 29 at 6:30 p.m. in the East Hampton High School T-Bell.

# Skincare Studio Finds Success in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

The life path Dory Bonet has forged for more than 20 years took a turn over the past two years as the mother of two got a divorce and opened Cara Mia Skincare Studio on Route 66 in Portland.

Bonet, of Middletown, was working at a day spa in Wallingford when she decided to set off on her own.

"I felt like I was stuck," she said. "I was stuck in my marriage, I was stuck in my job."

There was no room for growth in either realm, according to Bonet.

"I had to do something. In order for me to succeed and in order for me to grow and do more and offer more to my clients, I had to leave," she said.

Cara Mia Skincare Studio reopened this fall at 1062 Portland Cobalt Rd. Bonet hung up her first shingle behind the State Farm building near the center of town in late 2016, but was there only nine months before she found her new business home.

For Bonet, it became important to show her 13- and 14-year-old sons that she could succeed in life and in business on her own merits.

"I took no loans out to start this business. Nothing. I saved a little bit here and there. I did it all on my own," she said.

She wants her sons to see that their mom will be fine.

"I'm going to succeed. I'm going to make it grow. I'm going to do whatever I can, God-willing," she said.

When the idea was still in its formative stages, Bonet found support from the Main Street business community she'd gotten to know through her time as nail technician at Lacquer Nails.

She singled out Ellen Foster, the owner of

Victorian Inspirations, as an invaluable source of advice and assistance.

"She's been my mentor," Bonet said. "Between her and my family, they've been my push to do this. Not to give up, not to turn around and throw my hands up."

Bonet was born in Middletown to Puerto Rican parents. Many family members and friends still live in Puerto Rico.

"My heart is there," she said, crediting her family with a support network that extends from here to the islands.

At Cara Mia Skincare Studio, Bonet offers a range of services, including facials, manicures and pedicures, waxing, makeup application and eyebrow and eyelash tinting. Gerrianna Onisto, the owner of Body Wellness, provides massage therapy services at the skincare studio.

Bonet said she hopes to bring in an additional nail technician and lash extension technician as her business expands.

Skin care has been Bonet's main interest since she graduated from hairdressing and cosmetology school in 1993. She said that while skin care took the backburner in the industry compared to hairdressing, it's the face that has always been most important to her.

She said the most important element of beauty isn't specific to a salon; it's about someone taking the time to focus on themselves, their health and their appearance.

"It doesn't come from all the options and cream you put on," Bonet said. "It comes from within. I always felt if you feel good about yourself, if you're taking care of yourself, it will radiate. You will glow."

Bonet described some "medi-specific" facial treatments as some of the innovative services she's been able to provide now that she's on her own.



**Dory Bonet recently reopened Cara Mia Skincare Studio at 1062 Portland Cobalt Rd. Originally situated further up Route 66, Bonet started her own business in late 2016 as a way to grow both personally and professionally.**

Microneedling stimulates the production of collagen and elastin to fight off fine lines and wrinkles by puncturing the top layer of skin with titanium needles, according to Bonet. Dermaplaning utilizes a scalpel to remove peach fuzz and dead skin from the face.

She also carries three lines of spa-quality products for sale.

"You can come here and get your treatment, but how you take care of your skin after you leave is where you're going to see the difference," she said.

# New Restaurant Approved for Andover Plaza

by Sloan Brewster

Space in Andover Plaza is being groomed for a new eatery.

On Tuesday morning, while workers fixed electrical issues in the empty storefront between Andover Mini Mart and Oriental Wok in the Route 6 plaza, Carlamarie Goulet placed an order for a soda cooler for Nonna's Kitchen, a breakfast and lunch restaurant she plans to open next month. Many of the sodas, teas and juices she selected for the cooler were inspired by her eight grandchildren, she said, telling Bryan Fogelstrom from Coca-Cola that there would be trouble if she missed any of their favorites.

Her grandson, Teyton Boland, 6, of Bolton, named the place when she was trying to come up with an idea, she said.

"He's like, 'Well Nonna, you're always in the kitchen,'" she said. "He goes, 'Nonna's Kitchen.'"

Teyton also has big plans for working there, making chocolate milk for customers.

"He thinks he's going to be going to the tables stirring the milk," Goulet said. "He said to me, 'Gramma, you're gonna pay me \$10 an hour, right? I have to make the chocolate milk.'"

Goulet started working on getting the restaurant up and running about three months ago, she said.

So far, she put a fresh coat of paint, added new lights, counters, appliances and put in a new bathroom. On Tuesday, the electricians got the electricity going; and the floor still needs fixing.

When they successfully turned on the lights in the dining room, Goulet became excited.

"I got lights!" she exclaimed.

She has also received approval from the town.

Eric Anderson, chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said Zoning Agent John

Valente gave the go ahead for the new restaurant.

"We could've done a full review," Anderson said. "Because there was essentially a very similar business (previously in that location) we chose to just do it as an administrative review."

Anderson said a bakery/caterer, which also offered breakfast and lunch, was previously in that spot.

Goulet is shooting for a Feb. 4 opening – which, coincidentally, is also her birthday. Initially she had planned to open January 1, but then she learned there were serious electrical issues and she had to call someone in to make repairs, so she decided to capitalize on her special day.

"I can do it Feb. 4, my birthday," she said. "Woohoo!"

Overall, she's pretty pumped about opening.

"I've been trying to do this forever," she said. "I've been working over at the Oak Street Bar (in Manchester) and all my tips are going into getting this stuff done."

There have been many times when she has seen the space open up but she just didn't have the financing to do it, she said. Neighboring business owners are eager for her to open and residents have stopped in town and said they were looking forward to trying the place out.

"I mean it's a great stretch," Fogelstrom chimed. "So busy."

Nonna's Kitchen will be open from 6 a.m. till 2 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and will be closed Mondays.

"Before work they can sit down, eat breakfast, and watch my TV," Goulet said. "I'm going to have a flat-screen TV."

Breakfast will include a list of options named for Goulet's grandchildren. There's Teyton's French Toast, Kayden's Pancakes, Brianna's Brianna Veggie Omelet, David's Sandwich,



**A new restaurant has been approved for Andover Plaza. Nonna's Kitchen, nestled between Oriental Wok and Andover Mini-Mart, is expected to open next month.**

with bacon, sausage and egg, Alexia's Country Benedict, Anthony's Steak, with ham and eggs Caiden's Cheese Quesadilla, with scrambled eggs, and Aubrey's Eggs Benedict.

"I just love my grandkids to death," Goulet said.

Bill Kauffman, Goulet's fiancé, who stopped by to see the progress of the building, said her specialty is eggs benedict.

"She's been in the food business all her life," he said. "(Her) cooking, that's why I kept her around for 20 years."

Goulet is still working on lunch. She wanted to offer comfort foods, such as meatloaf with mashed potatoes and shepherd's pie, but those are considered dinner items. She isn't licensed for dinner and said she wasn't ready to spend

the extra few hundred dollars. At this point, she has decided to have one item posted on a menu board.

"What's on that board will be the only lunch of the day," Goulet said.

Goulet learned to cook from her Sicilian grandmother, her "Nonna," who lived next door when she was growing up and began teaching her when she was 7 or 8 years old.

"Easter was our favorite meal that we cooked together," Goulet said.

Goulet especially enjoyed baking Italian cookies with her. While at this time, she's not planning to offer desserts at her restaurant, she said she may bake some cookies at Easter.

"I'm just hoping to see everybody come on in and try my delicious cooking," she said.

# Colchester Selectmen to Schedule Presentation on OpenGov Software

by Julianna Roche

The OpenGov financial transparency software, which First Selectman Art Shilosky last month removed from the 2017-18 budget, may be back after all.

Art Shilosky announced last month funding for the software – originally backed by the Board of Finance – was out of this year’s budget, to help make up for the \$1.78 million deficit in municipal aid from the state.

But he pledged at Wednesday’s meeting of the finance board to organize an official OpenGov presentation for a future Board of Selectmen meeting to better understand the software, with the thinking that funding may be restored for the 2018-19 year.

Finance board members had bristled in December when Shilosky announced that he planned to reduce town spending by cutting the \$15,100 set aside for the transparency software.

But the first selectman maintained the elimination of the funding was necessary to help account for the shortfall in state funding. He noted the Board of Education had already moved to reduce its \$40.63 million budget by

\$825,000.

Reductions have “gotta come from everybody,” Shilosky said at the time.

However, at their Dec. 6 meeting, finance board members voiced their disapproval of Shilosky’s decision.

Board of Finance member Andrea Migliaccio questioned why Shilosky “didn’t seek counsel” from the finance board when making the decision to remove the software from the budget, while board member Andreas Bisbikos said he felt disappointment that the first selectman had “left [the finance board] in the dark.”

Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said he felt blaming the removal of the software on “the budget situation” was “disingenuous.”

According to its website, OpenGov– which had been an item of discussion and in-depth research among finance board members since mid-2016 – claims not only to provide citizens with easy access the town’s financial data and records (which are then presented in interactive visualizations and graphs), but also to help town officials “save hundreds of hours” pro-

cessing information requests, while still complying with transparency mandates.

During citizens’ comments on Wednesday, Board of Selectmen member Rosemary Coyle stressed that an official presentation on the transparency software was important so that selectmen could fully understand what the software does, ask questions, and “get to a place where maybe all of you [finance board members] are.”

“You as a board really did your due diligence as a Board of Finance. You spent a lot of time learning about it, viewing it,” Coyle said. “The Board of Selectmen has not gone through that process at all [and] that needs to happen for us to move forward.”

During the meeting, Tarlov explained that scheduling difficulties between various board members and an OpenGov representative was the reason that a presentation has not yet been planned; while the software may not be in the 2017-18 budget, he also emphasized that the finance board can request it be included in the next budget cycle.

\* \* \*

At the meeting, Tarlov also emphasized the importance of taxpayers taking the 2018-19 Colchester budget survey to offer their opinions and feedback on town financial matters.

As of Thursday, the chairman said the town has received just under 400 responses, but is hoping for more before the survey closes at 4 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 22. The 2017-18 budget survey had 414 responses – the lowest participation in the last four years.

Tarlov has explained that the purpose of the survey is to provide a separate channel for residents to share their opinions on town and school priorities, taxes, voting, and communications. Survey results are then shared and discussed among town officials and board members, with additional citizen input from meetings and other communication forms, to assess voter opinions.

To take the survey, visit [surveymonkey.com/r/LYV6KTH](http://surveymonkey.com/r/LYV6KTH).

\* \* \*

The next Board of Finance meeting will be held Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

## East Hampton School Board Member Departs

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Education is looking for a candidate to jump into the budget planning process as soon as possible following the resignation of Republican Erika Bonaccorso.

Bonaccorso resigned this week due to health concerns. She said an intensive multiple sclerosis treatment regimen left her extremely tired by the time evening rolled around, which forced her premature departure from school board meetings during her treatment.

“I always had to leave early and I felt bad about it,” she said.

Bonaccorso praised the school board as one that worked well together under the direction of Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith.

“I won’t stop fighting for the board,” she said.

School board chairman Christopher Goff said this week that applications for the position will be accepted through Jan. 26. Interviews are tentatively slated for Jan. 29, prior to the school board’s regularly scheduled meeting.

Goff expressed a sense of urgency due to the timing of the budget planning season, which kicked into high gear this week with Smith’s presentation of his \$31.05 million recommended budget on Tuesday. It’s a 3.35 percent increase over the current budget.

Goff said he hopes a new member will be

appointed at the Jan. 29 meeting and sworn in that week.

“Then they can be at our first meeting in February and be part of the budget process,” he said.

Members will listen to public input and deliberate the budget on Feb. 5 and 26, with a vote tentatively scheduled for the 26th.

The vacancy is the first one to emerge since the end of a roughly \$68,000 lawsuit between the school board and the Town Council that sought to determine which entity had the power to make appointments to the school board. In November, Superior Court Judge Edward Domnarski ruled the school board has “exclusive authority” to make its own appointments within 30 days of a vacancy.

The school board is now following a year-old provision in its bylaws, which was approved while the lawsuit was still ongoing, to expand its process for filling vacancies. It specifies the board “shall consider, but is not obligated to act upon, filling the vacancy with a person of the same political affiliation as the member who vacated the office.”

The bylaws direct the board to interview applicants no less than five days after public notice is given. The announcement ran in this issue of the *Rivereast*.

## East Hampton Police News

12/27: Jacob Field, 18, of 179 Wopowog Rd., was issued a summons for speeding, East Hampton Police said.

12/28: Colin Gibbons, 27, of 1554 Dixwell Ave., Hamden, was issued a summons for failure to drive right and operating under suspension, police said.

1/7: Richard Day, 46, of 58 Midwood Farm Rd., was issued a summons for misuse of a marker plate, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating a motor vehicle with a sus-

pending license and operating a motor vehicle without minimum insurance, police said.

1/11: John Loosemore Jr., 33, of 55 Braeburn Ln., Middletown, was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

1/11: Assane Betche, 40, of 101 Norton St., Waterbury, was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

Also, from Jan. 1-7, officers responded to 15 medical calls, 14 motor vehicle crashes and 17 alarms, and made 12 traffic stops.

## Marlborough Police News

1/11: State Police said Madison R. Clark, 19, of 2 Summit Rd., Columbia, was arrested and charged with fourth-degree larceny.

## Andover Police News

1/12: State Police said Elysia Petzold, 21, of 182 Lamplighter Dr., Manchester, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

## Route 6 Crash Injures Two in Andover

by Julianna Roche

A two-vehicle crash on Route 6 left two people injured last week, according to police.

Police said at approximately 12 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 9, Renee L. Pendergast, 51, of 50 Fitzgerald Rd., Brooklyn, was driving a Pontiac Grand Prix heading eastbound on Route 6 near the intersection with Route 316 when it collided with a Toyota Camry driven by William E. Barnard, 63, of 142 Crestridge Dr., Vernon, who had entered the eastbound

lane from a private driveway.

Police said both Pendergast and a passenger – Robert L. Berthiaume, 72, of 45 Oak Wood Ln., Columbia – were transported for suspected minor injuries to Hartford Hospital by the Andover Fire Department and the Ambulance Service of Manchester, respectively.

Barnard was issued an infraction for failure to grant right of way at a private driveway, according to police.

## Andover Hires Full-Time Treasurer

by Sloan Brewster

The Town of Andover has decided to hire a full-time treasurer.

At a special joint meeting between the boards of selectmen and finance on Thursday, Jan. 11, the Board of Selectmen unanimously passed a motion authorizing Town Administrator Joe Higgins to hire a treasurer for a salary up to \$60,000.

According to the minutes, Higgins told selectmen he has already received applications and that the applicants would be evaluated on their experience.

Currently, the town has a part-time treasurer, said Board of Selectman Chairman Robert Burbank in a phone call Wednesday.

“They needed some additional money and wanted to move money from the budget to make up the difference to hire a full treasurer,” Burbank said. “We moved to appropriate that money for this year’s budget. Next year that budget line will have to go in front of voters.”

Burbank explained that the town attorney had reviewed the matter and told selectmen they did not need to hold a public hearing on the matter.

The attorney “gave the legal opinion that the

Board of Selectmen could move the money in this year’s budget,” Burbank said.

According to the minutes, Burbank opened the meeting explaining it was to discuss the possibility of hiring a full-time treasurer and asked Beth Bauer, temporary part-time treasurer, to explain the need.

Bauer couldn’t be reached for comment for this story but, according to the minutes, at the meeting she mentioned the workload in her office, and said there were some things not getting done.

Three specific areas that need to be addressed she listed were reporting, internal control and accounting.

The town would also need to hire a part-time assistant to work with the full-timer, Bauer said.

Bauer told selectmen she would train the new person on the town’s accounting system.

She also discussed the process for putting together a procedure manual, which Burbank said is needed.

The short meeting began at 6:30 p.m. and was adjourned at 6:41.

## Colchester Police News

1/3: Colchester Police said at approximately 10:45 p.m., they responded to a report of a broken window in a building of Balaban Apartments on Balaban Road. The victim reported that just moments after the exterior window was broken, a female with long hair was seen running away from the back main door entrance of the building adjacent to the window in question. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Colchester Police at 860-537-7200.

1/10: Colchester Police said Devon Grace, 22, of 203 East Old Rd., Route 6, Hampton, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

1/11: State Police said Alexander Ferguson, 22, of 233 Rathbun Hill Rd., Salem, was arrested and charged with failure to respond to a payable violation for being in possession of less than half an ounce of cannabis.

## Drunk Driver Causes Three-Vehicle Collision in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

A three-vehicle car crash at the intersection of South Main Street and Dr. Foote Road left one Colchester resident injured last Friday, police said.

According to police, at approximately 2:36 p.m. on Jan. 12, Dylan J. Godwin, 21, of 118 Chestnut Hill Rd., East Hampton, was driving a Ford F520 when he struck the rear end of a Mercury Villager driven by Paul Peterson, 58, of 448 New London Rd. – which subsequently collided directly into a Toyota Tundra in front of it, driven by Shannon D.

Rodgers, 46, of 200 Boretz Rd.

Police said Peterson stated he felt neck pain, but declined medical attention while the passenger in his vehicle, Priscilla D. Marvin, 57, also of 448 New London Rd., was transported by the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department to Marlborough Clinic for possible injuries.

Godwin was subsequently arrested and charged with driving a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol, according to police.

## Obituaries

### East Hampton

#### Alex T. Meeker

Alex T. Meeker, 21, of East Hampton, passed at his home Monday, Jan. 15, with his mom and dad by his side, after a valiant battle with osteosarcoma. He was born April 28, 1996, in Middletown, the son of Edward Meeker and Tracy M. Dominski.

Alex loved his English Bulldogs Roman and Kobe, the Yankees, Lakers and the Giants. He cherished his time with his family and his enormous group of friends, especially those who fought alongside him for three long and grueling years. Thank you to Vinny, Matt, Marvin, Dylan, Tom, Sara, Jess, Morgan, Robby, Katie and Phil from the bottom of our hearts.

Alex was an amazing athlete who had the gift of speed and quick hands and his love for sports ran deep. He loved to play golf (especially with his boys during treatment), basketball, and football, but he had a passion for the game of baseball. Alex had the honor of being on the 2011 East Hampton High School state championship team led by Coach Wosleger, whom he adored and respected tremendously. In addition, Alex had great respect for Coach Timmes, Coach Seidel, Coach Mercaldi, Coach Altomar and Coach Johnson.

Alex has been described by the people who knew him best as a kind and sweet soul. Everyone loved being around him with his infectious smile. He was a fighter who fought for three long years with the determination and strength of a warrior that was indescribable. Despite the never-ending challenges he faced with his diagnosis, he never complained, and always promised to fight for his parents and those he loved. He wanted us all to be proud of him during his battle, especially his mom and dad, whom he worried more about than himself. His parents were extremely proud and blessed to have had him in their lives for 21 loving years.

Alex leaves behind many heartbroken family members, including his father Edward Meeker of Middletown and mother Tracy Dominski of East Hampton. His love for his auntie Michelle Dominski Sawyer of East Hampton was enormous and often said he was lucky to have her in his life and his uncle Mark Sawyer of Colchester who held a very special place in his heart. He cherished spending time with his cousins Jacob and Jadin Sawyer of East Hampton.

He loved his *SportsCenter* guru, Uncle Brian Dominski of East Hampton who shared his love for the Yankees, Giants, and the Lakers, and watching late-night games. He loved his uncle Scott Meeker of Middletown and adored his sense of humor. His cousins, Shayne Meeker of Hawaii and Troy Meeker of Arizona, were more than cousins; they were close friends. As quoted by author Marion C. Garretty... *A cousin is a little bit of childhood that can never be lost.*

He also leaves his number one grandmother Francis Dominski Palin of East Hampton whom he loved to the moon and back. He was her special angel. In addition, his grandparents Mitchell (Papa) and Patricia Dominski of Florida, whom he loved and missed dearly; and George Meeker and Lorraine Meeker of Middletown.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, Jan. 19, from 4-8 p.m. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 20, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Please go directly to church. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Alex's name may be made to the Make-A-Wish Foundation at [wish.org](http://wish.org).

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



### East Hampton

#### Eileen L. Cone

Eileen L. Cone, 83, of East Hampton, widow of the late Philip Cone, died peacefully at her home. Born June 5, 1934, in Norwich, she was the daughter of the late Albert and Helen Lasch.

Eileen was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and a communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. She had worked as a secretary for Stamm Neil Realty Century 21 office in Cromwell, she had been the regional office manager of the MLS and had worked as an executive secretary for the Middletown Board of Realtors. Eileen enjoyed traveling and spending time with her family and friends.

Eileen is survived by her two sons, Kyle Cone of East Hampton and Dale Cone and his wife Danielle Beylouni of Ridgefield; a sister, Elizabeth Strickland of Portland; and three grandchildren, Mackenzie, Madison and Morgan.

She was predeceased by her brother at a very young age.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Monday, Jan. 15. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Tuesday, Jan. 16, in St. Patrick Church. Burial followed in St. Patrick Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Ambulance Association Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424. To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).



### Hebron

#### Emil Leo Caron

Emil Leo Caron of Hebron, beloved husband of Frances "Annie" (Pagach) Caron, passed away peacefully early Wednesday, Jan. 10, at the age of 90. Born Sept. 17, 1927, in Ft. Kent, Maine, he was the son of the late Denis and Mary Jane (Campbell) Caron. He served proudly with the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Emil was a self-employed finish carpenter with attention to every detail for many years before his retirement. In his spare time, he loved the outdoors, especially fishing, but his greatest joy was found in his family.

In addition to his loving wife of 37 years, he leaves five children, Daniel Caron (wife Sharon), Linda Merrill (husband Rick), Kathy Caron, Deborah Higgins and Glendon "Luke" Higgins (wife Rosie); five grandchildren, Allyssa Caron, Michael and James Pudlo and Lucas and Haley Higgins; two great-grandchildren, Isabelle and Jenna; a brother, Adrien Caron; and numerous extended family.

Funeral services will be observed at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 24, at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 30 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron. He will be laid to rest privately in the church's Memorial Garden in the spring. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to St. Peter's Church (for the Renovation of Phelp's Hall).

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).



### Middle Haddam

#### Barbara Weir

Barbara (Leonard) Weir, 92, of Middle Haddam, widow of the late Joseph Weir, died Thursday, Jan. 11, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice. Born May 10, 1925, in Hartford, she was a lifelong resident of Middle Haddam. She had worked in the drafting department at Pratt & Whitney before leaving to raise her family.

She is survived by her five sons, Leonard Weir of Manchester, William Weir and wife Bonnie of East Hampton, Ronald Weir and wife Pam of Cobalt, Thomas Weir and wife Ellen of Bolton, Lawrence Weir and wife Tonya of East Hampton; two brothers, Frederick Leonard of Massachusetts, James Leonard of Portland; three sisters, Gertrude Scully of Portland, Catherine Albretch of Vernon, Mary Hennessey of Niantic; five grandchildren, R.J., Rachael, Justin, Matthew and Joseph.

She was predeceased by her brother, William Leonard, and two grandchildren, Brendan and Brittany.

Funeral services were held Monday, Jan. 15, in Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, followed by burial in St. Patrick Cemetery. Friends called at the funeral home Monday morning, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit, c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

### Amston

#### Dr. Tina Romano Jeter

Dr. Tina Romano Jeter, 61, beloved mother of Paul Jeter of Amston and Al Jeter of Colchester, grandmother to Brianna, passed away Monday, Jan. 8, at Hartford Hospital, after a short battle with cancer.

Born in Norwich Feb. 6, 1956, to the late Edward and Theresa (Przygoda) Romano, Tina spent her childhood years in Norwich and in Lord's Point, Stonington, graduating from Stonington High School in 1974.

In addition to her lifelong love of learning and her passion for teaching, Tina loved to travel with friends, enjoyed the beach, reading, horseback riding, and the Arts. Her favorite accomplishment was attaining her motorcycle license.

Dr. Tina Jeter attained her bachelor's degree from Saint Joseph University and master's and 6th year degrees from the University of Hartford. She went on to earn a doctorate from the University of Hartford. She was an extraordinary teacher, vice principal and principal for 39 years in the Hartford Public Schools. Most recently she was the director of adult education at Renzulli Academy. Dr. Tina Jeter was a talented and highly-respected educator. She strived to create an atmosphere of support and dedication for both staff and students.

Friends and family are invited to a celebration of life gathering for Tina Saturday, Jan. 20, from noon-4 p.m., at the American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough.

A scholarship fund will be established to honor Tina's career in the Hartford school system. Details will be available at the gathering.

### Portland

#### Scott Alan Chappell

On Jan. 8, 2018, Scott Alan Chappell went home to be with his Lord Jesus Christ. After several months of suffering with cancer, with his wife Deborah by his side, his battle ended.

Scott leaves behind Deborah Vogt, his loving wife of 20 years; children Olivia and Jessica; stepchildren Christine Laskevitch (Jon Crane), Aimee Heinrich (David); grandchildren Christopher Farrell, Mia Rivera, Caden Crane, Jesse and Abigail Heinrich; brother- and sister-in-law Wayne and Barbara Chappell; and brother-in-law Chauncey Copeland. He was preceded in death by his sister Lois Copeland.

Scott was born in Middletown Oct. 7, 1954, to the late Irvin and Lois Snelling Chappell. Scott grew up in Portland, attended local schools and he and his dad operated Chappell Auto Body, where they specialized in repair of Volkswagens. Scott held positions in local companies, and operated his own handyman company as well. Scott was a talented musician and expressed his love for Jesus in songs that he composed and sang.

A celebration of Scott's life will be held at Victory Church, 191 Meriden Rd., Middlefield, Saturday, Jan. 20, at 10 a.m. Burial will be private.



### Colchester

#### Albert Thomas Laird

Albert Thomas "Tom" Laird, 53, of Colchester, the beloved husband of Jeannine (Boudreau) Laird, died Saturday, Jan. 13, at his home. Born in Hartford, he was the son of Carol (Brault) Sutherland and his step-father Terry Sutherland and had lived in Colchester for many years.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his daughters, Michelle Hills and her husband Michael-John Hills of Manchester, Melissa Laird and Eric Risley, Brooke Laird, and Brittany Laird and Thomas Pereira, all of Colchester; 17 grandchildren; his siblings, Keith Sutherland, TJ Sutherland, Regina Carreiro and Jamie Sutherland; and several nieces and nephews.

The funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 22, at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, followed by burial in Mount St. Benedict Cemetery. Family and friends may call at the funeral home Monday from 9-11 a.m.

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

### Marlborough

#### Margaret M. McHugh

Margaret M. (Peggy) McHugh, 92, formerly of Manchester, passed away Sunday, Jan. 14, surrounded by her loving family. Born in Brooklyn, NY, within minutes of her beloved identical twin sister, the late Mary A. Thompson, Peggy was the daughter of the late John P. and Margaret Doyle Giblan, who had emigrated from Limerick, Ireland to Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1925.

Peggy married Eugene (Pat) McHugh, a World War II veteran who served his country heroically and predeceased her. Peggy's large and generous heart, deep humility and boundless love of all God's creatures, footed and winged, belied her small stature and quiet manner. She loved her family deeply, made friends for life and cared for every stray creature that crossed her path. Her generous spirit, concern for others in need, wonderful sense of humor and large candy bars will be missed by all of those privileged to have known and loved her as mother, sister, aunt or friend.

Left to mourn Peggy are her beloved son, Patrick J. McHugh and partner MaryLou Tew of Deltona, Fla.; cherished daughter and loving caretaker Margaret (Peggy) McHugh Raftery of Hebron; three grandchildren, Alysyn Raftery Mullen and husband Craig of Jewett City; Martin E. Raftery of Hebron and Jennifer Restucci of Amherst, Mass.; six great-grandchildren; and many adoring nieces and nephews here, in Canada and Ireland. She is survived by her siblings Helen Tuohy Heelen, David Tuohy and Eugene Tuohy and brother-in-law Francis "Pat" Ford.

In addition to her twin, Mary, Peggy was predeceased by her sisters Kathleen, Virginia, Polly and brother John.

Peggy's family would like to thank the staff at Marlborough Health Care and Rehabilitation Center for the excellent care they provided to her for 17 years.

The John F. Tierney Funeral Home at 219 W. Center St. in Manchester is handling the arrangements. Visiting hours were at the funeral home Thursday, Jan. 18. A funeral Mass will be said today, Jan. 19, at 10 a.m., at Church of the Assumption, 29 South Adams St. in Manchester.

In lieu of flowers, please honor Peggy's memory with a donation to the Connecticut Humane Society, 706 Russell St., Newington, CT 06111 or [cthumane.org](http://cthumane.org), or to a charity of your choice, or do something kind today for a person or animal in need.



Portland

Rosemarie Filanda

Rosemarie (Farinella) Filanda, 67, of Portland, beloved wife for 32 years of Peter J. Filanda Jr., passed away Wednesday, Jan. 17, surrounded by her loving family. Born in Hartford July 17, 1950, she was the daughter of the late Giuseppe and Rosina (Pinnone) Farinella. She is now



rejoined with her beloved son James Michael Pasquere, who predeceased her in 2017.

Rosemarie worked as senior claims adjuster for Amica for 38 years. She enjoyed cooking, baking and gardening, but more than anything she loved spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren.

A loving wife, mother and grandmother, Rosemarie will be forever missed by her devoted husband Peter; two sons, Joseph Anthony Pasquere and Peter T. Filanda and his wife Christine. She is also survived by her granddaughter Nicole Pasquere; her grandson Lucas Filanda; granddaughters Alexa Pasquere and Giana Rose Pasquere and their mother Teriann. In addition, she is survived by her aunt Marie Messina; her cousins who were more like a brother and sister to her, Carl Messina and Diana DiBacco; several nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends, as well as her adored canine companion, Bella.

Special thanks to all of Rosemarie's doctors, nurses and caregivers.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 20, at 11:30 a.m., at the Church of St. Mary, 45 Freestone Ave., Portland. Everyone is asked to please go directly to the church. Burial will follow in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield. Family and friends may call today, Jan. 19, from 4-7 p.m., at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield.

Donations in Rosemarie's memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., I-91 Tech Ctr., Rocky Hill, CT 06067, or New Horizons, 635 Main St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To share a memory of Rosemarie with her family, visit [desopo.com](http://desopo.com).

Portland

Karen Ann Welch

Karen Ann Welch, 74, of Portland and wife of Douglas A. Welch, died Wednesday, Jan. 17, at Middlesex Hospital.

Born Jan. 8, 1944, in Hartford, daughter of the late Edward A. and Dorothy (Kline) Grant Sr., Karen had been a resident of Portland for 46 years and was a member of St. Mary Church. She had worked at Pratt & Whitney for many years and was employed by the Town of Portland in the community development department for three years. She also was employed by the Zion Lutheran Church in Portland as the secretary/sexton for eight years, and she volunteered for Meals-on-Wheels in Portland.

Besides her husband of 47 years, Karen is survived by a brother Richard and sister-in-law Selma Grant of Moosup, and a niece Phyllis Grant of Ledyard.

The funeral will be held Monday, Jan. 22, at 1 p.m., in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the Swedish Cemetery Portland at a later date. Friends may call at the funeral home Monday from noon until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Mary Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

Andover

Muriel Mae Smith

Muriel Mae (Peck) Smith, 89, of Andover, beloved wife of 45 years to the late William E. Smith Sr., died peacefully Friday, Jan. 5. She was the daughter of the late Henry Putnam and Sylvia (Currier) Peck of Cromwell.



Muriel was proud to be a descendant of two founders of Milford, Joseph Peck and Nicholas Camp. Muriel worked as a waitress and secretary most of her life, retiring from Travelers Ins. Co. She was an active member of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Manchester, where she was a very active member of Peace by Piece Quilters until her mid-80s. She cherished her family vacations at the Lairds' cabin in Pawlet, Vt., along with her extended Vermont family and friends. Muriel was a kind, generous and loving lady who welcomed everyone into her life.

She leaves behind her children, William E. Smith Jr. and wife Karen of Canterbury, Nancy E. Eaton and husband Lawrence of Manchester, Robert P. Smith and wife Paula of Moodus and Janet J. Urgo and husband Tom of Columbia; 10 grandchildren, Kathy, Jenny, Leslie-Anne, Julie and her husband Richard Nunez Jr., Daniel, Nicholas, Carly and her wife Rebecca, Erin, Jonathon and Jacob and his wife Caitlyn; and four step-grandchildren, Amber, Josh, Scott and Jason and their families; three great-grandchildren, Malakai, Serenity and Coral. Muriel is also survived by her sister, Delores Filanda; three sisters-in-law, Lorraine, Rosemary Peck and Norma Smith; one brother-in-law, Joseph Corcuillo; plus several nieces and nephews.

Muriel was predeceased by her four siblings, Richard, Gerald, Donald Peck and Eleanor Corcuillo.

She also leaves behind many dear friends, Eileen and Val Wnuk, Al and Mel Patch, Lorraine Costanzo and her best friend Geraldine Adams, whom she shared many breakfasts, good times and lots of laughs throughout their 60-year friendship.

Special thanks to the staff of Vernon Manor, Companion and Homemakers and devoted caretaker, Patricia, whom she loved dearly.

Calling hours were held at Holmes-Watkins Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester, Thursday, Jan. 18. A service will be held at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 41 Park St., Manchester, at 11 a.m. today, Jan. 19. Private family burial in Townsend Cemetery, Andover will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, we ask that donations in Muriel's name be sent to St. Mary's "Book of Remembrance" at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 41 Park St., Manchester, CT 06040.

To leave an online condolence, visit [holmeswatkins.com](http://holmeswatkins.com).

Portland

Hazel Saul Johnson

Hazel Saul Johnson, 98, passed peacefully from this life Friday, Jan. 12, at her home in Portland. She will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by her loving family.



Born in Bridgeport, Hazel was the eldest child of the late John Richard Saul and Hazel Ruther Saul. Her family moved to the Lordship section of Stratford when she was six weeks old to 61 Birch St., the only house on the street at that time. She had many fond memories of time spent at the beach that was a few block away, picnics with family and friends and her teen years, during the depression when so few young people had jobs, hanging out with the "beach gang." Hazel graduated from Stratford High School in 1937 and from the University of Connecticut in 1941 with a BS in Chemistry. She worked in the Materials Control Lab, Spectrographic Department at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft until 1950. She always said it was only because the war had started and men were leaving that they considered hiring women in the lab.

Hazel married Robert Gerald Johnson in 1949 and settled in Portland when their first child was born. She was a longtime parishioner of St. Mary Church, active in the Mothers of Twins club, worked as a substitute and part time teacher in the Portland school system and obtained her MS degree in education from Central Connecticut State College while raising her family. Many happy hours were spent each summer with numerous friends at the Family Swim Club at YMCA Camp Ingersoll. Mom had a great thirst for knowledge and was an avid learner, she enrolled in many classes and programs with MALC/MILE and Elderhostel, and volunteered at Godfrey Library. She asked for and received a laptop computer for her 85th birthday. She had a passion for genealogy and extensively researched her Irish ancestors, connected with relatives and established lasting friendships. She loved to travel, and had an extraordinary appreciation of the art, culture and natural beauty of the countries she visited.

Hazel is survived by her children, Karen Wilson and her husband Richard of Gladstone, Ore., Joanne Hubbard and her husband Peter of Shrewsbury, Mass., Julianne Johnson of Mystic, Margaret Johnson, Peter Johnson and his wife Lauren, and Valerie Cavanagh and her husband Timothy, all of Portland; grandchildren, Robert, Daniel, Alex, and Emily Wilson, Alaina Fillback, Rebecca and Heidi Johnson, Emma, Eric and Julia Hubbard, and Daniel and Helen Cavanagh; great-grandchildren, Lauren, Claire and Josephine Wilson, Alyssa and Ava Wilson, Emmit Koch, and her latest joy, 2-month-old Penelope Wilson.

She was predeceased by her husband Robert and her son David; her sisters, Jeanne Gehl Kau and Frances Harrington; and her brother, John Ruther Saul.

Her family wishes to extend their gratitude to the Masonicare Home Hospice team with special thanks to her nurse Gina and home health aide Danielle for the loving care during the past year.

Per Hazel's wishes there will be no calling hours and internment will be private in the family plot at Rock Landing Cemetery, Haddam Neck. A memorial service is planned for Saturday, May 19, in Portland.

In keeping with Hazel's lifelong love of learning, please donate a book in her memory to your local library. Her family also hopes you will honor her memory with a random act of kindness or good deed.

*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Things are moderating now, but in the first couple of weeks after Christmas, it was COLD. Extremely cold. My brother was visiting from out of state, so a few days after Christmas he and I got up one morning and decided to hike up Case Mountain in Manchester. It wasn't even that early in the morning; about 10 a.m. or so.

But when we started the hike, it was 3 degrees outside. With a wind chill of 15 below. It was some epic cold.

Having experienced that cold – and the cold in the days that followed, when the lows fell below zero even without factoring in wind chills – I think I can say: I'm good. I know weather colder than that exists, but really, I'm fine. I don't need to see it.

In other words, I won't be hopping a plane for Russia anytime soon.

On Tuesday, in the region of Yakutia, which is about 3,300 miles east of Moscow, the temperature plunged to minus 67 degrees Celsius. That's minus 88.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

And a million people live in the region.

People there are no strangers to cold, though. Kids routinely go to school when it's minus 40 out. But school was canceled Tuesday – and police ordered parents to keep their children indoors.

Throughout the region, women posted pictures of their frozen eyelashes. Yes, it was so cold even their eyelashes froze.

That is extreme cold – and makes the cold we experienced recently seem downright toasty. Like I said, it routinely gets pretty cold in Yakutia, if not quite that cold. The people who live there are some hardy stock. I salute them – all the while knowing I'll never desire to visit there. Ever.

The arrival of January brings, as it has every year since 1976, a new list of banished words, courtesy the folks at Lake Superior State University.

The list – officially titled “List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-Use, Over-Use and General Uselessness” – is a tongue-in-cheek collection of words that people at the university feel should simply be removed from the lexicon. The list almost always features a word or two associated with political or pop culture news that broke during the previous year – words that seemed at first fun but quickly wore out their welcome.

Here is this year's list – along with the university's reasons, in its own words, as to why the words should go:

**Unpack:** Misused word for analyze, consider, assess. Concepts or positions are not packed, so they don't need to be unpacked.

**Tons:** Refers to an exaggerated quantity, as in tons of sunshine or tons of work. ‘Lots’ would surely suffice.

**Dish:** As in to dish out the latest rumor on someone. Let's go back to ‘talks about’ and leave dishes in the cupboard.

**Pre-owned:** What is so disgraceful about owning a used car now and then?

**Onboarding/Offboarding:** – Creature from the HR Lagoon. We used to have hiring, training and orientation. Now we need to have an “onboarding” process. Firings, quitting, and retirements are streamlined into “offboarding.”

**Nothingburger:** Says nothing that ‘nothing’ doesn't already. I'll take a quarter-pound of something in mine.

**Let that sink in:** One could say shocking, profound, or important. Let that sink in.

**Let me ask you this:** Wholly unnecessary statement. Just ask the question already.

**Impactful:** A frivolous word groping for something ‘effective’ or ‘influential.’

**Covfefe:** An impulsive typo, born into a 140-character universe, somehow missed by the autocorrect feature.

**Drill Down:** Instead of expanding on a statement, we “drill down on it.”

**Fake News:** Once upon a time stories could be empirically disproved. Now ‘fake news’ is any story you disagree with.

**Hot Water Heater:** Hot water does not need to be heated. ‘Water heater’ or ‘hot water maker’ will keep us out of hot water.

**Gig Economy:** Gigs are for musicians and stand-up comedians. Now expanded to imply a sense of freedom and a lifestyle that rejects tradition in a changing economic culture. Runs a risk of sharecropping.

Overall, not a bad list. And I agree wholeheartedly with the selection of fake news. It's been warped – by no less than Trump himself – to mean any story you don't like or agree with, and that frankly does a disservice to journalism as a whole.

Anyway, before I turn this into a Trump rant (and I can feel it happening), I'll let you know that each year's list of words, dating all the way back to the first one in 1976, is available at [tinyurl.com/ya3ulszp](http://tinyurl.com/ya3ulszp). Give it a look – after you finish reading this week's *Rivereast*, of course.

\* \* \*

See you next week.