

RIVEREAST

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Brownstone Intermediate School fifth-grader Annabelle Maruschock, center, has spearheaded a campaign to save a dog on death row at the Portland pound. The Save Rocky team includes her twin sister, Cassidy, right, and fellow fifth-grader Emelia Eckert.

Fighting to Give Rocky 'Second Chance'

by Elizabeth Regan

A group of 10-year-old girls has mobilized to demand a second chance for a Portland dog on death row.

Annabelle Maruschock, a fifth-grade student at Brownstone Intermediate School, said in an interview this week that she decided to start a petition imploring First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield to save the 90-pound pit bull mix named Rocky immediately upon reading about his case in the *Rivereast* several weeks ago.

Annabelle got about 40 signatures canvassing her neighborhood, she said. An online version of the petition called "Save Rocky" has garnered 1,272 signatures worldwide as of Thursday morning. The petition is located at change.org.

She also helped launch a Facebook page with the same name.

Rocky has been impounded for more than two years stemming from a Jan. 31, 2016 attack on Stephen Demarest, which resulted in injuries to the 68-year-old man's left ankle, inner leg and below his knee. Demarest said the dog was unattended and unleashed at the time of the attack, which occurred across the street from Rocky's residence. The next month, Animal Control Officer Karen Perruccio ordered the dog be put down.

Annabelle, along with her twin sister, Cassidy, and several friends, arranged a meet-

ing with First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield on April 17. They attended with Kim Maruschock, Annabelle and Cassidy's mother, and fellow animal advocate Rose Aletta.

The girls said their message to Bransfield was that Rocky deserves a second chance.

"Any of our beloved animals could get scared and bite someone, and we wouldn't want them killed," Annabelle said. "Humans get second chances too, most of the time. Rocky served his time at the pound so he should be released with precautions in place."

Annabelle said that while Bransfield told them the issue is out of the town's hands as it makes its way through the court system, the girls believe an agreement can be reached.

"He doesn't need to be killed, just closely monitored in his yard," Annabelle wrote on the petition.

Annabelle told the *Rivereast* she objected to what she described as Bransfield's repeated use of the term "euthanasia."

"I looked it up," Annabelle said. "Euthanizing actually means to put down if they're sick or suffering. But Rocky's in good condition, so he wouldn't be getting euthanized. He'd be getting killed."

In March, commissioner of the state Department of Agriculture, Steven K. Revivczyk, af-

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RHAM 'Assassins' Game Draws Controversy

by Sloan Brewster

Despite some controversy, RHAM High School seniors are filling up their water blasters and catching opponents unaware with cool wet blasts in the annual game of "Assassins."

Assassins is an end-of-school-year tradition for seniors that dates back about 10 years, said RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie. It is not sanctioned by, or in any way affiliated with the school, nor does it take place on school grounds, but administrators are aware of it.

"The school isn't involved," he said. "It's completely young adult organized."

In the game, teams of two are assigned targets and tasked with creatively eliminating them with water blasters, said senior Nikki McManus.

"It is meant to be a safe, legal, fun and positive way to end senior year, as it has been a tradition of RHAM seniors for the past decade or so, and it really brings us together as a class," fellow senior Isabelle Goode said.

This year, however, there have been mixed feelings from parents, Leslie said. He said some have voiced concern that due to the current climate, the game should be stopped – while others have compared it with a childhood squirt

gun fight and said they support its continued play.

Some parents also voiced concerns about the game on social media, McManus said.

"Some parents and community members became concerned about the game and its safety, and began complaining to the superintendent, the police, and the students via social media accounts," she said.

An email sent by the school Monday was a response to those concerns.

"Our recommendation to students and families is that they do not participate in the game," the email stated.

On Tuesday, Leslie followed up with a second email, reiterating comments he made to the *Rivereast* in a phone call that afternoon.

"Our intent in sending the email was to clarify to parents that the game is not a school-sponsored activity," he wrote. "We also wanted to notify parents that the game was occurring in order to keep them informed about student activities within the community."

Due to the controversy, and because their parents asked them to, the two students who originally led the game stepped down, leaving

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RHAM High School seniors Cameron Clegg, left and Nick Colona, right, are shown after taking out fellow senior Sam Brody with water blasters in Assassins – a game seniors play toward the end of the school year.

Rocky cont. from Front Page

firmed Perruccio’s 2016 kill order. Reviczky cited a report by agriculture department hearing officer Bruce A. Sherman describing the attack as “unprovoked and vicious.” Reviczky also noted Rocky got loose again the day after the incident with Demarest, prior to being delivered to the pound for quarantine. The hearing report said Rocky ran down the driveway and began to attack a bag being carried by a passer-by, but was successfully called back by Bell.

Rocky’s owner, Paul Bell, said his insurance company has settled with Demarest and his wife for \$275,000.

Meanwhile, Bell is pursuing an appeal of the agriculture department’s decision with the state Superior Court as he attempts to bring Rocky home.

Bell’s attorney, Thom Page, said he will be filing the appeal on May 7.

Emelia Eckert, one of Annabelle’s friends involved in the Save Rocky mission, emphasized Rocky’s close bond with Bell.

“A dog is a man’s best friend,” she said.

Annabelle said she asked Bransfield if the girls could meet Rocky, but was told it would be too dangerous in the pound.

Annabelle noted Bransfield hasn’t met Rocky yet, either. They found that out when they asked her about it during the meeting, according to Annabelle.

“She seemed really serious as soon as we asked the question. Her smile went down,” Annabelle said.

The 10-year-old wondered if Bransfield’s

stance on the kill order would change if she met Rocky.

Bransfield confirmed this week she has not visited the dog.

“I don’t typically go down and visit all the dogs,” she said.

Bransfield described the decision not to let children visit Rocky as a matter of “best practice.”

“I don’t know that any dog that’s in quarantine should be visited, particularly by children,” she said.

Adult visitors must get the go-ahead from the Portland Police Department and Perruccio in order to visit, she added.

None of these policies were in place before the story about Rocky began circulating widely around town, according to Bell. He said he is also no longer allowed to walk Rocky outside of the fenced-in area of the pound.

Bell said he had been taking Rocky for walks every day since October with Perruccio’s permission. He would go about 10-15 minutes away from the shelter in the vicinity of the Arrigoni Bridge.

Per town charter, Bransfield is the official chief of police. She is responsible for the police department and the animal control department.

Bransfield said Sgt. Scott Cunningham, who serves as the police department’s animal control supervisor, decided to halt the daily walks once he found out about them. She said the decision was made because it is safer for the dog to stay within the fenced-in area.

“I know that Karen [Perruccio] had allowed Mr. Bell to walk the dog and when Sgt. Cunningham learned of it, he thought it was best to stay safe,” Bransfield said.

Bransfield said during a previous interview that her cousin, Lynne Denning, was mauled by multiple Rottweilers in a high-profile 2014 case. The Canterbury woman was working as a healthcare aide at a home in Plainfield when the attack occurred. A police report said Denning was near death after the dogs ripped at her face, torso and extremities, according to the *Norwich Bulletin*.

Bransfield said she told the girls during their meeting about plans for educational opportunities on animal topics such as being a responsible pet owner, staying safe around animals, licensing, rabies, and general information about animal control. She said Perruccio will have a booth at the Grange during the town-wide tag sale on May 12.

Bransfield said she was happy to meet with Annabelle and her friends and to see their interest in how their town works.

“I think it was very positive,” she said.

Bransfield invited Cunningham and Capt. Ron Milardo to attend her meeting with the girls as well, she said. Perruccio was not on duty at the time, according to Bransfield.

Annabelle’s Advocacy

Going forward, the girls said they plan to make posters to bring attention to Rocky’s pending kill order. They hope to put them up at locations such as the town hall, library and local businesses.

Bell said he thinks it’s great that Annabelle is getting a lesson in civic responsibility.

“I’m glad she’s on Rocky’s side, for sure,” he said.

He pointed to the success of the Facebook page and petition in garnering support for his dog.

Annabelle and her friends also recounted a meeting held last Saturday with animal advocates and attorney Thom Page, who told the group that the agriculture department has never overturned a local animal control officer’s kill order.

Multiple calls from the *Rivereast* to the Department of Agriculture commissioner’s office were not returned.

A civil rights attorney specializing in animals, Page has argued in multiple filings with the state agriculture department that “unconstitutionally vague” language in existing state statute violates Bell’s property and due process rights.

Page said the statute leaves it up to animal control officers to hold dogs in pounds and issue disposal orders “with no adequate rules, regulations, guidelines, policies or standards” for doing so.

Annabelle and her friends acknowledged the need for changes at the state level.

Brainstorming among themselves, they wondered if that’s something they could address by meeting with the state’s official “Kid Governor” Megan Kasperowski – who just happens to be a fellow fifth-grade student at Brownstone Intermediate School.

Assassins cont. from Front Page

the slots open, McManus said. She and Goode took over the leadership roles.

“The game was at risk of being shut down because of this, so Izzy and I decided to step up and run the game in order to continue this tradition of harmless fun,” she said. “We believe that there are a lot worse things that kids our age could be doing than running around with water guns, and so we felt that it was important to not let this tradition die out.”

The Assassins game replaced a scavenger hunt that seniors did from the 1970s until about 10 years ago, Leslie said.

In the scavenger hunt – which, like Assassins, was not sanctioned by the school – students would retrieve a list of items, which toward the end of the game’s run often led to vandalism, such as when tennis nets were on the list, he said. To prevent the destruction of property, the students agreed to switch to Assassins instead, Leslie said.

Since then, students have made a point of playing safe, Leslie said, and have made sure the rules of play respond to concerns.

“The kids do take a great deal of effort to make it as well run as they possibly can,” Leslie said.

McManus said that, since she and Goode took over, there have been no further complaints about the game, and the two have worked with school administration to make sure this will continue smoothly.

McManus and Goode, who were on a team together before becoming leaders, were eliminated from play early on, which has allowed them to run the show.

Goode was eliminated on her way to dance class, but the duo still had a chance to continue with play, McManus said. To do so, she had to take out two targets within 48 hours, so she called one of those targets and appealed to her to help get her target as Goode had just been

eliminated.

“I asked [Goode] if she would drive me in her car to my targets’ house because my targets were aware of what my car looked like,” McManus said.

The trap worked and her target unwittingly let McManus into her car.

“I then turned and shot her with the water gun,” McManus said.

She was unable to get her second victim within the timeframe, however, so she and Goode were knocked out.

In another tricky play, a team called a target’s place of employment and asked what time she was getting off work because someone was coming to see her and “prom-pose” after her shift, McManus said. The person who answered thought “it was really sweet,” and gave away the info.

The dastardly duo hunkered down and waited for the girl to get off work and blasted her with water when she came out.

The winning team gets “endless bragging and a large cash prize,” as players buy into the game to play, McManus said. A portion of the proceeds will also be donated to a local charity.

Theresa Brysgel, a mother with a senior in the game, said she supports the tradition.

“I absolutely support it, part of that is I played myself when I was up at UConn,” she said

Brysgel’s husband also played Assassins when he was at Newington High School, she said.

Brysgel said that while she said she understands the alarm some parents have about the name of the game, anyone who is familiar with it realizes it is harmless fun.

“To me it’s like there’s an obvious difference from a water gun and a real gun,” she said. “It’s so innocent. It’s children running around with water guns.”

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

One of my favorite times in Washington was last weekend – the White House Correspondents’ Dinner.

The event drew a bit more post-show commentary than it usually does, thanks solely to the headliner of the night, comic Michelle Wolf. Wolf did a 20-minute set that was fairly hit-and-miss, and also fairly offensive in spots. In short, she was a comic, and did what she was hired to do. Still, Wolf was slammed – mainly by the right – mostly for her remarks at the expense of Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Wolf was criticized for comparing Sanders to Aunt Lydia from the book and Hulu series *The Handmaid’s Tale* – though the comment wasn’t necessarily a dig on Sanders’ looks. Rather, she was comparing the two character-wise – and while I’ve yet to see *The Handmaid’s Tale*, from what I’ve read Aunt Lydia is an enabler of a dystopian regime that treats women horribly.

What was more obviously a comment on Sanders’ looks came a few seconds later, when Wolf cracked that Sanders “burns facts, and then she uses the ash to create a perfect smoky eye.” Wolf added, in a riff on the old Maybelline slogan, “Maybe she’s born with it, maybe it’s lies. It’s probably lies.”

Boy did this gag set people off – saying that Wolf was slamming Sanders for her physical appearance and it was unnecessarily cruel. In my opinion, the concept of burning facts and then using the ash to your advantage was a clever premise, even if choosing to riff on someone for their choice of eyeshadow and eyeliner is a little juvenile. Still, riffing on someone for their makeup choice isn’t quite the same as making fun of someone’s physical appearance or weight or height or other things they don’t have control over.

The over-the-top reaction to Wolf’s comments was absurd. The pearl-clutching by the Republicans, as if the very man they elected president is the essence of G-rated decorum and politeness. Trump has attacked women, and men, for their looks time and time again. He’s attacked people for being handicapped. He’s attacked people based on their ethnicity. I could fill this entire page with comments from over the years – including after he became president – that perfectly exemplify him being a disgusting pig. So, please, don’t raise

your pitchforks over Michelle Wolf when you’ve happily turned a blind eye to all the vile things Trump has said, and continues to say. Hypocrisy is never a good look on people.

* * *

The controversy over Wolf’s jokes about Sanders seemed to overshadow the rest of her bit. Like I said before, she was rather hit-and-miss, and some of her jokes were just a little too blue to share here, but she did have some funny moments. Among them:

“Just a reminder to everyone: I’m here to make jokes. I have no agenda. I’m not trying to get anything accomplished, so everyone that’s here from Congress, you should feel right at home.”

“It is kinda crazy that the Trump campaign was in contact with Russia, while the Hillary campaign wasn’t even in contact with Michigan.”

“[Trump] wants to give teachers guns, and I support that because then they can sell them for things they need like supplies.”

“Trump is racist, though. He loves white nationalists, which is a weird term for a Nazi. Calling a Nazi a ‘white nationalist’ is like calling a pedophile a ‘kid friend,’ or Harvey Weinstein a ‘ladies’ man.’”

“[Ivanka Trump] was supposed to be an advocate for women, but it turns out she’s about as helpful to women as an empty box of tampons.”

“I’m 32, which is a weird age – 10 years too young to host this event and 20 years too old for Roy Moore.”

“I did have a lot of jokes about Cabinet members. But I had to scrap all of those because everyone has been fired. You guys are going through Cabinet members quicker than Starbucks throws out black people.”

“Fox News is here. So you know what that means, ladies. Cover your drinks.”

“Rachel Maddow is the Peter Pan of MSNBC. But instead of never growing up, she never gets to the point.”

“There’s a ton of news right now; a lot is going on and we have all these 24-hour news networks, and we could be covering everything. But instead we’re covering like three topics. Every hour it’s Trump, Russia, Hillary, and a panel of four people that remind you why you don’t go home for Thanksgiving.”

* * *

See you next week.

RHAM Budget Heads to Voters

by Sloan Brewster

The RHAM schools' proposed \$29.31 million 2018-19 budget request for the school year is headed to referendum in less than a week.

Voting will take place in each of the RHAM towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – on Tuesday, May 8.

The budget proposal includes the elimination of 11.6 positions, a figure that includes six layoffs as well as retirements and resignations.

According to Superintendent of Schools Patricia Law, the staff reductions are due to continuing declines in enrollment. Law projects enrollment to dip by 83 students, bringing it to 1,424 combined at the middle and high schools.

The spending package is largely composed of a \$29.07 million operating budget request, an increase of 1.92 percent, or \$547,204 over the current year's \$28.81 million budget. The package also includes \$243,286 for capital expenditures, a .16 percent or \$46,674 reduction over the current year.

Overall, the regional school budget comes at an increase of 1.76 percent or \$500,530 over the current year's budget.

The district's per pupil expenditure is the lowest of all other secondary regional districts at \$15,450 per pupil, according to Law.

When asked last month to reduce the spending proposal from an earlier 2.03 percent increase, Law eliminated \$28,400 in the operating budget.

She found \$20,000 in savings by knocking the virtual security audit services line item to \$5,000 and going with a variety of resources instead of spending \$25,000 for the individual service previously used, "which, in my opinion was exceptionally expensive," she said.

She also saved \$8,400 on science tables for the high school by finding some tables that aren't being used in the middle school.

Law also trimmed the capital budget, including by leasing rather than buying a plow/dump

truck.

The truck was originally slated to cost \$57,000 in the proposed capital budget. At six percent interest, leasing the truck would cost the district \$4,178 more over the four years of the lease than if the district had just bought it, Law said.

She also saved \$15,000 on a project to make Americans with Disabilities Act-mandated changes to the softball field. The project was initially slated at \$30,000. The savings will be realized by combining the softball project with another ADA project, Law said.

The reductions brought the capital budget request to \$243,286, a 0.16 or \$46,674 reduction from the current year's capital budget.

Other items on the capital budget include four sidewalk/step projects totaling \$152,299; \$12,500 in repairs to the loading dock; \$19,800 for installing vents in the main school entrance

soffit; \$20,000 for a new fire panel; and \$8,400 for chimney restoration.

When split between the three member towns, the \$243,286 capital budget translates to a \$37,369 levy for Andover, with 15.36 percent or 232 students from there; a \$127,774 levy for Hebron, with 52.52 percent or 793 students from the town; and a \$78,143 levy for Marlborough, with 485 or 32.12 percent of students from that town.

If approved by voters, Andover will be responsible for \$4.47 million of the operating budget, Hebron will cover \$15.27 million and Marlborough will pay \$9.34 million.

Voting will take place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday, May 8, at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St., Hebron; Marlborough Elementary School, 25 School Dr., Marlborough; and in Andover at the community room at Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

Vernon Man Due in Court for Shooting Near Hebron Park

A Vernon man charged in conjunction with an alleged illegal shooting on property near Gay City State Park is scheduled to appear in court Monday morning.

On March 20, Jeremy Grous, 31, was arrested and charged with second-degree reckless endangerment, breach of peace and unlawful discharge of a firearm, Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police said.

EnCon police said they responded that day to a complaint of illegal shooting at a property near the Hebron and Bolton park. Police had responded to a similar complaint last December, EnCon police said. At that time police warned the two people involved, who were allegedly target shooting, that shooting

was not permissible in the area as it was immediately adjacent to state park property and they were shooting toward the park with no backstop to prevent shells from entering it.

On March 20, EnConPolice were notified target-shooting was again taking place at that same location. Grous had left the property minutes before police arrived, but they were able to locate Grous' vehicle a few minutes away. There was a shotgun and spent shells in his vehicle and, according to EnCon police, he admitted to shooting toward the park in target practice.

Grous was released on a \$500 cash bond, and is due to appear in Rockville Superior Court May 7.

Tree Falls on Man in Colchester

Last Friday, a tree-cutting accident on Settlers Lane caused a man to be transported by a Life Star medivac helicopter, said Fire Chief Walter Cox.

According to Cox, an adult male in his late 50s was working alone in a wooded area to chop down a tree that was near the rear of his residence when it fell on him. The fallen tree left the man with an open lower-leg fracture, Cox said.

Cox said the man remained conscious and was able to dial 911. At approximately 9:12 a.m., the emergency call was dispatched to the Colchester Fire Department and units arrived at approximately 9:19 a.m., Cox said.

The man received initial treatment from the fire department and additional care from a Middlesex Hospital paramedic, prior to the arrival of Life Star. He was then flown to Hartford Hospital.

Colchester Police News

4/27: William Galvin, 50, of 33 Birch Rd., East Haddam, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Hebron Police News

4/28: State Police said Thomas M. Toscano, 52, of Old Colony Rd., Apt. K, Windsor, was arrested and charged with violating a protective order.

Portland Woman Making State Rep Bid

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland resident Laurel Steinhauser said running for state representative is a way to put into practice the same values she preaches to her three young children.

Steinhauser, a Democrat, last week announced her candidacy for the 32nd district seat currently held by Republican Christie Carpino. The district covers Portland and Cromwell.

Steinhauser, 34, said in an interview Wednesday that she can't in good conscience talk to her 5-year-old daughter about standing up for what's right if she doesn't put that credo into action herself.

"I came to the decision I would be a hypocrite," she said. "And I'm not a hypocrite."

Steinhauser, a massage therapist and birth doula, is married with an infant son, a 2-year-old daughter and 5-year-old daughter.

Carpino, 42, is married with two school-aged children and one stepson.

Steinhauser said the idea of running for office first came up at a meeting of the Democratic Town Committee as she was lamenting the lack of a Democratic candidate for state representative. That's when some members suggested she run for the position.

"I gave it some pretty serious thought and ultimately decided I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I didn't try," she said.

Steinhauser positioned herself as the candidate for working families in the district.

"I've spent my life advocating for children and families and that work will continue as your state representative," she said in a press release announcing her run. "I will work to expand opportunities for our kids, improve public education and give families the support they de-

serve by passing smart, creative legislation that prioritizes the needs of Cromwell and Portland."

When asked what characteristics make her a good fit for the position, Steinhauser said she firmly believes any smart, caring and well-intentioned person can do the job.

"I'm not special," she said.

But she said she's ready to work hard and her heart is in the right place.

"And I believe I can be a voice for children and families in Cromwell and Portland," she added.

Steinhauser graduated Wesleyan University in 2005 with a dance degree, she said. She lived in New York, Delaware and Vermont before settling down in Connecticut.

She said she has run afterschool classes in low-income communities, directed arts programming for children with speech and behavioral disorders, operated a small business as a perinatal massage therapist and birth doula, and been a mentor and counselor to pregnant women and new mothers.

Steinhauser cited job creation, economic development and small business assistance as high priorities.

"The small businesses in our communities are getting pushed out while powerful lobbyists write the laws on behalf of the largest corporations," she said in the press release. "I will work tirelessly to level the playing field and advocate for our small businesses at the Capitol. Connecticut is a hub of innovation and talent. Instead of using taxpayer dollars to bail out hedge funds, we should invest in infrastructure, technology, and renewable energy projects that will benefit everyone in Connecticut."

Steinhauser currently sits on the Portland li-

brary board of directors. She has not held other elected or appointed offices in town, she said.

On the volunteer side, she is an executive board member of the MOMS Club of Portland and Middletown.

Steinhauser said she will soon begin going door-to-door to meet her prospective constituents, which she described as the part of her campaign she's most excited about.

"I really enjoy talking to people and I'm most looking forward to connecting one-on-one with the community," she said.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, also a Democrat, described Steinhauser as intelligent, capable and kind.

"She also – and I think this is important for any elected official – listens carefully and she cares deeply about our families, our community and how she can make things better," Bransfield said.

Bransfield has known Steinhauser for about a year through involvement in the Democratic Town Committee.

"I know that she is particularly interested in literacy and particularly interested in education for children and is very committed to making Portland, Cromwell and Connecticut a better place for all of us," Bransfield said.

Board of Education member and former Valley View School librarian Meg Scata, a Democrat, said in the press release that nobody will work harder for children than Steinhauser.

"She knows that we all want the same thing: fair opportunities for us and our families. Laurel will work to build a Connecticut where our kids can receive a world class education and stay to raise families of their own," Scata said.

Steinhauser said she's been inspired by the



Laurel Seinhauser

support she's received from the communities of Cromwell and Portland so far.

She described the social and political climate as one that has been primed for change since the election of President Donald J. Trump in 2016.

"I've been very fortunate to experience the outpouring of support I've received so far," she said. "It's been encouraging. People really are ready for a change."

An official campaign kick-off event will be held Tuesday, May 8 at Farrell's Restaurant, 245 Marlborough St, Portland, from 5:30-8 p.m.

\$35.79M Budget to Hebron Voters Next Week

by Sloan Brewster

The referendum on the \$35.79 million 2018-19 budget proposal is just days away.

Next Tuesday, May 8, the polls will be open at Hebron Elementary School from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The spending plan reflects a 2.56 percent or \$940,873 decrease from the current year's expenses.

For general government, the spending proposal totals \$8.91 million general government, including debt and capital; this figure is down by 4.25 percent, or \$395,862, from current year general government spending.

The reductions in general government are meant to compensate for cuts in education funding from the state, Board of Finance Chairman David Veschi said at the April 10 budget public hearing. Last year, the town received about \$7.30 million in state funding, he said. This year it is anticipating \$6.13 million, a \$1.6 million cut.

Town officials used a combination of budget reductions to mitigate the effect of the state cuts – a \$500,000 contribution from the town's rainy day fund, and a tax increase.

The mill rate is proposed to go up to 37.44, which is a .44 mill increase over the current rate of 37 mills.

The increase translates to a \$92 increase for properties assessed at \$210,510, Veschi said. This year's taxes are \$7,789, and if the budget is approved, next year they will be \$7,881.

While some line items – such as the contribution to the open space account – are down in the general government proposal, one that is up is funding for capital projects, which at \$53,340, is an increase of \$9,080 or 20.52 percent. At the same time this year's contribution

to the capital non-recurring fund, is \$2,000, a \$1,050 cut from last year and at \$583,553, the town's contribution to capital improvement is down by \$187,358.

On the education side, the \$11.48 million request from the Hebron Board of Education marks a \$102,125 or .88 percent decrease. At \$14.05 million, the town's levy to RHAM is down by 1.48 percent. Debt service for RHAM is \$1.344 million, a \$47,272 or 3.43 percent drop.

The RHAM drop reflects a reduction in the number of Hebron students at the high and middle schools, Veschi said.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said he hopes voters will show up at the polls. On average, between 1,000 and 1,300 voters vote in budget referendums, he said.

Last year, the town budget passed at its first referendum, and indeed drew 1,300 of the town's approximately 7,000 registered voters, Registrar of Voters Jack Richmond said.

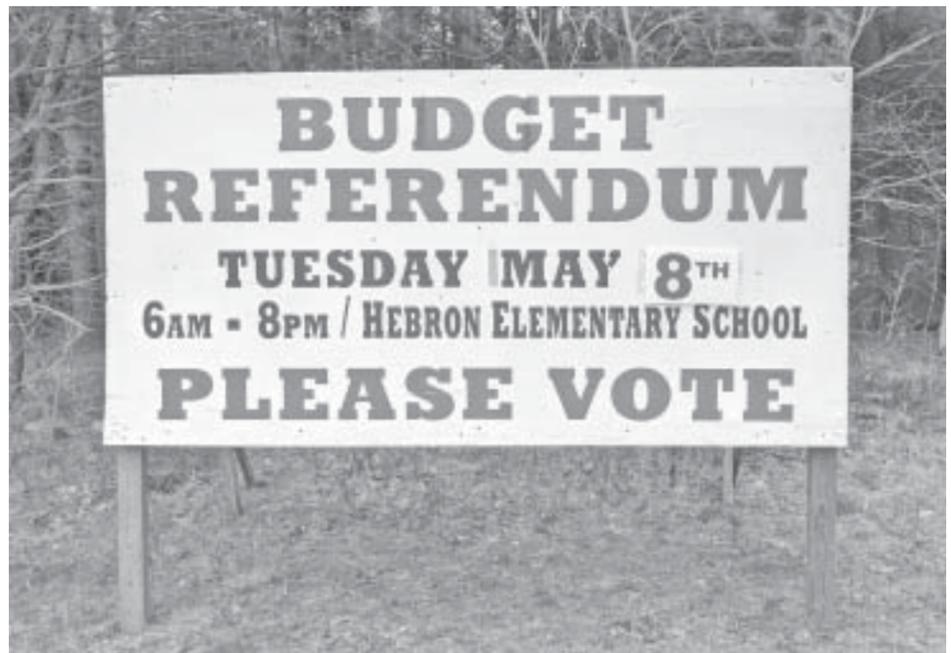
At the April 12 Board of Education meeting, board members appealed to the assembled crowd not only to vote themselves, but to bring others to the polls too.

"I just really hope that your passion, your drive and your desire gets you to the polls on May 8 and bring a friend, bring your neighbor," said Maryanne Leichter.

"Please vote," Heather Petit echoed. "Like Maryanne said, and bring your whole street, not just your neighbor."

Tierney, when asked why folks should come to the polls, said he feels the proposed budget rate is "palatable."

"I just think it's a great budget," he said. "Absolutely, I think with the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and the Board of Ed, that



Hebron officials want everyone to remember to come out and vote in the referendum next Tuesday, May 8, as is evidenced by the sign on Old Colchester Road in Amston, across from the Public Works Department.

we've come in with a very responsible budget."

For people who want to vote but will be out of town, absentee ballots are available, said Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz. Applications for absentee ballots need to be filled out in order to get one.

"The best way is to come in and pick up application and fill it out," she said. "Once we have the application, we give you your ballot and you go to a private place in the building,

vote and bring it back to the Town Clerk's office."

The deadline to submit absentee ballots is 4 p.m. Monday May 7, the night before the referendum.

There will be four separate ballot questions concerning the budget and three advisory questions about whether or not the town and Hebron and RHAM Boards of Education budgets are high.

Two-Vehicle Crash Injures One in Colchester

Colchester Police said on April 24 a two-vehicle collision was caused by a woman's failure to adhere to a red traffic signal.

At approximately 3:36 p.m. Elvira Weiner, 45, of 133 Bulkeley Hill Rd., was driving a Ford Escape Limited when she failed to stop for the red traffic control signal at Linwood Ave. and Linwood Cemetery Road. This resulted in a collision with a GMC Jimmy driven by Frank Sheppard, 64, of 156 Wall St.

According to police, both Sheppard and his passenger Verna Chamberlain, 57, of 156 Wall St., Apt. D, were transported by Colchester Fire Department to Marlborough clinic for non-life-threatening injuries.

The GMC Jimmy was towed from the scene by Desmond's Auto. Weiner drove her vehicle from the scene and was issued an infraction for failure to obey a traffic control signal, police said.

Vehicle Collides with Sign in Hebron

A Moodus man was injured when his car collided with a sign last Friday, April 27, state police said.

At approximately 9:29 p.m., Matthew R. Cavanaugh, 34, of 7 Barberry Ln., Moodus, was driving a Volkswagen Jetta south on Route 85 near Gilead Street, when he lost control of his vehicle for unknown reasons.

The Volkswagen Jetta veered right, where

it contacted a DOT "T" intersection sign and then a tree, resulting in heavy front-end damage, police said.

Cavanaugh was transported by Hebron EMS to Windham hospital with reported minor injuries. The Volkswagen Jetta was towed by Columbia Ford.

According to police, this case remains open and under investigation.

Should Trooper Be Located at Marlborough School?

by Allison Lazur

Increasing the safety of the children at Marlborough Elementary is a concern that has been on the rise in the wake of recent school shootings – and the Board of Education, as well as some residents, has expressed an interest in establishing a satellite office at the elementary school for the town's resident state trooper, Jeff Dunshee.

Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly encompassed these suggestions and concerns in an email to First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, inviting Traversa to a school board meeting last week to discuss the possibilities.

Traversa turned down the invite, however. She said that, after discussing the matter with the town's attorney and leadership at the Connecticut State Police Colchester barracks, as well as with Dunshee and the town's new constable, Officer Jay Kehoe, she was ruling out the satellite office "at this time."

Traversa said several factors went into the decision – including the limited exit access from the school; the safety of the students in regard to individuals who would have to be buzzed in to meet with Dunshee; upholding the integrity of the individual contracts of the constable versus that of the resident state trooper; as well as a busy front entrance that she said at any given time is saturated with school buses and parents dropping off their children.

"If a trooper was at the school and had to respond to anything there is no easy exit – period," Traversa said. "From a tactical standpoint it was determined it is not an option."

While any decision on establishing a satel-

lite office would ultimately be made by the Board of Selectmen, Sergeant Joshua Woodward – Dunshee's commanding sergeant – offered his support for the idea last week.

"It's something that the town needs to approve and allow [but] it's good to have a satellite office in the school. The presence of a police officer in the building is something we encourage, but it's something that the town would have to approve," Woodward said.

Dunshee offered the same thoughts as Woodward in an email last week.

"I would have to echo Sergeant Woodward's feelings – professionally I don't really see any negatives with the idea," he wrote.

Traversa offered the alternative location of town hall as a second office for Dunshee. His current tactical office is on West Road – a location selectman Dick Shea said was "something that needs to be corrected, whether [a new office] is at the school or somewhere else."

"You certainly can't tear out of Town Hall in any great rush in any direction with the traffic that we've got in Marlborough center," Shea said, at the April 17 selectman's meeting.

Shea also referenced the limited exit access from the school.

"I remember the trooper was concerned he only had one way out," he said. "We could consider opening the other end of school drive with signs for right turn only."

Traversa instead offered to locate Kehoe at the school. Traversa told Kelly in an email the new constable role is "vastly different" from what it was before.

"We've outlined several program ideas to engage and educate the students and their parents in the year ahead, and I believe you'll be pleased as you see these unfold," Traversa said.

At last week's school board meeting – where Kelly presented Traversa's email response to the rest of the school board – members questioned what these new program ideas entailed and when specifically they would see them unfold.

The school board discussed inviting Kehoe to its meeting in May to inquire about the referenced new programs.

Traversa said this week the new programs would include community forums where Kehoe would engage with parents and students and discuss issues related to law.

Traversa also pointed out in her email that Kehoe has already taken the initiative in developing a relationship with the students and can often be seen having lunch with the children.

Principal Dan White confirmed that Kehoe has been "very active and visible" at the school so far.

Kelly told the *Rivereast* last week she believes "any kind of police presence would be good for the kids, [especially] since they have seen Officer Kehoe at least twice."

Regardless of Kehoe's presence, the school board conveyed disappointment that Traversa wouldn't even come to the meeting to discuss establishing a satellite office for Dunshee.

Board of Education member Susan Rapelye was among those expressed her discontent.

"We made a friendly request for her to come [to our meeting] and she just wrote this [email] out – rejected our request and shut us down; there was no discussion," Rapelye said. "I feel like we should've possibly researched this together with her and come to a conclusion together on what's in the best interest for the community."

Superintendent of Schools Dr. David Sklarz communicated his frustrations.

"If this is good for safety, for peace of mind of families and it's good for our children, why can't we try find a way to make it happen as opposed to why it shouldn't happen?" he said.

Resident Dave Porteus also supported the idea.

"I think it's a good idea from a security standpoint and it's also a good idea for kids to have a sense of being at ease around police," he said.

Because the increased police presence at the school was a unanimous concern, the board decided to revisit the issue at its May 24 meeting – provided Kehoe's invitation is approved by Traversa.

Dunshee expressed his interest in the importance of school safety in an email to the *Rivereast* last week – regardless of whether he has a satellite office at the school.

"The safety of the children at school is top priority to me and either way the decision goes, I will continue to spend as much time as I can at the school and continue working with the school administration and town officials to make it as safe as possible," he wrote.

Marlborough School Board Forced to Slash Budget

by Allison Lazur

After weeks of budget negotiations with the Board of Finance, the Board of Education last week grudgingly satisfied the finance board's directive to cut \$132,000 from its 2018-19 proposed budget in preparation for the referendum next week.

This leaves the total education budget proposal at \$7.29 million—a 0.06 percent decrease over current year spending.

Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz said at the April 26 school board meeting that he believes the board delivered a “fiscally responsible budget” and was “disheartened” with the finance board's decision to reduce the school budget by an additional \$132,000. Sklarz said the school board's “very reasonable” initial proposal included the elimination of three classroom teacher positions in various grades.

Despite his reservations, Sklarz recommended eliminating the entire \$118,000 capital improvement budget and cutting the building maintenance contingency—totaling \$58,057—by \$14,000. The motion, made by Louise Concodello, was approved by every member on the board, except Susan Rapelye who abstained from voting.

Although the motion passed, frustrations were voiced by several members.

Board of Education Vice Chairman Wesley Skorski called the finance board's actions “foolish and short sighted.”

“They [the finance board] seem to be preoccupied with our bond rating. However, interest rates are going up so we are saving money now, but in the long term if we have to borrow in the future, it's not going to pay off in the end,” Skorski said. “The tax payers think it's a good deal—it's not.”

The finance board has had the town's bond rating on its radar, after a limited rainy day fund contributed to a downgrade by Moody's Investors Service last December. The recommended amount of the rainy day fund should be 12-15 percent of the total \$24.63 million town budget, according to Finance Board Chairman Doug Knowlton.

With that downgrade in mind, the finance board made the decision to utilize \$100,000 of last year's \$663,634 budget surplus and deposit the remaining \$553,634 into the fund balance, leaving the rainy day fund at \$2.67 million, or 10.85 percent of the total budget.

Skorski worried that cutting capital would prohibit the school board from keeping up with repairs on the town-owned building, which could result in an expensive bond project down

the road.

Sklarz explained that “if the building has serious problems because it's been neglected, the town has to go out for a bond,” - not the Board of Education.

Chairman Ruth Kelly weighed in on the cuts saying that although she believed this decision would “come back to bite us in the future,” she wanted to “keep the cuts as far away from the classroom” as possible.

Several other board members, as well as a resident, agreed the operations budget should remain untouched in order to keep the school's programs intact.

Resident Dave Portias said he believed the finance board put both the Board of Selectman and school board in difficult positions.

“They [the selectmen] cut a lot of capital items and I would expect that you would do the same because your operational budget is so slim and we don't want the kids to feel the impact of these cuts,” Portias said.

With a \$14,000 cut to maintenance looming over the proposed budget, Sklarz made sure to remind the school board that the town owns the school.

“This is one of the largest buildings owned by the town,” he said. “We don't own this build-

ing and yet we are responsible for the maintenance and capital improvements.”

Sklarz went on to reference a conversation that had happened earlier during the meeting when Principal Dan White explained he was on a ladder that day trying to remedy a condensation situation in the ceiling tiles, caused by a temperature change in the building.

“We need to step back and think about the conversation we just had,” Sklarz said. “[We had] our principal on a ladder [and] our assistant principal holding the ladder.”

He explained these sorts of issues are an unfortunate reality for the school and if there was a certified specialist designated to handle this problem, the responsibility would not fall to White.

During the public comment period at the conclusion of the meeting, Selectman Dick Shea voiced his concerns with cuts to capital in both the school and town budgets. Shea said he believed that although the town is “alright now,” it would potentially be in trouble “down the road.”

“They used to say if you cut capital, you're short sighted—I think we're blind,” Shea said.

Marlborough to Hold First-Ever Budget Referendum

by Allison Lazur

After years of being passed – or rejected – at a town meeting, Marlborough's proposed budget is going to, for the first time ever, be determined at referendum.

The town's debut budget referendum will take place Tuesday, May 8. Polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in the community room at Marlborough Elementary School, 25 School Dr.

The proposed 2018-19 total budget of \$24.63 million calls for a 2.34 percent increase over current year spending. The budget is composed of capital, general government and local school board spending, as well as Marlborough's contribution to the RHAM schools' budget. A story about the RHAM referendum appears on page 22.

The town operations budget of \$4.89 million saw an overall decrease of 0.23 percent. Items such as the salaries of appointed and elected officials contributed \$1.74 million – a 0.84 percent increase over the current year. The budget also includes \$1.55 million for public works, a 3.61 percent increase, and \$562,060 for health and public safety, a 3.30 percent decrease.

The town net capital budget totaling \$937,643 saw a 28.94 percent increase which includes \$191,000 in road improvements, as well as construction of a Finley Hill culvert over Flat Brook, costing \$272,368.

The local school board budget of \$7.29 million reflected a 0.06 percent decrease over the current year. This figure reflects such operational items as: the salaries of certified personnel, which is \$4.01 million, or a 2.01 percent decrease from the current year; non-certified staff, \$1.01 million, a 1.12 percent decrease; as well as employee benefits totaling \$1.13 million, a 7.26 percent increase.

The school only has an operations budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year after cutting all capital improvement items – totaling \$118,000 to satisfy the finance board's request.

Residents will also vote on Marlborough's portion of the RHAM budget which amounts to \$9.42 million – a 4.87 percent increase. RHAM's capital contributes \$78,144 to the total budget.

If passed, the proposed budget will result

in a 2.99 percent tax increase – a number the finance board spent several meetings struggling to get under 3 percent.

The mill rate also saw an increase of 1.06 mills bringing the total to 36.52 mills.

One mill is equivalent to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property, meaning a 36.52 mill rate would result in a resident paying \$9,130 in taxes on a home assessed at \$250,000.

While town officials, the school board and members of the board of finance all had different opinions on where the cuts should and should not happen, First Selectman Amy Traversa said she believed “everyone has done the best job they can.”

“There's nothing more in the budget that's controversial,” Traversa said. “We are talking about bare-bones budgets and this is what it costs to run the town.”

The referendum ballot will include the following three questions:

1. “Shall the budget of \$24,625,494 for the town of Marlborough for the fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, as recommended by the Board of Finance, be approved? (Please note: This amount includes Marlborough's share of the RHAM regional school budget, town operations, capital improvements and local Board of Education budgets.)”

2. “Shall the budget of \$29,071,436 for the operations and maintenance of the regional School District No. 8 public school system (RHAM), for the fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, be approved?”

3. “Shall the capital improvement program budget of \$243,286 as recommended by the Regional School District No.8 (RHAM) Board of Education, for the fiscal year July 1, 2018 to June 20, 2019, be approved?”

As this is the town's first-ever budget referendum, it means absentee ballots are also available for the first time. Absentee ballot applications are available in the town clerk's office at Town Hall, 26 N. Main St. Voters may either fill the ballot out there or take it home and complete it. Ballots can be mailed in and will be accepted until 5 p.m. Tuesday. Ballots delivered in person must arrive by close of business Monday.

Alleged Online Scam Artist At It Again in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

An East Hampton man has been arrested for the third time in two years on larceny charges in connection with an online scam that allegedly brought in \$348,000 since 2011, according to the East Hampton Police Department.

Demetrios Katras, 40, of 166 Comstock Trail, was arrested on May 1 and charged with first-degree larceny.

According to the Middlesex Superior Court Criminal Clerk's office, Katras was being held on \$150,000 bond as of Thursday morning.

The arrest stemmed from an investigation by Sgt. Paul Battista and Officer Hardie Burgin that began in August 2017, according to the arrest warrant affidavit. It came on the heels of the October 2016 and January 2018 arrests.

Katras employed “similar fraudulent scenarios” found in previous investigations to take money from prospective outdoor shed customers, police said. They said he posted sheds for sale online, took deposits and then failed to deliver the sheds. Other similar activity involved the purchase of large amounts of lumber from out-of-state companies and not paying for it.

The affidavit said Katras has left credit card companies and the online auction site eBay responsible for reimbursing people whose

sheds never showed up.

He was also arrested in 2013 in Berlin, Conn. on charges related to falsely filing a \$40,000 insurance claim, police said.

Rivereast archives show Katras was arrested in 2011 on charges related to the theft of 12 sheds worth about \$30,000 from an Amish supplier in Pennsylvania.

East Hampton Police Department Sgt. Paul Battista said at the time that Katras was accepting delivery of prefabricated sheds from a supplier in Embreeville, PA, and selling them without paying the supplier back.

The Amish shed dealers, Battista said, “are so nice that they don't want to get paid until you sell it.”

Katras pled guilty in the Pennsylvania scheme and was ordered to refund the supplier, according to the affidavit. Court documents show he received three years' probation in late 2015.

The arrest warrant affidavit accompanying Katras' January arrest said Mohegan Sun Casino records show Katras is considered a “Whale Player.” In gambling parlance, the term whale refers to high rollers.

The affidavit said Katras lost a total of \$31,692 at the casino between April and November 2017 and racked up \$14,117 in charges from the Draft Kings gambling website.

East Hampton Police News

4/21: Tabitha Demerchant, 19, of 578 Main St., Portland, was arrested and charged with falsely reporting an incident in the second degree and providing a false statement, East Hampton Police said.

4/22: Kevin Ringrose, 26, of 505 Tobacco St., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with reckless driving, failure to stop when signaled by a police officer and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

4/23: Meredith James, 46, of 195 West High St., turned herself in pursuant to an active warrant for her arrest stemming from a motor vehicle crash that had occurred in front of Loco Perro, 191 E. High St. James was charged with DUI and following too close, police said.

4/23: Brennan Gibbons, 25, of 16 Race Ave., Plainville, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault, first-degree reckless endangerment, first-degree unlawful restraint, second-degree criminal mischief, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, third-degree burglary and assault on a police officer, police said.

4/26: Nebo B. Huse, 23, of 13 West St., turned himself in pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest and charged with falsely reporting an incident, police said.

Also, from April 16-22, officers responded to seven medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and 13 alarms, and made nine traffic stops, police said.

Dollar General Gets Nod from East Hampton PZC

by Elizabeth Regan

A new Dollar General on Route 66 has been approved after a months-long saga involving multiple public hearings, a bureaucratic blunder, one lawsuit and countless social media exchanges that pitted the Not-In-My-Backyard contingent against proponents of an expanded tax base.

The East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission on Wednesday gave its unanimous consent to a site plan for the 7,500-square foot discount chain store on the corner of East High Street and Lake Road. The plan will demolish the Route 66 Snak Shak and the red house that sit on the 1.38-acre property.

Now, the state Department of Transportation must approve a traffic plan.

Matthew J. Bruton, of the engineering firm BL Companies Inc., said construction could begin this fall if state approval comes in the expected two-month timeframe. He said the project will take 120 days from breaking ground to moving in.

The project has also secured approvals and endorsements from town agencies including the Design Review Board, Conservation-Lake Commission and Water Pollution Control Authority.

The Planning and Zoning Commission's decision came after a November vote that did not go in Dollar General's favor. That's when commissioners voted 3-3 to deny a preliminary application from Gary Eucalitto, of the Harwinton-based Garrett Homes LLC, to

change the property's zoning from residential to commercial. What commission members did not know at the time was that the site had been approved as a commercial zone in 1998, but had never been updated on the zoning map.

Property owner Walter Smith of Portland filed an appeal of the commission's decision with the state Superior Court in January. The suit alleged that denying the zone change despite evidence of the 1998 approval was "illegal" and "arbitrary."

The commission, after determining it would be fruitless to fight the lawsuit, acknowledged the site was already commercial and accepted a site plan application from Eucalitto. They subsequently updated the zoning map to reflect the property's commercial status.

Objections from lakeside neighbors throughout the whole process have revolved around traffic and pollution concerns as well as the idea, expressed by resident Jennifer Palma last month, that the store would "cheapen" the area.

The site plan has evolved based on comments from the public and the commission to include only one access point on Route 66, instead of keeping an additional driveway on Lake Road as initially proposed.

Maple, cedar, pine, oak and arborvitae trees, as well as shrubs and groundcover, will line the property, according to the site plan.

According to Bruton, the stormwater management plan for the site will result in less runoff than there is today.

Ongoing Traffic Concerns

Bruton said a traffic study from his firm estimated roughly 17 cars will go in and out of the store during the peak traffic period on weekdays, with about 22 coming and going during the same period on Saturdays. Peak traffic hours are 4-6 p.m.

The traffic study found traffic would increase by 1-1.5 percent during peak periods if Dollar General moves in.

Truck deliveries happen once a week during off-peak business hours, according to Bruton.

The car counts used in the traffic study were recorded in October of last year. Several residents stood up during Wednesday's public hearing to ask that a study be undertaken during the busier summer months to get a better idea of how bad traffic can get around the lake.

Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli said the figures in the traffic study are in line with state Department of Transportation car counts recorded in August.

DeCarli acknowledged a comprehensive, regional study of Route 66 from Portland to Marlborough is currently underway, but said it is at least a year from completion.

Lower Connecticut River Council of Governments Executive Director Sam Gold confirmed the project – which will examine a host of land use concerns on Route 66 including traffic patterns, public safety and economic development – is on track to finish next summer.

When asked by residents if the commission

can wait for the results of the regional study before approving or denying the Dollar General project, members emphasized they are required to make a decision on an application in a specific timeframe dictated by the state. They have 35 days to hold a public hearing on an application and 65 days to make a decision once the hearing is closed. Only the applicant can request an extension of the public hearing timeframe.

Comprehensive state statutes and case law involving local zoning make it difficult for a commission to deny a site plan that complies with zoning regulations and state law.

State Supreme Court precedent from 2007 dictates that the commission can only address "traffic flow within the site and entering and exiting the site." The decision specifies a commission can't turn down a site plan because of congestion on adjacent streets.

Chairman Kevin Kuhr concurred with other members when he emphasized the commission has examined the issue closely over the past few months.

"We try to be fair to the town, we try to be fair to the public, we try to be fair to everyone – even the applicant," Kuhr said.

Member Ray Zatorski said there have been "pages and pages and pages" of changes since the store was first proposed. Various small and large-scale changes include the removal of the Lake Road driveway from the plan, lower light poles and new stormwater runoff provisions.

Draft Decision Finds Andover Violated FOI Act

by Sloan Brewster

By failing to release records containing information on alleged sexual harassment complaints against Jay Linddy, the town is in violation of laws granting access to public records, according to a hearing officer's draft report to the state Freedom of Information Commission.

The report said the records request stemmed from an August 2017 incident in which Linddy, a former town employee and current elected official, was accused of sexual harassment.

Linddy is a member of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Education and the Recreation Commission. He has not attended a meeting of the selectmen or school board since August but has been a regular attendee at Recreation Commission meetings.

According to findings by hearing officer Paula Perlman, the requested records "are public records and must be disclosed."

The commission is expected to issue a final decision later this month.

In October, after a two-month investigation into the sexual harassment complaints, select-

men unanimously voted to fire Linddy from his jobs as animal control officer and transfer station attendant. Linddy had been removed from his office in Town Hall in August, but during the investigation retained his positions.

In October, the *Rivereast* requested copies of records containing information regarding the complaints against Linddy, which the town failed to provide. The paper subsequently filed a complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission.

At a hearing that took place in October, town attorney Dennis O'Brien argued that releasing the records would invade town employees' privacy. He said the documents "concerned an 'extremely sensitive' personnel matter involving accusations of sexual harassment that took place in a town office." O'Brien further argued that the misconduct was of an "extreme nature" and information in the records would "shock the conscience." The town's decision to withhold the records was based on state and local personnel policies, he said.

In her eight-page report, Perlman found the policies did not provide an exemption for the release of the records.

In not providing records of the complaints, the town violated Connecticut General Statute 1-210, which grants access to records, Perlman wrote in her determination. In addition, the town violated General Statute 1-214, which governs the process a public agency must follow when requests are made for personnel files. Namely, the statute says the town may withhold the documents only if it received a written objection by the employee or its representative within seven days of the request for the files.

According to Perlman's report, the town refused to disclose the records prior to receiving Linddy's written objection and therefore violated the statute.

Last month, Linddy spoke with the *Rivereast* about his continued absence from meetings of the selectmen and school board even as he continues to attend Recreation Commission meet-

ings.

Linddy said he was planning to retire and would likely resign from the boards and commission in July.

When asked why he was a no-show at the boards but was still attending Recreation Commission meetings, he said that as a 30-year member of the commission, he said he feels the town's recreation programs are in trouble, as there are currently not enough programs for older children and youth.

Linddy said he is not attending Board of Selectmen meetings because they are the ones overseeing the "ongoing legal matter." He said he would attend school board meetings, if asked, in order to assure a there was a quorum – but added he stays away to prevent a scene.

"It'd be fruitless for me to go because it would be a disruption because all the members on there I don't get along with," Linddy said. "It doesn't make the board look good and it's not healthy for the town."

Life Star Transports Man and Toddler from Crash in Marlborough

A single-car crash on Route 2 last week led to Life Star being called, state police said, and left two injured.

On April 23 at approximately 12:52 p.m., Marcos Gonzalez-Caez, 23, of 22 Elliott St., Apt. 124, Hartford, was driving a Ford Explorer westbound on Route 2, near Exit 15, with a 1-year-old female passenger, police said.

Police said Gonzalez-Caez lost control of the vehicle and veered into the grassy center median, where the Ford Explorer collided with a cement culvert and then rolled over several

times before coming to a final stop.

Gonzalez-Caez was ejected from the vehicle and transported by ambulance and then by Life Star to Hartford Hospital, according to police. The passenger, who sustained minor injuries was also transported by ambulance and then by Life Star to Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Police said Gonzalez-Caez was found at fault for failing to maintain a proper lane. The vehicle was towed from the scene by North East Auto and Truck.

Two-Vehicle Crash on Route 66 in Hebron

State Police said a two-vehicle collision last Friday left one woman with possible injuries.

At approximately 11:59 a.m., Amy C. Knox-Green, 39, of 79 Northam Rd., Amston, was driving a Toyota Camry westbound on Route 66, near the intersection of Millstream Road, when her vehicle was struck by a Ford Crown Victoria driven by Christopher P. Briganti, 27, of 1111 Country Club Rd., Middletown.

Both operators stated that traffic had quickly slowed and they had to suddenly slow their own vehicles causing them to skid on

the wet pavement, police said.

Knox-Green was able to avoid striking the vehicle that stopped in front of her, but Briganti was unable to stop in time to avoid colliding with Knox-Green's Toyota Camry, police said.

Knox-Green complained of minor back pain and was transported by Hebron Fire Department to Middlesex Memorial Clinic. The Toyota Camry was towed to Belltown AAA and the Volkswagen Jetta was towed to DESPP Fleet.

Vehicle Collides with Bus in Hebron

State Police said last Monday a school bus stopped in traffic was struck from behind by a vehicle, leaving the driver of the car with reported head pain.

At approximately 8:34 a.m. Mayte M. Couvertier, 37, of 179 Park Ave., Colchester, who was driving the school bus, was stopped in traffic on Route 85, just prior to the intersection of Route 85 and Route 66. There were

no students on the bus, police said. Karen W. Fellman, 49, of 53 Fox Ridge Ln., Hebron, was traveling north on Route 85 in a Toyota Avalon when she became ill and struck the bus from behind, police said.

Fellman reported head pain and was transported by Hebron Fire Department to Marlborough Medical Center and was found at fault for following too closely, police said.

M box

Two-Vehicle Collision in Marlborough Leaves One with Minor Injuries

State police said an ignored red traffic signal caused a two-vehicle crash on April 25.

At approximately 8:23 p.m., police said, Geraldine F. Cecilio, 61, of 52 N. Main St., East Hampton was driving a Ford Edge Limited, traveling west on Route 66. Cecilio approached the intersection with South Main Street, and traveled through a red traffic sig-

nal without slowing. The Ford struck a Nissan Rogue traveling north on South Main Street, police said.

The Nissan Rogue, driven by a 17-year-old female, was towed from the scene by North East Auto and Truck. Cecilio was transported to Marlborough Clinic with minor injuries and her vehicle was towed by Desmond's Auto.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Elaine Wylie

Elaine (Fuller) Wylie, daughter of the late Clifford Fuller and Louva (Comstock) Fuller, peacefully passed away Wednesday, April 25. Born in Middletown, Elaine was proud of her heritage as a direct descendant of John and Priscilla Alden, who famously arrived on the Mayflower in 1620.



Elaine was also part of local history when she became an alum of the very first graduating class of East Hampton High School in 1940, and then worked for Gong Bell Manufacturing Company until she married her late husband, Gordon "Willy" Wylie. They remained in East Hampton for the rest of their lives, where their home became a friendly fixture on Main Street.

Starting every spring, Elaine could be found meticulously caring for her flowers and greeting neighbors on their family's porch, which was always open for conversation, cookies, and lemonade for anyone passing by. She would stay outside until dusk on most summer nights, chatting with her neighbors, daughters, and grandkids about their lives. Aside from her family and late dog, Dolly, Elaine loved the Red Sox, Elvis, dancing, and had a keen eye for fashion.

Elaine is survived by her sister, Beverly Becher. She also leaves behind three loving daughters and their spouses, Marlene and Billy Grillo, Eileen and Paul Oliva, and Diana and Timothy Rall. She survived by her seven grandchildren, who were her pride and joy: Mark Grillo, Sheri (Grillo) Salpietro, Ryan Oliva, Karen (Oliva) Moore, and Keith, Steven and Michael Rall. In addition, she has 10 great-grandchildren, with an 11th due in August. She also leaves behind several nieces and nephews, and her longtime pal, Roy Hallberg.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., today, May 4, from 10-11 a.m. A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. in the funeral home. Burial will follow in Union Hill Cemetery in Middle Haddam.

In lieu of flowers or donations, Elaine wanted all those who cared about her to take a few minutes to enjoy their favorite outdoor activity and think of her fondly.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Roland Charles Doty

Roland Charles Doty, 86, of Colchester, beloved husband of Janice (Nitkowski) Doty, passed away Sunday, April 29. Born Nov. 9, 1931 in Meriden, he was the son of the Eugene and Annette (Charpentier) Doty.



Mr. Doty served proudly with the U.S. Army during the Korean War and went on to work as a quality control representative at Pratt & Whitney for 32 years before his retirement. In his spare time, he had been an avid golfer.

In addition to Janice, his loving wife of 63 years, he leaves their four children, Melanie Marquis of Colchester, Thomas Doty (and wife Kathy) of East Hampton and Steven Doty of Colchester and Andrea Doty of New London; seven grandchildren; several great grandchildren; his brother, Arnold Doty of Florida; his mother-in-law, Eleanor Nitkowski of Cheshire; and numerous extended family.

The funeral liturgy was celebrated Thursday, May 3, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, followed by burial with military honors in the New St. Andrew Cemetery. There were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 417005, Boston, MA 02241-7005 (heart.org).

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

John Francis Murphy

John Francis Murphy, 68, died Tuesday, April 10, in Loxahatchee, Fla. John was born June 1, 1949 in Portland Connecticut to William and Rosemary (Coen) Murphy and grew up on Jobs Pond with his brothers, a sister and a multitude of friends.



He was a member of the first graduating class of Xavier High School in 1967. After a luminous summer hitchhiking through Europe, he attended the University of Scranton, Middlesex Community College and the University of Arizona. He was a member of a motorcycle club in those early years situated at the Portland quarry and was a charter member of Profane Roofing and Excavation, a group of friends who got together to do the manual labor none could easily accomplish on their own. His budding political career (running for First Selectman of Portland leading a slate for the Portland Citizens Party) was regrettably cut short due to a filing technicality. He was not the type to desire a nine-to-five job and accomplished many entrepreneurial endeavors. At various times he owned a general store, managed a wine shop, managed a pallet factory, and managed logistics for an electrical contracting company.

His travels took him from Connecticut to Arizona, to Florida, to Georgia, to Texas, to Australia, and back to Florida. He finally retired to assume the position of well-ensconced kept man. He is survived by his wife Julie (the keeper); his sons, Eli Spurgeon (wife Ashley and son Zayne), Cain William (wife Amber and sons Julian and Shea) and Justin James (wife Brandy and daughter Charlotte); his stepson, Tyler Harris; his stepdaughters, Brooke Fredric (husband Loran, son Logan, and daughters Auden and Maren) and Melisa Rocha (husband Joseph); his brothers Richard (wife Patricia) and Thomas (wife Karen), and his sister Mary (wife Sherry).

He is preceded in death by his brothers William and Joseph and his brother from another mother, James Pease.

John was also famous for never letting clarity get in the way of florid prose. He would routinely sign his correspondence "gloriously incongruent" and that was impressively self-aware. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 26, at St. Mary's Church in Portland, followed by a reception at 4 p.m. at Angelico's in East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the COPD Foundation at copdfoundation.org.

The Dude abides.

Portland

Judith Springer

Ms. Judith (Judy) Elaine (Bolin) Springer, 76, of Portland (previously from Kensington and Clover, S.C.), passed away Saturday, April 28. She was born July 3, 1941, in York, S.C., to the late Cora Clinton Bolin and John Henry Bolin. She graduated from The Medical School of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C., as a registered nurse.



Judy loved to help people and to laugh. She had a generous heart and took great pleasure in giving gifts to her friends and family. Judy enjoyed traveling and was able to see much of the world.

She is survived by her sons and their wives: Eric and Cindy Springer of Portland, Bruce and Anya Springer of San Diego, Calif., and David and Samy Springer of Phoenix, Ariz. She also leaves eight beloved grandchildren, Kelsey, Erin, Colin, Aiden, Nicho, Dayne, Nicholas and Alexia. Judy is also survived by her brother, Dicky Bolin; and sister, Kay Bolin Morris.

Judith was preceded by her brother, James Bolin.

The family would like to thank the wonderful, caring staff of the Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Judith's name can be made to the Nation Multiple Sclerosis Society.

A private memorial service will occur at a later date.

M.L. Ford Funeral Home is handling arrangements in Clover, S.C. Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, is in charge of local arrangements.

East Hampton

Ronald Lee Shepherd

Ronald Lee Shepherd, 70, of East Hampton, passed away Thursday, April 26, after a 10-year battle with prostate cancer, with his beloved wife Maggie by his side. He was born in Oklahoma City, Okla., Sept. 8, 1947 to the late Ralph W. Shepherd and Marjorie M. Shepherd (Griffith).



Ron grew up on a farm in rural Newcastle, Okla. He was always fascinated by science and always had to figure out what made things work. He attended Oklahoma State University for a short time before enlisting into the U.S. Navy. Ron served in the Navy from 1967 to 1972. He was a proud submariner, a machinist mate nuclear plant operator having served 3 of his years of service on the USS Nautilus SSN571. He always referred to the Nautilus saying "that's my boat."

When Ron got out of the Navy he went to work at Electric Boat in Groton CT as a radiation control monitor. In 1979, he decided to get into the commercial nuclear plant industry. He held various positions throughout his nuclear career in Health Physics and worked at Millstone, Maine Yankee, Connecticut Yankee and ending his career as nuclear engineer at the Windsor ABB site in Connecticut. Ron loved to share his knowledge with others. He had a knack to get the job done and actually have fun while doing it! He believed in the KISS concept, "keep it simple, stupid!" Because he primarily worked outages he met people from lots of places and made many dear friends along the way. Ron retired in 2014.

Ron had many hobbies throughout his lifetime. Having grown up on a farm he learned how to work on equipment and cars. He was a car enthusiast and enjoyed going to the stock car races at Stafford Motor Speedway, Thompson Speedway and Waterford Speedbowl. He was crew chief on the No. 3 Late Model for many years at Stafford. Prior to getting into stock cars Ron road raced motorcycles in the modified classification of the AAMRR - Association of American Motorcycle Road Racers. The first bike he raced was a Norton Commando 750 and then went onto racing a Yamaha RD400. His race number was 438. He raced at Thompson Speedway, Bridgehampton Long Island and Loudon, N.H.

He enjoyed the outdoors and learned rock climbing. He and climbing partner Steve climbed at Lantern Hill in Ledyard and the Gunks in New York. After he was done with the rock-climbing and motorcycle-racing he decided to do something "safer" and learned how to sail. The Dolphin III was his pride and joy - he and "Only Mate Maggie" lived onboard for 10 years seasonally. They sailed from Maine to Connecticut and then primarily sailed Fishers Island Sound and Long Island Sound. They also went to Block Island, Newport and Jamestown, R.I.

After living on the boat he and his wife enjoyed living in their land yacht (camper) for 14 years. Ron enjoyed tapping the maple trees in February-March and making maple syrup on the campfire outside!

Another big part of Ron's life was MUSIC - both listening to and playing it. He played several instruments: drums & percussion, guitar, fiddle and late in life took piano lessons. He enjoyed all music styles and artists from Miles Davis to Hank Williams Sr.! Ron used to carry his bag of percussion instruments whenever he would go to his local hangouts. He played percussion for a while with Martin at back then Smokey's. He and his wife Maggie played "classic country" with their dear friend Frank for many years. Ron also enjoyed jamming with his friends Miles and Dave when he could.

In recent years Ron was involved with the Horse Feathers Veterans Program at the Ray of Light Farm in East Haddam. He learned how to harness and drive a horse-drawn cart and helped as much as he could with the animals involved in the program. He especially bonded with Bjorn a Norwegian Fjord.

Ron was also very spiritual. He called himself a "Buddhapalian" because he was an Episcopalian and also practiced Shin Buddhism. His Buddhist name was Ryusan, which means Dragon Mountain - a person of wisdom. He was a mindful and compassionate man. People always felt "comfortable" with him and could talk about anything. He had a great sense of humor and quick wit. Ron also was a member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in East Haddam.

In addition to his wife of 33 years, Margaret (Maggie) Shepherd, Ron is survived by his daughter, Scheri Guthrie and her husband Steve and granddaughters Aubri and Jaci; brother-in-law, Walter Majcher; aunt, Bonita Freeman; and several cousins.

Maggie would like to thank everyone at the Middlesex Cancer Center as well as the Chestelm Health and Rehabilitation Center. Also sends much gratitude and love to all friends who have helped her through this difficult time.

A celebration of life for Ron is planned for Sunday, June 10, at Markham Meadows Campground in East Hampton at 1 p.m. Interment will be private.

If you wish to honor Ron's memory, gifts may be made to Middlesex Hospital, Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 or via their website, middlesexhospital.org/support-middlesex-hospital or the Ray of Light Farm - Horse Feathers Veterans Program, 232 Town St., East Haddam, CT 06423 or rayoflightfarm.org/horse-feathers-donate.

To leave online condolences, or share a memory or photos, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Matthew Alexander Fryer

Matthew Alexander Fryer, 58, of Colchester, formerly of Redwood City, Calif., passed away at his home Monday, April 23. Matt was born in Redwood City, Calif., Dec. 6, 1959. He was a son of the late John and Kathleen (Stevens) Fryer. He was raised in California and spent most of his life living and working as a roofing contractor.



Matt was an avid reader, and enjoyed bowling, sketching, playing the guitar and was gifted with a wonderful singing voice. Most importantly, he will be remembered as a kind and friendly man to family and friends alike.

He will be sadly missed, but always remembered with love by his daughters and their families, Shelli and Richard Toletti of San Jose, Calif., Jennifer Fryer of Minneapolis, Minn., and Samantha and Sean Thomas of Paso Robles, Calif.; his brothers and sisters-in-law, Andrew and Lisa Fryer of Redwood Shores, Calif., Sean Fryer of San Jose, Calif., and John Fryer (late of Redwood City, Calif.); his eight grandchildren, Jordan, Christina, Jacqueline, Caitlyn, Noe, Sophia, Xavier and Kaleb; his nieces and nephews, John Fryer, Christopher Fryer, Aimee Lucchesi and Liva Fryer; his longtime friend and companion with whom he made his home, Donna McLean of Colchester; and numerous extended family and friends.

A celebration of his life will be held Saturday, May 26, in Redwood City, Calif. Donations in his memory may be made to an animal charity of one's choice.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Alex Seppa



Alexander "Alex" Seppa, 23, of East Hampton, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, April 21, in Lake Worth, Texas. He was born May 26, 1994.

Alex had a warm, handsome smile, kind eyes, and a quick sense of humor that instantly revealed his character. From boyhood he charmed his family and huge circle of friends with his sweet, caring nature and loyal heart. He was quick with a smile and a joke, reveling in time spent with his loved ones and always making those around him feel loved. He attended East Hampton schools through graduation, continuing his studies at Western Connecticut State University. Alex excelled at both school and youth sports, impressing his peers and elders with his work ethic, sportsmanship and talent, while finding many lifelong friends along the way. If a person's worth can be measured by the love of his family and friends, Alex, at only 23 years old, left this earth richer than most.

Alex leaves behind his heartbroken parents Terrence Seppa of Rocky Hill and Amy Backus Seppa of East Hampton; fiancée, Keisi Mitaj and their unborn son; grandparents Kent and (step-) Karen Backus and Ron and Cynthia Seppa; great-grandmother Helmi Seppa; many extended family members; and very many friends, all of whom adored him and his company.

He was predeceased by his aunt Melissa Backus, grandmother Karen Backus and his sister Aubrey Seppa, whom he has joined in the afterlife.

Alex Seppa was truly one of the good ones, and he will be deeply missed by all.

Respects and sympathy can be shared today, May 4, from 5-8 p.m., at the John J. Ferry & Sons Funeral Home, 88 East Main St., Meriden. Funeral services will be held Saturday, May 5, at 10 a.m., at First United Methodist Church, 159 East Main St., Meriden. Burial will be in Walnut Grove Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations for Alex's and Keisi's unborn son can be made to Amy Seppa/Terrence Seppa Scholarship Fund to Bank of America CT2-106-01, 9 East High St., East Hampton, CT 06424, c/o Pina Michalowski.

For online condolences and directions, visit jferryfh.com.

East Hampton

Dorothy Rustek

Dorothy (Donahue) Rustek, 89, of East Hampton (formerly of Portland, passed away Monday, April 30, after a long illness. She was born Nov. 8, 1928, and was married to the late Frank Rustek Sr.

Besides her daughter, Marsha Sienna of East Hampton, she is survived by her son, (Frank (Cindy) of Portland; five grandchildren, great-grandchildren Jasmine and Michael, who provided special care; and several nieces and nephews. In addition, she is also survived by her siblings Isabelle (Alfred) Esteves, Alain (Diana), and Fran (Dora) and her stepmom, Jean Donahue.

Dottie was also predeceased by her son, Jeff.

Calling hours are 10-11 a.m. today, at Doolittle Funeral Home in Middletown. Burial will follow at the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

Colchester

Phyllis Randall McCall

Phyllis Randall McCall, 89, of Colchester, formerly of Salem, passed away Saturday, April 28. Born Dec. 17, 1928, in Norwich, she was the daughter of Calvin Hale and Ethel (Randall) McCall Sr., late of Salem.

Phyllis graduated from the former Chapman Technical High School in New London in 1946 and continued her education at the Wm. W. Backus Hospital School of Nursing in 1950. Throughout her career, she worked at Backus Hospital, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital and area convalescent homes before her retirement in 1994. Phyllis was a member of the Congregational Church of Salem.

She was a 71+ year 7th degree Golden Sheaf Granger and had served as Master of the former Salem Grange for many years and went on to join the Ledyard, and finally Colchester. Phyllis was also a 50+ year member of the former New London County Pomona as well as the State and National Grange. She had also been active with the Salem Historical Society and the Backus Hospital Alumni Association.

In addition to her parents, Phyllis was predeceased by two brothers, Robert and Calvin "Sizzer" McCall. She leaves her sister-in-law, Verna McCall; a niece, Robin Shaughnessy; two nephews, Jeffrey and Robert McCall; four grandnieces, Tiffany, Sarah, Susan and Kristy, and three grandnephews, Brayden, Noah and Weston; her dear longtime friend, Don Howell; as well as many friends and fellow Grangers.

The family received guests Thursday, May 3, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, with a Grange memorial service that evening. The funeral will be observed at 11:30 a.m. today, May 4, directly at the Congregational Church of Salem (located at 244 Hartford Rd. - Route 85). Burial will follow in the McCall family plot at Pleasant View Cemetery, Lyme.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Shriners Hospital for Children, 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607 or to Hospice SECT, 225 Dunham St., Norwich, CT 06360.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Andover

Heidi Donnelly



Heidi (Mercer) Donnelly, 68, loving wife of Michael P. Donnelly, died suddenly Wednesday, April 25. She was born Dec. 28, 1949, in Hartford, the only child of the late William and Jennie (Miner) Mercer. Heidi touched many lives through her work in Human Services for the towns of Coventry and Andover.

In addition to her husband Michael, she is survived by her two sons, Matthew Hall of Miami, Fla., and Jason Hall and his fiancée Chloe Sauer of Brooklyn, N.Y., as well as her cousin Roger Fisher of Maine and many dear friends.

A celebration of her life was held Sunday, April 29, at the First Congregational Church of Andover, at 359 Route 6. Burial was at Townsend Cemetery, Andover, with a reception at the church following. There were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Norton Children's Fund, which provides scholarships and assistance to local children, or to the Andover Senior Lunch Program, c/o Town of Andover, 17 School Road, Andover, CT 06232.

Holmes-Watkins Funeral Home, Manchester has care of the arrangements. To leave an online condolence, visit holmeswatkins.com.