

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**Pomp and Circumstance...** Portland High School graduates march to finish their high school careers and receive final words of wisdom while draped in the familiar red and black colors of Portland High School before heading into a world not so familiar. See story, additional photo on page 29.

## Complaints Pile Up Against Traversa

by Allison Lazur

Several complaints with the Connecticut Department of Labor and Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities have been filed against the Town of Marlborough and its first selectwoman, Amy Traversa, by the town's fire marshal, a public works union and tax assessor.

The complaints filed with the Department of Labor stem back to December 2016 with the most recent complaint submitted Wednesday.

Traversa would not comment in detail regarding Fire Marshal Joe Asklar's accusations or discuss past public works complaints because of current ongoing contract negotiations.

Asklar told the *Rivereast* a complaint was mailed to the Department of Labor Wednesday regarding a portion of his 2016-17 salary that has been withheld by Traversa.

Asklar, who has been the fire marshal for the town since 1980, had his salary initially cut by about \$22,000 in the form of health and dental insurance costs in the 2016-17 budget.

To help accommodate for those cuts, Asklar's salary was increased from the 2015-16 budget figure of \$7,582 to \$11,900, according to previous budget records.

However, Asklar told the *Rivereast* he was only paid approximately \$7,500 for the 2016-17 year, and that the town still owes him about \$4,400.

Asklar said the \$11,900 is what was approved by the town's fire commissioners and Board of Finance for the budget.

The town's budget report for the end of the 2016-17 fiscal year confirmed Asklar's claims and reflected that he had only been paid 65 per-

cent or \$7,771.92 of his \$11,900 salary.

Asklar said a letter dated June 19, 2017 was sent to Assistant Treasurer Hayley Wagner from the fire commissioners requesting the town pay the remaining money to him.

However, Asklar said Traversa "claimed that I had not filed all my monthly activity reports" — a claim he said is false. Asklar said that, according to state statute, he answers to the fire commissioners, which to date have received and approved his monthly activity reports.

Traversa told the *Rivereast* Tuesday that she could not speak in detail to the matter without having the files in front of her, but "off the top of [her] head" thought Asklar had been paid his full salary from 2016-17.

### Public Works Airs Its Gripes

In the three complaints filed by the public works department from December 2016 to September 2017, Traversa is named as allegedly retaliating against the highway department and Union Steward James Foley.

Foley is the union representative for Teamsters Local 559, which represents most public works employees.

The first complaint, dated Dec. 19, 2016, states "Amy Traversa has engaged in prohibited practices under the Municipal Employees Relation Act (MERA) Section 7-470 sub-section (a) by retaliating against all Highway Dept. members by harassing, threatening and discriminating against them."

An amendment to the complaint clarifies that Traversa allegedly "conducted individual meet-

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## RHAM Class of 2018 Sent Off on Life's Journey

by Sloan Brewster

Unlocking true potential on the journey of life is crucial, but don't forget to improvise along the way.

That line basically ties together the valedictorian and salutatorian speeches at RHAM's 2018 graduation ceremony last Friday.

Valedictorian Taylor Brysgel spoke of unlocking potential and Salutatorian Harrison Oatman lauded the value of spontaneity.

Oatman's speech was supposed to go differently, he said when he began. A friend had offered to write it on the condition that he would not see it beforehand. He declined the offer.

"The real twist of course would be when I discover a blank page where a speech would be, and I have to improvise the whole thing on the spot," Oatman said. "While ideally this would lead to a realization that the power to write an amazing speech was within me the whole time, I foresee the most likely outcome being a lot of stumbling over words, repetition, and nervous laughter."

Oatman went on to highlight situations where improvisation is a natural part of the process, such as in jazz. Improvising works best when the person doing it has a support system, he

said. For musicians, it's a good rhythm section; for Oatman, it was his parents, siblings and friends.

"This isn't to say, of course, that you need a full big band to support your sound," he said. "A good jazz pianist can improvise a solo in their right hand and back their melody with chords in the left, and they pull together a song just as well."

Oatman said it was okay if the graduates didn't have a plan that was totally set but advised them to allow their ideas be challenged.

"Maybe it doesn't seem like the most academic advice when the essence of my speech is to just make things up as you go, but I really do believe in this philosophy. I think there is a certain value to spontaneity, as well as a freedom in leaving your options open," he said. "As much as I hope your lives are made meaningful by success, I hope they are meaningful by the enjoyment you have on the way."

Brysgel began his speech asking for a round of applause for the "excellent teachers and faculty at RHAM" and thanked his family for their unconditional love.

"In my opinion, the most important factor in

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The family of Class President Reileigh Fleeher were seen taking pictures of a large, cardboard cutout of her face that they brought to the RHAM 2018 graduation.

**Complaints cont. from Front Page**

ings with two members of the highway bargaining unit on December 1, 2016. During those meetings [Traversa] made threats of retaliation.”

The “highway bargaining unit” refers to the entire public works department except for Public Works Director John Jones, Public Works Supervisor Tony Gallicchio and Administrative Assistant Darlene Crowley.

In an email to Foley dated Dec. 13, 2016, one public works employee – who did not wish to be identified – alleges that he was pulled aside by Traversa on Dec. 1.

The employee states in the email – obtained by the *Rivereast* – that Traversa accused him of having a lack of interest in information shared earlier that day regarding the hiring of two new public works supervisors.

In the email, the employee states that Traversa said the response by the public works department was “unacceptable behavior and if this were the private sector she would have fired all of us on the spot.”

In the email, the employee also claims that during the Dec. 1 meeting Traversa called him “spineless” for supporting union members – who she referred to as troublemakers – naming James Foley.

The employee alleges Traversa told him that if he thought things were bad now, to “just wait,” that she was “just getting started.” He adds that Traversa told him money used to litigate grievances would be money that would be made unavailable for raises and benefits for the bargaining unit.

Also in the email, the employee claims Traversa made him “aware of how difficult it would be to find a job” at his current age should a layoff happen.”

In the email, the employee describes further discussion with Traversa, stating that she told him she planned on “devoting 40 percent of her time” to “clean up public works.”

The employee writes in the email, “I apologized to her if she thought I had offended her, that it was not my intent, to which she replied ‘good luck making 5 years.’”

The email concludes with the employee stating that during his 11 years as a town employee he has never felt the need to file a complaint, but has now “because of the hostile and threatening environment that has been created towards my union and me by Mrs. Traversa.”

The second complaint, also dated Dec. 19, 2016, states “the town has engaged in prohibited practices under MERA Section 7-47- subsection (a) by harassing and discriminating against James Foley for his representational activities as a Union Steward on behalf of Teamsters Local 559.”

Foley said in addition to singling out two employees, Traversa also visited public works

– shortly before the complaints were filed – in November 2016 and said, “To the people at town hall that make more than me, that’s not going to happen much longer.”

Foley said both complaints were subsequently withdrawn after he was advised by the Department of Labor to come to an agreement without mediation from the state department.

A Memorandum of Agreement was signed Feb. 3, 2017 between Traversa and John Lupacchino, union representative for Teamsters Local 559. Lupacchino, unlike Foley, is a union representative who is not employed by the town.

The agreement states that both the union and town enter into an agreement where neither party admits fault and both acknowledge their respective roles as employee and employer, additionally stating the union agrees to withdraw its complaint with the labor department.

However, the relationship with the Teamsters Local 559 Union and the town did not improve, according to Foley.

Another complaint was filed on Sept. 14, 2017, by the Teamsters Local 559 stating that “Amy Traversa has retaliated against Steward James Foley” and that the town has “engaged in prohibited practices under MERA.”

Foley told the *Rivereast* this week, “The September complaint was filed because we gave her the opportunity to come around and work together and nothing changed.”

Foley furthered that “In July 2017 Mrs. Traversa put all public works employees on notice in regards to reporting to work on time, as well as following the contractual notices for paid time off. Mrs. Traversa advised public works employees that discipline would be issued up to termination if not followed.”

Foley said public works employees were written up on several occasions for being “two or three minutes late.”

“She was certainly taking advantage of her power,” he added.

Foley said that the week after Traversa made the statement to public works, he received several complaints from the public works department that another town hall employee was showing up 15 to 30 minutes late and not being disciplined nor using paid time off.

As a result of these complaints, Foley said he investigated the accusations via a Freedom of Information (FOI) request for employee time off.

Foley went on to say that when he questioned Traversa regarding these matters “She threatened to discipline me up to and including termination,” and stated that the employee was salaried.

“We would never expect to show up in the

morning 15 minutes to a half hour late without using our vacation time,” Foley said.

Foley acknowledged the September 2017 complaint was also withdrawn after an informal hearing at town hall with Traversa and the Department of Labor.

Foley said at the hearing – which took place in November 2017 – Traversa disclosed she wasn’t discriminating against him because of his role as the union representative, but because she just didn’t like him.

Foley explained that because the discrimination was stated as allegedly having nothing to do with his role with the union, the Department of Labor advised a complaint of this nature was better suited to be filed with the human rights commission.

Foley said he decided to withdraw the complaint and file a new one with the commission in March. Because the complaint is currently being investigated, the details could not be disclosed by the commission or by Foley, per the advice of his attorney.

However, Foley did include one item of interest that is noted in his Human Rights complaint. He said that in January, his insurance waiver totaling about \$12,500 was taken away.

Foley said that after deciding he could obtain insurance through his wife’s plan, an agreement with the town was drawn up in 2014 – under the town’s previous first selectwoman, Cathi Gaudinski – to receive a waiver for about half the amount of what his insurance would cost the town.

“It’s not like I was pocketing the \$12,500,” Foley said. “About half of that was going to my wife’s high-deductible plan.” He added that “if [Traversa] can save the taxpayers \$12,500, she should.”

Foley explained that because he’s no longer receiving the insurance waiver, he decided to “go onto the town’s insurance” which is costing the town approximately \$26,000.

Traversa told the *Rivereast* Tuesday that she was not at liberty to discuss any public works matters during current union negotiations and that the accusations were “very one-sided,” but failed to comment further.

Selectman Dick Shea also echoed Traversa’s sentiments and said he could not comment because of union negotiations.

**Tax Assessor Faces Cuts**

A complaint filed with the state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities was filed by Tax Assessor Marie Hall at the beginning of May.

Although the complaint is currently active and Hall was advised by her attorney not to discuss specific details of the complaint, she did

provide the *Rivereast* with some background on what prompted the complaint.

Hall said after the conclusion of a February 2017 budget meeting Traversa “out of the blue” told Hall “something is going to have to be done” about the fact that Hall works fewer hours but makes more money than Traversa.

Hall said the “something” was done last week.

A union contract was voted and agreed upon last Wednesday, June 20, where Hall’s salary was cut by \$9,306.66. Hall said she did receive the yearly 2 percent cost of living equating to “about \$1,500 or \$2,000,” but the \$9,306.66 was cut after that.

Hall said she wasn’t certain as to whether or not the contract had been signed, but it was “definitely voted on and passed.”

Hall said that as of last week Assistant Treasurer Hayley Wagner and Public Works Supervisor Tony Gallicchio were both co-presidents and played a role in what would be negotiated by union representative John DeVito.

Wagner and Gallicchio are part of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Union along with Senior and Social Services Director Vi Schwarzman and Recreation Director Ray Bull.

Hall said Wagner, Gallicchio and Bull all received raises on top of the expected 2 percent for cost of living. However, Schwarzman and Hall did not.

Hall said the rationale behind these raises involved a job title change for some or an increase in work load expected to happen “down the line.”

Wagner could not be reached as of press time Thursday.

Hall said her salary has never been cut since her start as tax assessor in 1985. She did say there were points in her career where she was working four more hours than her current total 32 hours depending on the time of year and workload.

“I went through two [first] selectmen and they never questioned my income,” Hall said. She added, “An income survey was done under the previous [first] selectman which showed I was right in line with what I should be paid.”

When asked about Hall’s claims, Traversa told the *Rivereast* Tuesday that the contract was not signed yet, but the cuts were negotiated by the union representative.

“There has got to be rhyme or reason to who is making what at town hall,” Traversa said. “Other people were significantly underpaid and what we tried to do was achieve parity among everyone.”

**Life's Journey cont. from Front Page**

determining success is effort," he said. "Not everyone has the same talents, attributes, and abilities. However, everyone has the ability to give forth 100 percent effort, and work with the talents that they are given."

Brysgel cajoled his fellow classmates to be committed to working at their highest potential, but said that despite their best efforts they may still fall short of their goals.

"Even if you don't reach your desired goal you should not consider yourself a failure," he said. "Instead, continue to give your life your all. And wherever this wild and unpredictable world takes you, be satisfied with the knowledge that you never gave up, and put forth your best effort each and every day, because the most important thing is to be the best you that you can be."

Class President Reileigh Fleeher, whose parents and family graced the front row holding sticks with big cutouts of her face on them, said the graduates were lucky to have spent four years at RHAM.

"Our future is here now," she said. "We must move forward with high school in our rear view mirrors."

While pointing out the school's high ranking in SAT scores – number 11 in the state – Fleeher said she got the most gratification from the student's affinity for giving back. She pointed out the green cords – indicative of having spent more than 100 hours performing community service – some graduates wore over their gowns.

"In these green cord hours alone, we spent a total of 6,000 hours," Fleeher said.

Fleeher advised her fellow graduates to establish meaningful traditions, build and grow relationships and improve the world.

"As important as it is to reflect on all the amazing things we have done in the four short years we have been together, it is more important to recognize that if we dedicate the rest of our lives to improving the world, there is no limit to the change we can evoke through our actions," she said. "With all we have accomplished in these four years together, just imagine the incredible impact we can and we will have on our world," she said.

2013 RHAM graduate and 2017 UConn graduate in mechanical engineering, Stephen Hawes, gave the commencement address. The founder and CEO of Atlas Laboratories, who currently works at Deeplocal in Pittsburgh, spoke about receiving a \$10,000 University of Connecticut IDEA grant to build a prosthetic hand.

An inventor since he was a child, according to Principal Scott Leslie's introduction, Howes wore one of his creations to the speech.

"Stephen is actually wearing a bowtie which is a portable WiFi source. Crazy," Leslie said.

While telling graduates to aim high and not let doubts win them over, he spoke of inventing a wrist-mounted flamethrower, which landed him his job at the innovation studio Deeplocal and allows him to play with fire for work. Coming to work can feel like going to recess, he told the graduates.

"Find life's work that looks like life's play," he advised.

Leslie congratulated the graduates before inviting them to make their walks across the stage and receive their diplomas

"The class of 2018 has proven itself to be an epic class," he said "It's not all about test scores, sometimes it's about being good people and this has been a fantastic class and we certainly are going to miss them."

The members of the RHAM High School Class of 2018 are: Sarah Nicole Aissis @, Evan Anthony Alfano, Cameron John Allen, Julia Buffinton Amodeo, Gavin Daniel Anderson, Gregory David Aniolek, Christopher Thomas Arel, Bradley Joseph Aston, Jameson Robert Averill, Madison Seethaler Baker @, Kristin Elise Bakke, Joseph William

Balula, Reann Lee Bangham, Taylor R. Baran\* @, Lia Cristine Baroncini\* @, Anna Rose Barry, Kathryn Ruth Beard \* @, Alexia Nicole Beben, Olivia Sunshine Bell, Gabrielle James Benson-Clarke\* @, Justin Thomas Benton, Joseph John Betz, Dylan James Bidwell, Jordan Marla Bidwell, Christine Ellen Whitney Bieri\*, Mikayla Nicole Billiter, Olivia Ann Blakesley, Samantha Antonietta Bodey, Samuel E. Bogue, Calvin Thomas Bordick, Anthony Michael Bosco, Elijah Keith Boushee, Samantha Page Bove\*, Hunter Leland Bradley, Alex Edward Breinan\* @, Benjamin Marshall Bretthauer, Kathleen Derby Briscoe, Jessica Lee Brophy, Jacob Taylor Brown, Taylor Van Brysgel #\* @, Troy William Burley, Peter Jacob Busa\* @, Collin Anthony Canterbury, Zachary Michael Caputo, Pietro Tommaso Carusone, Nicole Louise Catarino\*, Jacob Daniel Cavanna, Cameron James Cianci\*, Kierra Michelle Ciarcia-Abrams, Madison Leigh Ciarrocchi\*, Nicolette CJ Ciccarello, Cameron Robert Clegg +, Heather Teresa Clough @, Nicholas D. Colonna, Ryan Michael Constable, Hunter Michael Couture, Lindsay Elizabeth Covell, Maggie Rose Crean\*, Brendan D'Amaddio\*, Isabella Linda D'Eliseo, Erica Catherine Day, Julianne Marie DeDominicis, Joshua James Desjardins, Sarah Lauren Dingley, Ivy Marie Disney, Sean Donahue, Kathryn Nguyen Dorman, Samantha Joelle DuBois, Lauren Genevieve Duke\* @, Jared Tod Dumaine\* @, Alexander Joseph Dursin \*, Charles Robert Dursin\*, Grace Elizabeth Egazarian\* @, Alex Bradford Ezerins\*, Eric Albert Ezerins\*, Brody Francis Fahey, Taylor Ashley Falanga, David Gerard Farrington, Jonathan Daniel Farrington, Garrett Randall Fisher\*, Kyle David Fitzsimmons+, Reileigh Seton Fleeher\* @, Gavin Luke Foley, Marley Bruce Forbes \*, Ryan James Fraleigh @, Blake Blumenfeld Gaines\*. Connor James Garrity @, Kayleigh Anne Gauthier, Ashley Leigh Gauvin @, Amanda Lee Gentile\*, Noah Alan Gentile, John Christopher Gerke @, Zachary James Gianetti, Madeline Lee Glode, Sean Patrick Gnocchi, Jessica Lynne Golemba @, Hannah Elizabeth Goodale, Isabelle Rita Goode\* @, Alexa Noel Gosselin\* @, Katherine Elizabeth Grabowski, Daniel Keun Gray, Sofia Mikaela Green @, Anna Rebecca Greenwald, Joshua Phillip Gunas, Grady F. Habicht\*, Katherine Rose Hagearty\* @, Nicholas Walter Hale, Sarah Rebecca Hale\* @, Jacqueline Rose Hart\*, Dahlia Azeza Hasen, Connor James Hearn, Grace Elizabeth Heersping\* @, Alexandra Michelle Heline\* @, Duncan Samuel Henderson\* @, Noah Alexander Herington, Chloe Noelle Heslin @, Francisco Martin Higuera, Phoenix Glen Holden\* @, Ian Cameron Holm, Shane Stephens Houston, Nicholas Patrick Howard, Alana Margaret Hruska, Sienna Laura Jahn, Colin Joseph Jakacky, Nicolas Christian Jensen, John Thomas Jeroszko, Jeremy Christopher Jones, Nathan Longo Kane, Zachary Dean Keith, Liam Hayes Keleher @, Mary Margaret Keller, Brendan James Kelly+, Morgan Rachel Kelly, Melanie Rose Keogh @, Kelly Ann King @, Reilly Ian Kleinhenn, Amber Marie Kollar, Ashley Rose Kolodziejczyk, Kelly Ann Kozikowski, Gretchen Ann Kron\* @, Benjamin Russell Kruse, Jaclynn JungIm LaCroix, Gavin Joseph LaFleur @, Sydney Jean Lambert @, Eve Marie Lampugnale, Brylene Kaylee Laws @, Alex William LeMay, Ethan David Leslie, Tyler James Lettieri, Darren Lin, Ashley Nicole Loto @, Tyler Arthur Lovejoy, Kathryn Anne Lucenko\* @, Christen Emily Luddy\* @, Emily Rose Lukowski +, John Clayton Lukowski, Sarah Elizabeth Lukowski, Shaughn Patrick Maleryn, Katherine Carol Malgioglio, Aubree Jacquelyn Malitsky @, Matthew Karol Maratta, Jenna Marinelli, Garrett John Masotti\*, Nicolle Constance McManus\*, Graham Stewart McNeil, Jacob L. Meade, Ralph Samuel Meliso, Walker Odell Melzen, David Stephen Merry @, Madelyn C. Micoletti, Julia Kathleen Mimo\* @, Tyler James Moore, Elijah Joaquin Morales, Alec Moundraty, Brendan Cole Neary @, Kara Michelle Neubauer, Griffin James Nicholson, Joshua Clyde Norton, James Harry Noyes, Emma Eleanor O'Brien\*, Dylan J. O'Connor @, Ryan J. O'Connor\* @, Mary Grace O'Neil\* @, Brendan Wesley O'Reilly\*, Emma Antonina O'Shea\*, Harrison Robert Oatman ##\*, Adamarie Oliver, Lauren Elizabeth Opocensky, Nicholas John Orler, Olivia Paige Ortegon @, Caroline Kenyon Orzech\* @, Maya Victoria Paprocki\*, Trevor Joseph Pasquale, Joseph E. Pastore, Kyle Joseph Pesco, Joseph L. Petroni, Alexis Kathryn Petrowsky, Anthony James Pettit, Spencer B. Piacenta, Charlotte Jane Pintavalle\*, Bradley Reynolds Plausse, Luke Marcel-William Quirion, Robbie Rainville, Jr., Peter William Riehl, Jack Bradley Rizza, Jonathan



**After moving their tassels to the other side at graduation, RHAM graduates celebrate with silly string.**

W. Roberts\* @, Evan John Rodegher, William Lazarus Roser\*, Jack Wesley Rovazzini, Jack Tucker Salan, Christian M. Salvas, Alexa Rae Samuelson\*, Abigayle Clara Sanstrom, Andrew Jameson Savage, Noah James Savage, Samantha Rae Schaeffler, Taryn E. Schreindorfer @, Megan Elizabeth Schreiner @, Joseph Paul Sciano, Colby Walker Scott, Matthew Thomas Sedgwick, Melanie Mary Shalayda, Katherine Elizabeth Shea\* @, Gregory Scott Shimchick, Dalton Vaughn Signor\*, Noah Alexander Joseph Silk, Nyla Rose Simon @, Luke Christopher Slater \* @, Emily Whitman Smith\*, Lauryn Paige Smith, Maurice Vincent Smith, Erica Lynn Solecki, Nicholas Robert Stacey, Gehrig Joseph Sullivan, Sabastian Zachariah Suntheimer +, Jordan Ann Synodi @, Jessica Lauren Tardif\*, Amanda Louise Tate, Alexandra Jean Taylor @, Liam Christian Thomas, Melissa Jean Tilsch, Corey Edward Tobias, Daniel Ben Tominoich, Dylan Michael Tommasi, Peter Michael Touponce, Jack

Steven Turco, Maxwell Thomas Turley, Julia Louise Turo, Bridget Marie Varnum @, Faustino Villanueva\*, Patrick David Wakefield, Elizabeth Chapman Walker, Joseph Michael Walls, Daphne Marie Wampold\* @, Dylan Robert Wawruck, Grace Ann Webb, Alexandra Renee Welch, Cameron James Welch, Riley Lauren Westcott, Mackenzie Davenport Wheeler, Grace Emily Wilson, Caleb T. Yerke, Nicholas Joseph Yetishefsky, Mackinly Michael Yorgensen, Ashley Jane Young\* @ and Mickaelah Dawn Zipoli.

- # Valedictorian
- ## Salutatorian
- \* Member of National Honor Society in Good Standing
- @ Green cord: 100 or more hours of community service
- + Enlisted in the military

# Portland Graduates Reflect on Four Years of Growth

by Allison Lazur

Portland High School said goodbye to their 2018 senior class at last Thursday's graduation ceremony. The seniors sat in their red and black robes as final words of wisdom to take with them into the future were spoken by fellow classmates and administration.

Senior Class President Keira Kopchyak kicked off the slew of heartfelt speeches by reminiscing about how much she and the rest of the graduating class have changed since the start of their four year careers at Portland High School.

"We have grown tremendously as students and have matured into adults," she said.

She encouraged her peers to pursue whatever they desire, but to always keep their time at Portland High School in their repertoire of experiences.

"We are capable of doing anything we envision, but we must remember what we have learned from our past if we want to create the best possible future for ourselves," Kopchyak said.

She departed the podium after encouraging her classmates to "let things go" and "be accepting of others," as well as "don't let others define you."

Salutatorian Emily Bradshaw began her speech recalling a few key memories like sixth-grade D.A.R.E and a light bulb exploding in the cafeteria during eighth grade – an event she said she remembers "vividly."

Bradshaw, like Kopchyak, also discussed how much she has changed over her four years attributing her growth to the music department.

"No one could have predicted I'd be standing up at graduation giving a speech, especially not with this much confidence," she said. "I truly didn't know my own talents."

Bradshaw addressed those who knew her only as "the girl who's pretty good at singing," divulging that contrary to popular belief she will be pursuing a degree in nursing, not music.

She joked that nursing is a career where she can "wear scrubs and sneakers to work and it's considered professional."

Despite not pursuing a career in music, Bradshaw went on to call the music department her "second home" explaining that she felt it was where she was "accepted" and where she "became confident."

She concluded her speech with a piece of sage advice stating: "I hope we all find something that gives us a sense of purpose."

Valedictorian Yang Li had a slightly different approach on what words she would bestow upon the graduating class.

Li emphasized that there is significant amount she does not know. Joking that "I don't know" has been her response to several questions over the last year regarding future plans.

"I'm still clueless about what I want to do in the future," she said, adding she is "envious" of those who have already made their decisions.

Li did say she discovered that there are some things she does know, listing items such as how

to spell her name and that she's come to realize she "can't understand sarcasm unless it is spoken in a very sarcastic voice."

"Lastly I know that all of us here today are alive – hopefully there are no ghosts among us – therefore we all have a future in front of us," she said. "There is a long road ahead of us where we will be able to answer the 'I don't know's.'"

Principal Kathryn M. Lawson expressed how proud she was of the 2018 class.

"You have truly persevered as thinkers, learners, creators and problem-solvers," she said.

Board of Education Chairperson MaryAnne Rode thanked the teachers and administration for "being there for our children when we are not," noting that they are the individuals who "take over where we as parents and caregivers leave off."

She challenged the graduates to reach out to those in need in the future with a smile or hello identifying with the idea that each person may come to a point in their life where they "feel alone" or "forgotten."

"Go out and be the amazing people that we know you can," she said.

The class of 2018 marched into the crowd of smiling friends and family as no longer seniors, but individuals pursuing their own unique paths.

The members of the Portland High School Class of 2018 are: Alexis Alaimo, Joseph Anderson, Alicia Archuleta >, Anthony Aresco, Mollissa Bennett, Shelby Benoit, Rachel Bernard, Jessica Black \*#>, Jay Bordonaro, Emily Bradshaw ++\*#>, Rachel Briggs, Lucas Brown, Bettina Burke \*#>, Maraline Burke #>, Sara Butler, Charlotte Carlson, Aliya Carta, Addie Chudzik >, Liam Coleman, Jacob Corley, Dylan Curtin, Michael Desso, Luke DeToro, Kisbel Diaz, Abigail Dillon >, Nicole DiMare >, Madison DiMauro >, Emily DiSalvo \*#>, Shannon Dolan, Jacob Durkin >, Thomas Eccles >, Kevin Egan, Nicholas Faraci, Aaron Fazzino, Nathan Fecteau, Alexis Field, Nicholas Francesco \*, Morgan Geres, Alexander Gondek, Dianta Highsmith, Salvador Hinostraza, Jake Jurczak, Nile Keech, Megan Kelley >, Keira Kopchyak \*#>, Maya LaMalfa, Molly Leary \*#>, Yang Li +\*, Sophia Lin, Johandy Liranzo-Diaz, Aarianne Lord, John Lucas, Ford Lyman, Sophia Martyniuk, Daniel Maselek, Thomas Matterazzo, Amanda Mckelvey, Samantha Mizener >, Mariah Morneau \*, Ryan Murphy, Allyson Norton, Sarah Norton, Michael Olayos, Jovany Pagan, Samantha Powers, Nicholas Randazzo, Bridget Reddington >, Morgan Reinsch, Lia Smith >, Allison Tewksbury #, Scott Timothy, Madison Tomboly, Colby Townsend, Iseabal Turner, Heidi Valk, Olivia Velasco, Stephen Vincelette, Nickolas Violissi #>, Ava Wade-Fralick >, Anthony Zimmerman

- \* Top Ten of the Class
- # National Honor Society
- > Tri-M Music Honor Society
- + Valedictorian
- ++ Salutatorian



Portland High School Class of 2018 graduate Madison DiMauro is all smiles surrounded by friends at the conclusion of last Thursday's graduation ceremony. See additional photos from the ceremony at [facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin](https://www.facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin).

## Colchester Police News

6/19: Colchester Police said Philip Ellis, 24, of 141 West Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree assault, third-degree physical injury, and second-degree strangulation/suffocation.

6/20: State Police said Michelle R. Dowdy, 52, of 65 Palmer Dr., South Windsor, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane.

## Burglary at Ponemah Village in Colchester

Colchester Police said they are currently investigating a burglary that occurred between June 19 and June 21 at Ponemah Village, a rental housing complex on Westchester Road. Police said forced entry through a bathroom

window resulted in a stolen frying pan and approximately \$60 in cash and change.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

## Single-Vehicle Crash in Colchester

State police said on June 19 a car collided with guardrails and a dirt embankment on Westchester Road leaving one woman with possible injuries.

At approximately 8:06 p.m., a Pontiac Grand Prix driven by Talia Felker, 18, of 63 Lakeview Court, pulled out from a private driveway on Westchester Road near the intersection with Shailor Hill Road. The vehicle

accelerated while turning right and Felker lost control of the Pontiac resulting in a collision with guardrails and a dirt embankment off the right and left shoulders of the road, police said.

The vehicle sustained moderate to heavy damage and Felker was transported to Marlborough Clinic by Colchester Hayward Fire Department with suspected minor injuries.

## Vehicle Collides with Guardrail and Tree in Colchester

Police said last Thursday, June 21, a single-vehicle collision left one man with possible injuries.

At approximately 11:22 a.m., a Land Rover driven by Dennis W. Anderson, 45, of 2 Brook St., Waterford, was traveling south on Route 11, north of exit 5 when the vehicle drifted into the left shoulder, striking and going

through the wire rope guardrail, police said.

The vehicle then traveled on the shoulder for approximately 100 yards before going down an embankment and striking a tree.

Anderson was transported by the Colchester Fire Department to Backus Hospital with possible injuries.

# Portland Resident Slams PZC After Permit Approval

by Elizabeth Regan

The Planning and Zoning Commission last week approved a special permit to change the way explosive components are stored on a landlocked parcel between Isinglass Hill Road and Glastonbury Turnpike – much to the chagrin of resident Wayne Carini.

“Shame on all of you,” Carini told commissioners as he walked out at the end of the June 21 public hearing.

The special permit authorizes Richard M. Hosley Jr., president of Connecticut Explosives Company Inc., to construct four fertilizer-containing silos on his property. The silos will be constructed 593 feet from a new house being built Carini, the star of Velocity Network’s *Chasing Classic Cars* and the owner of F40 Motorsports on Route 66.

The approved plan involves a four-foot deep, 50-foot by 13-foot wide concrete pad to hold the silos, according to audio from the meeting.

The explosives operation off 39 Isinglass Hill Rd. is a repository for explosives used in the mining, construction and pyrotechnics industries.

Hosley’s proposal is a revision of his original application to build three taller silos, which town engineer Geoffrey Jacobson said would have violated the 35-foot maximum height specified in the town’s zoning regulations.

The commission, in approving the application immediately following the public hearing, rejected calls by Carini and some other members of the public who requested members take additional time to visit the site, get an updated review from Jacobson, and to receive feedback from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and possibly an independent expert.

The explosives site is regulated by the ATF, the state Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the local fire marshal’s office. Oversight includes regular and surprise visits, according to Hosley and multiple officials.

Portland Building Inspector Lincoln White said this week he was at a recent ATF site inspection. According to White, the agency is aware of the proposal for the new silos and is in support of the change.

Calls by the *Rivereast* to the ATF’s Hartford field office were not returned.

The company currently stores explosives in

50-pound, pre-mixed bags of fertilizer and fuel oil that sit in numerous 20-foot long containers, according to Hosley.

He said keeping unmixed, “noncombustible” fertilizer in the silos is safer and more efficient.

The silos are designed to feed the fertilizer by gravity into tank trucks sitting on the concrete pad underneath. The product would be mixed and used off-site, Hosley said.

“There is no explosive product in these silos,” he said.

Hosley’s plan for the site will eliminate about 8,736 cubic feet of explosives from three magazines and four storage trailers on the site, he said. Instead, three silos will hold about 4,500 cubic feet of fertilizer and a fourth will hold about 1,200 cubic feet of liquefied fertilizer.

Hosley said he will still be storing explosives on the site. Federal regulations, administered by the ATF, require high explosives to be stored farther away from any inhabited building than less hazardous materials like unmixed fertilizer.

Carini spoke during the public hearing to dispute Hosley’s description of unmixed fertilizer as “noncombustible.”

Carini cited the West, Texas fertilizer plant explosion that killed 15 people and injured hundreds on an April evening in 2013.

According to a 2016 report from the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, the nearest West, Texas neighborhood was about 370 feet away from the explosion and a majority of those injured were within 1,500 feet. The report cited deficiencies in federal, state and local regulations and shortcomings in local emergency response as key factors in the blast.

The report also pointed to weaknesses in the city’s planning and zoning approach that allowed development to spring up closer and closer to the West Fertilizer Company as the town grew – including a park and a school situated less than 200 feet from the site.

“I’m very disappointed, too, in this town that has let people build houses within certain distance of this without saying anything,” Carini said. “This has been going on for years.”

Hosley stood up after the public had spoken to address some of the concerns raised by Carini and others.

“Sparks will not ignite fertilizer and fertil-

izer is noncombustible,” Hosley reiterated.

Describing the West, Texas explosion as a “very interesting subject,” Hosley said the case spurred an executive order from then-President Barack Obama.

The order directed the federal government to enhance chemical facility safety by updating regulations, improving coordination between local, state and federal agencies, and working with stakeholders – including industry experts – to identify best practices for safety.

“Many of us volunteered hours and hours of our time to determine why this happened,” Hosley said.

Hosley honed in on one of the conclusions reached in the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board report identifying flawed emergency services operations, including a lack of pre-incident planning and training.

“The bottom line is that the firemen were not properly trained,” Hosley said. “You don’t fight explosives fires. You evacuate the area.”

Hosley told the commission he regularly shares training information with local emergency service providers. He said he’s developed a good relationship with them through their regular visits to his property to maintain a radio repeater he allowed to be placed there to strengthen the town’s communications system.

Hosley also addressed Carini’s concerns about security on the site by pointing to the existence of a hazardous materials security plan and a homeland security plan. He said everyone who accesses the site has a letter of clearance from the ATF based on a background check and drug tests.

The number of employees on the site currently ranges from six to 15, a number Hosley said will not change based on the updated storage framework.

“We have a camera system, which is not required by law, and we have an alarm system, which is also not required by law,” Hosley said. “We have those as an added feature after 9/11 to support the safety of our product and our community and the three-generation business that my grandfather started.”

Retired Portland Police Officer Michael Dapkus spoke at the hearing to defend Hosley’s proposal and the security of the site.

“As a police officer, we’ve had a couple incidents up there. But we resolve those issues and we learn from them. And they weren’t major issues. Thank God they were just very, very minor trespassing issues,” Dapkus said.

Dapkus, who owns the Durham-based Dapkus Fireworks as well as a store in New Hampshire, said the storage of ammonium nitrate is not unusual in the state. He pointed to the town of Durham, where fertilizer is stored down the road from his business at Lyman Orchards.

Resident Jim Kopencey told the commission he’s lived about 1,000 feet from the explosives site without knowing it.

“It’s something that’s frightening,” he said. “It’s something I didn’t know about after living there for 18 years. When you find out about something like that and then get out your Google map and start looking around, your confidence gets shaken a bit.”

He described the town as irresponsible for letting development occur around the site. He asked the commission to hold off on a vote while they wait for more information.

Hosley’s Portland-based attorney, George Law, said the application is in keeping with state statute and local zoning regulations.

Hosley is entitled to store explosives in the residential zone, as upheld in a 1994 Zoning Board of Appeals decision, because that’s what the site was used for before zoning regulations went into effect. Known as a “nonconforming use” in zoning parlance, the right is protected in state statute.

Those regulations allow an owner whose nonconforming property has historically been used for a certain purpose to apply for changes to the operation as long as the use is “not more intensive in character” than the existing use.

“It’s unfortunate perhaps that people didn’t discover this in due diligence when building houses if they’re so uncomfortable living near it, but unfortunately this property has been used since 1923 for this purpose and it has the right to continue on,” Law said.

Carini told the *Rivereast* this week he has hired an attorney well-versed in land use issues to commence legal action “very shortly.”

“I will fight this until they have to bury me in the backyard,” he said.

# East Hampton Schools Chief Gets 2.5 Percent Raise

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Education has approved a 2.5 percent salary increase for Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith.

The school board voted unanimously at its regular June 18 meeting to extend Smith’s contract for three years. The new contract brings his base annual salary to \$204,751.

School board members agreed to Smith’s request for a salary of \$190,751 plus a \$14,000 tax-sheltered annuity, or retirement plan. The change equates to a salary increase of \$4,652 and a \$500 increase to the tax-sheltered annuity.

School board Chairman Christopher Goff said this week he can’t speak highly enough of Smith, who started as the East Hampton superintendent in January 2016.

Smith has ten years’ experience at the helm of a public school district, serving first as superintendent in Bolton and then in Griswold.

He said Smith is respected by school board members, administration, staff and parents.

“He’s just so informative to everybody, and open,” Goff said.

School board members looked at superintendent salaries in comparable schools when weighing their decision, according to Goff. The list, provided to the *Rivereast* by the school dis-

trict, showed three school systems with superintendent salaries ranging from \$192,291 to \$214,172 (see sidebar).

Goff noted it’s important to consider the experience level of other superintendents when making any comparisons.

He said the school board felt the 2.5 increase fits in between the administrators’ 2018-19 increase of 2.75 percent – which was upheld in arbitration – and the teachers’ increase of 2.25 percent.

Goff said members were “very comfortable” with Smith’s salary request since it landed in the middle of those two groups.

Smith received a 1.32 percent increase last year at this time and a 2 percent increase back in 2016-17.

Goff said the school board looked at the coming year’s increase as a way to make up for the “low increase” in his current contract.

Smith is the highest paid employee of the town of East Hampton based on his current annual salary of \$183,960, according to information provided on the town website.

Everyone on the town’s list of the ten highest paid employees work for the school district except for Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, who comes in at number eight with an annual salary of \$138,000.

Maniscalco in January received a 7.12-percent increase from the Town Council. While Maniscalco typically receives his annual increases during the summer in conjunction with his annual review, councilors agreed at the time that the January jump would take the place of

the regularly scheduled salary increase. Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel confirmed at this week’s council meeting that Maniscalco’s performance review will be conducted in the coming weeks but no additional raise will be given.

## Other Superintendents’ Salaries

School Board Chairman Christopher Goff said school board members looked at salary figures for superintendents in comparable schools when approving Superintendent Paul K. Smith’s new contract. According to a list provided by the school district, those figures are:

### Portland

Years of experience as superintendent: 13  
2018-19 Salary: \$192,291  
Annuity: \$20,000  
Total: \$212,291

### Waterford

Years of experience as superintendent: 3  
2018-19 Salary: \$188,000  
Annuity: \$4,500  
Total: \$192,500

### Region 18, Lyme-Old Lyme

Years of experience as superintendent: 6  
2018-19 Salary: \$193,622  
Annuity: \$20,550  
Total: \$214,172

The *Rivereast* obtained additional compensation information from the following schools:

### Colchester

Years of experience as superintendent: 0  
2018-19 Salary: \$168,000  
Annuity: \$4,000  
Total: \$172,000

### Wethersfield

Years of experience as superintendent: 6  
2018-19 Salary: \$185,658  
Annuity: \$10,000  
Total: \$195,658



In the photo at left, Sophia Porter gives the thumbs-up sign as East Hampton High School Class of 2018 leaves last Thursday's commencement ceremony to begin the rest of their lives. She is flanked by aide Beth Vickery (right) and graduates Samantha Zimmerman (back left) and Nathan Goff. In the photo at right, Jayden Pitts, 8, sneaks in some time with his older sister, Alissa Pitts, during the graduation ceremony. See additional photos from the graduation at [facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin](https://facebook.com/RivereastNewsBulletin).

## EHHS Class of '18 Praised for Resiliency

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton High School Class of 2018 was hailed last Thursday as resilient in the face of tragedy.

The ceremony began with a moment of silence in memory of classmate Matthew D'Amico and Principal John Fidler.

D'Amico was an 11-year-old student in the sixth grade at East Hampton Middle School when he was killed in a car accident on Christmas Day in 2011. Fidler died of a heart attack last summer while descending Mount Katahdin in Maine.

"You have had no choice but to be strong for yourselves and for one another," first-year principal Frank Rizzuto told the seniors assembled on either side of him on the soccer field behind the high school. "I commend you for your strength and your perseverance."

Emma Donohue, the class valedictorian with a gift for both numbers and words, reminded all 104 of her classmates about the struggles and the triumphs they've experienced together in the 4,672 days since they boarded the school bus to be dropped off for the first day of kindergarten.

"At 5 years old, it never crossed our minds that 12 years, 9 months and 16 days later, today would become a reality," she said.

She remembered D'Amico as an adventurous, fun-loving boy who made everyone laugh.

"Our grade as a whole came together after the loss of our friend," she said. "We began to understand what resilience was. It is defined as the capacity to recover or adjust from difficulties. But more than that, it is a process: One that creates memories and brings back old ones, forges new friendships and, most of all, takes times."

Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith spoke to the idea of embracing memories both old and new when he pointed to the pristine, two-toned graduation gowns donned for the first time by the graduating seniors and the freshly-renovated high school that stood in front of them.

"You are in new blue-and-white robes, in a new school, in a new setting for graduation, so you have started what will be new traditions," Smith said. "However, as Bellingers, you are part of a longstanding tradition that binds you together with every other graduate of East Hampton High School."

Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff credited the class's resilience with allowing the school "to grow while remembering."

Their resilience came through in light-hearted remarks about the trials and tribulations that plagued their school experience, like the years-long building renovation project that culminated at the beginning of the school year.

Class President Emma Cook described the class as "trauma-bonded" by the construction.

"I realized the other day that you never really experience being close to your classmates until you're brushing shoulders with them for six months because half the hallway is taken up by drywall," she said. "We suffered so much through the renovation project in the way of getting lost together that I think we'll never truly forget each other. I'm also really surprised nobody got electrocuted. I waited four years for someone to grab some of the exposed wires and nobody ever did."

Others remembered the class's perseverance in athletics, which culminated this year when the boys' basketball team won the Shoreline Conference championship.

Rizzuto said the term "brotherhood" best defined the team's starting five seniors: Colin Baker, Tom Close, Nick DiStefano, Sean Vick, and Zack Webber.

"In a day and age where we could use more examples of brotherhood, more examples of unity, and more examples of selflessness, our team showed these every single night," Rizzuto said.

Donohue, the senior captain of the girls' soccer, basketball and track teams, echoed that sense of solidarity.

"As great as our love for sports was, we didn't play for ourselves," she said. "We did it for our coaches, teammates, families and the little kids who will be in our place someday – much sooner than they realize."

Also extolled in the various speeches throughout the ceremony were the students involved in music, theater and volunteer activities.

The musical component was front and center when the East Hampton High School choirs began another new tradition with the singing of the alma mater.

Choir director Ehren Brown invited the graduates and their supporters to sing along.

"If you know it, we invite you to sing with us. If you start knowing it by the second or third verse, we invite you to join us," Brown said.

The song rang out before the presentation of the diplomas, before the mortar boards were flung into the air, and before each new graduate tolled the ceremonial Bevin Bros. bell that comes out for each graduation: "They ring, and ring, they'll never die, the bells of East Hampton High!"

The members of the East Hampton High School Class of 2018 are:

Jessica Taylor Abbotts+, Jackilyn Joan Anelli+, Colin Jeffery Baker, Malique Richard Banning, Jordan S. Barrett, Emily Joan Barone, Kyle Corbin Baskin, Alyssa Ann Benvenga, Allison M. Brogan\*, Paige Brown, Collin B. Buchan, Joseph Paul Butler, Sarah Elizabeth Caramma, Akayleb Stephon Clegg, Thomas J. Close Jr., Jillian Grace Collingwood, McKayla Connelly+, Emma May Cook+, Lisa Clair Cowan, Gabriella Marie Crean+, Olivia Deming Cunningham, David Joseph D'Antonio, Aidan Patrick Daley+, Gabriella Violante de Oliveira, Peyton Matthew DeBowsky, Ryan Thomas DePasquale, Nic DiStefano, Emma Kay Donohue+, Shaina Rose Dunn, Samuel Douglas Dziekan, Zachary Alan Easter, Heather Edwards, Taylor Nicole Engel+, Dustin

Jamison Feliciano, Alexis Marie Fisher, Sean T. Flatley\*, Ailis J. Frost+, Julia Gavrylchuk, Samantha L. Gerolami, Danyel Elisabeth Godwin+, Nathan David Goff, Cody Hart Goodson\*, Mae Rayne Griffin+, Ryan Alexander Hall, James J. Haydu Jr., Alexandra Paige Herlihy+, Devon Scott HineLine, Ross D. Hurne, Allison Marie Ireland, Chloe Rose Johnson, Chapman Francis Judkins, Joshua Robert Kearney, Patryk Piotr Kita, Gabriel Armand Knittel, Vanessa Skye Kozlowski, Morgan Lynn Krajewski, Dana Lynn Kriss, Joshua M. Krywinski, Marissa Danielle Lane, Caleb Connor LeFoll, Madison Rose Lemieux, Jenna Suzanne Leone, Nicholas Shou Magee, Kaitlyn Ashley Marchinkoski, Connor Andrew Michaud, Savanna Rose Napolitano, Zachary David Ninesling, Caroline Amelia Nocera, Riley Benjamin Pawlewitz, Emily M. Pedevillano, Joseph August Pear, Bennett Earl Pellegrino+, Mathias Buckland Pierini, Alyssa Marie Pitts, Sophia Elizabeth Porter, Sean Robert Reilly, Aaron Harold Riley, Andrew R. Rinaldi, Kathryn Marie Rivard-Lentz+, Julian M. Santiago, Kyle Anthony Scrivano, Tyler Wilson Seifert+, Maura Dianne Shirley, Isabella Siewart, Iris Olivia Simone+, Emilie Rose Slossar, Leana Anna Stano, Brett Warner Stanton, Jodi Rae Stanton, Joshua J. Stiano, Kurt Andrew Sturmer, Erick Daniel Suarez Guzman, Alyssa Lynn Sweet, Alyssa Marie Talbot+, Jonathan E. Terry\*, Grace Lilah Therrien, James Merlot Therrien, Bryan C. Torres, Zachary Taylor Trahan, Sean A. Vick, Shana Marie Way, Cullen James Webber, Zachary Arthur Webber, Austin Ryan Weber, Joshua John Welburn, Rebecca Joyce White+, Kelley Ann Williams+, Devin Scott York, and Samantha Jill Zimmerman+.

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

### East Hampton Police News

6/13: During a traffic stop on Clark Hill Road, it was discovered that one of the occupants of the vehicle, Ryan Peterson, 22, of 712 Lake Vista Dr., East Hampton had an active warrant out for his arrest for failure to respond, East Hampton Police said.

6/14: Sarah Mount, 31, of 381 Main St., Middletown, turned herself in pursuant to an active warrant for her arrest, and was charged with violation of probation, police said.

6/16: Daniel Bruni, 36, of 203 Oakland St., Manchester, was arrested and charged with operating under the influence, operating a motor vehicle without a license and second-degree

breach of peace, police said.

6/17: A 17-year-old juvenile was arrested and charged with DUI and possession of alcohol by a minor, police said.

6/20: Frederick G. Everett, 35, of 36 Namonee Tr., was arrested and charged with second-degree stalking, second-degree threatening and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

Also, from June 11-17, officers responded to 13 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made 30 traffic stops, police said.

### Two-Vehicle Hebron Collision, Two with Injuries

State Police said failure to maintain lane is what caused a two vehicle crash where one woman was reported as having suspected minor injuries and another man was left with suspected serious injuries.

At approximately 2:46 p.m. on June 18, police said a Honda Civic driven by Jaclyn S. Kusluch, 34, of 440 Church St., Amston, was traveling west on Route 66 approximately 2 tenths of a mile of Burrows Hill Road.

At the same time a Cadillac driven by Kevin W. Kalama, 50, of 52 Hillcrest Dr., Amston,

was traveling east in the same area. While the Cadillac was traveling straight ahead, the vehicle traveled into the westbound lane colliding with the Honda Civic.

Kusluch was transported by the Hebron Fire Department to Marlborough Clinic with suspected minor injuries, police said.

Kalama was transported by the Hebron Fire Department to Hartford Hospital with suspected serious injuries and issued an infraction for failure to maintain lane.



The graduates of 2018 filed onto the field at Bacon Academy to hear farewell speeches filled with inspiration and wisdom from their fellow classmates and administration before heading into the next phase of their lives.



The Bacon Academy graduates of 2018 on Friday headed toward their final event as high school students. The graduation ceremony took place on the athletic field. Look for additional photos on the *Rivereast* Facebook page.

# Colchester Graduates Welcomed to ‘Real World, Day One’

by Allison Lazur

The 2018 Bacon Academy graduates concluded their high school careers on Friday evening – sent on their way with advice urging them not to “leave the puzzle of life with a missing piece.”

Principal Matthew Peel requested a moment of silence at the beginning of his speech to remember 2017 Bacon Academy Graduate, Taylor Howes, who died earlier that day from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident a week prior.

Peel continued by acknowledging the senior class for having “survived one of the longest school years ever” and joked that they were “the only senior class who required four superintendents” to get them through their high school careers.

He also disclosed how proud he was of the 2018 class, noting the students had raised thousands of dollars for Orangefield High School in Texas after the school was destroyed by floods earlier in the school year.

“When these students were faced with the epidemic of school violence, they did not quietly accept it sitting down,” he said, adding “they stood together and led with their voices and many went far beyond the town lines of Colchester.”

Peel concluded his speech with a simple line of advice: “Keep it up – keep making me proud.”

Valedictorian Joan Tremblay encouraged her fellow graduates to “figure out where we fit in the gigantic puzzle that is the world.”

“We are at the beginning of our own journey. We are discovering what our own personal legend is and deciding if we have the courage to pursue it,” she said.

Tremblay stressed to her classmates that “Whatever you do, wherever you go, pursue your personal legend with love and dedication; don’t leave the puzzle of life with a missing piece.”

Salutatorian Addey LePage joked about how

to be content with the idea that even after four years of high she had “absolutely no clue what’s going on.”

LePage reminisced about the nonsensical numbering of classrooms on the third floor and how, as Bacon Academy alumni, they will forever be followed around by the question of “Do you guys serve bacon in the cafeteria?”

LePage told her classmates not to worry if they don’t have it all figured out.

“The fact of the matter is high school is over, but our chances to learn are not,” she said. “Welcome to the real world, day one.”

Essayist Nicole Maria Perkins spent her time on the podium detailing how her love of reading has helped her figure out how to live life, referring to books such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Green Eggs and Ham* and *The Giving Tree*.

“This is what reading has taught me: love with a passion, lead with your heart, never think you can’t do something or that you’re unworthy of accomplishing a goal,” she said.

A less familiar Bacon Academy face was the new Superintendent Jeffrey Burt, who arrived at the high school in the beginning of June.

He joked about knowing the graduates for only a few hours and said he relied on five members in the graduating class, as well as kindergarten teachers at Marlborough Elementary and their students, for advice on what words of wisdom to relay to the seniors.

He described all the suggestions as oddly similar across the board.

“It’s amazing to think that those [kindergarten] students are twelve years away from sitting where you are and yet they are so wise,” Burt said.

Among the advice offered to the 2018 class was “Be kind, be happy, be strong [and] do what you’re supposed to do.”

Burt did have one piece of his own advice that he said was relayed to him by his 10-year-old daughter Phoebe on his first day as superintendent.

“Be awesome,” he said.

The members of the Bacon Academy Class of 2018 are: Nicolette Rose Albano, Brennan Amara, William Anderson, Danielle Antila, Alexandra Leodemia Arcaria, Megan Elizabeth Ashe, Justin Avery, Rachel MacKenzie Bagdasarian, Caroline Patricia Banning, Wyatt Douglas Barbabosa, \*Kendall Grace Barrett, Edward Allen Baxter V, Cassandra Bernier, Dawson Andrew Bertrand, Jamie Danielle Besaw, Madison Taylor Bis, Alyssa Bisi, Katherine E. Blakley, Sarah Marie Blanchette, Noah Christopher Bobrowski, Evelise Boenig, Angeline Yabo Bogle, \*Rachel Laura Boislard, Hannah Borsari, Rachel Lee Bova, Cole Leonard Brackett, Nathan Brigandi, Samantha Buhler, Edward Burke, Carolyn Rose Burnham, Joyce Anastasia Bylek, Jesús José Luis Cárdenas Román, Ian Edward Carey, Nicholas Cavaliere, \*Benjamin Douglas Chapman, Rebecca Leigh Chesters Wheaton, Tyler David Christianson, Matthew James Churchill, Ryan Michael Cicero, Adam J. Ciesinski, \*Morgan May Clark, Christopher John Consiglio, Hannah Leigh Corsa, \*Emilia Joy Couture, Skylar Cuppett, Alexis Bailey Curtis, Bailey Christopher Daigle, Danielle Dankiw, Timothy Davids, Owen Day, Caylee Brianna Debigare, Tyler Joseph DelGaizo, Julia Marie DeLoreto, Emily Nicole Denker, Joseph DesFosses, Ashton Destin, Brianna Marie Di Buono, Marissa Paige Dilla, Tyler E. Donovan, Jenaea Grace Marie Duddie, Garrett Wayne Dumore, Reilly Daniel Dyer, Sarah Eifler, Savannah Noel Eldridge, Connor, James Elmy, Cameron Emmerson, Cassandra Jeanne Evans, Nathaniel Edwin Figueroa, Jessie Lynn Fowler, David Joshua Fox, Simone Elise Francoeur, Emma Grace Fritz, Kaitlin Elizabeth Gadomski, Shane Nicholas Gagosz, Sarah Anne Galan, Christopher Michael Gatesman, Ethan Gaudette, Chloe Maeve Gillerlane, Anna Maria Goldberg, Aubriana Lee Goulet, Caleigh Rose Graff, Abigail Graham, Alexander Grant, Dylan Lawrence Edward Green, Mason Grey, Carly Grimord, Max Groeger, \*Connor Abel Groene, Brandon Guifarro, Kara Guinan, Ryan Michael Guire, Vincent James Gulizio, Lydia Alene Guy, Ethan Henry Hahn, Nicole Hammel, Charles Hancock, Samuel Thomas Healy, Anthony Heist, Jonathan Hipsher, Madisen Jacobs, \*Antonia Jascowski, Zachary A. Johnson, Molly Kelly, Ryan King, \*Audra Meredith Kingsley, Shelby Renee Kiro, Justin Kitchin, Haley Reagan Korczak, Bethany Lee Lacy, Cole Dakota Landry,

Colin Sullivan LaSaracina, Lucas Eric Lawley, Ryan Kristofer Lawrence, Madalyn Kelley Lawton, Bethany Jeanne Leitkowski, Gregory Sean Leitkowski, \*Addey Marie LePage, Gillian Paige Lewis, Jade Lindo, Jackson Livesay, Nicole Elizabeth Lizotte, Asia Annabelle Lopez-Roselund, \*Brayden Robert LoVetere, Madison Maggard, Kayla Marie Maldonado, John Kevin Marburger, Ryan Marinoccio, Andrew Martino, Rachel Elizabeth Marvin, Shelby Lynne Mason, \*Collin Matthew Maynard, Marissa Ann Mazzola, Colin D. McCarthy, Jr., Sean Duane McCormick, Isabel Anne McIntyre, Alexandria Lynn McKelvey, Zachary Tyler Moody, Kyrstin Mott, Cameron Murray, Joseph Albert Musinski, Lauren Neal, Sarah Grace Nebelski, Noah O’Connor, Heather Nicole O’Donal, Madeleine Rose O’Neil, Philip Oliver, Erik Jonas Olsen, Kristina Rose Paggioli, Jenna Pan, Jenna Nichole Papandrea, Jae Won Park, Matthew Parker, Alexis Darian Perham, Nicole Maria Perkins, Mathew Pierce, Jaisa Loraine Pinnock, Ashkuhquame Piper, \*William Thomas Picicelli, Cameron Allen Pizzoferrato, Angela May Plourde, Kendall Grace Pothier, Katherine Louise Pritchett, Shruti Rajkumar, Kevin Rakowski, Matthew Rapuano, Daniel Reyes, Cooper Rhodes, Jaida Riojas, Erin Nicole Rose, Makenna Russell, Jake Saczawa, Caleb Salvas-Melton, José Manuel Sanchez Garcia, Luke Everett Sanford, Johnathan A. Santiago, Bryan Peter Scheibelein, Brian Scheidel, \*Madeline Abbey Scherff, \*Audriana Margaret Schuff, \*Natalie Elizabeth Sedor, Zachary Thomas Sedor, Isaiah Seeley, Viktor Alex Setschinsky, Amanda Smith, Jacob Smith, Jared Tyler Smith, Ryan Smith, Jason Robert Sosnoski, Julia Marie Sousa, Anna Isabelle Sullivan, Brenden Swett, Ethan Sylvester, Elijah Bryan Tassmer, Pranav Ketan Thaker, Elizabeth Blain Thoms, Maricelis Torres, \*Joan Lauren Tremblay, Georgios Tsakiris, Jake Tucker, Tyler Tuttle, Maurice Underwood, Samantha Elizabeth Urbowicz, Tyler Ushchak, Patricia Alejandra Vazquez, Ariana Vigil, Jameson P. Violette, Brady Wallington, Alaina Walsh, Justin Edwin Wargat, Alex Joseph Weinberger, Amanda Stephanie West, Caroline Lilian Wilcox, Daisy Magan Williams, Ryan, Edward Witkovic, Dylan Skyler Woodcock, Aaron T. Young, Kyle M. Zoldak \*Member of the National Honor Society

C Box

## Fatal Two-Car Collision

State Police said a crash last Sunday fatally injured one woman and left two men with possible injuries.

At approximately 2:31 p.m. a Dodge Challenger driven by Donald F. Hibbert, 52, of 151 Lakeshore Dr., was traveling west on Lake Hayward Road approaching the intersection for the Route 11 southbound. A Toyota Scion, driven by Lucy Hinton, 91, of 149 Longwood Dr., was traveling south on the exit 6 off ramp on Route 11, approaching the stop sign at the end of the ramp.

However, Hinton did not stop at the stop

sign and continued onto Lake Hayward Road.

Hibbert told police he was unable to stop before making contact with Hinton’s Toyota Scion.

Hinton was transported by the Colchester Fire Department to Marlborough Clinic where she succumbed to her injuries, police said.

Hibbert and his passenger George A. Thompson, 42, of 222 Valley View Rd., Manchester were both transported by the Colchester Fire Department to Backus Hospital with possible injuries.

C Box

## Automobile Accident Kills BA Alumni

At Bacon Academy’s graduation last Friday, a moment of silence was held for 2017 graduate Taylor P. Howes, who died earlier that day from injuries sustained in a motor-vehicle crash a week earlier.

State Police said Howes, 18, was driving a Toyota Corolla in the area of Norwich Avenue and Elm Street at approximately 2:26 a.m. on June 15 when the vehicle collided

with a tree.

At that time, Howes was transported via Lifestar by the Colchester Fire Department to Marlborough Clinic.

The crash currently remains under investigation and anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper Steven Loiler at 860-465-5400.

## Marlborough Vehicle Collides with Cement Wall

State Police said a driver traveled off the roadway, damaging a cement wall and sustaining possible injuries.

Police said at approximately 4:06 a.m. last Saturday, June 23, a Ford F150, driven by Jacqueline Ruffino, 32, of 271 S. Main St., was traveling south on Isleib Road, approximately 300 feet south of the Glastonbury-Marlborough town line, when the vehicle went off the roadway via the right shoulder.

The Ford then rolled down a steep incline and into a stone lined culvert/driveway, police said. The culvert/driveway that the vehicle landed in caused damage to a cement wall and gouge marks in the driveway.

Ruffino was transported to Marlborough Clinic by the Marlborough Fire Department with possible injuries and issued an infraction for improper turn.

## Two-Vehicle Collision in Marlborough

State Police said a two-vehicle collision occurred last Wednesday, June 20, after one driver failed to adhere to a stop sign.

At approximately 2:40 p.m., a Grand Cherokee Jeep driven by Geoffrey D. Wilson, 74, of 48 Belltown Rd., South Glastonbury, was traveling north on North Main Street approaching the intersection of Chapman and Lake Road when an Audi driven by Christine M. Burby, 48, of 9 Saffron Ln., East Hampton, traveling east on Chapman Road, approaching North Main Street failed to stop at a posted stop sign at the intersection and continued across North Main Street to Lake Road.

The Jeep struck the Audi, rolling it onto Lake Road where it came to a final rest on its wheels.

Police said Burby stated she was taking a detour due to traffic and never saw the stop sign.

Wilson was transported to Marlborough Clinic by the East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance with suspected minor injuries.

Burby was also transported with suspected minor injuries to Marlborough Clinic by the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance and issued an infraction for failure to obey a stop sign.

# Movie Premiere Set for Andover Filmmaker

by Sloan Brewster

A young local moviemaker is hoping his film will be picked up by a distributor and has his sights set on film festivals.

On Monday, members of the crew were working on finishing touches for *Goodnight (or Good Morning)*, a movie that will premiere next Saturday, July 7, at 7:30 p.m. at Cinestudio Theater on the Trinity College campus in Hartford.

Filmmaker Bradley Plausse, who graduated from RHAM last week and was a half day student at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, started writing the script in 2016 and completed it in early 2017. He then spent six months doing revisions.

Plausse wanted to do more than just write a script, though.

"A script is just something you wish you could make (into a movie), but I wanted to actually make it," Plausse said.

Some of the actors and crew members are volunteers – who share an interest in filmmaking – from youth groups of the Presbyterian churches of Manchester and Coventry. All the local talent brought Plausse to the conclusion that there is much untapped potential in the area.

"There's this weird ecosystem in eastern Connecticut that I found to be a plethora of opportunity and where I found all my friends as well," Plausse said. "I just kind of looked around in my life and saw that something pretty big could be done."

Plausse hopes to put the movie into film festivals and that it will ultimately be picked up by distributors.

"The story's really good, character driven, and really emotional and beautiful," he said.

Plausse estimates making the movie could have cost him about \$50,000, but with a crew of volunteers and borrowed equipment from Community Voice Channel (CVC) in Bolton, Plausse made the movie on the cheap. He said the finished product doesn't look it, however.

"I didn't want anyone to feel like they were watching a student film," he said. "I tried to avoid it as much as possible."

The trailer, viewable at <https://tinyurl.com/yat7h5mp>, shows a teenage boy dealing with some emotional upheavals.

"It's just about being a teenager, it's one facet of it," Plausse said.

The main character, Gareth, is a senior in high school with a difficult family situation and few friends, according to Plausse.

"I think a lot of it was trying to capture the feeling of not belonging ... sometimes the characters don't really belong in the world."

While there are takes from his own life, including that he and the lead are both Christians and share an interest in "pretty girls," Plausse said the movie isn't an exact parallel. For starters, his father is not at all like the abusive father in the movie.

"The reason I started writing was I just wanted to tell a story that was similar to my own but I didn't just want it to be autobiographical," Plausse said. "I guess I wanted to capture some of the events in my life in a more direct way."

Also, he thought he would follow the old adage about writing.

"Write what you know, that was the idea," he said.

After Plausse finished writing, he spent six months in preproduction, which included two to three months of storyboarding – sketching the entire movie out from start to finish on whiteboards. Cinematographers Josiah Edwards, of Vernon, and Abram Hammer, of Bolton, met Plausse at his house twice a week to play out scenes, which Plausse would draw.

"That was good because once we got on set it was really good to have a plan and know how long it was going to take," Plausse said.

There are 29 speaking roles in the film and 29 filming locations, which Plausse had to secure in advance. Shooting took six weeks of three eight- to 14-hour days per week.

As luck would have it, the cast – which included fellow Academy of the Arts students – consisted of primarily stage actors, who were well versed in getting the job done in a single take.

"There are a couple scenes that we just set the camera down and let it roll for 10 minutes," Plausse said. "It was nice to be able to kind of let the actors bear the responsibility of keeping the audience interested."

About 300 people make up the film's cast, crew and extras, and it was a younger bunch, most of whom were under the age of 25.

Plausse also got financial donations from businesses, non-profits and individuals, including Kenny's Diner in Manchester, Scooter Bug Ice Cream in Hebron, RHAM High School, Tom's Hot Dogs in Andover, the Presbyterian Church of Manchester, Hartford Marriott Downtown, and the Manchester Parkade. Various homes in Andover, Coventry, Bolton, Vernon and Tolland, opened up their doors for filming.

"This has been like a big community thing," he said. "The whole community has pitched in."

Plausse discovered lead actor Eric Murphy,



**Filmmaker Bradley Plausse of Andover, a 2018 RHAM High School graduate, works on some last minute sound editing on his film *Goodnight (or Good Morning)* with Dan Karas, of Hartford, in preparation for the film's July 7 premiere.**

of Middletown, who plays Gareth, in the art academy hallways. When he saw him, he thought he looked the part and approached him to see if he was interested.

"He's kind of like my rock star, he played sensitive very well," Plausse said. "I think he's just a great actor."

Jasmine Cheri Rush, of Windsor, who stars as Emily – Gareth's love interest – did not expect to be cast in the role as she felt like she was too tall for it, she said.

Rush said she normally avoids film, preferring the stage, as film can be too intimate and scenes can lose their genuine nature when they are done over and over again. Still, she found her way into the character's mind.

"I just tapped into the fact that she was this girl who had an unstable life and was looking for companionship and she found that in Gareth," Rush said.

Plausse has no doubts that Rush has a long career before her.

"She's going to be an actress for the rest of her life, she was amazing," Plausse said. "She plays a confident, progressive, young woman. She's got a good sense of humor."

Adults leads were played by two teachers.

Karl Jancis, head drama teacher at RHAM, plays the male adult lead and Missy Burmeister, theater teacher at the arts academy and off Broadway actress, plays the female adult lead.

"She was definitely the most qualified actress we had working in the movie," Plausse said of Burmeister.

On Monday, Dan Karas, of Hartford, was working on some final sound editing for the film.

When Plausse popped in to check on his efforts, the pair listened to a line and brainstormed over the best way to edit it.

Down the hall, Nick Lavigne, executive director of CVC and the executive producer on the film, said he was helping Plausse finish the film, doing some tech work and completing the color correction.

Though it was not a school project, Plausse said he got an independent study for the effort and was able to leave school to complete parts of the project, which has swallowed up many long days of time.

"My poor family has wanted me to have dinner at home," he said.

Tickets are available online at [tinyurl.com/goodnightmovie](https://tinyurl.com/goodnightmovie) or can be purchased at the door.

## Opinions Sought for Andover's Future

by Sloan Brewster

The Long Term Planning Committee wants residents to weigh in on the town's goals and objectives.

A survey that will be included with July motor vehicle tax bills is designed to help the committee determine the town's goals and objectives on an ongoing basis. The idea is that the committee's vision statement, and therefore the town's as well, will evolve based on responses to the survey, according to committee chairman Eric Anderson.

The vision as it stands now is at the top of the survey. Goals of the town included therein are that it be sustainable, positive and welcoming; that healthy activity and lifestyles be promoted; and that environmental responsibility be encouraged – to name a few.

"Rooted in tradition, we will maintain our strong sense of historical and rural character by fostering a sense of place and pride," a portion of the statement reads. "We are committed to providing positive opportunities for our town."

The statement in its current incarnation is not unlike ones used in the corporate world or by other towns, Anderson said.

"It's kind of a statement of what the town government feels its responsibilities are, what it should be doing," he said. "We have basi-

cally a – what I would say is – a pretty good first-round vision statement."

The idea behind the committee, which was formed in January, is to understand the long-term problems of the town and determine how to get where it needs to be as a town in terms of infrastructure and staff, Anderson said.

To that end, the committee has received feedback from boards and commissions, but the public should participate as well, he said.

"So hopefully we don't end up making recommendations that people in the town don't ultimately fund," Anderson said.

One idea behind the survey is to look at the changing demographics of the town and determine what people are looking for and finding a balance between the wants and needs of the differing populations, Anderson said.

"The average age is increasing pretty rapidly," he said. At the same time, "The next largest generation of homebuyers is the millennials and that generation has its own needs and goals and we have to align at some extent what we do in town with what future homebuyers are looking for."

The two-page survey includes a section on preserving the town's heritage and re-establishing the community with questions about support for a community/senior center, the devel-

opment of a town center re-establishing Main Street and restoring the museum of Andover history.

There are also sections on health and welfare of residents, building a sustainable economy, maintaining an efficient government, marketing, demographics and a final question asking for other suggestions.

Amanda daCunha, committee secretary, said the goal of the committee is to work on bettering and beautifying the town and making sure that the committee's goals align with those of residents.

"We are looking to make sure the residents have a voice," she said. "It's kind of a community brainstorming session, via a survey (or) via a piece of paper to make sure we have everyone's side."

Some of the questions in the survey were born of ideas already floating around town, such as building a community/senior center, developing a town center and re-establishing Main Street, daCunha said, adding she has heard them discussed at meetings in town.

In addition, with so much recreational areas in town – including the Hop River Trail, Andover Lake and the Long Hill Soccer Field – the committee wants to figure out where and how residents use public spaces, daCunha said.

The Andover Farmers Market is another thing at which the looks.

"We're also really excited to include our questions about the farmer's market in our survey," daCunha said at the June 6 Board of Selectmen meeting, where she gave a presentation on the survey.

daCunha told the board that she was into supporting local agriculture "and all that jazz." "For us younger people, it's what we're looking for, for the town to be sustainable," she said.

Survey questions about the farmer's market include if folks go and when they would like to see it take place.

While at the meeting, the Farmers Market Committee, of which daCunha is also a member, had not yet decided if the market would be held this year. On Wednesday, daCunha said she was excited to announce it has since been scheduled.

The farmer's market will be held on the third Wednesday of every summer month – July 18, Aug. 15 and Sept. 19 – from 4-7 p.m., at Over AndOver at 415 Route 6.

"It's a place where you can get local produce, bread [and] all sorts of awesome things that you can find through September and October," daCunha said. "We're just looking to have people have healthy local options."

## Obituaries

### East Hampton

#### Marietta DeSarro

Marietta (Randazzo) DeSarro, 94, of East Hampton, wife of the late Hugo DeSarro, died peacefully Monday, June 25, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born Dec. 17, 1923, in Hartford, to the late Sebastian and Mary (Mauriello) Randazzo.



After graduating from Weaver High School in 1941, where she excelled at Home Economics, Marietta worked for the Traveler's Insurance Company until she and Hugo married, in 1946. They settled in Hartford, where they raised their three daughters.

Marietta lived a beautiful life surrounded by her family, which was her greatest joy. She was happiest supporting the interests of her husband, daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was an excellent seamstress, making the bridesmaid dresses for her own wedding, and later making her daughter's wedding gown and bridesmaid dresses, as well.

Marietta was a wonderful cook, hosting family gatherings for her extended family well into her 80s. She was famous for her Saturday night spaghetti suppers that she lovingly prepared from scratch, bringing us all to the table each week to enjoy each other's company.

During their 71 years of marriage, Marietta and her beloved husband, Hugo, enjoyed square dancing, traveling cross-country to visit national parks, were former members of the West Hartford Grange and spent many winters in Florida with family and friends. They were both active members of the East Hampton Senior Center, where Marietta enjoyed crafting, companionship and exercise.

Marietta was the consummate wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother, who will be remembered most for her devotion to her family.

Marietta was predeceased by her husband, Hugo; her parents, Sebastian and Mary Randazzo; her sister, Pauline Daloe and her brothers, Salvatore and Michael Randazzo. She leaves her sister, Rosalie Lynch of Glastonbury; her three daughters, Doreen DeSarro of Glastonbury, Nancy Carbone and her husband Frank of Colchester, Anita Bellows and her husband Warren of East Haddam; six grandchildren, Jesse Carbone and his wife Margherita of Brooklyn, N.Y., John DeSarro of Glastonbury, Emily Silva and her husband Claudiano, Raymond Bellows of New London, Michael Bellows of San Antonio, Texas, and Janet Kellum of East Lyme and two delightful great-grandchildren, Evalynn and Leo Kellum; and numerous nieces and nephews who she loved dearly.

Calling hours were Thursday, June 28, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, June 29, at 11 a.m., at St. Andrew Catholic Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will be at Mount Saint Benedict Cemetery at 1 Cottage Grove Rd., Bloomfield.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the East Hampton Senior Center, c/o JoAnn Ewing, 105 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To share memories or express condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### East Hampton

#### Shirley Mager

Shirley "Ma" (Barbour) Mager, 91, of East Hampton, left this earth to join her beloved husband Mike Mager, Wednesday, June 20, peacefully at home with family. Shirley was born in East Hampton, daughter of the late Raymond and Gertrude (Flood) Barbour, actually taking both her first and last breath in the very same house.

Prior to her retirement, Shirley was the manager of Mr T Casuals. Shirley was best known though as Ma to people of all ages. Not only did she raise her own two daughters, but grandkids, great-grandkids, and all the friends they've had at the house, through the years. She used to love to cook, bake, and clean the house. Always cooked more than she needed, because all the kids through the years bought home extras, and still managed to keep the house clean too.

Shirley is survived by a daughter, Kim Mager of East Hampton; two grandchildren, Michael Salafia his wife Lana, their children Skyler and Michael of East Hampton; and Mallory Adams her husband Jeremy and their daughter Hailey, also of East Hampton.

She was predeceased by a daughter, Doreen Mager.

In honoring Shirley's request, there will be no services. Biega Funeral Home is in charge, to share memories or express condolences online, visit [biegafuneralhome.com](http://biegafuneralhome.com).

### Colchester

#### Charlotte A. Turner

Charlotte A. Turner, lifelong resident of Colchester, born April 28, 1955, passed into the arms of the Lord Monday, June 25. She was 63 years old.

Charlotte leaves her loving family: her mother, Odessa Turner of Colchester; sisters, Marilyn and Denise Turner, both of Colchester, and Joyce Turner of Old Lyme; a niece and her husband, Odessa and Thomas Messina of Mystic; and numerous extended family and friends. She was predeceased by her father, Aaron M. Turner.

Charlotte was an IT specialist, working as a project manager for several consulting companies throughout her career. She was a life member of the Colchester Federated Church. Charlotte was also a longtime member of the Colchester Lions where she served as past secretary and liaison to the Guide Dogs for the Blind for their club. Charlotte loved to knit and play her guitar. Most importantly she will be remembered with love for all the kindnesses she has done for others throughout her lifetime.

Friends and family are invited to attend her calling hours Sunday, July 1, from 2-4 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral service will be held Monday, July 2, at 10:30 a.m., directly at the Colchester Federated Church, 60 Main St., Colchester. Burial will follow in the Linwood Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Guiding Eyes for the Blind, 611 Granite Springs Rd., Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.

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

### Colchester

#### Taylor Paige Howes

Taylor Paige Howes, 18, died Friday, June 22, Hartford Hospital from injuries sustained in an automobile crash. Taylor was born in Manchester Aug. 26, 1999, to Jeff Howes and Kathie-Sue (Gaffney) Howes-Heering.

Taylor was an honor student who graduated from Bacon Academy in 2017 and attended Manchester Community College where she was studying child development. She had a passion for little kids and had worked at the Enchanted Jungle Learning Center in Colchester. Taylor loved being with friends and family, her beautiful smile would light up any room she entered, she was a social butterfly. As an organ donor, Taylor's smile will radiate within those who received her selfless donation; she given the greatest gift anyone can give, the gift of life.

Taylor is survived by her father, Jeff Howes and Tamechia Morgan of Colchester; her mother and stepfather, Kathie-Sue Howes-Heering and Bill Heering of Terryville; siblings, Bryan Howes, Brandon Howes, Allyson Howes, Dyshelle Pemberton, Michael Morgan and Shannon Heering; maternal grandparents Christine and Carl Lenart of South Carolina and fraternal grandmother Flavia Joanna Howes of New Hartford; as well as numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Visitation with the family was held Sunday, June 24, at Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St., Colchester. Burial will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the "Taylor Howes Memorial Fund c/o Liberty Bank.

Visit [belmontfh.com](http://belmontfh.com) to leave condolences for the family.



### East Hampton

#### Robert A. Nichols

Robert A. Nichols, 76, of East Hampton, died peacefully Thursday, June 21. Born Oct. 28, 1941, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Walter and Mildred (Royce) Nichols Sr.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Lynn (Nichols) Nichols; daughter Cathy (Nichols) Sirois and husband Claude of East Hampton; grandchildren, Amanda Sirois of East Hampton, Nicole (Sirois) DeMay and husband Scott of East Haddam and Brian Sirois of East Hampton; and brother Gary Nichols of Rocky Hill. He was predeceased by his brother, Walter Nichols Jr. (Gloria).

He graduated from Vinal Tech in Middletown and worked as a machinist for many years at Standard Knapp in Portland and retired from Ripley Manufacturing in Cromwell. A lifelong resident of East Hampton, Bob was a veteran member of the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department along with his father, brother and uncles. Bob was an avid reader and enjoyed collecting Coca-Cola memorabilia and trading cards and playing setback in the leagues in town.

In keeping with Bob's wishes there will be no services.

The family would like to thank the staff at Cobalt Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center and Beacon Hospice for the wonderful care they provided Bob.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, 3 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424 or to the East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

### Andover

#### Joel Michael Koller

Joel Michael Koller, 51, of Andover, died unexpectedly Tuesday, June 19, from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident in Bolton. He was born Jan. 17, 1967, in Manchester one of six children of the late Samuel J. and Mary A. (Daly) Koller.

Joel was raised in Andover and attended RHAM High School. He was employed for over 20 years as an Operating Engineer for Costello Industries in Newington and he was a member of Local Union 478 (IUOE). Joel was happiest when he was on his bike. He loved the outdoors and spending time with his friends and family. Joel wasn't afraid of anything and he lived his life to the fullest.

Joel is survived by his two sons, Jaime Schatz of Waterbury and Kyle Koller of Manchester; a grandson, Jameson Schatz, and one expected shortly; his two sisters, Barbara Dunn (John Roberson) of The Villages, Fla., and Janet Foley (Bill) of Maine, his three brothers; Michael Koller (Joan) of Port Charlotte, Fla., Stephen Koller of Solana Beach, Calif., and David Koller (Janet) of Westminster, Calif., and numerous nieces and nephews; Alex Stratton of Andover, whom was like a son; his former spouse and best friend Jennifer Zakuri of Manchester; his loving partner, Kelly Smith of Andover, with whom he made his home; and many wonderful friends.

A graveside service will be held Saturday, June 30, at 11 a.m., in Townsend Cemetery, on Townsend Road in Andover, CT 06232. There are no calling hours.

Holmes-Watkins Funeral Home, Manchester has care of the arrangements. To leave an online condolence, visit [homeswatkins.com](http://homeswatkins.com).



### Amston

#### Brett Elliott Rushford

On Friday, June 22, Brett Elliott Rushford unexpectedly passed into Eternal Life. Brett worked at Winchester Interconnect as a cable operator.

Brett was the pride and joy of his parents, loved and cherished by his sister; Brett and Paige shared their love for the New England Patriots. Brett is known for his huge smiles, love and devotion to his family, being full of life and laughter and pulling practical jokes.

Brett is the friend you wanted to have; he was always "a phone call away" and there with helping hands. Brett loved fishing and spending time with his friends.

Brett is survived by his parents, Debra DeGray Rushford of Amston and Stephen Rushford of Norwich; his sister, Paige Rushford of Amston; grandparents Bruce and Roberta DeGray of Amston; Uncle Bryan and Aunt Deborah DeGray of Coconut Creek, Fla.; Uncle Bob Rushford of Taftville; and Aunt Barbara Rushford of Taftville.

Brett was predeceased by his paternal grandparents, Benjamin and Jeanette Rushford of Norwich.

Calling hours will be Saturday, June 30, from 2-4 p.m., at Guillot Funeral Home, 75 South B. St., Taftville. Following services, friends and family are welcome at the VFW, 36 Pratte Ave., Taftville, for a gathering to celebrate Brett's life. The burial will be private at the family's convenience.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Make-A-Wish Foundation in memory of Brett.

### East Hampton

#### George B. Castelli

George B. Castelli, 70, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, June 19, surrounded by family at Hartford Hospital. He is preceded in death by his parents, George and Alicia (O'Brien) Castelli of Portland.

George is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Suzanne (Behm) Castelli of East Hampton; his son, Christopher Castelli and his wife Melissa of East Hampton; his daughter, Kara Aiello and her husband Matthew of East Hampton; his grandsons, Ian and Nathan Aiello; his brother, Peter Castelli and his wife Sandra of Portland; his brother Daniel Castelli and wife Olenka of Portland; and his niece Kate Castelli of Cambridge, Mass.

George worked very hard for his family as a pipefitter for Henkels & McCoy for over 30 years. He had a passion for fishing and was an avid outdoorsman. He looked forward to his annual trips to New Hampshire, and was able to come home with a story or two from his trip to Alaska. On the weekends you could find him taking rides with his best friend, Bill Richards, or taking his wife Sue down to the shoreline for an early dinner or antique shopping.

George loved nature, the outdoors, and feeding his beloved birds. He loved spoiling his two grandsons and one visit from them would make his whole day. George left an impression on everyone he met; he was graced with the gift of gab, had an incredible sense of humor, and the ability to never forget a name or face. He will be missed dearly by his family and friends; his great legacy will live on in all of us forever.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Lung Association at 55 W. Wacker Drive, Suite 1150, Chicago, IL 60601.



*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

This may surprise some of you, as I've been pretty blunt in the past about not being a fan of hers, but I do wish Sarah Huckabee Sanders were allowed to eat her meal.

Sanders, as most of you I'm sure now, was asked to leave the Virginia restaurant The Red Hen last Friday. She hadn't caused a scene or anything; the owner simply asked her to leave because she's, well, Sarah Huckabee Sanders. She's spokeswoman for one of the most hated presidents of certainly my lifetime. She regularly gets combative with the media, and peddles her boss' lies on a regular basis. To make matters worse, last week in particular was a tough time to be associated with the Trump Administration, what with that whole little matter of locking children in cages.

Let's just say I wouldn't be too thrilled to see her at an adjacent table while I was enjoying my fettuccine alfredo. I may even say something to her. But I'd let the woman eat.

I bristled when I heard of Sanders getting tossed out of the restaurant. No matter how gratifying it may have seemed in the moment to exact some form of revenge, no matter how minor, against a high-profile member of this terrible administration, it simply wasn't worth the long-term damage.

People had to have known Sanders would tweet about the incident – and she did. People had to have known Trump supporters would be up in arms about it, and make a stink about it far eclipsing any feelings they may have espoused regarding those aforementioned caged-in children – and the supporters did.

People had to have known many of those Trump supporters would seek out similarly-named, but wholly-unrelated, Red Hen restaurants in other parts of the country – including Old Saybrook – and scream obscenities at the staff, issue ominous threats, and even egg the buildings.

Okay, maybe people shouldn't have known that last one was going to happen.

Seriously, though – people had to know how this was going to play. It makes those of us opposed to Trump look petty, and childish. We're supposed to be better than that.

Don't get me wrong: it's not like the other side is made up of saints. Far from it. It's tough to work up a whole lot of sympathy for folks who proudly wear T-shirts that say "F—k your Feelings," who openly laugh at and made fun of people just for crying, whose idea of a hilarious insult is to call someone gay, who don't even attempt to hide their racism anymore, who gleefully chant "Lock her up!" like

members of a crazed mob.

But still, we're supposed to be better than them. We're supposed to be the ones who remain adults, remain civilized, and keep fighting the good fight. There's something to be said for not lowering yourself to the president's level. (Boy, is it surreal to write that.)

On Saturday, Democrat Rep. Maxine Waters doubled down on the stupid when she encouraged people to openly harass anyone associated with the Trump Administration. Bad idea. There's nothing to be gained from that. Like the incident at the Red Hen, it doesn't win anyone over to your cause. All it does is elicit sympathy for folks that, frankly, are wholly unsympathetic.

And that's the thing: I see the appeal. Oh boy do I see the appeal. When you see people stepping on your constitutional rights, threatening to take your health insurance away, treating folks from other countries as sub-human, and a host of other offenses, it can be awfully tough not to tell them "screw you" in the most heinous way possible. But the only people that would be impressed by that are already on your side anyway; independents could very well be turned off by it. You know Trump officials, and Trump supporters, feel they're not doing anything wrong, so they'd milk the harassment for all it was worth, and, like I said, engender sympathy where none should exist.

Sen. Chuck Schumer, also a Democrat, put it nicely on Monday, when he discouraged people from following Waters' advice.

"I understand those who are outraged at the hypocrisy of this president when he complains about bullying, harassment and nastiness when it's used against him or his allies and he uses it as a regular tool every day," he said. "But the president's tactics and behavior should never be emulated. It should be repudiated by organized, well-informed and passionate advocacy."

From my days attending college in New York in the late '90s and early '00s, I've always liked Chuck Schumer. And stuff like that is why. He's a reasonable guy. It may be tempting to be less-than-polite to a high-ranking Trump official. . . .but in the end, I really feel it does more harm than good.

November is now just a few months away. It's so close. Let's not blow it.

\* \* \*

See you next week.