



RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

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## Area Towns Favor Lamont, Stefanowski

by Allison Lazur

Democrats and Republicans in the majority of the *Rivereast* towns went the way of the state at the polls Tuesday, choosing Ned Lamont and Bob Stefanowski as the respective Democrat and Republican candidates for governor.

Statewide, Lamont, the endorsed candidate, sailed to victory, receiving 172,557 votes, or 81.19 percent, to just 39,975, or 18.81 percent, for his opponent, Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim.

Hebron resident Sean Connolly, former commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs, initially sought the governor's seat himself, dropping out of the race at the Democratic convention in May and endorsing Lamont, a Greenwich businessman who previously unsuccessfully ran for governor and for U.S. Senate.

Connolly told the *Rivereast* this week, "I'm excited about the campaign going forward.

[Lamont] is honest and open and he's not doing this to seek another job – in fact, he's said this will likely be his last job."

Connolly added Lamont "really wants to turn the state around – economic-wise – and wants to bring people together." He also said he believes Lamont wants to "have a place of opportunity for everyone, regardless of where you live."

*Rivereast* Democrats across the board also proved their overwhelming support for Lamont, by casting votes in his favor amounting to upwards of 10 times the number of votes received by Ganim in towns such as Marlborough.

Hebron Democratic Town Committee Chairman Ted Bromley said he thought the results were "positive," adding, "I think that the primary [process] was able to work and the Democrats in Hebron were able to choose their can-

didate for the election in November."

Statewide, the five-way race for the Republican gubernatorial candidate was a closer call, with Bob Stefanowski the ultimate victor, winning 42,067 votes, or 29.43 percent.

Four of the six *Rivereast* towns went for Stefanowski as well; Andover Republicans opted for Timothy Herbst, while David Stemerman won in Marlborough.

Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, who was the state's endorsed Republican candidate, fared no better than fourth place in each of the *Rivereast* towns. (See related sidebars on page 10.)

Portland Republican Town Committee Chairman Tim Lavoy told the *Rivereast* Wednesday he's ready to move forward with the general election.

"I'm glad it's over," he said. "I'm one of those

people that wants to get out to the main event. I think [the results are] positive and we have a good candidate to put forth in November."

On that November ballot, Lamont will be joined by former Connecticut secretary of the state Susan Bysiewicz, who won Tuesday's primary for the lieutenant governor seat, while Stefanowski's running mate will be state Sen. Joe Markley (R-16), who also won Tuesday.

Marlborough Republican Town Committee Chairman Ken Hjulstrom said in an email to the *Rivereast* Wednesday, "When it comes to the November elections, it would appear that the two teams (Lamont/Bysiewicz vs. Stefanowski/Markley) will provide voters with a choice between two diametrically opposed sets of candidates when it comes to how they plan to address Connecticut's woes."

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## Marlborough Tavern to Rise Again



A local historical landmark, the Marlborough Tavern has been closed since 2011. But new owners are hoping to have the eatery up and running again by the end of October. As this sketch shows, the outside isn't expected to change much from the building area residents know and love. Sketch by Parsons School of Design student Carly Blumenthal.

by Allison Lazur

A piece of town history that is older than the country itself will soon open its doors once again.

The Marlborough Tavern, which has been closed since 2011, is expected to open by the end of October, Evan Schwartz of Schwartz Realty Developers told the *Rivereast* this week.

"The community is excited and we are super excited to be a part of the community," he said.

When Glastonbury-based Schwartz Realty purchased the property in 2016, it hoped to turn the property back into a tavern. The building – which dates to 1760 – is located at the corner of South Main Street and Route 66 and has been an iconic landmark for the town.

According to a 1978 letter nominating the historic spot for the National Register of Historic Places – a nomination that proved successful – the tavern was at one point "a major stopping point along the turnpike from Hartford to New London." The letter states that

militia men celebrated the end of the Revolutionary War in the tavern's taproom, the town's activities centered around the taproom and, in the early 19th century, meetings for the town's incorporation were found there.

The building was owned by the Buell family until 1898, and has changed hands multiple times since.

Before being acquired by the Schwartz developers, the building had been most recently owned by Robert Elliott and the tavern run by Jim Bradley and John Spellman. In 2011, the tavern closed its doors, after being run by Bradley and Spellman for more than 25 years.

In 2013, brothers Scott and Marc Digoalbo attempted to reopen the tavern as the New Marlborough Tavern. The building was set to undergo several renovations, but by mid-2014, the renovations had come to a halt.

The building – still owned by Elliott at the time – was later foreclosed upon, along with four other Elliott-owned properties located in

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## FOIC Rules Paper Ballots Not Public

by Elizabeth Regan

The Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission has ruled paper election ballots are not public documents protected by the state's Sunshine Law.

The commission last week dismissed the *Rivereast's* complaint against East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco and the Town of East Hampton for refusing to allow access to handcounted ballots from last year's municipal election.

The *Rivereast's* Freedom of Information request for access to all handcounted ballots from the 2017 municipal election was made after officials revealed an unspecified number of ballots had inadvertently been counted twice.

At least one commissioner expressed concern with questions about whether state election law or the Freedom of Information Act

controls access to paper ballots once a statutory 180-day impoundment period has expired.

The argument made by East Hampton Town Attorney Richard Carella, which was upheld by Freedom of Information Commission attorney Kathleen K. Ross, hinges on a provision in state election law that requires election ballots to be sealed for 180 days after the election. Only a judge can order the ballots be unsealed, according to the statute.

Ross's proposed final decision was released on May 21. A hearing on the matter had been held March 26.

"It is found that such 180-day period had not expired as of the date of the hearing in this matter, nor had the complainant obtained a court order to disclose such records," Ross wrote.

She concluded "public access to the re-

quested paper ballots is governed by state election statutes," not by the Freedom of Information Act.

The *Rivereast* requested at a subsequent meeting of the Freedom of Information Commission – which occurred on June 27, after the 180-day retention period had expired – that commissioners take a broader look at the issue.

The commission is charged with making a final decision based on the hearing officer's report.

The *Rivereast* argued in a post-hearing brief that state statute does not preclude access to the ballots in the time between the expiration of the 180-day impoundment period and their eventual destruction.

State law says the ballots "may be" destroyed after the 180 day period.

"The emphasis in this argument is on 'may be destroyed,'" the *Rivereast* brief said. "It does not say the documents shall be destroyed."

The *Rivereast* argued state election law controls access to the ballots up to 180 days after the election, but that Freedom of Information provisions control access after 180 days.

Commissioners, who tabled the issue at the June meeting because Ross was not present, were initially receptive to the *Rivereast's* argument. Addressing concerns that the ballots may be destroyed before a decision was rendered, members voted to send a letter to the Town of East Hampton requesting that the town maintain the records while the case was still active.

The ballots were retained as requested during that time period, Republican Registrar of

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**Paper Ballots cont. from Front Page**

Voters Lori Wilcox said in July. Republican Deputy Registrar Margaret Jacobson said this week the ballots are still in the vault.

But when the case was taken up again at the commission's Aug. 8 meeting, members said the issue of access to ballots after 180 days was outside the purview of the commission. That's because the complaint and the hearing officer's decision were made *before* the 180 days had elapsed.

Commissioner Matthew Streeter said commissioners were unclear at the previous meeting whether the commission had any jurisdiction over access to the ballots.

"And at this point, it seems like we don't," he said.

Streeter said the issue can be taken up with the state legislature if advocates believe the law should be changed.

Commission member Jonathan Einhorn spoke at both meetings in favor of transparency when it comes to paper ballots.

He said in June that a lack of access to paper ballots "tends to keep electors in the dark." But he acknowledged this week that the commission's decision must be based on circumstances at the time of the hearing.

"I have to say, thinking about this thing since the last time we met, one of the salient points that I think I really overlooked last time was that the 180-day period hadn't expired as of the time of the hearing," Einhorn said. "Anything that happened after is pretty much outside of the jurisdiction or purview of the hearing."

He suggested the *Rivereast* submit another Freedom of Information request to the town asking for access to the ballots.

"I'd like the opportunity to discuss and review this matter if, in fact, there's another request made [to] the town now that the 180 days is up. And then we can see what happens," Einhorn said. "Unfortunately, that's not what we have before us now. Hopefully it will be before us in the future."

The *Rivereast* last week filed a second request to inspect the handcounted ballots from last year's municipal election. Town Manager Michael Maniscalco acknowledged receipt of the request but has not yet responded with an answer.

Carella has stated since the *Rivereast* first filed its request that citizens who want access to ballots should go to a judge, not the Freedom of Information Commission, to seek the release of the documents. He described the 180-day retention period as a mechanism to ensure the ballots are preserved if a judge determines they should be made available.

"I will tell you, we told the complainant in December in our response, we told the complainant in March at the hearing, and I begged the complainant after the last hearing to go to a court and seek to get the ballots. That has not occurred," he said.

Carella told Einhorn at last week's meeting that he believes the Secretary of the State's office controls the ballots even after 180 days has elapsed.

"I don't know that the town has the ability to disclose those absent a court order," he said.

*Rivereast* publisher Jim Hallas this week decried the commission's ruling.

"Essentially, the decision preserves unnecessary secrecy and deprives the public of transparency in the voting process should questions arise about any given election or referendum," he said.

**Reason for the Request**

The *Rivereast* on Nov. 20, 2017, requested to view all handcounted ballots after the previous week's recount revealed an unspecified number of ballots had been counted twice on Election Day.

The recount was triggered by close votes in Town Council and Zoning Board of Appeals contests. The vote for a referendum question on the construction of an \$18.98 million municipal hub passed by 30 votes, narrowly avoiding a recount.

Election officials recounted only the two affected offices. Per state guidelines, none of the other contests – including the referendum question – were tallied again.

Democrat Deputy Registrar of Voters Terry Latimer said after the recount that the error involved ballots on which voters had filled in the bubble for "write-in votes." Those ballots were run through the tabulator first and then handcounted as well.

The Secretary of the State's *Moderator's Handbook for Elections and Primaries* specifies in bold, all capital letters that only the write-in vote on the ballot should be handcounted. It emphasizes all other votes were previously counted by the tabulator.

There were no registered write-in candidates for any races on the ballot.

Latimer last November could not be sure of the specific number of write-in ballots since the sheets are on lockdown following the election. She said she thought there were about 22 of them.

The winners of the two seats in question remained the same after the recount corrected the problem, even though the number of votes changed.

Some residents, like Chatham Party member Kyle Dostaler, have wondered why election moderator Steve Maynard didn't call for a broader recount once the double-votes in the Town Council and ZBA races came to light.

But Secretary of the State spokesman Gabe Rosenberg said last year that that's not how it works.

"If something is discovered during a recount, the place that it would be dealt with is in court," Rosenberg said.

State statute gives eligible voters seven days to make a complaint with the Superior Court regarding any discrepancies that are revealed through the recount process.

The *Rivereast's* request to view the handcounted ballots was an effort to find out how the double-counted votes may have affected the results of the referendum question.

Dostaler, who ran unsuccessfully for a council seat in last year's election, remains shocked that taxpayers don't know how many people voted for the referendum question and how many voted against it.

He said the possibility that some ballots were counted two times raises questions about whether or not the slim margin of victory would hold if every vote only counted once.

**Tavern cont. from Front Page**

the town center. Ownership of the properties was passed to the Chelsea Groton Bank in February 2016 and was later purchased by Schwartz Realty Developers.

Schwartz this week said the 100-seat restaurant has undergone a transformation and will now accommodate a variety of dining desires for local residents.

Schwartz explained that the focus is on "variations of good quality tavern food," but will also offer a more "elevated dining experience" where residents can order items such as pork chops and filets.

"The dining room really sets the tone for a casual fine dining experience," he said, adding that there will also be a kids' menu.

Patrons will be able to dine on culinary offerings by New York City chef Peter Varkala,

who has recently moved back to the state.

"[Varkala] is very interested in working with local farms and local ingredients," Schwartz said, adding that Varkala has extensive cooking experience in various types of cuisine.

The new tavern will also be home to a three-sided fireplace positioned in the dining room, an outdoor patio on the corner of South Main Street and Route 66, as well as a banquet room located in the front of the restaurant that will host everyday dining patrons, as well as private events, Schwartz said.

Progress of the tavern can be followed on the restaurant's Facebook page at [facebook.com/themarlbroughstavern](https://www.facebook.com/themarlbroughstavern) or Instagram page at [www.instagram.com/the\\_marlborough\\_tavern/](https://www.instagram.com/the_marlborough_tavern/), where Schwartz said photos of construction will be shared.

**Towns Favor cont. from Front Page**

Other races for spots on the ballot included Attorney General and Treasurer. Three-term state Sen. Art Linares (R-33), whose district includes the *Rivereast* towns of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland, was hoping to secure the spot of state treasurer despite failing to be the Republican endorsed candidate.

However, while Linares won the primaries in four *Rivereast* towns Tuesday – Colchester, East Hampton, Portland and Marlborough – he came up short in his overall total across the state, collecting 58,129 votes, or 43.97 percent, to opponent Thad Gray's 74,087, or 56.03 percent.

Linares told the *Rivereast* Wednesday afternoon that he wanted to thank all the voters in the 33rd District. Linares is not seeking re-election to his senatorial seat.

"It was honor of a lifetime to represent them as their senator," he said. "I hope they support all the Republican nominees and I am very excited to get back into the private sector on a full-time basis and spend time with my wife and baby boy due in November."

On the Democrat ballot, Shawn Wooden won the treasurer race, both statewide as well as in four of the six *Rivereast* towns; in Andover, he received exactly the same number of votes as opponent Dita Bhargava – 121 – while in Port-

land Bhargava collected 332 votes to his 308.

In the attorney general race, all six of the *Rivereast* towns mirrored the state's overall results – with victories for Democrat William Tong and Republican Susan Hatfield.

\* \* \*

Statewide, 201,334 votes of 702,664 total registered Democrats – or 28.65 percent – turned out at the polls Tuesday, while 123,379 votes of 387,773 registered Republicans – or 31.82 percent – showed up.

*Rivereast* towns had similar results, with an average of about 31 percent of Democrats and 33 percent of Republicans making the effort to get to the voting booths Tuesday.

Hebron Republican Town Committee Chairwoman Catherine Marx said she was satisfied with voter numbers.

"The Republican turnout was one of the highest ever – close to 130,000 statewide," she said. "That shows that we have energy in our party and I believe that we are going to unite to get a win in November."

Marx added, "We have a strong team and we are going to show stark differences between the plans we put forward to get Connecticut back on track versus repeating the eight years of Dannel Malloy."

**How Democrats Voted for Governor**

**Marlborough:** Lamont – 399 votes

Ganim – 40 votes

**Colchester:** Lamont-783 votes

Ganim-108 votes

**East Hampton:** Lamont – 595 votes

Ganim – 113 votes

**Portland:** Lamont – 555 votes

Ganim – 96 votes

**Andover:** Lamont – 218 votes

Ganim – 32 votes

**Hebron:** Lamont – 524 votes

Ganim – 65 votes

**How Republicans Voted for Governor**

**Marlborough:** Stemerma – 127 votes

Stefanowski – 117 votes

Herbst – 63 votes

Obsitnik – 52 votes

Boughton – 44 votes

**Colchester:** Stefanowski – 237 votes

Herbst – 160 votes

Stemerma – 134 votes

Obsitnik – 117 votes

Boughton – 115 votes

**East Hampton:** Stefanowski – 252 votes

Stemerma – 151 votes

Herbst – 131 votes

Boughton – 87 votes

Obsitnik – 85 votes

**Portland:** Stefanowski – 134 votes

Stemerma – 124 votes

Herbst – 84 votes

Obsitnik – 67 votes

Boughton – 43 votes

**Andover:** Herbst – 69 votes

Stefanowski – 56 votes

Stemerma – 44 votes

Obsitnik – 35 votes

Boughton – 22 votes

**Hebron:** Stefanowski – 182 votes

Stemerma – 178 votes

Herbst – 96 votes

Boughton – 84 votes

Obsitnik – 78 votes

# Portland Pipeline to be Emptied, Cleaned

by Elizabeth Regan

A pipeline running underneath an abandoned tank farm the town hopes to buy will be emptied and cleaned at the owner's expense.

A contract signed July 17 by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield specifies the owner will be responsible for the \$20,700 cost of decommissioning the pipe, according to estimates attached to the contract.

Bransfield in January signed the original purchase agreement for \$385,000, with associated fees bringing the total to \$410,000. The sale is contingent on approval by taxpayers at a town meeting.

The sale includes 222, 230 and 248 Brownstone Ave.

The purchase is part of a riverfront revitalization effort. Officials hope to build on the success of the municipal Riverfront Park as well as Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park, a private venture that leases land from the town.

The three-parcel site was a petroleum storage and distribution site operated by Port Oil Company before it was vacated almost a decade ago, leaving five conspicuous oil tanks on the site. Bransfield said the pipeline was used to carry oil from river barges up to the tank farm.

A town meeting originally scheduled for Feb. 28 to allow the public to vote on the proposed purchase was postponed after a public hearing yielded questions about who is responsible for removing and/or remediating the pipeline.

The property is in estate after the death of the company's owner. The estate will pay to empty the pipe of oil, transport the oil for disposal, and wash the pipe.

The project involves capping the pipeline on the property where the pipeline reaches the surface and where it intersects with the Buckeye Pipeline in the vicinity of 56 Brownstone Ave, according to the contract.

Bransfield said the owner will first pay half the cost of a ground penetrating radar survey to determine the exact location of the pipeline. The contract specifies the owner and the town will share the bill, which is not to exceed a total of \$3,000.

Selectmen at a July 13 special meeting unanimously authorized Bransfield to sign off on the amendment.

The purchase agreement originally specified the town has 90 days from the signing to inspect the property and review any existing easements, liens or encumbrances. There have been multiple extensions since then.

The contract amendment gives the town up to 90 more days to do its "due diligence" once the pipe is decommissioned.

Bransfield said she expects the project to be finished this month.

"I'm very pleased they will be decommis-

sioning the pipeline at their expense and we will know exactly where the pipeline is and go from there," she said.

The town must take ownership of the property before it can access a \$750,000 grant from the state Department of Economic and Community Development to remediate the brownfield site. According to reports from the environmental engineering firm Tighe and Bond, that's how much it will cost to mitigate soil and groundwater contamination on the site.

Possibilities for the site, if purchased by the town, include a waterfront restaurant that could be operated as a private business on land leased by the town. An example of a similar model of partnership between public and private entities is the Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park, which officials say has paid the town more than \$2.75 million in lease fees since the park opened in 2005.

# O'Reilly Puts Retirement Plans on Hold in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly put his retirement plans on hold after the Board of Education asked him to finish his three-year contract instead of bowing out at the end of the upcoming school year.

O'Reilly initially submitted a letter of resignation in June, describing his time in Portland as the capstone of his career.

He rescinded his resignation last Tuesday.

O'Reilly came to Portland in 2014 to replace Sally Doyen. He brought nine years of experience as the superintendent of New Hartford Public Schools.

He is currently entering the second year of a 3-year contract approved in 2017. A set series of 3.5 percent salary increases puts him at \$192,292 this year and \$199,722 in 2019-2020. The contract specifies he receive an additional \$20,000 tax sheltered annuity each year.

School board member Meg Scata said O'Reilly told her shortly after the school year ended that he was conflicted about his retirement.

Scata said the conversation reminded of her own indecision as she neared the end of her career as a librarian in the Portland school system. Whether or not she should retire was something she debated for several years before finally submitting her resignation in 2016.

"When I finally decided to retire, I knew it was time. It was such a positive decision and when I made it, I didn't ever think to take it back," she said.

Hearing O'Reilly question his decision made her think it might not be the right time for him, she said.

So she asked him to stay.

O'Reilly acknowledged Scata's request in a

phone interview Wednesday.

"I said it was a board decision and if the board asked me, I would strongly consider it," he said.

Board of Education Chairwoman MaryAnne Rode said members came to the conclusion it would benefit the school board and the district as a whole if O'Reilly stayed on an extra year. The time would both extend the transition period while a new superintendent is sought and would give a relatively new group of administrators time to grow as a team.

Rode described O'Reilly as adept at guiding the administrators to work together to ease students' transition from one year to the next.

O'Reilly agreed the extra continuity would benefit the administrators.

"[Portland Middle School Principal] Scott Giegerich is the only remaining principal since

I was hired," O'Reilly said. There have also been leadership changes affecting athletics, special education, curriculum and technology.

Both Scata and Rode said O'Reilly has instituted numerous successful initiatives, including enhanced reading, writing, and mathematics coursework and the introduction a program to provide a dedicated mini-laptop for every student in grades five-12. They also pointed to a new collaboration with Wheeler Clinic to address the social-emotional needs of students at school.

O'Reilly's leadership skills are evident in the team of professionals he hired in his time here and the vision he put in place for the district, according to Scata.

"He needs to stay to finish what he started," she said.

# Dead Trees Hang in Limbo in Marlborough

by Allison Lazur

A countless number of dead, large oak trees currently loom over Marlborough after being ravaged by gypsy moths last year – and the town tree warden said this week the situation is at "the point of being dangerous."

After a Hartford tree fell and injured a boy last week, and another incident last month occurred where a fallen tree across Route 44 in West Hartford blocked all four lanes on the roadway, Marlborough is being faced with its own timber dilemma.

Jones told the *Rivereast* this week he could not provide a definitive number on how many trees actually need to be taken down or how much it would cost, but did say that "maybe 55 percent" of the dead trees would fall to the responsibility of the town, with the remaining 45 percent falling to the state and Eversource to chop.

"I couldn't give you an estimate" in terms of how many trees need to go, Jones said, clarifying that everyday more trees are added to the list of those that need to be chopped down.

Jones explained that the dead tree situation is a vicious cycle that is difficult to remedy. He explained that when the trees are devastated by

gypsy moths during year one, the following year – this year – the trees die.

"We are trying our hardest to clear [the trees]," he said. "All the towns have the same problem; the gypsy moths are not selective."

The town just recently removed 80 trees from Ogden Lord Road – a location that desperately needed to be addressed, Jones said.

But the gypsy moths aren't the only concern. Jones said the emerald ash borer (EAB) could impact any ash trees in town, although he said "I've seen very little impact" of the beetle so far.

The EAB feeds on ash trees according to the website for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Similarly to gypsy moth-infested trees, trees overrun with an EAB infestation die within 2 to 3 years. DEEP urges that firewood not be transported long distances to minimize the impact of the EAB – an insect that didn't appear in North America until 2002.

The DEEP website states that insects such as the EAB "hitchhike readily on firewood, which can then sit in a backyard for a year or more, giving ample time for the insect to emerge."

Funding for tree removal in the 2017-18 town

budget clocked in at \$15,000 plus an additional, recent transfer of \$5,924 from the snow removal fund to cover the excess cost of removing trees during last year's budget season. Another \$15,000 was allocated for tree removal in the current year budget, with approximately \$10,500 utilized so far, according to Treasurer Hayley Wagner.

Because public works does not have the proper equipment to clear such large trees, an outside contractor is hired, Jones explained.

In regards to private residences, Jones said "If the tree overhangs town roadway or property, the town can go and take the tree if it's dead," otherwise it's the resident's responsibility.

The town has also relied on DEEP and Eversource to clear a number of trees that impact state roadways and power lines.

Jones said Eversource has been proactive in working with him to identify and remove any trees that could have a potential impact to any power lines.

"Every time I have a question, [Eversource] has done a fantastic job," Jones said.

He said that even if a dead tree is across the street from a power line, but leaning in the direction of the line, Eversource might remove it, adding when and if the tree falls it's "an act of nature" and difficult to predict.

"The main thing we are concerned about is public safety," he said.

Eversource spokesman Mitch Gross told the *Rivereast* this week that the arborist who handles Marlborough, as well as East Hampton and East Haddam, disclosed those towns have been impacted "the worst she's ever seen."

Gross explained that Eversource has removed "thousands and thousands" of trees that could potentially impact the 17,000 miles of electrical lines the company oversees.

Eversource "works on a quarter of those miles every year," Gross said, adding that 80 million dollars has been invested in the work for just this year.

"There's a lot of damage out there," he said. "The major challenge is balancing the aesthetics [of the trees] with reliable service. We understand our customers love the trees, but also want their lights on when they need them."

# Marlborough Residents Row the River

by Allison Lazur

In a boathouse which sits along the Connecticut River, residents from across the state gather to tackle the river by boat where they partake in acts of teamwork, communication and aquatic mastery through rowing.

Rowing is just one of a slew of programs offered by the Riverfront Recapture program – a privately funded organization based in Hartford.

The team consists of members from around the state including *Rivereast* town Marlborough.

Marlborough resident Marcelle Groves who has been involved with the program since April, serves as the coxswain – the person who steers the boat – for the morning recreational team.

“The coxswain really serves as an onboard coach who looks at all eight rowers and determines who if anyone is doing anything incorrectly,” Groves said, explaining that everyone has to be “in sync with the stroke seat,” a position that is closest to the stern or back of the boat.

Groves, who served as the role of coxswain in college in the 1980s, said when she started working in Hartford her interest in rowing was rekindled.

“I would come in the morning and see the crews out there [on the river] and it just made me feel like I wanted to belong again,” she said

Marlborough resident Martha Rogers also delved into rowing as an adult and is currently in her second summer as part of the recreational team.

She emphasized that rowing is something “you can learn as an adult,” adding “if it’s something you’re curious about and you’ve always wanted to try it, you can,” she said.

Director of Rowing Programs, Brian Wendry, who has worked for Riverfront Recapture for 20 years, said the boathouse is home to approxi-

mately 700 people from all ages and walks of life, as well as about 78 boats owned by the clubhouse.

Wendry explained the program offers beginner, intermediate and advanced classes, as well as classes for veterans and those with disabilities or visual impairments.

He explained that rowing utilizes “almost all lower body” muscles.

Although there are smaller boats, those frequently used in the program are nine-person vessels consisting of eight rowers and a coxswain.

Rowers are attached to the boat with sneakers while sitting on a sliding seat, Wendry explained.

“It’s like doing a squat and then you finish it off with your arms,” he said.

Marlborough resident and evening recreational team member Roberta Murphy acknowledged the physical and community aspects of rowing to the *Rivereast* this week.

“Everybody there has been so nice,” she said. The coaches are so wonderful and there is such comradery; you get your exercise in while having fun.”

Murphy who has been involved with the program for six years referred to the program simply as, “super” for all of the support the classes offer to kids and adults.

In addition to regularly hosting recreational teams, the boathouse will entertain approximately 3,000 participants who competitively row in high school, collegiate and adult teams at its 20th annual Head of the Riverfront Regatta.

Wendry said approximately 10,000 people – participants and spectators – will gather at Riverside Park, the home of the boathouse, to race down the Connecticut River.

The event is scheduled to take place Satur-



**The Riverfront Recapture organization hosts several programs including rowing classes for all walks of life – many of which are enjoyed by residents of Marlborough. The boathouse sits along the Connecticut River in Riverfront Park.**

day, Sept. 29, from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., at 20 Leibert Rd., Hartford.

But rowing isn’t the only aquatic activity that can be seen on the river.

This Saturday is the Riverfront Recapture Dragon Boat & Asian Festival.

Approximately 82 teams –community and professional teams from Boston, New York City and Philadelphia – will paddle in 2 to 3.5 minute races launched from the Mortensen Riverfront Plaza, Facilitator/Dragon Boat Steersperson, Blair Wlochowski, said.

“The race is 500 meters, he said, “a good team [completes the race] in just under 2 minutes and community teams take 2.5 to 3.5 min-

utes.”

Unlike rowing, to paddle a dragon boat requires “all upper body,” Wendry said.

Wlochowski, while bailing water out of one of the Dragon Boats, said this weekend’s festival includes food and activities all celebrating Asian culture.

He said six to eight boats will race side by side, holding 20 paddlers, a steersperson and a drummer who establishes the beat for the paddling tempo.

“It’s a great teambuilding activity,” Wlochowski said. “You figure 20 people on a boat sitting side by side – the only way it moves is to work together.”

# If East Hampton Budget Fails Again, ‘There Will Be Cuts’

by Elizabeth Regan

Town Council members Tuesday reiterated in no uncertain terms that voting down the general government budget in East Hampton for a third time will be interpreted to mean the budget is too high.

The Republican council majority drove the point home by cutting an additional \$40,000 from the capital budget when they approved the latest town budget proposal in a 4-3, party line vote.

Combined with \$91,000 cut by the finance board last month, the \$131,000 decrease brings the total proposed 2018-19 general government budget to \$14.95 million. The proposal – which includes general government operations, debt and capital spending – represents a 5.16 percent increase over the current budget. The increase is largely driven by debt from the high school renovation project.

A town budget meeting will be held Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. in the East Hampton Middle School library. The referendum is scheduled for Sept. 19 in the middle school gymnasium.

Voters struck down the proposed general government budget first in May and then again in June.

Councilor Mark Philhower was adamant it’s the council’s responsibility to cut the budget whenever it fails at referendum.

“We were quite clear on day one of the budget process that if the budget failed – and we were quite clear on education as well as general government – there will be cuts,” Philhower said.

The \$30.50 million education budget passed at the first referendum despite the fact that it included the reduction of eight teaching positions. Three of the affected teachers were laid off; the remaining positions were left unfilled after teachers retired or were shuffled around the district. The reductions were endorsed by the Board of Education after the finance board cut the school board’s proposed budget by \$670,000.

But some of the same voters who supported the education budget rejected the proposed general government budget at the first and subsequent referendum. Advocates for the school system have been vocal at public meetings and

on social media in saying they believe some or all of an unexpected budget surplus should be applied to the education budget.

Philhower said residents were well aware how the council interprets ‘no’ votes.

“The education people did not want their budget cut any further, so they approved it,” Philhower said. “However, there must be people in town that think [the town] budget is too high.”

The \$91,000 reduction made by the finance board last month resulted from a decision to pay for repairs to the community center roof out of the current budget surplus instead of the capital fund.

Councilors on Tuesday endorsed the cut despite a discussion at the same meeting during which they rescinded a previous motion to put in a new roof on top of the existing one.

Council members instead empowered Philhower and councilor Pete Brown to work with Town Manager Michael Maniscalco to explore other options for the library roof after Philhower raised concerns that the fix recommended by an engineering firm and an architect was not something he’d ever seen on a non-residential building before.

Councilors also made multiple cuts affecting the public works department when it reduced the vehicle sinking fund by \$75,000 and took out \$18,000 from its budget for road repair and maintenance.

The council removed \$30,000 from the public safety budget by deferring until 2020 a plan to dredge a small pond near Watrous Street. The pond is used by the fire department to draw water for fire suppression, according to Maniscalco. He said officials are concerned silt-laden runoff may be clogging up the pipe, but cautioned testing should be done before any dredging is done.

Councilor Kevin Reich, a Democrat, described the decision to cut capital spending as short-sighted.

“We need to be proactive, not reactive. We need to take care of tomorrow, because you know tomorrow isn’t going to be any better than today,” Reich said.

He said he’d rather pay “a few extra dollars”

in taxes to ensure there is money in the capital budget to address public works needs such as vehicle upgrades and road maintenance.

Philhower, who made the motion to approve the capital budget reductions, said he hopes voters come out in support of the proposal. He emphasized there will be “deep cuts” if they don’t.

“Things will be closed. People will be laid off. I don’t see any other way if you have to go much lower,” he said.

## Voter Intent

Democrat Dean Markham disputed the council’s insistence on interpreting any failed referendum as a directive to cut the budget proposal.

He said he hasn’t seen “any real substantiation” about why people voted the way they did.

“I don’t think there’s any information gathered one way or the other,” he said. “I think we’re all in the dark.”

His suggestion to include advisory questions on the ballot to gauge voters’ thoughts on the budget was not supported by other council members.

Fellow Democrat James “Pete” Brown disagreed there was any ambiguity.

“I’ve said this on other occasions, that for all practical purposes, if a budget does not pass, it’s too high,” Brown said.

Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel told Markham council members have made it clear that a failed budget means more cuts. She said the interpretation is in line with how other councils have acted in the past.

“There shouldn’t be any confusion,” she said.

Education advocates have already expressed concern about the budget proposal based on the finance board’s refusal last month to appropriate \$250,000 from the current budget surplus to reinstate three teaching positions cut from the already-approved education budget.

The failed budget maneuver, crafted by Finance Director Jeff Jylkka in consultation with Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith, would have taken \$250,000 slated for student computer tablets and classroom interior door locks out of the town’s proposed 2018-19 capi-

tal budget. The items instead would have been funded through a portion of the current budget surplus, which Jylkka has said is “just north of” \$700,000.

The \$250,000 freed up in the capital budget would have been directed to the Board of Education to restore a third grade teacher, fifth grade teacher and high school English teacher, according to the plan.

Smith has said the affected elementary classrooms will have about 27 students each without the additional teachers.

Both the finance board and council did, however, approve a plan to buy a public works department plow truck and paver with cash instead of leasing the items. The \$347,000 price tag will be paid using a portion of the current budget surplus if the supplemental appropriation is approved by voters at a town meeting. The vote is scheduled for 6:45 p.m. on Sept. 10 at the middle school library.

## Budget Numbers

The \$14.95 million general government budget is down from \$15.14 million at the first referendum and \$15.17 million in the subsequent round.

The town operations budget proposal now comes in at \$10.73 million. Representing an increase of 1.11 percent over the current budget, it did not change from the amount that failed at the last referendum.

The \$992,206 capital and transfers budget is an increase of 21.7 percent over the current budget.

The town’s debt accounts for \$3.23 million of the council’s budget proposal. That’s an increase of 15.74 percent over the current year.

The budget proposal, if approved by voters at referendum, could result in a mill rate of 32.21 mills, which would amount to a 0.89 mill increase over the current year. The projected increase is down from the 1.01 mill increase associated with the budget proposal that failed in June.

Property taxes for someone with a home assessed at \$250,000 would go up \$223 in the upcoming budget year if the general government budget passes.

# Hebron Women's Club Leaves Legacy of Service

by Sloan Brewster

After nearly five decades of giving back and making lifelong friends, the Hebron Women's Club is disbanding.

Membership in the small club has dropped in the past few years, according to Alice Marien, the sole member of the Membership Committee.

"Just me, a committee of one," she said.

At the last club meeting in June, members looked at the numbers and realized there would not be enough women to staff offices in the fall, she said.

"We're a small club," she said. "Everyone had some reason not to come in the fall."

Some women said they were dropping out because they had become empty nesters and had plans to return to school or work. Others had young children who put demands on their attention. Still others were starting families.

"It just seemed like it was a perfect storm of reasons," Marien said.

The club, which is a member of the Connecticut Junior Women, Inc., was founded in 1969 and started out as the Hebron Junior Women's Club.

According to the CT Junior Women, Inc. website, the organization is open to all women over the age of 18.

In the 1990s, however, the clubs were only open to women under 40 and as members aged out, they had to leave, said Mindy Johnston, a lifetime member of the Hebron club, which combated the problem in a different way.

"We dropped Junior from name in the early 1990s because we decided that we wanted to be welcoming to women of all ages and not just women under 40," Marien said.

At that time, some of the women, including herself, were approaching 40 and weren't ready to leave, she added.

The Hebron club is not alone in being disbanded. Other clubs in the state have either disbanded or combined, Marien said.

"It's not just Hebron, I think it's a trend," she said. "Last year several disbanded."

In 2009, due to conflicting meetings with another organization, Johnston became inactive.

"When I was active I was extremely active," she said. "I was co-president for a couple years, I ran a lot of events."

Johnston, who was involved for 26 years, attributes declining membership to changing times.

"When I first joined most of the moms weren't working and we had play groups and now most of the people are working," she said. "I used to spend hours and hours on women's club things, but I had the time to do it."

Nowadays moms have little time between working and running around getting kids to and

from activities, she said.

"Unfortunately, people don't have the time that we had back then," she said.

Johnston said it was sad to see the club go because she met so many lifelong friends through it – folks with whom she continues to stay in touch.

"But truly it was one of the best times of my life," she said. "I used to look forward to meetings."

Johnston recalled when she was being discharged from the hospital after having a baby. The club was meeting that night and though she went home, she wanted to go to the meeting.

"They were having jelly beans and I wanted jelly beans," she said. "It was good, it was fun times. Really, really fun times."

Club members have held fundraisers, performed community service projects and just enjoyed spending time together, Marien, who has been a member for 28 years, said.

She said the nonprofit community service organization provides members with the opportunity to use their combined energy for the betterment of our community – "and to meet people and make friends."

A club activity that stands out most in Marien's mind was bringing the Hartford Symphony Orchestra to town for four benefit concerts at RHAM High School.

The concerts were seemingly enjoyed by the town, she said.

The club has supported various local projects and agencies, including AHM, the local food bank and social service agencies, Marien said.

"Several years back we raised money for a thermal imaging unit for the fire department, which was one of their critical needs," she said. "We haven't done anything really big in the last year or two because the membership has gone down."

The club has also held story hours at the Douglas Library, summer reading programs, holiday gift drives and breakfast with the Easter bunny, among others.

According to a couple different histories compiled by the club, it was organized in November of 1969 by approximately eight women.

"A lack of opportunity for community service and sociability seemed to indicate the need for such an organization in Hebron," the history of 1969 to 1990 reads. "Officers were elected at this time to serve as the Board of Directors and to write the by-laws for the new club. Mrs. Carol Cubit was elected Hebron's first president to serve for the 1970-1971 club year, Hebron's first year as a Federated club."

In 1970, the club's by-laws were approved and accepted by the Connecticut State Federation of Women's Clubs.



Members of the Hebron Women's Club enjoy a pot luck meal in March 2017. Standing from left to right are Maria Morelli-Wolfe, Alice Marien, Mary Schadtler, Marcia Tecca and Rebecca Scorso, current president. Seated are Mary Rose and Phyllis Beaulieu.

Two of the club's first projects, according to the document, were baking monthly birthday cakes for nearby convalescent homes and a weekly story hour for preschoolers.

That year, the club also donated funds to a RHAM High School Band trip to England and to fifth and sixth grade trips to the United Nations.

At Christmas, club members collected approximately 75 gifts for incarcerated children.

The biggest fundraiser of that year was an arts and crafts fair.

On and on the list goes, with project after fundraising project held for 49 years.

In 1975 and 1976, as the country celebrated its 200 birthday, the club constructed more than 200 toys for a bicentennial workshop for teachers.

In 2009 to 2010, the club celebrated its 40 year anniversary.

"Unbelievable!" reads the line in the 1990 – 2015 history.

Over the years, the club has made blankets, toys, enjoyed paint nights, shared potluck dinners, served food to the homeless, raised thousands of dollars for the community - including

\$6,000 for the Hebron playscape - and done even more.

Now that it is disbanding members will have to look elsewhere for avenues for giving back.

Marien said at first she was disappointed the club was disbanding as she has made many friends over her 28 year membership, but she has since begun to view it differently.

"All good things come to an end," she said. "I'm at peace with it at this point, I'm just really pleased to look out over the years and know that Hebron Women's Club has had a significant impact on the town of Hebron."

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All current and former club members are invited to a commemoration dinner on Aug. 29 to celebrate the positive impact made by the club on the town over the years and to honor the enduring friendships that have been formed along the way.

Meal cost will be partially offset by the club.

Those planning to attend must RSVP by Aug. 20 by email to [jimmarien@earthlink.net](mailto:jimmarien@earthlink.net) or by calling 860-228-4416. Upon RSVP, further details will be provided regarding time and location of the dinner.

# Former Hebron Woman Ruled Fit to Stand Trial

by Sloan Brewster

A former Hebron woman, charged with attempted murder after an attack in an Old Colchester Road home in March, has been declared competent to stand trial.

According to documents on file at Rockville Superior Court, on Aug. 9 Judge Jorge Simon found Paula Christakos, 77, formerly of 435 Old Colchester Rd. and now a resident of 32 Park Place in Middletown, competent to stand trial. Simon also granted a motion to reduce Christakos' bond to \$5,000.

Christakos posted bond and was released under a list of several conditions, court documents show.

Under the conditions, she must wear an electronic monitoring device, and comply with her probation officer and with all medical and psychiatric recommendations. She is also to remain in her residence, though she will be allowed to move to a new place once her family acquires one for her and it is approved by her doctor and probation officer. Christakos is allowed to leave the house for medical, psychiatric and probation appointments and to go out to meals with family as long as they are supervised and approved by her probation office, the documents state.

In addition, she may not possess any weapons or illegal substances.

Christakos in May was declared not competent to stand trial, court documents show, and

was admitted to Whiting Forensic Hospital at Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown for a period of 60 days – after which time a hearing to reconsider her competence was to be held.

Christakos was arrested on March 26, according to the prosecutor's report included with the court paperwork. The six charges against her include disorderly conduct, attempted murder, assault, assault of an elderly victim, threatening and reckless endangerment.

According to the arrest report, police were called to 435 Old Colchester Rd. at 4:25 a.m. March 26 by a 911 caller who said she awoke to yelling. The caller said two women were arguing and one of them was bleeding from her head.

The caller also reported that the door was open and said one of the women – Christakos – may have left the residence.

When troopers arrived, the caller greeted them and explained she lived there with Christakos and another woman, who was lying on her bed bleeding from her head.

According to the prosecutor's report, Trooper James Olson noted that the victim's pillow was soaked in blood and there were streaks of blood on the bed sheets. In addition, Olson saw a wound on her head from which blood was "flowing freely."

According to the report, the woman woke in the night when someone was repeatedly strik-

ing her on the head with a hard object. She reported she had lost consciousness and was in extreme pain and said her roommate was the person who attacked her, and that she did not know why.

Upon searching the room, Olson found an empty handgun holster on the nightstand, the document states.

Medical personnel responded and treated the victim, the report says, while Olson and another trooper, referred to as Trooper Jason Hickey, went to a neighbor's house, where Christakos was located in the living room and detained.

Christakos admitted to striking the victim with a handgun and led the troopers to the spot where she had left it in the yard of her Old Colchester Road residence, according to the report. Police seized the Smith & Wesson revolver, which had no bullets in it, and arrested Christakos.

The alleged victim was transported to Windham Hospital, the report states. She had two cuts on her head. One above her left ear required three staples while the other, which was on the left side of her forehead, needed three stitches. She also had multiple bruises on the left side of her head.

While at the hospital, the woman provided a sworn statement to Detective Sean McManaway, in which she stated that for approximately 30 years she had lived with

Christakos and the woman who called police. The woman said she had recently had a stroke and Christakos had moved into her bedroom to keep an eye on her and that they each had their own beds in the room.

According to her statement, the alleged victim did not know what happened and said Christakos "just snapped." She said the night before they had watched a TV interview of Stormy Daniels, an adult film star who alleged an affair with President Donald Trump, and then went to bed. The alleged victim said Christakos may have had a glass of wine but had taken no drugs or medication.

The woman said when she woke up Christakos was hitting her with the handle of the gun while talking to her.

"Do you want to go?" Christakos asked, according to the victim. "Do you want to die?"

"No I don't," the woman said she responded.

"I'll help you," Christakos said as she hit her again, according to the report.

The woman said she did not know exactly how many times she had been struck, according to the report.

Christakos was initially assigned a \$100,000 cash surety bond, which she could not post, and was transported to Rockville Superior Court for arraignment.

There is no date for a trial specified in the court documents.

## East Hampton Town Clerk Leaving for Rocky Hill

by Elizabeth Regan

There's a job opening in East Hampton. Town Clerk Sandi Wieleba, who took the role almost 14 years ago, said she will leave East Hampton on Sept. 7 to become the town clerk in Rocky Hill.

Wieleba began her municipal career in Wethersfield as the assistant town clerk, where she served for 11 years.

Wieleba said she is leaving the department in good shape and in good hands. Her assistant, Bernice Bartlett, has been in her position for 20 years.

"Everything has been backed up. Everything has been preserved, which is very, very important," Wieleba said.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said he received Wieleba's resignation last Friday.

"We wish her all the luck in the world," he said. "I'm sure she'll do well in her next position."

The position has been posted internally and online, according to Maniscalco. It's also advertised in a professional journal.

The town clerk, with a salary range of \$61,080-\$70,858, is responsible for managing municipal functions related to land records, elections, vital statistics, licensing and other municipal records.

Wieleba is a state-certified town clerk with a master's degree in management from Cambridge College.

Wieleba listed accomplishments including codification of the town's ordinances, backing up all meeting minutes on laserfiche, redesigning the town seal, and putting all land records and maps online.

She described codification as the process



Sandi Wieleba

of organizing ordinances into a single, accurate volume of all the local laws.

"That was my very first project," she said.

The move will shorten the commute for the Wethersfield resident. It will also be a change of pace.

Rocky Hill has a population of 20,119, based on 2016 statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau. East Hampton's population is 12,869.

She said she is looking forward to working in a larger municipality with a staff she described as incredible.

"I love the work. I love serving people. I love the variety," she said.

## East Hampton Police News

8/1: Richard Olinatz, 44, of 11 Barrington Way, Glastonbury, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

8/2: Renee Marchant, 53, of 58 Mallard Cove, East Hampton, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

Also, from July 30-Aug. 5, officers responded to 11 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made 31 traffic stops, 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.

## Life Star Called After Hebron Crash

A vehicle collided with an oak tree last week, which resulted in a boy sustaining serious injuries and Life Star being called to the scene, State Police said.

At approximately 3:26 p.m. Aug. 7, police said, Tammy Smith, 43, of 12 Oakland Rd., Amston, was driving a KIA Stinger south on North Street when she exited the roadway off the right shoulder, striking a large oak tree

approximately 15 feet off the shoulder.

Smith was transported by Hebron Fire Department to Hartford Hospital with suspected minor injuries and her 11-year-old male passenger was transported to Connecticut Children's Medical Center by Life Star.

According to police, this case remains active.

## Pair of Silver Alerts Issued in Colchester, Both Canceled

by Allison Lazur

Silver Alerts were issued on two separate occasions last weekend after two women went missing, although both were later canceled after the women were found.

The first alert came Aug. 10, state police said. A report was received at approximately 10:35 a.m. on Aug. 10 of missing Brooke Rafala, 23, who did not return home on the night of Aug. 9, according to her mother, and had not recently posted anything on social media.

A Silver Alert was issued, and Rafala's vehicle was located at Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands, state police said.

The State Police Search and Rescue K-9 unit was requested and responded to search the woods, as well as the state police dive team, who searched the Ruby Cohen Preserve on the

property. The Colchester Fire Department also provided a boat and drone for the search, police said.

According to Colchester Police, Rafala was found shortly after midnight Saturday, Aug. 11. She was located on Route 85, police said, near the area of Deer Run, and was transported to the hospital with minor injuries. This incident has been deemed non-criminal in nature, state police said.

A second Silver Alert was issued at approximately 1:30 p.m. on Aug. 12 for 55-year-old Vicki Miller who was last seen at her Colchester residence. The alert was later canceled at approximately 9 p.m. when she was discovered safe at Mohegan Sun Casino, Colchester Police said.

## Man Seriously Injured in Portland Crash

by Elizabeth Regan

A Route 66 motorcycle accident Wednesday night left a man with serious injuries.

Portland Police Capt. Ron Milardo said the unidentified man was on a 2007 Harley Davidson traveling east on Route 66 in the area of Butler Construction at about 10 p.m. He rounded the corner, lost control and hit a guardrail. The man landed in the westbound left lane of the state road after he was ejected from the motorcycle.

Milardo said the motorcyclist received se-

rious injuries to his lower extremities.

There were no other vehicles involved, according to Milardo.

Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea said Life Star was called but the helicopter was delayed. Middlesex Hospital Paramedics decided to take the man to Hartford Hospital by ambulance.

Milardo said the road was closed for a couple of hours.

## Early Morning Crash in East Hampton Kills Motorcyclist

by Elizabeth Regan

A motorcyclist is dead after an early Thursday morning crash in Cobalt involving a Portland police cruiser.

State police said a motorcycle reportedly struck a Portland police vehicle at the intersection of Route 66 and Route 151.

The identities of the motorcyclist and the driver of the police cruiser were not available at press time.

The emergency call came in at 1:03 a.m., according to East Hampton Police Chief Den-

nis Woessner. He said he turned over the case to the state police "due to the severity of the accident and the involvement of a neighboring agency."

The state police accident reconstruction squad responded to the crash at 1:24 a.m., state police said.

Portland Police Capt. Ron Milardo on Thursday morning said he is not releasing any information at this time.

## Pair Arrested After Drug Altercation in Andover

A pair of men were arrested after a drug deal turned violent at the Xtra Mart on Route 6 Monday, State Police said.

Police said they responded to the scene to a report of a disturbance, and learned that Vincent Smith, 27, of 659 Center St., Ludlow, Mass., and Shawn B. Buczko, 27, of 361 Pucker St., Coventry, had gotten into a physical altercation over a marijuana sale – and that Smith fled the scene.

Police said they found Smith operating his vehicle at a high rate of speed on Route 6 in Coventry. He was stopped and taken into cus-

tody after a pound and a half of marijuana was found in his vehicle, police said.

Smith was arrested and charged with reckless driving, operating a motor vehicle without a license, possession of 1kg or more of cannabis with intent to sell, first-degree larceny, interfering with officer/resisting arrest and second-degree breach of peace, police said.

Buczko was charged with possession of less than one half ounce of marijuana and second-degree breach of peace, according to police.

## Obituaries

### Colchester

#### Carlton Porter Ous

Carlton Porter Ous, lifelong resident of the Westchester area of Colchester, passed away at his home Friday, August 3. Carlton was born March 4, 1958, the son of Betty Jones Ous of Colchester and the late Joseph Andrew Ous.

He leaves three sisters, Darlene Ous (Dusty) of Andover, Hilary Ruitto (Jim) and Jodie Ous (Karl) of Colchester. He also leaves his companion of many years and best friend, Linda Montminy; a nephew, Josh Ruitto; and two nieces, Chelsey Barr and Jaime Hunt.

Carlton worked for many years with his father at Ous Const., and spent most of his life working with heavy machinery. He loved the Salmon River area, NASCAR, and being outdoors, especially camping in the Allagash. His favorite time was playing guitar with friends.

A memorial service will be held at the Westchester Congregational Church Saturday, Aug. 18, at 1 p.m. with Pastor Ron Thompson officiating.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Animals Humane Society or the Westchester Congregational Church Memorial Fund.



### East Hampton

#### Burton Sanford Hodge Jr.

Burton Hodge, beloved father, grandfather, brother, uncle and friend, passed away Tuesday, Aug. 7, in Lake Worth, Fla., with his family by his side. He was born in Middletown Nov. 1, 1933, the son of the late Burton S. Hodge Sr., Charles Edward Ocelik and Doris Barber Ocelik.

Burt grew up in East Hampton on Clark Hill in the days when the kids ran wild all day, picking fruit, weeding the garden and "stealing" the vegetables for a snack, playing, swimming in the lake, and sledding down the hill until they were "whistled" in for dinner. He grew up in a loving family surrounded by grandparents, cousins, extended family and friends that became like family.

Immediately upon graduating from East Hampton High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. Burt served for four years during the Korean War. Upon his return to East Hampton he worked for various trucking companies and then settled into MGB/Contech as a foreman, from which he retired.

Following in his stepfather and mother's footsteps, Burt was active in the VFW and served as Commander of the East Hampton Veterans of Foreign War Post 5095, 1981-1982.

His passions were his family, golf with his buddies, crossword puzzles, the Civil War, and walking in the local park, especially when his sisters visited. Several people will tell you they could never beat Burt at golf because he always insisted on being the score keeper!

Burt was devoted to his mother Doris and was a great help to her in her later years. She could always depend on Burt to take care of "her business."

Burt later moved to Florida to enjoy the sunshine and golf courses in his retirement years and thoroughly enjoyed his time there. Many of his children were nearby and he was thrilled when his daughter Tracie moved around the corner; she became a great source of comfort and help to her parents. His first wife, Barbara Ostergren Hodge, and Tracie's mother, lived across the street from Burt.

Burt would always greet you with a smile and big hug and had a silly nickname for every member of the family.

Burt is survived by his seven children: Mark Hodge (Mindy) of Clermont, Fla., Jay Hodge of Lake Worth, Fla., Brian Hodge (Dora) of Loxahatchee, Fla., Scott Hodge (Sharon) of Muldraugh, Ky., Tracie Hodge of Lake Worth, Fla., all with first wife Barbara Ostergren Hodge of Lake Worth, Fla.; and Michael DeSantis (Kim) of Colchester and Tracy DeSantis Cooley (Mike) of Colchester, with second wife Betteann DeSantis Hodge of East Hampton. He is also survived by three sisters: Donna Cronin (Wayne) of Colchester, Patricia Dessureault of East Hampton, and Mary Ley (Bill) of East Hampton; grandchildren: (Mark) Alaina, Morgan, Parker, Sarah (Jay), Shane, Ryan (Brian), Sean, Eric, Brian, Jeremy (Scott), Bree, Kimberley, Victoria, (Tracie), Nicholas (Elizabeth), Emily Porras (Santiago), (Michael) Makayla, Madison (Tracy), Taylor, Eric, Ryan, Faith great-grandchildren: (Nicholas) Jacob, Liam (Bree) Alex; numerous nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by an infant daughter, Kimberly Ann, and brother, George Thomas Ocelik.

Burt will be remembered with love for his generous spirit, sense of humor, ready smile and encouraging words for his family and friends. He will be greatly missed.

Services will be held at the convenience of the family in Lake Worth, Fla., at South Florida National Cemetery with a full Honor Guard Ceremony.



### Cobalt

#### Dorothea Dagle

Dorothea Pearl (Johnson) Dagle, 95, of Cromwell, wife of the late Walter A. Dagle, passed away Wednesday, Aug. 8, at Cobalt Lodge Healthcare & Rehab Center. Born in Norwich, she was the daughter of the late Frank and Beatrice (Canning) Johnson.

Dot lived in Cromwell her entire life and was a member of Saint John Church. She was a veteran of World War II serving in the United States Navy. After being at a lecture where Eleanor Roosevelt was speaking, Dot and four other Waves were escorted in queenly fashion into Eleanor's waiting car where she took them downtown to the White House and gave them a tour of the presidential manor. Dot loved to shop and enjoyed her morning trips to McDonald's.

Dot is survived by her sons, Richard B. Dagle and his wife, Pauline of Lowell, Mass., and Thomas J. Dagle and his wife, Julie of East Hampton; three grandchildren, Jennifer Dagle, Lindsey Gionfriddo and Kimberly Dagle; three great-grandchildren, Collin Grimshaw, Lucas Gionfriddo and Dylan Gionfriddo; five stepgrandchildren, Julie Fisher, Robert Zukas, Jr., Susan Eickenhorst, Lawrence Zukas and Virginia Criscitelli; 16 step-great-grandchildren and eight step-great-great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Along with her husband and parents, Dot was predeceased by her daughter, Carolyn Dagle; sister, Gertrude Rose; and three brothers, Robert, Herbert and Richard Johnson.

A graveside service will be held Monday, Aug. 20, at 10 a.m., in Cromwell Hillside Cemetery West, 29 Hillside Rd., Cromwell, where full military honors will be accorded.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Dorothea's memory may be made to VITAS Hospice, 628 Hebron Avenue, Suite 300, Glastonbury, CT 06033.

To share or send condolences to the family, visit [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).



### East Hampton

#### Janet Kay Parent

Janet Kay Parent, 73, of East Hampton, beloved wife of George F. Parent, died Sunday, Aug. 12, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her loving family. Born Sept. 23, 1944, in Fennimore, Wis., she was the daughter of the late Alva and Neva (Johnsen) Blackburn.

Janet was a communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton where she had taught CCD for several years, and was active in the prayer line. Janet was a member of the East Hampton Garden Club; she enjoyed flowers and had worked at a local florist years ago. She also enjoyed watching birds. Janet's family meant the world to her, especially her grandchildren and her great granddaughter.

Besides her husband George she is survived by her son, Todd Parent and wife Julie of Preston; two daughters, Julie Lefemine and husband Patrick of Union, Katie Measimer and husband Ken of East Hampton; brother, Robert Blackburn and wife Eloise of Texas; seven grandchildren, Samantha, Ashley, Jessica, Patrick Jr., Matthew, Abigail, Corbin; and her great-granddaughter, Harper.

She was predeceased by her sister, Judith Bollant.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Monday, Aug. 20, from 6-8 p.m. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Tuesday, Aug. 21, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church, East Hampton. Burial will follow in St. Patrick Cemetery.

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



### East Hampton

#### Michael J. Cavanaugh

Michael J. Cavanaugh, 36, of Blacksburg, S.C., formerly of East Hampton, died unexpectedly Saturday, Aug. 11, in Hartford. Born May 24, 1982, in Middletown, he was the son of Thomas Cavanaugh and Donna (Kelsey) Cavanaugh.

Michael had worked in the construction business for many years. By trade he was a heavy machine operator who loved working in the woods. Michael had been a member of the 4H Club when growing up in East Hampton. Michael had a great love for animals, especially oxen. He was a dedicated member of the Connecticut Whiplash Teamsters and spent many hours training and working with steers on the family farm with his son Dane, teaching him the family way.

If you couldn't find him on the family farm, you would find him at a fair, helping with the animals, making jokes, pranking someone, laughing or the occasional late night line dancing. Michael was a lover of life with charm and wit to match.

Michael struggled with addiction these last few years. It led him to many places that most of us couldn't even imagine. In the end, it took his peace and his life. May he find peace now. We thank you all for your unending love, support and prayers.

Michael leaves his father, Thomas Cavanaugh, and stepmother Kathy of East Hampton; his mother, Donna (Kelsey) Cavanaugh of Middletown; grandmother, Dolly Lathrop of Essex; his son, Dane Joseph Bromm, his significant other and Dane's mother Nina Bromm, both of South Carolina; brothers, Thomas M. Cavanaugh and his wife Kamey of East Hampton, Randy Cavanaugh and wife Marsha of East Hampton; sister, Meghan Cressotti and husband Lino of Maryland; two nephews, Lino and Tristin, and a niece Ashley; and a great niece, Addison.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Sunday, Aug. 19, from 4-7 p.m. Funeral services will be held Monday, Aug. 20, at 10 a.m., in the Haddam Neck Congregational Church. Burial will follow in Rock Landing Cemetery in Haddam Neck.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the Dane Bromm Education Fund, c/o Liberty Bank, 72 Berlin Rd., Cromwell, CT 06416 Attn: Cara Ehlers VP.

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



### Colchester

#### Raymond John Stevens

Raymond John Stevens, 79, of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, Aug. 14, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Hartford Oct. 22, 1938, he was the son of the late Frederick and Margaret (Leary) Stevens.

Raymond was a proud veteran, having served with the U.S. Air Force from 1956-60. He married his beloved wife, Jeanne Archambault, June 26, 1958. The couple moved from Wethersfield to Colchester in 1960, where they made their home and raised their family.

Raymond was an avid outdoorsman. He especially enjoyed hunting and fishing. He was a lifelong member of the Wethersfield Game Club and he was also a member of the Colchester Fish and Game Club. Most importantly, he will be remembered by his family as a loving and devoted husband and father.

In addition to his wife of 60 years, he will be remembered with love by his daughter, Tracy and her husband Edgar Girouard of East Haddam; six grandchildren, Krystle (Daniel) Petersen, Lyndsi (John) Klimasewski, Samantha Phillips (Steven Botsch), Taylor Stevens, Nicholas Girouard, Joseph Girouard; three great-grandchildren, Riley, Mckinley, Sawyer; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by two sons, Mark and Kenneth.

Friends and family are invited to attend calling hours on Monday, Aug. 20, from 5-7 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated Tuesday, Aug. 21, at 10:30 a.m., directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will follow in New St. Andrew Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Hayward Vol. Fire Dept., 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

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



### Colchester

#### Carl D. Zirkenbach

Carl D. Zirkenbach, 65, of Colchester, partner of the late Karen A. Goguen, died Friday, Aug. 10, at St. Francis Hospital. Born Aug. 27, 1952, in Holden, Mass., son of the late Carl W. and Margaret (Thienes) Zirkenbach, he had lived in Colchester since 1992.

Carl was the owner and operator of New England Traditions and The Barn in Marlborough. He was a member of the Hebron Lions Club, and a proud 15-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

Carl is survived by his daughter, Karly L. Zirkenbach of Moodus, and many friends whom he considered to be family.

The funeral service will be held today, Aug. 17, at 11 a.m., in the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury. Burial with military honors will follow in Marlboro Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home this morning from 9-11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Smilow Cancer Center at St. Francis Hospital, 114 Woodland St., Hartford, CT 06105.

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



### East Hampton

#### James Arthur Brown

James Arthur Brown, 59, of East Hampton, passed away Sunday, Aug. 5. James was born Aug. 2, 1959, in Middletown, to Howard W. Brown Sr. and Elizabeth (Massey) Brown.

He is survived by his four children, Jennifer, Caitlyn, James and Elizabeth; his siblings, William Barbour, Howard Brown Jr., Cynthia Treadwell, Lola Brown, Suzan Brown, Penny (Brown) Oschmann, Lisa Brown, and their families; as well as his many friends.

James was an avid outdoorsman - whether it be fishing, camping or kayaking. He had many talents and skills and loved helping anyone in need due to his kind soul.

A memorial will be held at a later date; family and friends will be notified.



## Obituaries continued

East Hampton

### John P. Palazzo

John P. Palazzo, 85, died peacefully at home in East Hampton Sunday, July 29. A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, John will be devastatingly missed by his wife, Christine (Emmons) Palazzo, with whom he spent 26 happy years of marriage.



Born in Hartford Jan. 6, 1933, he was a son of the late Michael and Christina (Venditti) Palazzo. John lived in Wethersfield for several years before moving to East Hampton 30 years ago. Soon after the start of the Korean War, he was drafted into the Army and served honorably as a military police officer. Upon his return back home, he co-founded General Paving, which he ran for 35 years, and then co-owned and operated Palazzo Construction for another 20 years with his son John.

John lived a life of devoted service to his country, family, and town. He was a charter member of the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill Elks Lodge 2308, as well as a 'lifetime member' of the Wethersfield Game Club. In his free time, John loved to make his own wine as well as homemade Italian sausage. He was an avid hunter during the day and had countless wine nights at home with his family and friends. Mostly, John dedicated his life to bringing joy and memories to his beloved family.

Besides his wife, he will be forever remembered by his son, John Palazzo and loving daughter-in-law Helen of Rocky Hill; stepdaughters, Kelly Lamb and her husband Ed of Florida and Brenda Trumbull of East Hampton; a daughter, Joanne Palazzo of Wethersfield; 10 grandchildren, John and his wife Maria, Christopher and his wife Jamie, Nicholas and Nicole Palazzo, John-Michael, Leigh-Ann and Robert Scrivano, Nik and Mackenzie Lamb, and Kyle Trumbull; eight great-grandchildren, Jason, Livia, Gianna, Taylor, Elena, Cody, Sophia and Caden.

John was predeceased by his brother, Joseph Palazzo, and sister, Antoinette Costardo.

*From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Well that's a relief.

In a race that was called amazingly quickly Tuesday night, Ned Lamont beat Joe Ganim to ensure he'll be the Democratic candidate for governor this November. This was the outcome I'd hoped for, but I wasn't quite sure it was going to happen. Sure, Ganim was a convicted felon, but he'd also earned praise in recent years for the work he'd done in Bridgeport.

But at the end of the day, I guess voters decided that if their governor was going to be convicted of bribery and sentenced to prison, it should happen *after* he was elected to the office, and not before.

As I've written here before, if Ganim had won the Democrats would have stood no shot in November. The attack ads would've written themselves. Even with Lamont, it's still going to be an uphill battle, given how low Gov. Malloy's approval ratings have been. But I feel that, with Ned, at least Democrats have a chance. That wouldn't have been the case with Ganim.

None of this is to say I wish Joe Ganim ill. I'm a firm believer in second chances, and Ganim, like all of us, deserves one. He seems sincere in his remorse. But he got his second chance, when he was elected mayor of Bridgeport again in 2015, after serving seven years in federal prison. I feel his past would've just been too much to overcome in a campaign for governor.

As for who Lamont will face: That race took a little bit longer to sift out Tuesday night, but it wound up being Bob Stefanowski. Which I hope is a good thing for Lamont. I wrote about Stefanowski just last week, and mentioned that I found his choice of language just far too vitriolic – way too reminiscent of Republicans on the national stage. Even in his victory speech Tuesday night, he was blasting the media and the "trolls on the Internet." We don't need that level of anger here.

Also, in his commercials, he proudly boasts that he's a conservative, and proudly compares himself to Donald Trump. That approach may work in other parts of the country, but Connecticut, despite the aforementioned disappointment with Malloy, is still a pretty blue state. I'm not sure that tactic will be successful.

\* \* \*

Speaking of the primaries, I go back and forth on the idea of whether Connecticut should follow the lead of a bunch of other states in the union and hold open primaries. Currently, they're closed; you have to be a registered Republican to vote in the Republican primary, and vice versa. This shuts out everyone else – meaning everyone who dares to belong to a party that's not one of those two, or people who are unaffiliated.

Yes, you can switch over to the Republican or Democrat party before the primary – that's how I became a registered Democrat in 2008; I had been unaffiliated up until then, but I really wanted to vote in that year's presidential primary – but I can certainly understand why people wouldn't want to do that, or, because of their jobs, they simply cannot affiliate with a certain party.

Moreover, anyone can vote in the November elections, as long as they're a registered voter. It doesn't matter what political party they belong to, or even if they are a member of a party at all. So why not let them do the same in August, when folks are determining just what names they'll be able to vote for in November?

At the same time, though, I'm not sure open primaries are something I can 100 percent get behind. I can see the potential for corruption. Because you're not voting on who you *want* to be governor or congressperson or president so much as you're voting on whose name you want to see on the ballot in November.

So I could easily see people being disingenuous. Take Ganim, for example. I'm sure I'm not the only one who thought he was unelectable when it came to governor – I'm sure plenty of not just Democrats but Republicans as well felt the same way. In an open primary, what's to stop Republicans and other unaffiliated but right-leaning folks from asking for a Democratic ballot and stuffing the box, as it were, for Ganim? Then the GOP candidate can coast to victory in the fall.

In the end, maybe the current system is the only way it can cleanly work – the only way you can clearly be sure people are voting for the person they authentically want to see win. But it just feels awfully strange, and frankly not right, to be disenfranchising so many potential voters.

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See you next week.