

**RIVEREAST****News****Bulletin***Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland*

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Top Taxidermist... East Hampton taxidermist Steve Hackett recently competed in the Garden State Taxidermy Association and won over 15 major awards, including Best All Around Taxidermist, Best of Show in Masters, and People's Choice for Fish, Birds, and Mammals – to just name a few.

Three Dead in ‘Horrific’ Crash

by Elizabeth Regan

Three people are dead after a two-car crash early Tuesday evening on Route 16 in East Hampton.

The victims were identified Thursday as Kyle Hermann, 24, of East Haddam; Leslie Marshall, 40, of Middletown; and Danielle Jacobs, 29, of Colchester.

There were no survivors in either vehicle.

East Hampton Police Chief Dennis Woessner said the crash occurred around 5:50 p.m. near the Salmon River. The two women were traveling together in a Buick and Hermann was driving a Jeep Wrangler.

Woessner said it is “somewhat safe to say” the cars collided head-on, but emphasized not much is known at this point. He estimated it will take four months for the Connecticut State Police Collision Analysis Reconstruction Squad to release its final report on the crash.

One of victims was ejected from the Buick, according to Woessner.

Woessner said Hermann and one of the women died at the scene; the third victim was flown by Life Star to Hartford Hospital, where she was later pronounced dead.

East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department Chief Greg Voelker said parts of both vehicles caught fire. The sedan broke up into pieces, with its engine, transmission and other parts lying on the road, while the Jeep was “over the edge.”

He said efforts to fight the fire were hampered by the amount of gasoline in the Jeep.

The East Hampton Ambulance Association and Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company also responded.

“It was a pretty horrific crash,” Voelker said. “There wasn’t a lot we could do.”

Woessner said officers were still conducting witness interviews on Wednesday. He reiterated “it will take a while” for officers to determine what happened.

Autopsy results from the Office of the Chief State Medical Examiner are expected in several weeks, according to Woessner.

“We’re trying to figure out exactly what happened,” Woessner said.

Police from Colchester and East Haddam also responded to the scene, Woessner said.

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Crash Course in Chinese Culture

by Elizabeth Regan

From eating fish heads in Shanghai to haggling over souvenir prices in Jinan, East Hampton High School students got a crash course in a different culture on their 10-day visit to China earlier this summer.

Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith brought the group of 39 students, teachers and family members to the world’s most populous country on a trip that began on June 23 in Beijing and ended on July 2 in Shanghai.

Smith said it was the fifth Chinese excursion he’s led since he first visited with a group of school principals in 2008.

“Especially in communities like East Hampton, where we don’t have a lot of diversity, it’s great for our students to step well out of their comfort zone and experience China,” he said.

A different English-speaking tour guide showed the group around each of three Chinese cities: Beijing, population 21.7 million; Jinan, population 6.8 million; and Shanghai, population 24.1 million.

Stacey Gibson – a preschool teacher at Memorial School who went on the trip with her 16-year-old son, Noah – described the three cities as completely distinct from one another.

“Each city had a different feel,” Gibson said. “It was almost like being in three different countries.”

Shanghai was the most like the United States, according to Gibson. The 128-story Shanghai Tower, with its fast elevator and 121st-floor observation deck, reminded her of the Empire State Building.

The capital city of Beijing gave the group a chance to visit the Forbidden City, take a rickshaw bike tour and take a tai chi lesson. And no visit would be complete without a stop at one of the Seven Wonders of the World: The Great Wall of China.

Smith said he chose the smaller city of Jinan as a destination because it is “off the beaten path.”

“To me, that’s the real experience,” Smith said. “Don’t just go where the tourists are.”

The capital of Shandong province, Jinan has been known since antiquity for its springs. It’s a short trip from Jinan to Tai’an, the home of one of China’s five sacred mountains. Smith said the steep climb up Mount Tai ends with amazing views and a vibrant summit scene that includes cultural artifacts, numerous temples, vendors and even a hotel.

“It’s like nothing I’ve ever experienced,” Smith said.

Gibson said the group was given several hours to explore the mountaintop even though there was enough to see and do to keep them busy for days.

“That was almost better than the Great Wall, if that’s at all possible,” she said.

For rising junior Rachel Gardiner, streets teeming with people, bicycles and mopeds was a bit of a culture shock.

“Being in the city was different because it was more crowded with less respect for per-

sonal space,” she said. “But if you get used to it, it’s not too bad.”

Gardiner described a jam-packed itinerary that included a Chinese acrobatics show, a calligraphy lesson with a home cooked meal by the teacher, and a visit to a silk factory, among many other activities.

“It was really filled with as much as we could fit into the day, which is great because we weren’t spending any time doing nothing,” Gardiner said.

She recalled one unguided afternoon in Jinan as a highlight of the trip. Food and souvenir vendors lined the alleyways of the downtown area with such unique offerings as fried octopus on a stick.

“I was a little worried to try it because it was sitting out in the sun,” she said, adding that she had ice cream instead.

Ben Nafis, who will be entering ninth grade at the high school this year, went on the trip with his parents and 11-year-old brother, William.

He said he was a bit hesitant at first. For one, there’s the language barrier. Then there’s the fact that he’s never been a big fan of Chinese food as it’s typically experienced in the United States.

But it turns out authentic Chinese cuisine is “pretty good,” according to Nafis.

“There was a Lazy Susan and a bunch of dishes that you spun around to other people on the table,” Nafis said.

He pointed to a visit to the Jianhua Experimental School in Beijing as one of the unique elements of the trip. The group visited the private, K-12 boarding school to meet a group of Chinese students who will be coming to East Hampton High School for a month in the fall.

“That was interesting because it was an experience not many tourists have,” Nafis said.

Gibson described the school as an elite educational institution where students are in the classroom from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. She said the long school day and working parents’ demanding schedules make it practical for children as young as seven years old to live on campus.

She said visiting the school and learning about the students’ lifestyles will make her a better host when she takes in two exchange students during their upcoming visit to East Hampton.

“One of the boys we met loved basketball,” she recounted. “But they’re so regimented with their school day and academics, we don’t know if he’s ever been to a basketball game.”

Gibson foresees going to a University of Connecticut basketball game with her exchange students – especially if one of them happens to be the same young man she enjoyed meeting in China. She also plans to give her guests the chance to participate in seasonal activities like pumpkin-carving or going on a hayride. A visit to an amusement park will

See Chinese Culture page 2



Students took in 10 days of sights in three Chinese cities earlier this summer, including the Wangshi Garden outside of Shanghai. From left to right: Hannah Balda, Emily Balda, high school Spanish teacher Regina DellaVolpe, Noah Gibson, Emma Wolfram, Rachel Gardiner, Emma Cook, Jason Gardiner, Ben Nafis and high school substitute teacher Robert Hein.

Chinese Culture cont. from Front Page

likely be on her itinerary as well, she said.

While China's rich history and sprawling beauty made the trip one she'll never forget, Gibson said she envisions a different focus

when the Jianhua students arrive in East Hampton.

"I want to show them the fun parts of Connecticut and New England," she said.

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Fatal Crash cont. from Front Page

State police provided traffic control in addition to accident reconstruction.

Route 16 was closed between Tartia Road and Waterhole Road for approximately seven hours Tuesday night into Wednesday morning. Woessner said state Department of Transportation crews came out to help put sand on the road after the crash.

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While China's rich history and sprawling

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I don't just work in journalism; I'm a fan of the industry. I've also been a lifelong fan of the New York media. So last week's news of the massive layoffs at the *New York Daily News* hit hard.

The *Daily News* is an institution. Its front pages, and back pages, have produced some powerful, iconic images over the past nearly 100 years. "WE'LL CARRY ON" read the banner headline across the Nov. 26, 1963 edition, placed above the famous, heart-wrenching picture of John F. Kennedy Jr. saluting at his father's funeral.

A little over a decade later, the cover of the Oct. 30, 1975 edition read "FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD" – referencing President Ford's refusing to help out the city with a multibillion-dollar bailout loan.

"IT'S WAR" adorned the top of the Sept. 12, 2001 cover, emblazoned atop a picture of a plane flying into the World Trade Center the day before.

On a related note, "ROT IN HELL!" read the front page of the May 2, 2011 cover, with a picture of the recently-killed Osama bin Laden.

The cover of the March 20, 2013 *Daily News* was a real gut punch: After a ban on assault weapons fell through, the cover read "SHAME ON U.S.," and the words were surrounded by pictures of all 20 children killed in the Sandy Hook massacre the prior December.

But the *Daily News* was of course so much more than just its banner headlines. Its stories were routinely fantastic, in areas ranging from local news to politics to entertainment to sports. Its reporting has won 11 Pulitzer Prizes over the years. I often picked up a copy whenever I was down in the city, and it was always a fun, insightful read.

So it really, really stunk when I heard the horribly-named Tronc – the same company that owns the *Hartford Courant* – laid off 50 percent of its newsroom last Monday. Fifty percent! The company said it was going to refocus the paper "on breaking news – especially in areas of crime, civil justice and public responsibility." On the bright side, it was good news for an old friend of mine who is a crime reporter there. His job wasn't cut. But it means an awful lot of good, solid, gritty reporters were immediately out of a job.

Times are tough in the journalism industry; I know that. They have been for years now. But it's awful to see one of journalism's giants decimated like this. I'm sure what's left of the *Daily News* staff will continue to put out a top-rate paper. It's just very sad to see a development like this.

Holy cow, Andover may have seen the light. The town's recently-appointed Charter Review Commission is eyeballing several changes – including a couple that I've long advocated.

The commission apparently sees the value in finally dropping the long-antiquated practice of holding municipal elections in May. It's one of just four towns in the state to hold elections in May – and I've long thought that makes just no sense. Election Day is in November. It's when people are conditioned to vote. They expect to be casting ballots then. If you hold elections in November like every other town, it may just increase turnout.

Another "it's about time!" change would be reconfiguring things so that people can vote on the Andover town budget the same day they vote on the RHAM schools budget. For as long as I can remember, the referendum on the town budget has taken place a couple of weeks after the RHAM referendum. Hebron

and Marlborough, the other two towns in the RHAM district, always managed to hold their town budget votes on the same day as the RHAM budget. But Andover has to do things differently.

This results in the needless hassle and expense of setting up and operating the polls literally two weeks after the town set them up and operated them for the RHAM referendum. Plus, you have to believe this also blunts the voter turnout; how many people are itching to return to the polls to cast a budget vote just two weeks after voting on another one?

Yes, moving up the Andover budget vote to sync it up with RHAM would require some revising of the budget calendar. But it certainly can be done. And I firmly believe it would result in not only less money but more voters.

There are other possible charter changes I like as well – such as the creation of an Ethics Commission, something I feel every town should have – but I was pretty delighted to see the parts pertaining to municipal elections and budget votes in there. There may have been reasons for Andover to do things the way they've done them all these years. But that doesn't mean they need to keep doing them this way. Times change; the Andover charter should as well.

The East Hampton Police Department informed me this week that, once again, residents are reporting an automated phone system has been leaving messages imploring them to call an out-of-state phone number alleging to be the IRS – as the person allegedly owes back taxes.

But it's really not from the IRS at all. While police say it may sound official, it's a scam. If there really and truly is an issue with your federal taxes, you'll first receive a notice in the mail from the IRS, police said. Also, they said, if you happen to answer the phone and get one of these scam artists in person, ask whomever the caller is for their badge number. Real IRS employees have badge numbers. If the caller gives you a number, hang up and call 1-800-829-1040 to confirm it.

If all this sounds familiar, yes I wrote about it fairly recently. But one of the most terrible things about this scam is it won't go away. It keeps popping up – and I'm guessing in other towns as well – and police want to make sure no one falls prey to it.

Police advise that, if you get a phone call from someone claiming to be from the IRS and you know you owe, or think you owe, taxes, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040. If you know you don't owe taxes, or have no reason to think you do, then report the incident to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at 1-800-366-4484.

Police also advise anyone who's been targeted by this scam to contact the Federal Trade Commission via the "FTC Complaint Assistant" at FTC.gov. Add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your complaint.

Lastly, police said, the IRS does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media channels. The IRS also does not ask for PINs, passwords or similar confidential access information for credit card, bank or other financial accounts, police said. If you get an email purporting to be from the IRS, don't open any attachments or click on any links in the email. Instead, forward the whole thing to phishing@irs.gov.

See you next week.

East Hampton Man Turns Himself In on Assault Charges

by Elizabeth Regan

A local man turned himself in to East Hampton police last week on a warrant related to an alleged incident of domestic violence with a knife that took place in June.

Jason Canterbury, 35, of 5 Bellevue St. was arrested July 26 on felony charges of

first-degree unlawful restraint, second-degree assault, and two counts of risk of injury to a minor, as well as misdemeanor charges of second-degree threatening, third-degree assault and first-degree reckless endangerment.

According to witness reports outlined in the July 16 arrest warrant affidavit, Canterbury cut an unidentified individual on the forearm with a knife when that person intervened in a June 19 family dispute between Canterbury and another unidentified individual.

The victim's knife wound was about 3.2 centimeters long and required a total of 10 stitches, according to emergency room records cited in the affidavit.

The victim with the knife wound told officers they intervened after they saw Canterbury holding the knife to the other person's neck and screaming at them.

The other person told police the incident began as a verbal argument and escalated when Canterbury threw them to the ground in an effort to prevent them from leaving the house, the affidavit said.



Canterbury

Canterbury drove away in his black pickup truck before police arrived, according to the affidavit.

Police said the individual who was allegedly thrown to the ground complained of a sore head at the point of impact, but refused medical treatment.

Canterbury was unable to post a \$175,000.00 bond at the time of his arrest, police said. He was held until his arraignment at the Middletown Superior Court later the same morning. He has since been released from custody, according to the state judicial branch website.

Canterbury was also arrested last October and charged with first-degree threatening, first-degree reckless endangerment and second-degree breach of peace. Police alleged he interrupted a pickup basketball game at Sears Park by pointing a gun at the head of an 18-year-old player.

Canterbury pleaded not guilty in the gun-related case. Proceedings are in the pre-trial phase.

The arrest warrant affidavit for Canterbury's arrest last year said a search of the statewide law enforcement database showed there were seven long guns and six hand guns legally registered in Canterbury's name at the time.

Police said Canterbury's guns were seized by the department last week after a protective restraining order mandated the revocation of his pistol permit and the surrender of his firearms.

Woessner did not confirm how many guns were seized.

Canterbury's next court date for both cases is Aug. 28.

Painted Chairs Coming to Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

Some towns have painted frogs, some have painted apples, others have brightly designed horses or cows – and Hebron's going to have painted chairs.

The Town Center Project received a \$3,500 Community Challenge Grant from AARP to improve the quality of life in the downtown, said Judith Podell, Town Center Project founder.

According to AARP's website, the grants are part of an initiative to make communities great places to live for people of all ages.

The Town Center Project, a non-profit, is a means to bring more people to the center of town through events and activities, Podell said. It's something she has been working on for more than a year.

The project was one of 129 grant recipients selected from 1,600 applications, Podell said. Only three recipients were from Connecticut.

Town Planner Michael O'Leary alerted Podell to the grant and helped her write the application, she said. She credits him with the grant award.

"He wrote a section that was just wonderful," she said.

According to Podell, the Town Center Project is about "reinventing the heart of Hebron and working toward a more beautiful town center." With the grant, her idea was to do something to draw people to the town center and "catch their eye," but she wanted to do something that was also functional.

She decided on painted chairs.

"[It's] similar to the frog parade in Willimantic, they had big ceramic frogs in town, West Hartford had the cows, there are apples in Glastonbury," she said. "I was looking for something [practical]. I love the idea that it was creative, it was art, but at the same time it was not practical, so I said, what if we do chairs."

Podell selected a modified Adirondack-style chair designed by Irving Hopkins of Glastonbury, a retired chemistry professor from Mitchell College in Mystic, she said. Unlike the standard design, Hopkins' chairs are more level, making it easier for folks to get out of them.

Podell adapted the design for a larger chair and, with help from local police officer and woodworker Sgt. Marc Rubera, came up with

measurements of the chairs she needed. She ordered kits to make 12 from Country Carpenters where Paul Baker, general manager, cut the pieces and drilled the holes for screws.

Local Boy Scouts, their parents and Scout leader joined Podell's neighbors and friends in assembling the kits, she said.

Local artists submitted applications to paint the chairs, including images of their work and sketches of their ideas. Judges, who reviewed the applications without knowing the names of the artists, selected 10 winners from the 16 who entered.

They are painting the chairs using oil or acrylic paint based on their interpretation of the theme "Crazy for Color," Podell said. The chairs will be varnished before they are placed in pairs in spots in the historic district between Wall Street and Route 85 where folks will be able to sit and chat or relax.

"I'm hoping when it's possible that we can plant a small tree with each of the sets of chairs so eventually there's shade," she said.

Podell plans to meet with the Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments to discuss logistics, such as how to secure the chairs and mow around them.

Podell, who is one of the artists painting a chair, is creating an abstract design.

Town Clerk Carla Pomprowicz is also painting a chair. The design is "just kind of folk art, nothing fancy" and is reminiscent of drum hats she also paints, she said.

Pomprowicz she said she gets her inspiration from "West African fabrics and masks, paintings and sculptures."

Painting chairs and working on wood is new for Pomprowicz, who, after taking on drumming, studied African folklore and decided to paint drum hats in the folk style.

"I just have fun with it, so I do it," she said.

Pomprowicz said Podell was working hard to bring the town together and that she is looking forward to meeting the other artists when the chairs are presented.

The chairs will be presented on Patriot Day, Sept 11, at 10 a.m. in the town center. Prizes will be presented for judges' and peoples' favorites.

An ongoing activity of the Town Center



Dorothy Reiss, of Bolton, paints a chair for Hebron's Town Center Project. The project is a way to reinvent the heart of Hebron, according to founder Judith Podell. The decorated chairs will be in pairs in the historic section of town for folks to sit and relax or chat while in the center.

Project has been a series of summer concerts at Veterans Memorial Park. The final one will take place Aug. 12, when Nakita will perform rock, soul and funk.

The previous two concerts – held in July – drew between 85 and 100 people enjoying the free music, snacking on food from a food truck and playing summer games.

"There's a lot of room for dancing," Podell said.

The project's Harvest Moon Happening will take place October 20 and will include a fun run and a variety of games and activities.

Meanwhile, Podell is working on plans for next year.

To donate to the project, send a check to The Town Center Project, P.O. Box 153, Hebron, CT or through the project's website, thetowncenterproject.org. People can also have five percent of Amazon.com purchases donated to the project by selecting it as their charity of choice when checking out.

To volunteer, reach out to Podell through The Town Center Project Inc. on Facebook or on the project's website or call her at 860-205-3744.

Hebron Finance Department Lauded for Reporting Excellence

by Sloan Brewster

For 14 years running, the town has been recognized for excellence in financial reporting.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada awarded a certificate of achievement to the town for its comprehensive annual financial report, Finance Director Elaine Griffin announced in last Friday's weekly town management report. She said the award is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting.

Griffin said the achievement would not have come about were it not for the efforts her staff made and the cooperation of department heads.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said his "hat goes off" to the finance director and her staff and that Griffin makes sure the town is in compliance with all the policies and procedures.

"It's always a great accomplishment to get recognized, especially in the financial department," he said. "It's a statement that shows the taxpayers and the town officials that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing with the taxpayers' money."

The day to day process leading to getting such high marks is about keeping the town's books in order and making sure there are "no faux pas," Griffin said.

"It's making certain that the ledger – the financial ledger – is maintained in the manner that it should be and all posts are done right," she said. "The finance department is kind of the heart and all the nuts and bolts of all the operations."

While department heads maintain their own budgets and are responsible for staying within them, "everything flows through" the finance department, she said. The town has a stringent policy on purchases that everyone must follow, with department heads authorized to approve purchases under \$3,000 and required to get three quotes for anything over that amount.

Anything \$25,000 or more must go to bid, she said.

"So there's very strict criteria they must meet to make purchases," Griffin said.

The finance department in turn takes care of

expenses that affect everyone in the town hall, such as heating, electric and phone bills, she said.

"Those are all just paid through my finance staff," she said.

The department works closely with the tax collector and assessor to assure that all revenue is accurately posted and that the numbers balance with the bank statements.

"It's a fine balance to try to keep the auditors happy and keep the department heads happy," Tierney said.

The award is the result of a positive audit of the year's financial records, Griffin said. The 2017 fiscal year-end audit was completed in December. The 2018 fiscal year-end audit is in progress.

While glitches are rare, Griffin recalled one that occurred two or three years ago, when the tax collector had taken in revenue but the log of the transaction never made it to finance department, so the revenue was not posted.

"So the bank said we had \$26,000 more than

I had in my ledger," Griffin said.

Staff tracked down the report, which had inadvertently been stuck to some other papers, and reconciled the numbers, she added.

This month Griffin closed out fiscal year 2018 and began setting things up for fiscal year 2019. In the process, she reviewed purchases made toward the end of fiscal year 2017 but that were paid for in the beginning of fiscal year 2018 to make sure they were in the proper year's books, she said. Per the auditors' specifications, purchases must go into the books for the year they are ordered, not the year they are paid.

"The first week of July, I work on three different fiscal years," Griffin said. "July gets to be kind of a blur for me. I always end up taking the last week of July off."

Griffin officially closed the ledger out for fiscal year 2018 on July 17 and took off July 18 to July 27.

Griffin has been finance director since 2013; before that, in 2010 and 2012, she was interim finance director.

Clean Energy May Come to Colchester

by Allison Lazur

Natural gas may be coming to Colchester. While it's still in the early stages, Colchester has been selected to participate in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) renewable energy program. The plan is to construct a fuel cell, which relies on natural gas as its power source.

While Colchester currently has no natural gas lines, First Selectman Art Shilosky said that it could be available by 2020 based on the current plan.

Shilosky told the *Rivereast* this week Colchester was one of several cities or towns in the state approved to have natural gas.

The town, along with Eversource and Bloom Energy, met about a month ago to discuss the possibility of bringing natural gas to the electric-, propane- and oil-fueled town.

Public Works Director Jim Paggioli said the California-based fuel cell company Bloom Energy proposed the renewable energy project.

Bloom's website said the "renewable, clean and alternative energy" company converts fuel

into electricity through an "electrochemical process" utilizing a fuel cell as one the company's offered systems.

Natural gas, along with a small amount of water, is needed to power the fuel cell, Paggioli explained.

Paggioli explained that currently Eversource owns a piece of 13-acre property on Old Amston Road near the transfer station with an existing substation or transformer.

"Bloom Energy is proposing a 10-megawatt fuel cell generation facility at that location, which takes up a foot print of 100 feet by 150 feet," Paggioli said.

"There are no emissions that come from fuel cells, so it fits under the state's clean energy program," he said.

Although Paggioli said the program still has "a long ways to come," he cited several positives with the project.

"The footprint is extremely compact to get that type of generation of clean energy," he said.

Paggioli explained that natural gas tends to

be more economical and less expensive. He also noted that in the winter months, those with natural gas wouldn't have to worry about shoveling out a walkway so an oil delivery can be made.

He said the current proposed location is ideal because it's on a property Eversource already owns and is familiar with.

The major factor left to be decided is where the natural gas will come from and how it will get to Colchester.

Paggioli said Eversource is trying to decide between a location in Willimantic and a spot in Montville. Either way, once a route is determined, a gas line will have to run down state roads, in order to reach Colchester – something that will eventually have to be discussed with the Department of Transportation (DOT), he said.

"The town's interest is trying to maximize availability of gas service in those areas that are dense enough," Paggioli said.

He explained that housing densities, school facilities and most likely the center of town will

have the new natural gas option, adding "it probably won't extend to the outskirts of town."

Colchester's fuel cell project was approved in June by DEEP based on a proposal submitted by Bloom Energy in response to the state's Clean Energy Request for Proposals.

Other selected projects include bringing fuel cells to the Naugatuck Valley, Hartford and New Britain, DEEP Spokesperson Chris Collibee said.

Collibee said the "complicated, multi-level" clean energy process in this case involves the state, the natural gas provider and the fuel cell company.

"We go out and procure the energy and then [Bloom Energy] goes before Eversource and enters into a contract between [Bloom Energy] and with Eversource," he said.

Collibee said the cost of the project could not be disclosed because the contracts are still in negotiation, reiterating "it's complicated" and "all the details are not completely clear."

Colchester Resident to Attend Veteran Games

Colchester resident and United States Air Force veteran Martin Lopez is off to the National Veterans Golden Age Games this weekend.

The games, which take place in Albuquerque, N.M., will run from Aug. 3-8 are expected to host approximately 900 veterans.

Lopez, who served in Vietnam, has been attending the games for 16 years and has won over 40 medals in nine-ball, table tennis, shuffleboard and bowling – all of which are

played from his scooter.

The games' website states the event aims to improve the quality of life of veterans 55 and over through sports and recreational competition.

Lopez said he would like to thank his family, friends and customers at the Colchester and East Hampton Stop & Shop Supermarkets, Noel's Market and Ted's Restaurant for the support over the last 16 years, which have enabled him to regularly attend the games.

Possible Charter Changes in Andover May Scrap First Selectman

by Sloan Brewster

The Charter Review Commission is eyeballing a slew of changes to the town charter – including officially eliminating the first selectman position.

The reasoning behind scrapping the position sparked disagreement this week, however.

Changing the makeup of the Board of Selectmen – keeping it a five-member board, but getting rid of both the first selectman and vice first selectman positions – was one of several discussed by residents at a public hearing on July 19, Dennis Williams, Charter Review Commission chairperson, said. The hearing was attended by about 10 to 15 members of the public.

"There was a lot of great discussion, in my opinion, from the public as to ideas they had for changes as well as voicing concern about how the current government is going and how changes to the charter may help alleviate the problem," Williams said. "It allowed us to really get our arms around the issues people have, which is great."

The idea to change the makeup of the five-member Board of Selectmen was a response to concerns about Town Administrator Joseph Higgins' ability to move forward with certain items, Williams said. Some people thought the town administrator's hands were tied on certain tasks and blamed the problem on a disagreement between him and First Selectman Robert Burbank. The first selectman position – which Burbank has held since June 2006 – was the chief position in the town until the town administrator position was implemented in 2017.

What residents suggested – and what the Charter Review Commission officially proposed in a meeting immediately following the public hearing – was to eliminate the first selectman and vice first selectman positions, in favor of a chairman and vice chairman appointed by the board. The town administrator would then report to the board as a whole, not the first selectman.

But in a phone call Tuesday, Town Administrator Joseph Higgins said he already does that

– and added that he has never said Burbank prevents him from moving forward with anything.

"This is news to me; I was not familiar with that accusation," Higgins said when told about some at the public hearing feeling Burbank had tied his hands. "I do report to the entire board."

In a phone call Thursday, Burbank said the same thing.

Higgins "does not report directly to me," Burbank said. "He reports to the entire board, not to the first selectman."

Burbank admitted he does spend a lot of time working with Higgins, but said that's because Higgins is "inexperienced" and he is helping with the transition to town administrator. Prior to assuming the position in 2017, Higgins had spent 16 years working for the state, in such positions as project manager for the Connecticut Department of Administrative Service. Prior, he worked as a sanitary engineer for both the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Department of Public Health.

Burbank added he does not agree with the idea of eliminating the first selectman position as there are certain responsibilities the position continues to handle, such as signing off on grants.

"I know of no towns that don't have a first selectman; it's pretty standard," Burbank said. "There's a lot of things that the first selectman has the responsibility for, even when you have a town administrator."

However, in nearby Hebron, for example, there is a town manager and the Board of Selectmen. In lieu of a first selectman, there is a chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

While admitting that he does not agree with everyone all of the time, Burbank said there were no particular disputes between himself and Higgins.

Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen, who attended the July 19 public hearing, offered some thoughts on the makeup of the Board of Selectmen, comparing it with the Board of Education's makeup, Williams said.

Doyen expanded on this in a phone call this week.

School board members are elected every two years, and the board votes for a chairperson on a yearly basis, Doyen said. Doyen reports to the board as a whole, but works on a one-on-one basis with the chair to discuss certain things, such as her ideas for meeting agendas and what she thinks the board should discuss at its meetings.

"The chairman and I usually confer ahead of time on the agenda on the meeting," she said.

Williams, while admitting that he did not know if the town administrator's duties were actually being impeded by the first selectman, offered ideas for how to remedy the situation, if it in fact exists.

"If the citizens are frustrated by any selectman hindering the ability of others to perform their job, and if they feel that it is causing disruption to town business being conducted effectively, perhaps the solution rests at the polls by the electorate, as opposed to removing the title and position from the charter," Williams wrote in an email. "I also suggested that perhaps a revision to the town charter that specifically identifies and limits the powers and responsibilities of the first selectman could make it clear what role he/she plays with respect to the interaction with the town administrator."

* * *

The Charter Review Commission, which met after the hearing, is considering eliminating the first selectman and vice first selectman position and included the idea in a list of potential charter changes disseminated in a press release.

Another idea that came out of the hearing was to change the terms of office for selectmen from four to two years, Williams said. In response, the commission is recommending reviewing the terms of office for all boards and commissions.

The commission is also looking into changing the date of municipal elections from May to November, which was also something brought up at the public hearing – as was the establishment of a standing ethics commission.

"Other towns have ethics commissions and my personal commitment to that was that I needed to look into that further," Williams said, adding that he is researching the powers and responsibilities of ethics commissions in different towns and looking into to whom they report.

Some people also recommended a restructure of budget referenda so town, Andover Elementary and RHAM budgets would appear on the same ballot, but as separate questions.

Speakers at the hearing suggested it would be more cost-effective to do it that way, rather than having the town and elementary school's budget on one ballot and RHAM's on another, on a different day.

Lastly, the commission is reviewing purchasing procedures, according to the press release.

The commission has not voted on any measures, but Williams said he expects there to be motions and votes at its next meeting. The commission would then recommend any charter changes to the board of selectmen. Any of those that selectmen are in favor of must then be vetted through the town attorney and brought to referendum.

While some potential changes may be included on the November ballot, Williams said he and the rest of the commission do not feel rushed to do that.

Williams said he and other members of the commission "agree that we're under no specific time restraints," and added, "Some commission members said they would rather get it right, than get it in by a deadline. I'm in agreement with that."

The seven-member commission has an 18-month charge, per the town charter, he added.

Additional revisions may be included based on further input, according to the press release. Comments from Andover residents and electors are welcome. Messages may be sent to andoverctcharter@gmail.com.

The commission will meet the week of Aug. 13; the date and location and agenda will be posted on andoverct.org. A second public hearing will be held Aug. 23 at Town Hall.

Marlborough WPCA Makes Decision on School Floor-Stripping

by Allison Lazur

After nearly a year of battling over who is to blame for the clogged sewer issues at Marlborough Elementary School, the town's Water Pollution Control Agency (WPCA) reached a decision at its July 12 meeting that will change how the school strips its floors and disposes of the wax and stripper.

Prior *Rivereast* articles reveal that a blockage was discovered last August. The cause at the time – according to Town Planner Peter Hughes – was “three five-gallon buckets’ worth” of floor stripper, wax, paint, cleaning rags and other materials stuck in the pump propeller and discharged into the sewer at the school.

Hughes was out of town this week and could not be reached for comment.

Since then, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz said the school paid the nearly-\$30,000 sewer bill, but is now faced with how to go about stripping the floors this summer, since the WPCA ruled that the stripper can no longer be discarded into the sewer system.

The alternative option would be to barrel the waste and have it hauled away, Sklarz explained.

The cost of that option is approximately \$6,000 for the two weeks of floor stripping that takes place once a year in the summer, Sklarz said.

“Over five years that’s \$30,000; wouldn’t it be wiser to fix the problem permanently?” he said.

But the floor stripper the school has been using isn’t anything new. According to a September 2017 *Rivereast* article, shortly after the blockage was discovered, Marlborough Elementary School Principal Dan White stated the school had been using the same “green” cleaning product for the last 10 to 15 years with no issues.

White was out of town this week and could not be reached for comment.

School invoices reflect that the green product is called Green Select Stripper – a solution that is non-toxic, phosphate free, contains no dye and is non-flammable, according to product information.

Sklarz also said this week, the biggest concern was to utilize a product that contained no petroleum, which the green product satisfies.

“The product we use was on the green list of

products and not petroleum based,” Sklarz said, adding that he found out that other school systems are using the same product for floor stripping. “It was frustrating for us because we did everything we were supposed to do,” he said.

Colchester Head of Facilities Ken Jackson confirmed that the schools he oversees utilize the Green Select Stripper solution and stated “it definitely isn’t barreled, so I would imagine it goes into the sewer system, since it’s a green solution.”

Steven Campbell, Head Custodian at Andover Elementary, said the school does not use a floor stripper, but a “degreaser” product called Tenacity, which he says goes into their septic system because the school does not have a sewer system. Tenacity product information states the product is “green.”

Third-Party Opinion

Prior to the WPCA’s decision, the school hired an outside civil engineering and environmental consulting firm – Comprehensive Environmental Incorporated – to determine the reason behind the sewer clogging.

The report states that “as part of resolving the blockage issues, new pumps were installed at the school” after the blockage occurred last August. The report takes into account the water flows through the pump stations and determined that both the pump stations and pipe sizing are of “adequate capacity” for the school’s flows. However, the flows may take 8 hours or longer to reach the gravity manhole.

Ultimately, the reports concluded that the newly-installed pumps “should be able to handle most liquids from the cleaning operations, but would be susceptible to degradation from products with high levels of petroleum distillates.”

The firm also consulted with the pump manufacturer. The manufacturer’s findings state that the cleaning solutions used by the school can be used “provided that there is extensive flushing after usage with clean water.”

The civil engineering firm also speculated that it is “very plausible the materials re-harden in the pumps and piping” with a delay in the flow of water through the pipes, especially in the summer months when school is not in session.

The recommendation by the firm states “the school district utilizes floor stripping and wax-

ing materials in accordance with the pump manufacturers flushing recommendations for this coming summer recess. At the conclusion of that recess the pump stations should be pumped out and inspected for accumulation of wax in the pumps and the system should be flushed” and materials collected and tested for wax levels.

After receiving the firm’s report, the Board of Education unanimously decided at its June 28 meeting to continue discarding the wax and stripper into the sewer system while abiding by the recommended flushing parameters. A motion was made by Board of Education Vice Chairman Wes Skorski who stated the board determined this to be the “safest and most cost-effective procedure.”

However, when the school’s plan was explained by Hughes to the WPCA at its July 12 meeting, the agency unanimously decided to vote against the plan.

WPCA Chairman Jack Murray told the *Rivereast* this week “the sewers aren’t designed for floor strippers; the sewers are designed for human waste.”

He also explained that the water used ultimately ends up at a treatment facility in East Hampton that charges per gallon. “Every gallon we send to East Hampton we pay for,” he said.

Murray said that if the school were to go ahead with the flushing, “The volume of water they [would use] for flushing exceeds the amount of water we permit.”

The pH level of the floor stripper clocking in at 12 also exceeds what is allowed, explained Murray, but acknowledged the school does dilute the solution.

“When you add water it would bring the pH down to around 7, but that’s not so much what we are concerned about,” he said, and added, “It still ends up at something that we have to deal with in our system.”

The sewer system is not only connected to by the school, but also to the senior center and five residences which were impacted by the blockage last year, according to Sept. 14, 2017 WPCA meeting minutes. However, based on what was discovered at that time, Murray said the findings point to the school.

“We’ve had sufficient experience with cleaning out grinder pump chambers. We know from

those experiences – doing those cleanouts – and finding things like lumps of coal, paint, floor stripper, mop heads, crayons, ceramics, that we can speculate it’s from the school.”

What About Before?

According to Board of Education secretary Louise Concodello, the school was connected to the sewer system in 2003 and had “no issues” until 2016. Concodello explained that once former Superintendent of Operations Chris Corsa resigned, there was no one to “make sure our systems were in working order.”

Sklarz also echoed Concodello’s thoughts and said “Corsa would check our sewers and grinder pumps and once he left, it left us educators to deal with the problem.”

He added “When the position was eliminated, we started having issues with the sewer system...coincidence? I don’t know.”

According to a previous *Rivereast* article, when Corsa resigned in October 2016, town officials split the job into two separate positions, Public Works Supervisor and Public Works Director, currently held by Tony Gallicchio and John Jones, respectively.

Gallicchio told the *Rivereast* this week neither he nor Jones conduct regular checks on the school’s sewer system, but will visit the school if something is broken and can be repaired by them.

When the sewer system was met with its blockage issue last year, Hughes, at the time, said the school had been informed since 2012 not to dump materials in the sewer.

First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, in the September 2017 *Rivereast* article, stated that this incident was the fourth time since 2012 that a blockage had been caused by the school.

Traversa echoed Murray’s sentiments this week and told the *Rivereast* the bottom line is “floor wax is not human waste and does not belong in the sewer system – period.”

Moving On

Concodello confirmed this week the school’s floors have not been stripped yet this summer. She said the school is looking into a “possible deal” with a company utilized by Middlesex Hospital to barrel and remove the waste.

“At some point you have to move on, we did everything reasonable people should do,” Sklarz said. “It’s [the WPCA’s] jurisdiction and they took a very conservative approach.”

Marlborough State Firefighters Off to Colorado

by Allison Lazur

A crew of 20 assembled at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Marlborough location last Friday, July 27, to head out west. The group consisted of 16 firefighters from across Connecticut, two New Hampshire firemen and two State of Connecticut employees all with one goal: assist in the current Colorado fires that have set portions of the state ablaze for approximately the last two months.

DEEP’s Forest Protection Supervisor Helene Hochholzer told the *Rivereast* this week the crew will be faced with fighting the Buttermilk fire, after receiving their specific assignments from the local geographic dispatch center, upon arrival.

According to the Incident Information Website – which displays hourly updated maps of active and contained wildfires all over the country – the lightning-ignited fire is estimated to be approximately 746 acres, located in western Colorado, 15 miles north of the town of Montrose, which is positioned on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains.

Hochholzer said before heading out to the Centennial State, the men and women were outfitted with items such as line gear and fire-retardant Nomex clothing, and will obtain some

of the larger equipment such as chainsaws and trucks once they arrive.

The crew will put the additional training they each receive to the test, working 12- to 16-hour days for the next two weeks and camping in a public park, she said.

“They have to go through a pretty rigorous field base training in Enfield, a physical ability test every year and an eight-hour refresher course once a year,” she said.

Hochholzer explained that some of the larger camps house thousands of firefighters. In some cases, showers and caterers for food are brought into the camp, while other sites rely on ready-to-eat meals, similar to what would be used in the military. Hochholzer said she wasn’t sure which situation this year’s crew would face.

DEEP has sent crews all across the country for the last 20-plus years, with the exception of last year, when “budgetary restrictions” kept an interstate fire crew from being dispatched, Hochholzer said.

And DEEP Fire Control Officer Richard Schenk is no stranger to fighting those interstate fires.

“Since 1988 I’ve pretty much been in every state in the U.S. that has fires,” he said.

“Fire is fire really wherever you go; what makes things most interesting are the people you meet who live in the area that you are going to help.”

Schenk recalled a situation in Montana where a fire was approaching a mobile home positioned on top of a cinder block foundation. Schenk said he made a “seat-of-the-pants decision” to pull the mobile home off the foundation.

Because it was such a quick decision, Schenk said he wasn’t sure how the mobile home owner would respond. However, the individual ended up being very appreciative that irreplaceable items like family photos had been saved, he said.

“It’s about the little things you can do to help sometimes,” Schenk added.

He explained that while he’s traveled around the country to fight wildfires, Connecticut has its own potential risk of facing flames.

The state’s wildfire season runs from March 15 to May 15, he said.

What people are unaware of is that if the state did not get rain for a while, Connecticut would have “almost identical fuel conditions” to the large fires that occurred in Tennessee in 2016.

He also disclosed that the cause of wildfires vary from lightning to debris burning to arson, or an equipment fire from a motor vehicle, for example, that has pulled off the side of road in tall grass.

Several of the fires in Connecticut are arson fires, Schenk explained.

“It’s very difficult to have evidence left from an arson fire” that reveals the fire was in fact started with malicious intent, he said, adding that the lack of evidence makes those particular fires tough to label as arson.

Schenk said during a thunderstorm in the Rocky Mountains, often times the rain can evaporate before it hits the ground, which can result in lightning still striking, potential causing a fire.

In Connecticut, Schenk said on average there are about 20 fires a year that span between 5 to 10 acres and only a couple fires that exceed over a hundred acres.

DEEP recommends taking precautions such as carefully disposing of hot charcoal, having firefighting tools nearby and handy, as well as obeying local laws regarding open fires and camp fires, in order to minimize the risk of igniting a forest fire.

New Business Offers an Eclectic Escape in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

Wild Roots is a cool, cavernous escape in the middle of the Village Center where shoppers can find an eclectic mix of home decor ranging from plants that don't need soil to an embalmed bat hanging upside down in a bell jar.

Krista Comtois opened her shop at 82 Main St. in March. She's since moved to another unit in the same building to take advantage of more space as well as the glass-paned French doors that welcome visitors to the unique space.

Wild Roots features anything-but-ordinary greenery like air plants – which grow without dirt – and bug-eating species such as Venus fly traps and pitcher plants. There are rocks and crystals interspersed with natural candles and teas. Antique glass bottles retrieved from the bottom of the Connecticut River are for sale on one table, while books about nature and mysticism sit nearby.

Comtois said she's always wanted a shop of her own. The dream goes back to the days she was a "crazy, rock-collecting kid" learning about nature at the hands of parents and grandparents with green thumbs, she said.

"I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted in my shop, but I wanted it to represent who I am and what I like," she said.

The musical ambiance is eclectic, too.

"You can definitely hear lots of different things when you come in here, because my taste in music is absolutely all over the place," she said.

Old-timey tunes might crackle out of the 1926 Victrola next to the cash register, or the playlist emanating from more modern speakers might include the wheezy rap of the Notorious B.I.G.

"It depends what mood I'm in," she said.

Comtois was a stay-at-home mom to children ages 13, 5 and 3 when she made the leap to business ownership. Her husband, Jon, is a structural engineer who crafted all the wooden

display tables as well as the hanging lattices that hold plants, tiny glass terrariums and even some of the bittersweet vines that are taking over their yard at home in Marlborough.

She described the shop as an extension of her own house and a "home away from home" for her kids.

"They love getting their hands dirty, making terrariums and touching all the crystals," she said. "I think it's good for them to get their hands in there and do that. It's just natural for kids to be curious."

She said she is looking to carry a few more science-based items for children, but added there's plenty to interest her youngest clients already. They're fascinated by natural curiosities like the Venus fly trap plant, the coyote skull with air plants sticking out of its eyes, and the bat at permanent rest in a glass dome near the front window.

"Plants and animals, it's all part of nature," she said. "I think the mix is beautiful. It just kind of flows."

Comtois said East Hampton was the natural location for her endeavor based on its proximity to home and its close-knit, evolving community of businesses.

"ECO Coffee House has brought a lot of traffic down here, and people are really starting to like what downtown is becoming," she said, adding that an artisan bread bakery is set to open across the street in the coming months.

"I think it's going to be really nice down here," she said.

She cited lower Connecticut River Valley towns like Essex and Chester as inspiration for her own local endeavor. The quaint downtown areas mix business, history and recreation as part of the quintessential New England experience.

"I don't think there's any reason downtown East Hampton can't be as popular and busy as those towns," Comtois said.



Krista Comtois brings a green, mystical vibe to the Village Center as the proprietor of Wild Roots, an eclectic home décor boutique that opened its doors in March.

East Hampton Police News

7/18: Eric O'Connell, 23, of 91 Front St., Middletown, was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest, and charged with conspiracy to commit fraudulent use of an automated teller, conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree forgery, and sixth-degree larceny, East Hampton Police said.

7/18: Troy Roper, 47, of 54 Midwood Farm Rd., was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and operating a motor vehicle without a license, police said.

7/18: Frederick Galvin, 54, of 54 Midwood Farm Rd., was issued a summons for permit-

ting operation of a motor vehicle without insurance, improper use of a license plate and allowing operation of an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

7/19: Shannon O'Connell, 26, of 7 Barton Hill Rd., was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle under suspension, police said.

7/20: Thomas Curris, 44, of 47 Haddam Neck Rd., was issued a summons for kindling fire in the open, police said.

Also, from July 16-22, officers responded to 13 medical calls, two motor vehicle crashes and 10 alarms, and made 35 traffic stops, police said.

Two-Vehicle Collision, Three Injured in Colchester

State Police said two drivers and a passenger were left with minor injuries after a collision on July 26.

A Volvo driven by Christopher Carberry, 26, of 190 S Thames St., Unit 15, Norwich, was traveling east on Route 2 near exit 21 at approximately 3:14 p.m. when it struck a Dodge Ram traveling in the same area, ac-

cording to police. The Ram was operated by Martin H. Perzanowski, 67, of 973 Worthington Ridge, Berlin.

Carberry and Perzanowski, as well as Perzanowski's passenger, Sandalee Perzanowski, 68, of 973 Worthington Ridge, Berlin, were all transported to Hartford Hospital with minor injuries.

Portland Police News

7/20: A 15-year-old juvenile male was arrested and charged with breach of peace and second-degree criminal mischief, police said.

7/20: Cristina Moreno, 23, of 10 Coe Ave., was charged with third-degree assault and risk of injury to a minor, Portland Police said.

7/20: Dominica Anderson, 22, of 36 Chatham Court, was charged with third-degree assault and risk of injury to a minor, police said.

7/22: Riquelle Williams, 37, of 12 Vernon St., New Haven, was charged with speeding and operating a motor vehicle without a license, police said.

7/28: Patrick Dube, 74, of 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., was charged with speeding and reckless driving, police said.

Colchester Police News

7/26: Colchester Police said Valerie Taff, 70, of 42 Bailey Rd., Andover, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right at slow speed.

7/26: State Police said Tanya Gagnon, 37, of 164 Norwich Ave., was arrested and charged with violation of probation after turning herself into police.

7/28: Colchester Police said Dayna L. Wright, 45, of 38 Lynch Rd., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with operating a vehicle under suspension, DUI, failure to drive right and operating a vehicle with a handheld electronic device.

Colchester Residence Burglarized

Colchester Police said an apartment on Renee Drive was broken into on July 24.

Police said calls came in around 7:53 p.m. that valuable jewelry was stolen from the apartment after the perpetrator gained entry through a basement door.

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

Herd of Deer Causes Collision in Colchester

A herd of deer are to blame for a collision on July 26, according to state police.

Police said Heather M. Hoxsie, 22, of 75 E. Old Rte. 6, Hampton, told them she swerved her Chevy to avoid a herd of deer on Miller Road before striking a rock and then a tree off the left side of the road. The crash occurred at approximately 11:35 p.m. in the vicinity of Route 85.

Hoxsie was transported by the Colchester Fire Department to Hartford Hospital with suspected minor injuries.

Obituaries

Colchester

Jake Devon Koch

Jake Devon Koch, 22, of Colchester, passed away at home Saturday, July 28. He was the beloved husband of Amanda (Buell) and father of Liam Koch. Jake was born on Sept. 14, 1995, in Hartford, a son of Marguerite (Shuman) Koch of Colchester and Timothy Koch of Vermont.



Jake was a laborer, working with Siracusa Moving Co. in New Britain. He was also studying to learn HVAC. He enjoyed fishing and dirt bike riding, but most importantly, he was ever devoted to his son, Liam.

He leaves several other family members, including two brothers, Eric Koch of Glastonbury, Michael Koch of Colchester; stepmother, Kathy Koch; in-laws and their spouses, Debora and husband Timothy Cote of Colchester, Don and wife Cindy Buell of Sterling; and numerous extended family and friends.

Calling hours were held Wednesday, Aug. 1, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral service was held Thursday, Aug. 2, at the funeral home. Burial will be in the Westchester Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to benefit his son Liam at gofundme.com/liams-bike.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Helen Loretta Bell

Helen Loretta Bell of Hebron, widow and soulmate of the late Robert S. Bell, passed away Monday, July 30, at Hartford Hospital, surrounded by her loving family.

Born Feb. 4, 1938, in Boston, Mass., she was the daughter of the late William and Loretta (Dunn) Burbank, and grew up in Hebron. In her life, Mrs. Bell was a successful business woman, owning and operating Creative & Northeast Drywall. She was a member of the National Organization of Women in Construction and was a communicant of the St. Columba Church in Columbia.

Known for her quick wit and sharp tongue, Helen was a loving wife, doting mother, and an indulgent grandmother.

She leaves three children and their spouses, Mary Ann and Allen Parker of Colchester, Helen and Bruce MacBryde of Coventry, and Robert and Valerie Bell of Manchester; 11 grandchildren, Cassandra, Teresa, Richard, Helen, Michael and Robert Parker, Mary Kathleen MacBryde, Megan (and Bryan) Swiger, Madelyn MacBryde and Melinda and Robert Bell; along with many extended family and friends.

The family will receive guests Monday, Aug. 6, from 5-7 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated Tuesday, Aug. 7, at 10:30 a.m., at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron. Burial will follow in St. Peter's Cemetery, Hebron.

East Hampton

Donald D. Dakers

Donald D. Dakers, 81, of East Hampton, passed away Sunday, July 29, peacefully at his home, surrounded by his family. Born in Hartford July 5, 1937, he was the son of the late Albert and Janet Dakers. Donald (Don) was predeceased by his siblings, Virginia and Albert. The beloved husband for 56 years of Jane (Sayers) Dakers, he leaves behind his six children: his son Andrew Dakers of Austin, Texas; his five daughters, Susan Joyce and husband Terry of Deep River, Lynne Dakers of East Hampton, Lisa Audet and husband Dean of Woodstock, Elizabeth Havican of Simsbury, and Jennifer Stroker and husband Jon of Littleton, N.H.; and ten grandchildren, Megan, Emily and Michael Audet; Ashley, Caitlyn and Jack Havican; Gillian and Liam Stroker; Wyatt Joyce and Derek Phillips.

Don graduated from Hartford Public High School in 1955 and attended UConn, where he received a BA in English. He then earned his JD at UConn Law School in 1962 and subsequently a master's degree in English at NYU.

Don was an officer in the Judge Advocate General Corps of the United States Army, serving in Fort Lee, Va. He was honorably discharged with the rank of captain. After the military, Don moved to New York City where he worked in the legal department for Chemical Bank, eventually returning to Connecticut as vice president and resident counsel for Waterbury National Bank.

Don left the corporate world to pursue a career in law, initially as a solo practitioner before transitioning to criminal defense, which he practiced for the remainder of his career, eventually serving as the chief public defender for the New Haven Superior Court in 1999. After retiring from the state, Don then went on to serve as the head of the criminal unit of the New Haven Legal Assistance until his full retirement.

Don raised his family in Madison, a block from Long Island Sound where he enjoyed fishing, sailing and spending time with his children and grandchildren. Most recently, Don has been enjoying his final years living in East Hampton, getting to know the local residents as he went about his daily errands, and keeping his mind sharp doing crossword puzzles and voraciously reading. His favorite place to be was sitting with Jane at his kitchen table, especially on Sunday mornings. His keen yet unassuming intellect, sense of humor, compassion for others, and ability to whistle any tune on command will be missed by all who knew him.

Friends may call at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, Aug. 3, from 6-8 p.m. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Saturday, Aug. 4, at 9:30 a.m., in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will be private in St. Mary's Cemetery in Hamden.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Boys Town, 14100 Crawford St., Boys Town, NE 68010.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com



Danielson

Ioannis A. Dionisopoulos

Ioannis A. Dionisopoulos, 89, of Danielson, passed away Sunday, July 22, 2018 at the William W. Backus Hospital in Norwich. He was born in Anemohori, Pyrgos, Elis, Greece on May 22, 1929, son of the late Anastasios and Sophia (Zanglis) Dionisopoulos. He was the beloved husband of Marcina (Atsales) Dionisopoulos.



Mr. Dionisopoulos served in the Greek Navy. He retired from Rogers Corporation after 42 years of service. He was a musician and bandleader and was the organist for The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Churches in Danielson and Norwich. He was a member of AHEPA.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his children, Anastasios Dionisopoulos and Karen (Karina) Miller of Amston, Constantine Dionis and wife Monika of Danielson, and Sophia Sarault of Rogers; sister, Toula Grammenos of Auburn, Mass.; several beloved grandchildren, great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by two sisters, Helen Panos and Olga Zafiroopoulos, and brother, Vasilis Dionisopoulos.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, July 31, at 11 a.m., at The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Danielson. Burial was in Westfield Cemetery, Danielson. A calling hour was held Tuesday at the church, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, send memorial donations to Marcina Dionisopoulos.

For online condolences, visit tillinghastfh.com.

Andover

Jordan Keane Murdock

It is with great sadness that the family of Jordan Keane Murdock announces his passing on Wednesday, July 25, at the age of 56 years. He was born Oct. 24, 1961. Jordan will be forever remembered by his wife and best friend Teresa, and their children, Martin and Madyson.



SFC Jordan Murdock was a member of the United States military for 27 years and achieved the rank of Sergeant First Class. SFC Murdock was a Signal Support Systems Specialist and retired with an honorable discharge. He served in the United States Army, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and National Guard Active Guard Reserve. He deployed in support of the Bosnian War and Operation Noble Eagle. His unwavering dedication to duty and unparalleled professionalism have consistently earned the respect of subordinates, peers, and superiors alike. An innovative and relentless troubleshooter, his vast technical knowledge greatly aided in his unit's success. After retiring from the military he went to work for DKW Communications, Inc., based in Washington, D.C., as a Systems Analyst in New London.

Jordan was a loving father and husband, and was a rock, always providing for his family and others in need. He loved the outdoors and was a huge movie buff. He played a mean harmonica and was an avid fan of Neil Young. He loved sports, football being his favorite, the Raiders and the Mets were his teams and he was a very competitive individual.

Along with his wife and children, Jordan will be lovingly remembered by his sisters, Karlen (Brian) Senseny, Kathryn (Chris) Burki, by stepbrother Joseph (Diane) Scott III and by nephews and nieces, Tyler Butterbaugh, Victoria Senseny, Cavan Devine, Ryan Devine, Conrad Burki, Patricia Scott and Joseph Scott IV. He will also be remembered by his mother, Myrna L. Wade Scott.

Jordan was predeceased by his brother, Kelly Butterbaugh, and stepfather, Joseph Scott II.

The family will receive friends today, Aug. 3, from 3-5 p.m., at Manchester Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester. A funeral service will follow at 5 p.m.

To sign the online memorial guestbook, visit manchesterfh.com.

Colchester

Marie Therese Keith

Marie Therese Keith, 83, of Norwich, passed away Saturday, July 28, at Harrington Court in Colchester after an extended illness, surrounded by her family. Marie was born Sept. 26, 1934, in Groton, the daughter of the late Ollie A. and Lena (Jeanette) Thomason.



She married the late William J. Keith Sr. Feb. 20, 1954 at the Cathedral of St. Patrick in Norwich. He passed away May 21, 2008.

Marie is survived by her children Judith Stolaronek and husband Stas', Kathy Mikna, William J. Keith Jr., Cynthia Serwinski, John Keith, Andrew Keith and wife Jo-Ann, Mary McClary and husband Alan, Joseph Keith Sr. and wife Jill and Anthony Keith, by her grandchildren William, Anthony and Nicholas Stolaronek, Jonathan and Danielle McClary, Jessica and Sarah Mikna, Joseph Keith Jr. and Andre' Keith and by her great-granddaughter Lydia Stolaronek.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was predeceased by her sisters Diana Brennan and Cecile Davidson, and by her brother John O. Thomason.

Marie's family would like to take the opportunity to thank the staff at Harrington Court for their caring and compassion during Marie's time there.

Because of her love for the color purple, Marie's family requests that those attending her services please wear the color purple. Visitation will be held Saturday, Aug. 4, at the Labenski Funeral Home, 107 Boswell Ave., Norwich, from 9-10:30 a.m. and will proceed to an 11 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial at The Cathedral of St. Patrick, 213 Broadway in Norwich. Burial will be private for the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Marie's family.

To leave a message of condolence for Marie's family, visit her memorial at labenskifuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Benjamin Harrison Bidwell III

Benjamin (Tommy) Harrison Bidwell III, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, passed away at age 60 Tuesday, July 24. He was born Dec. 30, 1957, to the late Lorraine Sampson (Schooner) and the late Benjamin H. Bidwell Jr.

Ben served in the Air Force as an aircraft mechanic. He also worked on plumbing and mechanical systems throughout his career.

Ben is survived by his brother, Brenden Bidwell and wife Karyn of Middletown; sister, Marcia Addy of Nashua, N.H.; sister Allison Clark and husband Matthew of Willington; and nieces, Meghan Addy and Khira Bidwell; also his estranged wife Margaret Bidwell, and stepchildren Brian Dickenson, Melissa Dickenson and Holly Visone.

We will miss Ben's wry humor and love of history, politics and cats. His family wishes to thank the VA medical staff as well as David Eppner.

Those who wish may donate in Benjamin's name to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Friends and family are welcome to attend the memorial service Saturday, Aug. 4 at 11 a.m. at Lakeview Cemetery, East Hampton.