

RIVEREAST

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Semper Fi!... Bacon Academy rising senior Maile Blumberger and Bacon's varsity soccer coach Lee Elliott attended the four-day Semper Fidelis All-American Program in July. The highly-selective program involves intense athletic challenges under the direction of a Marine Corps sergeant and allows attendees the opportunity to become eligible for specific scholarship opportunities available only to program participants. See story on page 21.

A Reprieve For Rocky?

by Elizabeth Regan

Animal advocates clamoring for the release of a dog on death row at the Portland pound have renewed reason to be hopeful now that First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield has expressed willingness to explore "alternative options" to Rocky's death sentence.

The 90-pound pitbull mix has been held at the pound for two and a half years stemming from a 2016 bite incident while his owner, Paul Bell, appeals a kill order from Animal Control Officer Karen Perruccio.

Bransfield last week sent an email to Bell's attorney, Thom Page, inviting him to "explore and discuss alternative options to the disposal order on Rocky." She provided a copy of the email to the *Rivereast*.

Bell said this week that his attorney will be setting up a meeting with Bransfield to be held later this month.

"I'm getting my f—ing dog back," Bell said in an exuberant phone interview Tuesday.

He credited a dedicated group of Rocky supporters for joining him at Board of Selectmen meetings and writing to local officials to call for Rocky's release. The advocates have spoken for as long as two hours during the public comment portion of selectmen's meetings since May.

"I don't even know what to say," Bell said. "It's amazing. People are beautiful. Supportive. Compassionate. It's inspiring in a major way."

He said their support has put a lot of pressure on Bransfield to reconsider the kill order.

"I'm a nice guy, I really am," he said. "But don't mess with me, because I will win."

Heavily documented in filings with the state Department of Agriculture and the court system, the case revolves around a Jan. 31, 2016 attack by Rocky on 68-year-old Stephen Demarest. The bites resulted in injuries to Demarest's left ankle, inner leg and below his knee. Demarest said the dog was unattended

and unleashed at the time of the attack, which occurred across the street from Rocky's residence.

Rocky's case is currently in front of the New Britain Superior Court, where Page has appealed the state agriculture department's decision to uphold the town's kill order. He is asking the court to vacate the agriculture department's final decision and to grant a temporary injunction to prevent the town from killing his client's dog.

Bransfield described the meeting with Page as a precursor to a scheduled pre-trial conference at the New Britain courthouse. Originally set to be held Aug. 29, the conference has been postponed until Oct. 1.

She said she sees the meeting, which will also include Town Attorney Kari Olson and representatives from the state Department of Agriculture, as a chance to "do some homework" ahead of the pre-trial conference.

Alternative Options

"I'm going to keep an open mind and do what I said, which is discuss alternative options," Bransfield told the *Rivereast*.

She alluded to options ranging from rehoming Rocky to returning him to Bell with behaviorist-recommended precautions in place.

The rehoming possibility has come to the forefront as officials in Waterbury consider sending a dog named Rose to a rescue shelter in New York state, according to Bransfield. She said she has spoken with the city's legal office, where she was told officials are interested in speaking with the dog's owner about accepting the rescue group's offer to take the dog.

A post on social media from Bell's attorney, who represents Rose's owner in a federal court case, expressed profound opposition to that option.

"What troubles us is the generalized assumption that the only way to get Rose released, is

See Rocky page 2

Deteriorating Conditions at Andover Senior Center

by Sloan Brewster

Deteriorating conditions at the Andover Senior Center have already forced out several programs in recent years, and now the senior luncheons are moving.

When the luncheons return in September, they'll be held at Andover Pizza – due to the fact that the kitchen at the senior center isn't up to code.

The weekly luncheons are just the latest casualty for the senior center, which is located in the town's old firehouse on Center Street. The building has mold, mice, and ants, according to Senior Center Coordinator Cathy Palazzi.

The senior center's weekly exercise programs and line dancing classes have already been moved, and currently take place at the community room in Town Hall. This is due to people who have allergies to mold, Palazzi said.

The moving of the luncheons, however, is due to the center not being up to code. Palazzi said the center does not qualify for an annual permit to serve food. It had been getting monthly permits from the Eastern Highlands Health District, making the lunches permissible, she said.

Robert Miller, director of health at Eastern Highlands, said that in order to get an annual permit the town would need to make some improvements to the kitchen and bring it to compliance with town and state health codes.

Improvements would include installing three sinks, getting a specific type of refrigerator and having staff qualified to serve food, Palazzi said.

"[Eastern Highlands] said my people, who I had serving the food, are not qualified to serve," she said.

The last temporary permit expired June 29, and Palazzi said she was under the impression the center could not get another one. While Miller said that's not necessarily the case, Palazzi said she still is going to try the luncheons at Andover Pizza – at least for the time being.

Palazzi said she actually expects the lunches will be better attended at Andover Pizza, however – because of the lack of mold.

Some seniors skip lunches at the center, she said, because of the mold. "They have an allergy to the mold and they walk in and have issues," Palazzi said.

However, First Selectman Robert Burbank said he has concerns about the lunches being moved – and that he plans to contact Miller about getting another temporary permit.

"We're careful how we handle the food," he said.

Burbank said he feared for the long-term future of the senior luncheon program if it is permanently moved to a private facility, as a restaurant could prove too small to accommodate it. In addition, if the luncheons are held at the senior center, with food brought in from outside establishments, it is easier to change the menu. For example, folks could decide they wanted Chinese fare on occasion.

Burbank said the senior luncheons are "a great program" and that they represent "the only social hour some of the seniors get."

"I want to clear this whole situation up because I think it's very unfortunate, because if we have to go to private facility to hold the func-

See Senior Center page 2



Annabelle Maruschock, 11, hopes Rocky will soon be returned to his owner after two and a half years on death row at the Portland pound.

Rocky cont. from Front Page

to permanently take her away from her owner and give her to a sanctuary," Page wrote in June. "Where this assumption has come from, and the basis for it elude us. We're sure most dog owners would strongly object to this, as would anyone regarding their own property, which is what dogs are still considered under the law. Governments just don't have the right to unilaterally take away your property and give it to someone else."

Bell said Tuesday sending Rocky away is "absolutely not" an option he will consider.

Bransfield also referenced recommendations from animal behaviorist Michael Shikashio, of Complete Canines LLC, who evaluated Rocky in June 2016.

Shikashio said his visit with Rocky, as well as historical information about the dog provided by Perruccio and Bell, led him to believe the bite incident may have been attributable to "territorial behavior in which a dog may be motivated to protect his property." Shikashio added Rocky did not exhibit aggressive behavior in any other context.

The animal behaviorist recommended several precautions be put in place if Rocky is sent home to Bell.

Shikashio said the dog must be contained securely in the home using self-closing doors or gates. He said a second barrier must also be put in place between any doors leading outside "to decrease the risk of Rocky accidentally escaping the house should any main entry/exit be left open."

The animal behaviorist said a fence with a "Beware of Dog" sign must be installed on Bell's property. Rocky must be muzzled and leashed under Bell's control at all times when outside of the fence.

Shikashio's final recommendation specified Bell must work with a dog behavior professional with a background in aggression cases to decrease the likelihood of further incidents of aggressive behavior.

"I make no warranties or guarantees of Rocky's future behavior," Shikashio said.

Bransfield emphasized any alternative options must keep in mind the victim of the attack.

Bell has said his insurance company settled a lawsuit filed by Demarest and his wife for \$275,000.

"We do have to be aware of public health and safety," Bransfield said.

A change.org petition to save Rocky had garnered 3,070 signatures by press time. The petition was started by Annabelle Maruschock, an 11-year-old Brownstone Intermediate School student who was inspired to advocate for the dog after reading about the case in the *Rivereast*.

She said this week she is happy Bransfield is open to discussing alternatives to the kill order, but added it's something the first selectwoman should have considered earlier.

"I believe that instead of having Rocky go to New York like they are having Rose do from Waterbury, that he should be sent back home with a fence and training," she said.



Mold, mice and ants are among the issues reported at the Andover Senior Center, which is located in the old firehouse on Center Street. The weekly senior luncheons are the latest program to move out of the center.

Senior Center cont. from Front Page

tions I don't think it's going to last," Burbank said.

Eric Anderson, chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the town's Long Term Planning Committee, said the building's deteriorating condition has also kept him away.

"I'm mold-sensitive," he said. "I don't want to spend any more time in that building than I have to."

Anderson, who blamed the mold on a leaky garage roof, said other people have concerns about the mold as well.

Burbank, however, expressed his doubts on the presence of mold. He said he believed mold was eliminated when a ventilation system with an air purifier was installed in the building – and he said he hadn't heard of anyone avoiding the building due to mold sensitivities.

"I can't say 100 percent [that there's no mold] because we haven't had a specialist come in, and it's an older building," he said. "I just think that it's overblown to be honest with you."

But even beyond the mold, Anderson said, "the building has had a number of issues."

Anderson and Palazzi each mentioned mice have been spotted in the building, and Palazzi said there has also been a problem with ants.

"The reality is that's a 100-something year-old building that was appropriated for the fire department many years ago and was a problem for the fire department for many of the issues it has now," Anderson said.

Town Administrator Joseph Higgins said he had not heard about the mold, rodents or ants.

"Those particular issues haven't been brought to my attention," he said.

Despite the issues with the building, some senior center activities are still held in the building, including bingo, movie night and Young at Heart meetings. Those activities are "potluck," or folks just bring their own snacks, so they are not regulated by the health district, Palazzi said.

Some town meetings are also held there, as are meetings of local civic groups, Anderson said. For example, next week's meeting of the Charter Revision Commission is being held at the senior center.

Young at Heart secretary of programs Marge Surdam concurred with the deteriorating state of the building – as well as the presence of ro-

dens.

"We've had some little four-legged creatures there for quite some time," she said.

Surdam said she has commented at local meetings that the center "could really use an upgrade."

"Pretty soon one of these days it'll fall down around us," she quipped.

Higgins added that the old firehouse building was "beyond its useful life," and that it would not be cost-effective to repair it.

He said some in town have discussed a new community center, as well as a new building for the Public Works Department, which Higgins said also has issues.

The Long Term Planning Committee, which is looking at the needs of the town going forward, may include a community center in its goals, Anderson said.

"I assume a recommendation would be a new community center starting by working on the design," he said. But, he added, "That's not set in stone; the committee has not made that conclusion yet."

Last month, the Long Term Planning Committee sent out a survey that was included with motor vehicle tax bills and was designed to help the committee determine the town's goals and objectives on an ongoing basis. The two-page survey included questions about support for a community/senior center.

The committee is not ready to release the data gathered through the survey as it has not completed compiling it, Anderson said.

"We're still wading through the results of the survey and tabulating everything," Anderson said.

Still, he added that from what he has seen folks around town support the idea of a new community center.

"There was a clear consensus," he said. "A lot more people were in favor of a community center than weren't."

Burbank, however, said he felt that, at this time, a new senior center would be cost-prohibitive.

Palazzi, for her part, is confident a new center is not far down the road.

"I believe that in between two and five years they will build a new senior center," she said.

Shea Steps Down From RHAM School Board

by Sloan Brewster

With a move out of state in her future, Marlborough resident Carole Shea has resigned from her seat on the RHAM Board of Education.

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen is now seeking a replacement.

Shea, who was one of four Marlborough representatives on the regional school board, sent her letter of resignation to First Selectman Amy Traversa on July 12. The resignation was effective the following Monday, July 16.

"It has been an honor to serve and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity I have had the last four years to represent the Town of Marlborough on the District Board of Education," Shea wrote in the letter.

In a phone call Monday, Shea said she had resigned because she and her husband Dick, who is on the Marlborough Board of Selectmen, are planning to move out of state.

"My husband and I are retired now and we are going to be relocating out of state and I felt that it would be best to resign from the board at the summer break," she said.

She added that she thought it would be best for the district if she gave folks enough time to

find her replacement while school was on break and the board had no meetings scheduled.

Shea said she is not certain when she and her husband will be moving.

"We're building a house elsewhere," she said. "The house is under construction, but it's almost done."

Shea's husband Dick said Thursday he plans to stay on the Marlborough Board of Selectmen, on which he has served for the past seven years, for as long as possible.

"We're subject to the usual difficulties with building schedules," he said. He said he doesn't expect to move before late October or November, but noted the date has not been finalized.

Carole Shea has been on the regional school board for four years, one year as an appointee to replace a vacancy and three as an elected member. Her term runs through November 2019. Prior to joining the RHAM board, she served on the Marlborough Board of Education for six years.

Shea said she would miss the RHAM board.

"I think it's an interesting board and a lot of interesting things happen in a large school, especially a middle school and high school," she

said. "I hope they get someone who is going to make a positive contribution."

Sue Rapelye, another RHAM member from Marlborough, said Shea has been an insightful addition to the board and would be missed.

"Losing Carole is a huge loss to the RHAM Board of Education," she wrote in an email. "Carole's insight and attention to the details showed in everything she did for the RHAM Board of Education. I wish her nothing but the best and thank her for her dedication."

Rapelye said Marlborough board members have no input into Shea's replacement.

"It's in the hands of the Marlborough selectmen to appoint a Republican replacement within 30 days," she said. "Although, it would be nice to have some input into the selection."

Ken Hjulstrom, Marlborough Republican Town Committee chairman, said much the same thing about the town committee.

"I would like to see the Republican Town Committee involved more in the selection process when it comes to filling vacancies," he said.

At the Marlborough Board of Selectmen meeting on Tuesday, Jannat Gill, a Marlborough

resident who is unaffiliated, told selectmen she was interested in filling Shea's seat on the RHAM board, Hjulstrom said.

Based on the town charter, a person filling a Republican vacancy on a board or commission must be a Republican, he said.

Hjulstrom said he would not be opposed to an unaffiliated voter registering as a Republican and filling the seat as long as the person's qualifications were suitable.

"I'm looking more for qualified people," he said. "I'm not concerned with a letter beside her name."

Hjulstrom also said Shea would be missed. "She has been an excellent member of the RHAM board," he said. "Her level of insight has been fantastic and I'm sure she'll be sorely missed."

Traversa did not return calls for comments for this story, nor did RHAM Board of Education Chairwoman Judy Benson-Clarke, who also lives in Marlborough.

The next RHAM Board of Education meeting is Monday, Aug. 20, at 6:30 p.m., at RHAM High School, 85 Wall St., Hebron.

Bill Introduced Would Change Agent Orange Law

by Sloan Brewster

Due to a local Vietnam veteran's mission, a bill has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives that, if passed, will make treatment possible for veterans with certain Agent Orange-connected ailments.

Vietnam veteran Gerry Wright went on a six-week, 10,357-mile motorcycle journey to 32 states seeking signatures on a petition to get treatment and disability benefits for veterans exposed to Agent Orange, whose ailments have been all but ignored. Wright returned home in June.

Last week, Rep. Joe Courtney (D-02) introduced the bill removing a stipulation in the law that prevents treatment and disability benefits for many Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. Wright said he wrote the bill with Courtney.

Agent Orange, an herbicide that contains the contaminant Dioxin, was sprayed over Vietnam by the U.S. military to get rid of the jungle canopy and make it possible to see enemy combatants and to get rid of the food supply, Wright said. The defoliant killed food including bananas, coconuts and rice and took out wildlife, including monkeys.

"That's what they were trying to do, starve them out," he said.

Wright served two tours in Vietnam with the U.S. Army and was on active duty during Operation Desert Storm.

Many Vietnam veterans, including Wright and Ed Fortin – who accompanied Wright on part of his cross country journey – ended up with health issues and diseases connected to the herbicide, they said. Those with three spe-

cific ailments have faced challenges in getting disability benefits and treatment.

In order to receive treatment or to be put on partial disability from the three ailments, which include skin problems causing lesions, rashes or blistering and nerve disorders, the Veteran's Health Administration (VA) requires that veterans had registered their exposure within one year of separation from the war, Wright said.

Wright, who sprayed the contaminant, did not register his exposure within a year, and said he did not learn he was required to do so until eight years after his tours ended.

H.R. 6566, which was referred to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs on July 26, strives to amend Title 38 of the United States Code "to remove the manifestation period required for the presumptions of service connection for chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents," according to the bill's title.

Courtney, who spoke to the *Riverast* Wednesday, called the one-year registration mandate "ridiculous" and likened it to expecting people to self-diagnose based on limited information, which he said was "unbelievably unfair."

"We're talking about going back to the 1970s for folks that had no idea that Agent Orange was a problem," Courtney said. "They were being told that this stuff was safe."

Veteran's groups have rallied around the issue, Courtney said. He lauded Wright's efforts to spread the word.

Wright said he got 1,500 signatures on the

petition on his trip alone. He also sent it all over the country, where it had amassed 37,188 total signatures as of Tuesday. And the effort continues.

Wright said he plans to walk into Congress with a huge pile of signed pages and that he wants to be able to say to members of congress that he visited their district and their constituents are watching them.

He is also working on getting national veterans organizations, including the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, to back the bill.

The Hebron American Legion approved a motion to give its support and forwarded the motion to the state convention in Trumbull, Wright said. He spoke at the convention in July, where members approved the measure and passed it up the chain.

"Now it's in the hands of national," Wright said.

He will find out on August 25 if the national convention will also give its support to the bill.

The more support and sponsors the bill gets, the less likely it will die on the floor, Wright and Courtney said.

"It's really critical that we get external support with the American Legion," Courtney said. "Gerry's doing great at that."

This is not the first bill seeking to overcome barriers to Agent Orange treatment, Courtney said.

"If you go back in time, Agent Orange coverage by the VA has been a knock down, drag out fight for 40 years in terms of the VA's resistance to covering Dioxin," he said. "This has

been a nonstop contentious issue with the VA."

The "blue water" Agent Orange bill, which is pending a senate hearing, strives to get treatment for sailors with Dioxin-connected ailments who have been denied care because they were not on the ground in Vietnam, Courtney said.

"If you did not step foot on Vietnam soil, you are not covered," he said.

Agent Orange was transported via U.S. Navy ships and sailors were exposed, which has resulted in health issues for some, including heart, respiratory and skin conditions, Courtney said.

If the "blue water" bill is passed, sailors will receive the same treatment as soldiers who were on Vietnam soil.

When Congress is back in session in September, Courtney said he will work on rounding up committees to co-sponsor H.R. 6566, including the armed services and veterans committees and to raise the bill's visibility.

"They were ordered to spray this stuff, being told it's safe, that it was only an herbicide and only affected plants. Obviously that wasn't the case," Courtney said. "They should be cared for."

In the meantime, Wright continues with a long list of dates to speak with groups on the matter and get more signatures on the petition and backing for the bill.

"God bless Gerry," Courtney said. "He's a man on a mission."

Wright urges folks to contact their congressional representatives and ask them to co-sponsor the Agent Orange bill.

Portland Site Plan Approved with ‘Extensive’ Excavation

by Elizabeth Regan

Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission last week rejected the advice of the town attorney and approved the excavation of approximately 200,000 cubic yards of material from a Route 66 property based on a site plan only.

The commission voted 4-1 in favor of the application after the public hearing despite a strongly-worded opinion from Town Attorney Kari Olson, of Murtha Cullina, stating that a special permit is required.

The excavation is required to make room for two commercial buildings totaling 8,200 square feet, according to the application from local business owner Tom Clausi. Portland Selectman Ben Srb identified himself at the Aug. 2 public hearing as the developer for the project.

The approval paves the way for Clausi and Srb to excavate a 5-acre portion of the site Monday through Friday from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. for up to five years. They told commissioners they expect to finish the first phase and begin construction of the front building within two years.

Local zoning regulations call for a special permit in order to remove or bring in earth material. But a list of 10 exemptions has been the subject of differing interpretations over the past several years.

Srb has been involved in the debate since 2014, when he secured site plan approval to remove an unspecified amount of earth material in order to build a single-family house on the corner of Sage Hollow Road and Cornwall Street. Excavation of the one-acre site is ongoing.

Some residents, as well as current and former zoning officials, have expressed concern with Srb’s interpretation that local zoning regulations don’t require special permit oversight for earth removal if a site plan for a building lot has been authorized by the commission. That is, regulations for sand pits don’t apply if one is simply removing earth material to accommodate a new house or a business.

Srb stood up during the public hearing to defend himself and his history as the developer of numerous properties in town.

“I’ve never had a denial from any board,” he said. “That’s because of two things: I understand the rules and regulations and I only apply for what is appropriate for Portland. Having said that, there’s always a few people that can’t handle that.”

‘Extensive’ Excavation

Olson’s July 12 written opinion described the amount of excavation in Clausi’s proposal as “extensive” and argued that a project of that magnitude has never been approved by the commission without a special permit.

A document prepared by Land Use Administrator Ashley Majorowski shows numerous excavation operations approved with a sand and gravel excavation special permit since 2010, including one directly across the street from Clausi’s lot. Land use records show 1561 Portland Cobalt Rd. is being excavated via a 2012 special permit that has been renewed every two years since. Owner David Erlandson was approved last year to remove up to 249,860 cubic yards of earth material.

Other excavation projects approved via special permit range from the removal of 35,000 cubic yards of material to 562,000 cubic yards, according to the document.

George Law, a Portland-based attorney and chairman of the town Ethics Commission, represented Clausi at the public hearing.

Law pointed to the same exemption to the earth removal regulations that has been cited by Srb in the past. The language laid out in section 9.5 of the regulations specifies a special permit is not required in connection with “any subdivision, special permit use and/or site plan approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.”

Law said the earth removal regulations aren’t conducive to development because they forbid excavation within 25 feet of the property lines and don’t allow construction to begin until all

phases of excavation are complete.

“That’s why it’s a site plan. It’s not an earth-removal operation. It’s incumbent upon [Clausi] to do this in order to build the buildings that are put forth in the site plan,” Law said.

Both Law and Srb argued that other site plans that included excavation have been approved without a special permit. Srb said the Chris Cote’s Golf Shop site, which he also developed, included 30,000 cubic yards of earth removal.

Olson’s argument hinged on the tense of the word “approved” in the exemption to the earth removal regulations.

“[T]he commission does not have to approve this site plan so there currently is no ‘approved’ site plan for which to grant an exemption under this rule,” she wrote in her opinion.

She went on to argue that any other interpretation would “completely undermine” the entire section of regulations governing earth removal.

“In other words, if all that is required to escape [the earth removal regulations] is a pending site plan application, section 9.5 would be rendered completely moot,” she wrote.

Law told commission members during the public hearing that Olson’s interpretation would force the commission to deny any site plan application that has an excavation component.

“I understand that this is not yet an approved site plan,” he said. “But you have the ability and obligation, if my client meets the site plan criteria, to approve it. Then it’s exempt.”

Each attorney quoted established case law to describe the other’s interpretation of the regulation as “absurd and unworkable.”

In addition to recommending that the commission require a special permit as part of Clausi’s application, Olson suggested members come up with new language in section 9.5 of the regulations to address any unreasonable constraints based on her interpretation.

“We strongly recommend that the commission revise section 9.5, by text amendment, to the extent that it deems necessary to balance the desires of property owners to conduct reasonable site development work with the need for special permit conditions when larger more extensive earth work is proposed,” Olson wrote.

Language for a text amendment has been drafted and will be discussed at a future meeting, according to Land Use Administrator Ashley Majorowski.

Conditions of Approval

The motion to approve the site plan came with 36 conditions designed to mimic much of the earth-removal regulations from which the applicant was exempted.

The conditions were added despite objections outlined in Olson’s written opinion that “the commission has no authority to grant a conditional site plan that ignores the current zoning requirements” and that to do so in this case “would set a dangerous precedent.”

One of the conditions of the site plan approval requires the applicant to submit erosion and sediment control bonds and performance bonds in an amount to be determined by the town engineer. A July 27 email from consulting town engineer Geoffrey Jacobson provided a preliminary estimate of \$98,300.

Performance bonds are required to ensure the site is stabilized and planted to the satisfaction of local zoning officials upon the completion of excavation, according to the earth removal regulations.

Other conditions of the site plan approval are more generous than the earth removal regulations, including ones that allow excavation within 25 feet of property lines, permit construction to begin before excavation is complete, and authorize excavation and hauling activity to occur on Saturdays.

Instead of the two-year renewal requirement and associated costs that come with a special permit, a condition of the site plan approval

vaguely requires a “2 year update to PZC.”

Majorowski told the *Rivereast* after the meeting she was unclear what the “update” would entail or how it would be enforced.

Public comment during the hearing included endorsements by the closest residential neighbor and a nearby business owner.

Neighbor Patrick Farley credited Clausi with dropping the level of the property in the site plan so Farley doesn’t have to look directly at the new buildings. He also said he has no problem with excavation activity on Saturdays.

Jesse Morin told commissioners approximately 50,000 cubic yards of material came out of the Morin Diesel site several years ago as part of a site plan.

“But you see the finished project: It’s flat, it’s level. You’ve got irrigation, beautiful lawn, everything’s manicured just to the tee. But that wouldn’t be achievable if [Clausi] wasn’t allowed to pull some material out of there,” Morin said.

The site plan for the Morin Diesel property was approved as part of a special permit for the sale and repair of diesel vehicles, according to land use documents.

However, resident Dave Murphy, of Carousel Drive, stood up in opposition to the project based on his experience as a neighbor of what he described to commissioners as “the debacle

Is Portland Protecting the Fen?

by Elizabeth Regan

The Planning and Zoning Commission approved a five-year plan to excavate a property on Route 66 amid unanswered questions about a rare wetland on the site.

The 33-acre 1600 Portland Cobalt Road site includes a “significant natural community” of peatland known as a medium fen, according to a Nov. 6, 2017 review by state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection analyst Dawn McKay.

The commission authorized the removal of 200,000 cubic yards of material from a 5-acre portion of the property in preparation for 8,200 square feet of commercial space.

Portland Wetlands Agent James Sipperly said the fen is more than 200 feet from the excavation site. He signed off on the project on May 15.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency described fens as similar to bogs, but more hospitable to plants and animals. The EPA said it “is crucial to protect” the rare fens that have been declining in number since 1950.

McKay said fens are threatened by development and associated runoff, recreational overuse and habitat alteration in the adjacent landscape. Such wetlands can be destroyed by direct stormwater discharge and by groundwater diversion activities conducted in the vicinity of the fen. Any road construction or development activities should strive to avoid those practices, she concluded.

McKay said this week the purpose of her review in part is to inform municipalities about the significant natural communities within their borders. There is no mechanism for enforcement by the state, she said.

“It can be used by the local planning and zoning commission to make decisions about what happens in their town,” she said. “Maybe

known as the Sage Hollow sand pit.”

Murphy said excavation has been happening for four years on the corner of Sage Hollow Road and Cornwall Street with no signs of the single-family home Srb got site plan approval to build there.

“Let’s be very clear. This is a sand-and-gravel operation,” he said of the Sage Hollow property. “There’s no doubt in anyone’s mind of that.”

Murphy said he appreciated the “2 year update” provision in the 1600 Portland Cobalt Road approval as a way for the commission to keep tabs on progress.

“There should never be a five-year window for a project of this magnitude to go unchecked,” he said.

Only Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Bruce Tyler voted against the motion to approve the site plan. He said after the meeting he felt Olson made a “persuasive case” that a special permit is required.

Commission member Chantal Foster said she doesn’t feel good about going against the town attorney’s recommendation, but acknowledged the current regulation as written can be interpreted in different ways.

“Ultimately, they did put in the conditions we were looking for, and that was the most important thing,” she said.

the inland wetland commission could review it to see if they agree and would like to protect it in any way.”

The 1600 Portland Cobalt Road site plan application has not been reviewed or discussed by members of the Inland Wetlands Commission, according to land use staff. The wetlands commission has not had a meeting since Sipperly signed off on the project.

Sipperly is granted the authority in local inland wetlands regulations to approve projects that are not directly inside a wetland as long as the activity “would result in no greater than minimal impact on any wetlands or water-courses.”

Sipperly in his May 15 memo said the excavation area is “well over 200’ from any potential wetland areas” on the parcel. The inland wetlands regulations require a permit for any excavation within 100 feet of any wetland.

“No permits are required and I will inspect regularly,” Sipperly wrote.

Site plan applicant Tom Clausi’s project engineer, Frank Magnotta, told Planning and Zoning Commission members at the public hearing last week that the site effectively acts as a bowl that contains runoff and keeps it away from the fen.

“There’s no surface water that leaves that developed area,” Magnotta said.

The town’s planning consultant, Terri-Ann Hahn of LADA Land Planners, said in a July 26 memo that there is not enough information to determine whether the site plan adequately addresses concerns raised in McKay’s letter. Hahn recommended Clausi’s site plan include a report from a qualified soil scientist with a map of the exact location and extent of the fen as well as strategies to mitigate any impact from excavation and construction.

Bacon Academy Senior Has Semper Fi Summer

by Allison Lazur

Rising Bacon Academy Senior and soccer player Maile Blumberger, along with 95 other athletes from around the country, were chosen from 6,000 applicants to attend the Semper Fidelis All-American Program in Washington, D.C. this past July.

Blumberger explained she was looking for more scholarship opportunities to get involved with and stumbled upon the U.S. Marine Corps Semper Fidelis program. Realizing she met the qualifications, she applied and was accepted.

"I remember reading through [the qualifications] and realizing it was super competitive – so I thought 'I'll just apply and see what happens,'" she said.

The long list of qualifications for high school juniors includes a 3.5 GPA or higher, a record of community service and a spot on a competitive sports team.

Blumberger said the overall experience left her feeling inspired and motivated.

"It was all about pushing ourselves," she said. "It was a mental challenge more than physical, but it really got us thinking, because that's what Marines go through every day."

The program put Blumberger and her chosen mentor, Lee Elliott, through rigorous athletic tasks after waking up at 4 a.m. each day,

all under the direction of a U.S. Marine Corps sergeant. Tasks included push-ups, burpees, CrossFit and even a National Mall scavenger hunt, which sent participants running miles and miles through D.C. in the heat.

But the all-inclusive four-day program also focused on showering attendees with words of wisdom to take away from the program and apply to their lives.

"We kept being told 'you guys are inspirational, you're the top kids in the nation, you should be proud that you got in the seat you're in now.' It was a realization moment for all of us to understand that it was really competitive, but now that we are sitting in these seats, it means something," she said.

Elliott, who serves as the Bacon Academy varsity girls soccer coach, called the experience "completely life changing."

"To see these kids and mentors come from all over the country and then gel as one is crazy," Elliott said, adding "it was a real family bond."

Elliott also expressed the profound impact speakers such as Rutgers University's head women's basketball coach, Vivian Stringer, and Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant, Verice Bennett, had on him while at the program.

"Listening to [the speakers] talk about their

challenges help put into context the little battles we deal with daily. They've gone through years of it being a thousand times worse, but now they're on top of their games," he said, adding that to listen to such inspiration was reassurance "you can do it."

Blumberger said she chose Lee as her mentor for the trip because "he's someone that I've looked up to from the second I met him."

"I've have a lot of coaches and teachers throughout my life, but something different just stands out about Coach Lee," she said. "Even on our roughest days, he was never one to blame us – he's always positive."

But after returning from the program, Blumberger said she has another mentor – Sgt. Brittany Keiter, a leader in the program who was assigned to Blumberger and Lee.

"[Keiter] is the true definition of a Marine," Blumberger said. "She's very into teamwork."

She and Elliot explained that during the National Mall scavenger hunt, other teams were splitting up, but Keiter was adamant the team

members stay together and complete the tasks "as one."

Blumberger said that among the athletic challenges was a trip to Quantico, VA. She and Elliott, along with all other attendees, visited the National Museum of the Marine Corps and learned about tanks, guns, martial arts and tactical training.

Elliott and Blumberger also experienced what military men and women rely on for sustenance by eating ready-to-eat meals while enrolled in the program.

Blumberger said while not every attendee of the program will go into the military, she plans on taking that route.

She hopes to join the Marine option of the Naval Reserve Officer's Training Corps (NROTC) program after high school. She is looking into schools such as Virginia Tech that offer the program, she said.

"To be around 95 like-minded individuals was really different," Blumberger said. "I wish I could be with them every single day."

Minor One-Car Collision in Andover

A vehicle went off the roadway and down an embankment last week, leaving one man with suspected injuries, State Police said.

At approximately 9:36 p.m. Aug. 4, a Toyota Camry, driven by Ethan J. Maynard, 19, of 20 Novelli Pl., was traveling on Boston Hill Road near the intersection with Wales Road when the vehicle traveled off the roadway, down an embankment and struck dirt, grass and bushes, police said.

Maynard was transported by the Andover Fire Department to Marlborough Clinic with suspected minor injuries and was found at fault for the crash, police said.

Car Stolen from Colchester Driveway

Colchester Police said a car was stolen from a private driveway Wednesday, Aug. 1.

At approximately 1:47 p.m., police received a report of a stolen gray Toyota Avalon from Scott Hill Road. The car has license plate 933XDE. The vehicle, which had the keys inside, is believed to have been stolen sometime between July 31 and Aug. 1.

This is an active investigation, according to police. Anyone with information should call police at 860-465-5400.

Body Found on Lawn in Colchester

State Police said a body was found on the lawn of a residence last Friday, Aug. 3.

Police said that at approximately 5:45 p.m. they responded to a report of a dead body on the lawn of 63 Shailor Hill Rd.

The death has been ruled non-criminal, according to police.

Portland Nursing Home Fined by State

by Elizabeth Regan

The state Department of Health has fined a Portland nursing home \$3,260 for two separate violations affecting residents with dementia.

The state health department issued the citation two weeks after a June 5 inspection at Portland Care & Rehabilitation Centre Inc. at 333 Main St.

The inspection revealed one resident received an overdose of pain medication in the early morning hours of April 21 after a nurse accidentally administered 2.5 cubic centimeters of morphine instead of the doctor-prescribed 0.25 cubic centimeters, according to the citation.

Notes in the patient's file indicated the nurse immediately realized the error and informed the doctor and the patient's responsible party, the citation said. The resident was taken to the hospital for treatment of the overdose, returning at noon the next day.

An interview with the nurse during the state health department inspection in June indicated the nurse had administered the medication in a rush before realizing the syringe was "larger than usual."

The nursing director told inspectors that the nurse who administered the wrong dose was subsequently trained on the prevention of medication errors and was tested on her ability to administer liquid narcotics, according to the citation.

State health department officials also found a nurse's notes indicating a resident with Alzheimer's disease was allowed to leave the building by a nurse aide who mistook the resident for a visitor.

The citation said the resident was wearing a WanderGuard alarm bracelet around the left ankle due to "exit seeking" behavior evidenced by eight attempts to leave the building in the previous six days.

The citation stated staff discovered the resident was not in bed around 1:30 a.m. on May 23 and that the resident had last been seen sleeping at midnight. Staff searched the building and then the perimeter before calling the police.

Police found the resident "roaming the streets," the citation said. The resident was taken to the hospital for evaluation but was not injured.

According to the citation, the nursing director told inspectors the nurse aide who let the resident out of the building didn't realize the alarm that went off when the resident approached the door was caused by the WanderGuard sensor.

The aide no longer works at the facility, the citation said. Additional protocols to reduce the risk of elopement were implemented and staff members were trained on the changes.

The facility's administrator did not return a call for comment as of press time.

Colchester Police News

7/31: State Police said Denzel M. Mitchell, 23, of 33 Camp St., Floor 2, Waterbury, was arrested and charged with speeding, reckless driving, disobeying signal of an officer, interfering with officer/resisting and first-degree reckless endangerment dating back to an incident in December 2017.

8/1: State Police said Brandon Waldron, 33, of 222 Williams St., East Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with first-degree failure to appear after turning himself in pursuant to an arrest warrant.

8/3: State Police said Conrad Carrette, 42, of 89 Connecticut Blvd., East Hartford, was arrested and charged with reckless driving, DUI and failure to drive in proper lane.

8/4: State Police said Trevor-Ian J. Simms, 22, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree assault and third-degree strangulation/suffocation.

8/4: State Police said Nicholas D. Alderman, 36, of 32 Carriage Dr., Wallingford, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Two-Car Crash Injures Three in Marlborough

State Police said a two-car collision left one with suspected minor injuries and two with possible injuries, police said.

At approximately 2:31 a.m. a Honda Accord, traveling eastbound on Route 2, prior to exit 13, driven by Nicole S. Chambers, 25, of 10 S. Main St., East Hampton, rear ended a Honda Odyssey, driven by Anjesh Patel, 48, of 71 Slater Ave., Griswold.

Police said after the collision, the Odyssey

came to an uncontrolled final rest in the right shoulder and the Accord came to an uncontrolled final rest in the center lane.

Patel and his passenger, Lalit B. Sisodia, 45, of 454 East Main St., Norwich, complained of neck and arm pain and were transported to Marlborough Clinic. Chambers complained of hip pain and was transported by the Marlborough Fire Department to St. Francis Hospital.

East Hampton Police News

7/21: Damon Jansky, 25, of 114 N. Moodus Rd., Moodus, was arrested and charged with failure to drive right and DUI, East Hampton Police said.

7/25: Bruce Strong, 51, of 88 Main St., was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with an expired license and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

7/27: Alex Dylan Banning, 25, of 4 Smith

St., was arrested and charged with second-degree breach of peace, third-degree assault, interfering/resisting an officer, misuse of plates and operating a motor vehicle without a license, police said.

7/27: Benjamin Barrett, 22, of 25 Penny Corner Rd., Portland, was arrested and charged with DUI, using a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle, and carrying a firearm while intoxicated, police said.

Portland Police News

8/4: Lisa Loffredo, 48, of 85 N. Main St., East Hampton, was charged with criminal mischief and tampering with a motor vehicle, Portland Police said.

Silver Alert Briefly Issued in Colchester

Colchester Police said a silver alert was issued Aug. 1, but canceled a few hours later.

Police said they responded to the alert of a missing 79-year-old man at approximately 4:32 p.m.

The alert was canceled at approximately 7:38 p.m., when the man was found in a wooded area near his residence.

O'Reilly to Stay in Portland

At a special meeting of the Board of Education this week, Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly rescinded his letter of resignation, the board announced in a press release.

O'Reilly had previously told the board he planned to retire in June 2019.

Instead, O'Reilly will stay through the end of his current contract, which runs through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

"The benefits of having Dr. O'Reilly stay on include both the potential for continued educational advancement and a two-year transition plan to a new superintendent for the district," board chairwoman MaryAnne Rode said in the press release.

Look for a full story in next week's *Rivereast*.

Proposed Gas Station in Marlborough Draws Concerns

by Allison Lazur

A gas station and convenience store have been proposed for 1.5 acres at 37 Hebron Rd. However, those who would be neighbors to the fuel station have expressed concerns about the project.

The site would contain a 4,920-sq. ft. convenience store and eight self-serve fueling pumps positioned on four double-sided fuel dispensers under a roof canopy, the project summary reveals. But questions have been raised over the project's effect on Lyman Brook – which runs through the east side of the property – as well as the local well system.

The application, filed by Marlborough One LLC at the beginning of March, was accompanied by a detailed project summary which addressed several aspects of the proposed site development.

The property, located at the northeast corner of Hebron Road, is bordered by the northbound Route 2 onramp and Route 66. This has led some residents to worry about whether the local well water system will be impacted by potential diesel and gas run off. The Connecticut Water-owned system already faces salt run-off from Route 66 and the Route 2 onramp in the winter months. The well system serves approximately 40 homes, according to the water company.

Hickory Road resident Suzanne Karrenberg told the *Rivereast* this week her main concern with the project is the contamination of the water system from spills from individuals filling their cars.

"To me it's a very fragile [water] system," she said, adding, "I used to get letters all the time from Connecticut Water notifying the homeowners about the increased salt content.

It's not that hard to cause harm to our system."

The site plan, prepared by project engineer Robert Baltramaitis, states that protecting groundwater is important, and noted that "many safeguards are provided to eliminate the potential for spills and leaks of fuels."

These "safeguards" include fuel pumps complete with an "automatic shut-off mechanism" and "splash guards to prevent overfilling." The fuel filling areas will reside on a "concrete pad," which the plan refers to as an "almost impermeable surface" that will remedy small spill situations through evaporation and easy cleanup. The concrete surface will also cut down on the damage of a potential larger spill, through the grooved concrete surface along the perimeter "designed to hold fuel until it can be collected, handled and disposed of."

Contacted by the *Rivereast* for comment, David Radka, director of water resources and planning for Connecticut Water, said that "without a detailed analysis" he couldn't confirm whether the well system is directly fed by Lyman Brook or a bedrock aquifer, but explained that concerns from residents about water contamination and run off were not unrealistic.

Radka said that before the *Rivereast* contacted him, "we were unaware of this proposal." He said "we are paying attention to [the plan] now," and added that Connecticut Water would be reaching out to the town.

"If this were to be approved by the local agencies there would be certain conditions, we would request," he said, and explained they would be looking for an opportunity to review the site plan and its specifics.

Hickory Road resident Shawn DeFelice expressed concerns this week regarding the possibility of contamination to not only the well system, but also to residents "downstream."

"They have the gas and diesel tanks going into the ground; I'm not concerned about those leaking, but what about diesel, gas and oil dripping on the ground. Then when it rains where is it going?" he said.

The site summary states that in regards to storm water run-off and in order to protect the brook which is a "tributary to Blackledge River and ultimately to Salmon River," catch basins will be constructed to "trap coarse sediments." The plan also shows that the storm water from the proposed parking area will pass through a "water quality enhancement unit (oil/grit separator)."

The town's plan of conservation and development states that the commission must "review activities within 150 feet of wetlands and 200 feet from major watercourses and their associated wetlands."

The proposal meets both of those conditions. According to July 9 Conservation Commission minutes, the commission unanimously voted that the proposed development "may involve a significant impact or major effect on an inland wetland and regulated watercourse area."

James Sipperly, a certified soil scientist hired by Marlborough One, submitted a report Aug. 2 to Baltramaitis. The report states that "there will be no significant adverse impacts to the wetlands and watercourses, whether on-site or off-site, resulting from the proposed construction."

While worries over polluted well water and

neighboring brook encompassed most of resident concerns, others expressed opinions on logistical items like traffic and safety.

Residents Dan and Donna Moore submitted a letter to the Zoning Commission at the beginning of June urging commission members to do their "due diligence in considering whether this site is suitable for a gas station." They added "we don't think" it is.

In the letter, the Moores also expressed concern about crime and safety "given the 24/7 nature of these businesses and the fact that they are notorious for loitering, increased noise and possible increased drug activity, etc."

The Moores also wrote they were concerned about how traffic would impact residents, questioning how safe entrance and exits will be upheld on "this former small residential site." They added that "the entrance to Route 2 west, where this site is situated, backs out to impede Route 66 during morning traffic now. [We] can only imagine the danger to a car seeking to exit a gas station toward Hebron from that site."

The proposed site plan states that one driveway will be utilized for entering and exiting, in order to satisfy a deed restriction by the state.

Karrenberg stressed she and other residents aren't opposed to the further development of Marlborough – they just don't feel this is the right location.

"It's not that we don't want a gas station and convenience store; we just feel it's in a bad spot," she said.

A public hearing on the proposed project will be held at the Conservation Commission's Sept. 10 meeting, which will be held at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Little Free Library Comes to Marlborough

by Allison Lazur

Blish Memorial Park is home to a sandy beach, Lake Terramuggus, bikers, swimmers – and now a Little Free Library, thanks to Marlborough Elementary School student Lexi Nicotera and her grandmother, Colleen Gilpin.

Approximately 20 residents gathered on the beach Wednesday night for the unveiling of the small wooden box, currently home to about 30 books donated by friends, family and strangers. Neighbors can take a book from the florally-adorned yellow and blue box and leave a favorite book behind for the next reader.

Nicotera explained that the inspiration for the library came from a school assignment.

"We had to do an article in school on [Little Free Libraries] and after talking about it and talking about it, I finally I decided I wanted to do it," she said.

Nicotera said she pitched the project to the Parks and Recreation Commission in May and received approval to move forward – so she then set out to raise the funds for the book abode.

Through GoFundMe and a book fair at school, Nicotera raised approximately \$300 to become a player in the book swap movement.

The Little Free Library website discloses there are "more than 70,000 registered Little Free Library Book sharing boxes in 85 countries worldwide," with Marlborough's registered at number 76,487.

The non-profit organization began with a goal of not only inspiring a love of reading around the world, but also building community and sparking creativity through neighborhood book exchanges, especially to low-income families that may not have age appropriate books for children at home, the website explains.

Little Free Libraries are scattered all over the state, including *Rivereast* towns East Hampton, Colchester and now Marlborough.

Wednesday night, Nicotera told the *Rivereast* the culmination of hard work "felt good" although she admitted to being "pretty nervous" at the reveal.

After the post for the Little Free Library was installed by the town, Nicotera and Gilpin had help from elementary school janitor Chris Judge installing the book house.

The box, painted by Nicotera and Gilpin and finished with a glaze to serve as protection from the weather, also had a contribution from Nicotera's friend, Lily Farrelly.

Below the box, sits a plaque which reads "Books are not just pages and chapters. Books are adventures waiting to be taken," words that were written by Farrelly during a poetry unit at school, she explained.

Nicotera was already discussing future projects at Wednesday's gathering and said installing another Little Free Library in town might be a possibility.

"I hope to do more. I really want to put [a Little Free Library] in Jessica's Garden because that's a really popular spot," she said.

Gilpin also shared her wish for Little Free Library number 76,487.

"I hope everyone takes books all the time and replenishes them and reads more and more," she said. "That was the goal, to get people to read and have books available to people relaxing at the lake."

Anyone interested in finding a Little Free Library or starting their own can visit littlefreelibrary.org.



Marlborough Elementary School student Lexi Nicotera and her grandmother, Colleen Gilpin, unveiled a Little Free Library Wednesday night at Blish Memorial Park. The library is part of an international book swap movement, where people can take a book and leave a book in various locations around the world.

Obituaries

Portland

Richard Wiseman, PhD

Richard "Doc" Wiseman, PhD, child psychologist, one of the pioneers of modern mental health treatment for children and author of Riverview Hospital for Children and Youth, passed away at age 89 on Saturday, Aug. 4.

He was the son of late Gladys and C. Henry Wiseman and son-in-law of the late Gladys and C. Raymond Ganung. Born in New York City in 1928, he lived in North Arlington, N.J. He received degrees from Springfield College and Michigan State University, where he made lifelong friends. He served two years in the Air Force during the Korean War and was inducted into two Halls of Fame for his athletic accomplishments.

Dr. Wiseman was founder and first superintendent of Riverview Hospital for Children. "Doc" was the first in Connecticut to argue that autism was a developmental, not psychiatric, disorder. His work was an important factor in the State of Connecticut's decision to shift the care of children with autism from mental hospitals to the Department of Development Services. He and his wife were house parents at Children's Village and foster parents. He built and was director of Camp Quinebaug, a camp for patients from state mental hospitals in collaboration with college student helpers from the Connecticut Service Corps. He was a past member of the Portland Exchange Club, The Brownstone Quorum and a Corporate Board Member of Middlesex Hospital. "Doc" was an Advisor to Wesleyan students who created Gilead House and recently honored for all his work in mental health at their 50th anniversary. After retirement, he developed Community Collaboratives for families who had children with emotional and behavioral needs, which kept them from needing hospitalization, by providing free services from local child agencies, using grants.

He cherished his loving family, Eunice Ganung Wiseman, wife of 63 years; son Ken (Betty Lou) Wiseman; daughter Lauren (Arthur) Sullivan; grandchildren Justin Wiseman, Eric (Mary) Wiseman, Sara (Daniel) Roy, Jared Slingerland; great-grandchildren Connor, Brooke-Lyn and Noelle; step-grandchildren Ryan Sullivan and Sara Sullivan; families of the late Donald (Bonnie) Wiseman, Laurence Ganung, George Ganung and James (Beth) Marshall; siblings and families of Betty (Ray) Townley, Roger (Barbara) Wiseman; and his many Canadian relatives.

His extended family included many friends and staff who stayed close to him throughout his life and showed their love and respect for his mission in life. His home was always open to those in need, especially Jim, Sue and Steve. He loved sharing the family cottage with his family, friends and colleagues. The Friday Night Group were treasured friends as were the Donlons, Barlows, his colleague Dr. Lou Ando and loyal Assistant Jackie Reardon.

He lived in Portland for 50 years before moving to Covenant Village of Cromwell in 2010 where he enjoyed the companionship of new friends and helped start a CVOC Community Partnership with Middlesex Community College. He continued his passion for children's mental health and autism and mentored students from Cromwell High School, who came twice weekly to assist him. He leaves a legacy of being a long-time advocate for bringing people together to work for the good of children and showing families and students the importance of passion, tolerance, community and work ethic.

The family is grateful to Dr. Pascale, Dr. O'Donoghue, the Pilgrim Manor staff and the Hospice team, who took great care of him. The family is also grateful to his many visitors from all paths of his life who came to honor him.

Calling hours will be held at The Cromwell Funeral Home, 506 Main St., Cromwell, Monday, Aug. 13, from 4-7 p.m. A memorial service will be held at the Portland Congregational Church, 554 Main St. Portland, Tuesday, Aug. 14, at 11 a.m. Burial will be at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Gilead Community Services, Inc. P.O. Box 1000, Middletown, CT 06457 attn: Lucy McMillan.

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



East Hampton

Johann L. Pardi

Johann L. (Ferrigno) (Draghi) Pardi, 81, of East Hampton, wife of John G. Pardi, died Wednesday, Aug. 1, at Hartford Hospital, surrounded by family. Born Jan. 14, 1937, in Middletown, daughter of the late Louis and Lucy (Cavanna) Ferrigno, she was raised in East Hampton and had lived in Glastonbury many years before moving back to East Hampton.

Johann attended Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell where she earned three degrees: a BA in social sciences, a MA in moral theology and a post-master's certificate in theology. Johann taught CCD at St. Patrick Church in East Hampton for many years and was a lector at St. Patrick Church and St. Augustine Church in South Glastonbury and St. Paul Church in Glastonbury.

Johann had a love for life. She enjoyed gathering with family and friends celebrating what life had to offer. She loved making a difference in lives of the children she taught. She worked in a preschool program at Sisters of Our Lady of the Garden for 34 years and was employed at KOCO in East Hampton. She lived her life through her faith. She touched many lives through her journey in life and will not be forgotten. We love you Mom and we will miss you.

Besides her husband she is survived by her two children and their spouses, Heidi and James Moody of Marlborough, Luke Pitcher-Draghi and Edward Pitcher-Draghi of Burlington; two sisters, Kathleen Anzalone of East Hampton, Frances Samuelson and her husband Peder of Portland; three grandchildren, Matthew and Rebecca Moody and Evan Pitcher-Draghi; and several nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws and friends.

She was predeceased by a son, Paul Draghi; the father of her children, David Draghi; a sister, Paula Riley and her husband Harold; and a brother-in-law, Tom Anzalone.

A special thank you to Dr. Yaffee and the caring team in the cardiac ICU at Hartford Hospital.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Monday, Aug. 6, in St. Patrick Church, 47 W. High St., (Route 66), East Hampton. Burial followed in St. Augustine Cemetery, South Glastonbury. Friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, Sunday, Aug. 5, from 2-5 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Holy Apostles College and Seminary, 33 Prospect Hill Rd., Cromwell, CT 06416.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.



Hebron

Rachel Carin Lawrence

Rachel Carin Lawrence, 19, of Hebron, beloved daughter of Michael Lawrence and Lynne Olson, ended her life Friday, July 27, in the early morning hours. Rachel was born on Nov. 19, 1998 in Manchester Hospital, a two-pound miracle baby.

Rachel lived life to the fullest, never passing up a challenge or adventure, be it dancing, cheerleading, fishing, shooting guns with her dad, cliff-jumping, or just eating sushi with her friends. She was a successful model with Tillet Studios for 3+ years. She was larger than life on her social media accounts, #Raynochill, where she was followed by her many "fans." Rachel was an incredible artist, from painting portraits and murals to tattooing her friends. Rachel moved to Florida in 2017 with her mom and was leaving for the Navy to start her career as an MA in early August.

Rachel will be remembered by her friends for her constant tardiness as she perfected her make-up, her 5'11" height towering above all, her silly videos and millions of selfies, her zany impressions and her ability to make anyone laugh. She was always kind and loyal. Rachel grew up surrounded by family who love her dearly. She leaves behind many broken hearts.

She is predeceased by her grampy Pete Lawrence, her brother Kyle, and her sister Marissa. She also leaves behind her older brother Robert; her brother David, his girlfriend Stephanie, and their four children, nieces Arianna, Victoria, Mia, and her nephew Wesley; her grandparents, Robert and Carol Olson of Glastonbury; her grandmother, Sue LaBonne of East Hartford; her mimi Claudette Hill of Georgia; her aunts and uncles and five special cousins, Gina, Danielle, Samuel, Tobias and Noelle. She also leaves behind her beloved Boston Terrier, Daisy, of ten years.

Friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Wednesday, Aug. 8. A celebration of her life/memorial service was held Thursday, Aug. 9, at Trinity Covenant Church, 302 Hackmatack St., Manchester. Burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, please honor Rachel and make a donation to SuicidePreventionLifeline.org in her memory.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.



Colchester

Clifford Langdo

Clifford Langdo, 84, of Colchester, passed away Wednesday, Aug. 1, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown, surrounded by his loving family. He was born in Madawaska, Maine, Aug. 7, 1934, a son of the late Arthur and Delia (Defour) Langdo.

He was also predeceased by an infant daughter, Debra Ann, and five siblings.

He leaves to mourn his passing his beloved wife of 62 years, Monica; his son Gary and wife Joan Langdo of Tolland; his daughter, Jeannine Garrison of Colchester; three granddaughters, whom he adored, Marie Smith, Heidi Garrison and Jessica Langdo; two great-grandchildren, Morgan Larrabee and Calvin Smith; six siblings; and numerous extended family members.

Cliff served his country in the U.S. Army Infantry. He retired from Colt Industries after 30 years. Cliff was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester. He loved to be outdoors in any season. He especially enjoyed camping, hunting, fishing, or just sitting outside, enjoying a beer and a cigar. Cliff will be remembered with love by his family for his strong work ethic, big heart, willingness to help anyone in need, but most importantly, for the love and devotion he generously gave to all of them.

A memorial service was celebrated Thursday, Aug. 9, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. The family greeted guests followed by celebration of the funeral liturgy. Burial will be private at a later date.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, alz.org.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of these services. For online condolences, visit mccarthyfuneralhome.com.



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Over the weekend, my work email got a press release from the Bob Stefanowski campaign. It was a bulk email, sent to I imagine media outlets across the state. The subject line was eye-popping though: “Left Wing Newspaper Endorses Stemerman.”

Poor punctuation aside – “left-wing” really should’ve been hyphenated in that instance – I was intrigued. What newspaper was he talking about? So, for laughs, I opened the press release.

This dastardly left-wing rag Stefanowski was talking about was.....*The Hartford Courant*. The newspaper’s editorial staff on Sunday endorsed David Stemerman for next week’s Republican primary.

The endorsement obviously ruffled Stefanowski’s feathers, but “left-wing newspaper”? The *Courant*? Really? I read a lot of the *Courant*’s coverage of various items, and it’s never struck me as particularly left-wing. Yes, it’s not right-wing either, but it’s generally a pretty fair read.

At least, that’s my viewpoint. It’s clearly not Stefanowski’s. The press release goes on to quote Stefanowski as saying – and the questionable capitalization is his own – “While David will surely brag about this endorsement, Republicans around Connecticut don’t want a candidate who is proud of appeasing the same Liberal editorial board that endorsed failed Governor Dan Malloy, twice. While David talks a lot about being ‘outside the box,’ he was just endorsed by the paper of record for the Hartford Insiders.”

What does that even mean? “Paper of record for Hartford Insiders”? I mean, it’s not like there’s another Hartford-based newspaper. Although I admit to getting a chuckle out of “Hartford Insiders.” The way Stefanowski capitalized it, it sounds like it could be the next minor-league hockey team.

The press release also accuses Stemerman of “catering his campaign to the tastes of liberal editorial boards around Connecticut.” At that point, I said, “Okay, enough.”

It was a nasty, insulting, condescending attack ad in the form of a press release. The language was used in it was vitriolic, hyperbolic and all-too-reminiscent of the ugliness we see from Republicans on the national level.

If I were inclined to vote for a Republican in next week’s primary (a moot point as I’m a registered Democrat), I’m not sure who I’d choose but I know who I wouldn’t, and that’s Bob Stefanowski. There’s enough of the nasty, media-slammng, bullying, insulting language on the national political scene these days. We don’t need to let it invade Connecticut.

* * *

New road signs are apparently headed to Andover this month, to let motorists know there might be walkers, joggers and/or bicyclists on the road.

This prompted Andover resident Carol

Barton to reach out to me to let me know that, while of course drivers need to be watchful, that walkers, joggers and bicyclists need to look out for drivers as well. Indeed, I’ve seen first-hand that they’re not always mindful of this – especially bicyclists. I’ve seen people on bikes blow through stop signs and red lights, as if they have the right of way no matter what. That’s incredibly dangerous – obviously for the bicyclists but also for motorists.

Carol asked me to pass along this article stating the “Rules of the Road” for those of us who aren’t in cars. I’m happy to share it because I do feel it’s a problem that needs to be addressed before someone gets hurt, or killed. Here are the rules of the road she typed up – and it would come in handy not just in Andover but throughout the *Rivereast* area:

“Andover Town Crews will begin putting road signs and pavement signs on Lake Road. These signs are to alert drivers that there may be walkers, joggers and/or bicyclists on the road. BUT the people who want these “signs” will not advise residents of the Rules of the Road. They want drivers to watch out for everyone, but what about the walkers, joggers and bicyclists watching out for the drivers.

Here are the Rules of the Road required by law to be followed by walkers, joggers and bicyclists:

Bikers: Ride on the same side of the road as traffic (under 12 can legally ride on sidewalks – which we don’t have). Obey ALL traffic signs – Stop, One-Way, Yield, etc.

Walkers and Joggers: Walk/jog facing traffic. Cross Safely – don’t weave from side to side. Walk/jog in a single file. Be visible; wear bright clothing – in winter reflective items should be worn; Be aware of your surroundings; If walking dogs, use a short leash.

Many residents that use Lake Road and surrounding lake roads to walk, jog or bike DO NOT follow many of the above rules. Many drivers come up upon residents who don’t even know a vehicle is behind them (they are on the wrong side of the road), because they are busy talking with friends, on their phone, or walking two or more abreast. If they were following the Rules of the Road they wouldn’t be surprised by a vehicle coming up upon them.

Please review the above rules with your family and make sure your kids understand the important and safety these rules mean. We want our Town of Andover to be a safe and happy place. Following the rules for riding bikes, walking with friends and jogging for your health are just as important as drivers having to follow the Driving Rules of the Road. Thanks for making Andover a safe place to live.”

And thank you, Carol. This is sage advice that we’d all do well to follow.

* * *

See you next week.