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RHAM High School senior Skylar Haines covers the Women's March in Hartford as part of the RHAM News production team. Haines created a series called *Speaking Through Stories* on the Community Voice Channel. On March 19, at 1:30 p.m., the most recent show in the series: "Connecticut's Response to Gun Violence" will air. In the episode, which will also air on March 28 at 7 p.m., Haines endeavors to start a conversation about both sides of the issue.

Hebron Teen Tackles Gun Violence

by Sloan Brewster

RHAM High School senior and blooming journalist Skylar Haines is passionate about the truth.

Haines, who sat down with the *RiverEast* last week to talk about some of her projects and endeavors, created a news show called *Speaking Through Stories*. The most recent episode of the series, which airs on the Community Voice Channel [CVC], is about gun violence.

In a time when "most issues are increasingly polarized," Haines, a Hebron resident, said she is about opening dialogues and starting conversations "where we could find where our values, our intentions, and our visions could overlap." To get there, she said, she does thorough research and has conversations with folks on all sides of an issue.

The in depth programs Haines creates are newsy but are a bit longer than typical newscasts and resemble mini-documentaries, according to Nick Lavigne, CVC's executive director.

Not only does Haines come up with her own ideas, she has the drive and follow-through to complete them and asks for feedback along the way, he said. He noted that she has even asked during the editing process if cutting footage in a certain way would project a certain angle or position on the subject – which is something she does not want to do.

"She's always interested in it representing the truth and not a specific mindset," he said.

Melanie Merkel, community outreach manager and trainer at CVC, said Haines is at CVC three to five times a week, spending up to five hours a day there, and is constantly striving to do better.

"She's got such a good head on her shoulders," Merkel said. "I know she's going to make a great journalist some day and I am very proud of her."

For her latest episode, entitled "Connecticut's Response to Gun Violence," Haines sat down with a long list of people, including members of Mothers United Against Violence; Mark Barden, who lost his 7-year old son in the Sandy Hook shooting and is founder and executive director of the nonprofit organization Sandy Hook Promise; Jeremy Stein, executive director of CT Against Gun Violence; Ray Johansen, director of education for CT Carry; and Rich Burgess, president of CT Carry.

Haines said she met Burgess and Johansen at a brewery and while she was interviewing them a man from a nearby booth started shouting, using explicit words about how he disagreed with what the members of the gun rights advocacy group were saying.

"I was in awe of how the people from CT Carry handled the situation. They kept saying, 'We would love to have a conversation with you,'" she said. "That really struck me because that was what I was trying to do, trying to have a conversation."

When she was editing all her interviews, Haines said she found a lot of soundbites in which people were saying the same thing about trying to have a conversation.

"I also found every single person I was interviewing was searching for a dialogue where there could be that middle ground and at least an understanding of where the other was coming from," she said.

Haines said she wanted to do the show because the country has been involved in one war or another since was born – and also because gun violence has been on the rise of late.

"I spent my prom night [in 2018] watching coverage of the Santa Fe shooting and Parkland, earlier that year, had devastated our school community," she said.

The May 10, 2018, shooting at Santa Fe High
See Gun Violence page 2

Temporary Fix Floated for Colchester Charter

by Allison Lazur

A subcommittee of members from the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance this week drafted an agreement to temporarily mend a major charter issue recently brought to light.

The issue involves the discovery of a significant, one-word omission in the town charter, which was last revised and approved in 2017. The charter is a fundamental document outlining the power structure and procedures that guide local government.

First Selectman Art Shilosky last month was the first to call attention to current charter language that seemingly strips the Board of Finance of its ability to help craft the town budget by making members responsible for pre-

senting the budget – but not for "developing" it.

The memorandum of understanding hashed out at the subcommittee's meeting Wednesday is designed to serve as a short term solution until a long term remedy can be brought to voters at referendum in November. The agreement will allow the town to proceed through the upcoming budget process as it has in the past, with the finance board making cuts to both the town and school budgets.

The subcommittee – which consisted of members Rob Tarlov and Andreas Bisbikos from the finance board and Stan Soby and Rosemary Coyle from the Board of Selectmen –

unanimously approved the draft agreement at what they hoped would be their first and only meeting.

Tarlov, Bisbikos and Soby are Republicans; Coyle is a Democrat.

The draft agreement must be approved by the full Board of Selectmen as well as the finance board.

A legal opinion from town attorney Matthew D. Ritter said the omission of the word "developing" in the charter takes away nearly all of the finance board's involvement in the creation of the town budget, including making necessary cuts, while enhancing the Board of Selectmen's power over the yearly spending

package.

The legal opinion was requested by Shilosky after he discovered the omission last month.

Letters sent to Shilosky by several people who served on the charter revision commission – Monica Egan, Don Philips and Gregg LePage – state it was not the intent of the commission to alter the powers of the finance board, but merely to offer clarification.

"In our view the town budget is developed by the first selectman, department heads, and the office of the CFO. The BOF reviews, modifies and adjusts the budget as the process goes along," LePage wrote in his letter.

See Temporary Fix page 2

Gun Violence cont. from Front Page

School in Santa Fe, Texas, left 10 dead and 14 injured. Three months earlier, on Feb. 14, a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., killed 17 and wounded another 14.

Following the two shootings, “The gun debate in Connecticut and on a federal level was rising in tone and [was] polarized,” Haines said.

To make matters worse, misinformation was being spread.

In response, Haines decided to make an episode of her show that would utilize research and legislation and information on past effects of gun violence, and on what the state has done and is attempting to do to address gun violence.

Topics in the “Connecticut’s Response to Gun Violence” episode show include: Ethan’s Law, a proposed bill requiring the safe storage of firearms; a proposed bill on homemade firearms known as “ghost guns;” the ban on bump stocks, which are modifications that allow semi-automatic weapons to fire at a faster rate; the proposal to arm teachers; and the rise in gun sales.

“It was a journalism piece, completely unbiased and displaying the beliefs on both sides of the debate so that people could truly understand where they stood,” Haines said. “I mostly framed the episode around the idea of wanting this two-sided conversation.”

With hopes of becoming a foreign correspondent, Haines plans to major in journalism and international studies in college. She said she has not yet chosen her top college as she has found aspects she loved in several universities she has toured.

Haines realized she wanted to pursue journalism while teaching English to impoverished children in Serapio, Mexico during the 2016 presidential election campaign – a campaign that saw then-candidate Donald Trump pledge to build a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

“I was with the kindest and most resilient children I ever met, being immersed in that, and there was misinformed dialogue in the U.S.,” she said. “I found that I could be a voice for the voiceless and to create conversations that would have all perspectives.”

Haines threw herself into studying journalism to find out how international news is covered, discovering along the way that it is the least-watched news.

She decided she wanted to put different stories out, stories that “deserve and need to be heard” and expose people to one another.

“Personally, I am looking forward in the future to being an advocate for interesting journalism; it’s something I feel very called to with my time in Mexico,” she said. “I feel that interesting cultural exchange and interesting group contact is extremely important today.”

“I really believe in exploiting the basis of human connection,” she added. “When you’re flipping through the channels and you see a hu-

man being that already has a similarity to you just by being a human being ... it has an impact.

The first episode Haines created for *Speaking Through Stories* was about a refugee resettlement program and a Syrian family resettling in Manchester.

The show gave the family members a platform in which they could feel comfortable sharing the tale of “the immense struggle and journey,” Haines said.

“Our conversations are so much more rich and informed if we are able to internalize different people’s perspectives,” she said. “They spoke for about an hour on tape. I produced, directed and reported and led the interview delving into every aspect of the conflict in Syria, their journey to apply for refugee status and eventually resettle.”

Haines has also been a part of the RHAM News production team, which covers stories for the school community. In January 2018, she covered the Women’s March in Hartford.

“I found so much purpose in just being able to hold the microphone up and give people a platform and share why they’re marching,” she said. “I think that was the first moment that I knew I was a journalist and that I was sharing news and news that needed to be heard.”

Haines isn’t only about journalism. She also started a foundation called “Peace, Love and Art: Hope for the Children of the Serapio School in Mexico,” which provides creative therapies such as art and musical instruments and classes where student can express their culture, backgrounds, and dreams. The foundation also raised money to install a computer lab and started a letter exchange program, whereby Hebron students email the kids she taught in Serapio.

Another of her ventures is the Activism Club at RHAM, which she and fellow student Abigail Perrin co-founded in response to the Parkland school shooting.

Through the club, students are supported in using their voices to become change makers, she said.

“This is a place for people to use their voice, whatever that voice has to say,” she said.

Last weekend, club members and others participated in an Activism Boot Camp in the social hall at Gilead Congregational Church.

According to Haines, it went well. “It was a wonderful experience to be part of encouraging people’s inner activist and passionate voices,” she said. “I know that we all learned from each other while we were there and that people walked away feeling as if they could change the world.”

* * *

The “Connecticut’s Response to Gun Violence” episode of *Speaking Through Stories* will next air on March 19, at 1:30 p.m. and then on March 28 at 7 p.m. It can also be viewed in the “On Demand” section of cvcct.org.

Temporary Fix cont. from Front Page

He added the charter gives the finance board the power to approve supplemental appropriations and transfers within the town budget and “it would not make sense” for the board to have that authority but not be involved in the initial budget process.

The current town charter reads “The Board of Finance shall be responsible for presenting to the town voters the budgets for all the town departments and the combined budget and shall have all of the powers and perform all of the duties conferred or imposed upon Boards of Finance by the general statutes.”

But before charter revision occurred, the language outlining Board of Finance duties and powers read “shall be responsible for *developing* and presenting to the town voters the budgets...”

The boards of selectmen and finance formed the subcommittee over the past two weeks, each nominating two members. The short meeting Wednesday night got off to a rocky start as Coyle and Bisbikos exchanged cutting remarks about how the meeting should proceed and what should be discussed.

“I don’t need your sarcasm, Rosemary,” Bisbikos said.

“Andreas, this is going to be a civil meeting,” Coyle said. “There are not going to be attacks of people. We are here to make a process go forward so that the town of Colchester and the people we represent can have a budget and vote on a budget.”

Tarlov and Bisbikos questioned a portion of the memorandum of understanding, which was written by Soby, that stated the agreement would stay “in effect unless amended or ended

by vote of the Board of Selectmen.”

Tarlov said he felt that line allowed the Board of Selectmen to have a possible “change of heart” in the future.

Bisbikos agreed, stating the line allowed the selectmen, at any point, to lift the “checks and balances” imposed by the Board of Finance “at a whim.”

Soby said the line was included to avoid “encumbering a future Board of Selectmen with a decision that this board made.”

Tarlov suggested changing the line to state the agreement would stay in effect until November 2019 when the change could be formally voted on by residents at referendum.

However, Coyle interjected: “Rob, Rob, it just feels like [there’s] no trust at all.”

“Then why does the line have to be in there,” Tarlov responded.

Coyle said she interpreted the line as protection in case the charter change did not pass at referendum.

“If the charter doesn’t pass, this gives us a mechanism already in place to continue [the memorandum of understanding]. I just read it as the opportunity for us to protect the town,” she said.

The committee ultimately changed the agreement to read “the memorandum of understanding shall remain in effect until superseded by revision of section C-601.C. of the town charter.”

The full Board of Finance is expected to vote on the agreement March 20 at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall. A special meeting of the Board of Selectmen had not been scheduled by press time.

Read the Full Text of the MOU

The Memorandum of Understanding drafted this week by a subcommittee of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to address a pressing issue with the town charter will go to the full boards for approval in the coming weeks. The full text reads:

“The Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance agree, by majority vote of each Board, that the budget process for the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 shall be the same as that which occurred under the immediate past Town Charter.

This process is described on page 49, Town of Colchester 2018-2019 Adopted Budget

document as follows: “The First Selectman’s and Board of Education’s Proposed Budgets, and the Capital Improvement Plan are finalized and submitted for review by the Board of Finance.

Budget meetings are held to examine the proposed budgets. The Board of Finance may adjust Town department budgets, and can adjust only the bottom line total of the Board of Education budget.”

This Memorandum of Understanding shall remain in effect until superceded by revision of Section C-601.C. of the Town Charter.”

Capital Improvements Drive Portland \$35.07M Budget

by Elizabeth Regan

First Selectman Susan Bransfield and Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly this week introduced a proposed \$35.07 million spending plan heavy on capital improvements.

The combined budget proposal represents an increase of \$1.04 million, or 3.05 percent, over the current budget. The officials presented their plan at a public hearing Tuesday in the secondary schools' auditorium.

Bransfield's general government budget proposal comes in at \$13.68 million - including operations, debt and capital. That's \$321,756, or 2.41 percent, over the current budget.

The school board in January unanimously approved a \$21.46 million education budget proposal, which is \$781,951 - or 3.78 percent - higher than the current budget. A \$65,000 reduction by Bransfield brought the proposed increase to 3.47 percent over the current budget.

Bransfield described the capital improvement plan - which is up by \$294,740, or 40.39 percent, over the current year - as one of the main factors driving this year's budget increase.

The proposed \$1.02 million capital improvement plan for the coming year includes \$188,500 in technology upgrades for the school system as part of what O'Reilly described as "huge, huge changes in technology" in the coming year.

The school board decided to move several technology purchases from the education spending plan to the capital budget before voting to approve the proposal unanimously in January. The technology needs include \$131,500 for the secondary school wifi system, \$35,000 for a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Math lab, \$10,000 for smart boards and \$6,500 for projectors.

A request for \$41,500 to upgrade a heating, ventilation and air conditioning system in the district brings the capital requests for education to \$230,000.

The town side of the capital improvement plan includes \$88,000 to replace a police cruiser, \$50,000 for communication equipment upgrades in the fire department, \$40,000 to save up for the planned 2021 revaluation, \$30,000 each for sidewalk and municipal parking lot improvements and \$10,000 for work on the Air Line Trail.

Expected state grants amounting to \$268,064 for improvements to Main Street sidewalks, town sports fields and municipal parking lots will reduce the impact on taxpayers, according to budget documents. Water and sewer usage fees will fund \$250,000 of the capital improvements.

The projected increase to the mill rate based on the total proposed budget would be 0.81 mills, or 2.39 percent, over the current mill rate of 33.81. A taxpayer with a home assessed at \$200,000 would pay \$6,762 based on the projected 34.62 mill rate. That's an increase of \$162 over the current year.

The budget proposal must be approved by the Board of Selectmen. The board can make changes to the proposed education budget's bottom line, but must leave it up to the school board to decide how the changes are itemized.

The largest chunks of the spending plan include salaries, at approximately 33 percent of the total operating budget; employee fringe benefits, at 22 percent; and debt service, at 13 percent.

Staffing changes include full-time administrative assistants in the Parks and Recreation Department and at the Waverly Center. The two positions were each previously filled for 17.5 hours a week by a shared assistant, according to Bransfield.

Oversight of the senior center and youth services department is shared, according to the proposed budget.

The changes contributed to an overall 14.39 percent increase in the parks and recreation budget line and a decrease of 5.51 percent in the senior center line.

Bransfield also added five hours to the part-time land use and economic development coordinator position and approximately five more hours for the zoning enforcement officer.

Debt and Aid

Bransfield noted a \$151,204 decrease in debt compared to the current year despite the issuance of a significant bond package approved by voters in 2016.

The \$10 million bonding project funded the Route 17 recreation park and infrastructure improvements to roads, sidewalks and a few buildings.

"Some of our bonds have fallen off; we've paid them in full. Even with the \$10 million bond we put on this past year, the debt payment is down," she said.

Bransfield noted that revenue projections remain uncertain as the Connecticut General Assembly decides how it is going to apportion funding to towns in the coming state budget. State lawmakers won't vote on the massive spending plan until several months from now.

The town's budget plan will continue to evolve over the coming month as well, according to Bransfield.

"We're still in the middle of trying to determine what the state's going to do, trying to determine our needs, fine tuning some of our num-

bers - and that will occur over the next month by the Board of Selectmen as we review in detail this proposal," she said.

The last several years have been marked by uncertainty in education funding, coming to a head in 2017 when former Gov. Dannel P. Malloy made drastic and unanticipated cuts the Education Cost Sharing program that left officials in Portland scrambling to close a resulting budget gap of more than half a million dollars.

While selectmen at the time discussed the possibility of going to the rainy day fund or sending out a supplemental tax bill, they did not have to do so. Bransfield this week said officials were able to find savings by holding off on purchases and new hires, as well as by delaying the \$10 million bond issuance until the current fiscal year.

The budgeting move pushed \$416,400 of debt payments from May of last year until July, Bransfield has said.

The state budget plan from Gov. Ned Lamont released in February recommends an increase of \$73,505 in Portland's share of education funding from the state.

Bransfield said Lamont's revised formula for apportioning education aid for municipalities is more favorable to Portland than it's been in the past.

"I'm happy that we're on this side, although it meant in the past we weren't getting as much. But [the state] is trying to make it up for us and I think that's certainly healthy," she said.

Lamont also proposed as part of his budget a cost-sharing arrangement that would require municipalities to pay a portion of teachers' pension costs.

Figures from Lamont's plan show the move could result in a bill of \$59,327 for Portland's share of the expense if the governor gets his way.

Teachers in Connecticut do not pay into the Social Security system. Instead, they make a mandatory contribution of 7 percent of their annual salary into the state retirement fund, according to the 2018 Connecticut Teachers' Retirement Handbook.

But the state underfunded the Teachers' Retirement System for decades and is now grappling with how to keep the spiraling costs in check.

Education

O'Reilly in his presentation at the public hearing described special education costs as one of the biggest expenses facing the district.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot emphasize strongly enough the challenges, the changes, that are occurring in our world relative to stu-

dents with special needs," O'Reilly said.

State law requires towns to provide special education services for all qualifying students who live there, which can result in expensive outplacement costs if the school district is unable to meet the students' needs through its own existing programs.

The proposed education budget's emphasis on enhancing special education options within the district adds one special education teacher to the applied behavioral analysis initiative at Valley View School. The program started in 2017 to give students with autism and other developmental disabilities specific techniques and principles to help them learn, communicate and interact with peers more effectively.

The budget also continues a special education program in collaboration with Wheeler Clinic, currently in its inaugural year, that provides counseling and a supportive educational environment for students in seventh through 12th grade with mental health and behavioral challenges.

The district pays \$107,000 for a counselor and supervisor from Wheeler Clinic, O'Reilly said in January. The program requires one full-time teacher and at least one paraeducator, according to Director of Student Services Dawn Davis.

O'Reilly at this week's public hearing emphasized no additional staff members are being requested in the upcoming budget.

The education spending plan also bolsters the district's initiative to make sure all students in grades five through 12 have a Chromebook to use during the school day. The school rolled out 775 Chromebooks in 2016 for \$200,000. The program was funded in part through a \$48,000 grant from the Gildersleeve Wheeler Educational Fund.

The proposed education budget includes \$75,000 to begin the yearly replacement cycle.

The school board during last year's budget planning process approved a flat budget that cut one teaching position each in kindergarten, first grade, third grade and fourth grade. A special education teaching position, a full-time custodian and a full-time library assistant position were eliminated through attrition.

Budget Planning Dates

Department heads will present their requests to the Board of Selectmen on March 19 and 26. Selectmen are slated to deliberate April 2 and 3, with a vote scheduled for April 10. The selectmen-approved budget will go to a town meeting on May 6 and a referendum on May 13 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Portland Middle School.

Andover Taxpayers OK Public Works Purchases

by Sloan Brewster

The Public Works Department is getting some new equipment after all.

Voters at a referendum Tuesday confirmed what those in a town meeting had already decided two weeks ago - that it's okay for the town to purchase about \$335,280 in equipment for the Public Works Department.

Voters agreed to pay for a \$141,875 Volvo payloader over four years, with an interest rate of 4.07 percent. The first \$36,195 payment will come from the current year's undesignated fund balance. Voters also gave the go ahead to buy a plow truck outright for no more than \$200,000, with funds also being drawn from this year's fund balance.

Both questions passed 132 to 21.

The town will purchase a \$193,405 Peterbilt plow truck, which includes \$99,405 for the body and plow and \$94,000 for the chassis, Town Administrator Joseph Higgins said.

The town will order the cab now and it will take about nine months to build it, he said. Once it's built it will be outfitted with the chassis and plow.

The truck will replace a 1996 truck that, according to Higgins, "is well past its useful life." With a three-person crew, the public works department breaks up the 30-mile route through town between the three of them and they need three dependable trucks.

The town is coming to the end of a three-month lease on the payloader, which is used to load trucks with sand and road salt and move large amounts of snow, Higgins said. The town will be reimbursed for the lease if it buys the equipment outright when the lease expires.

The lease, which started in January, comes with an option to buy and, after trading in the town's 1992 John Deere payloader for \$5,767, the new one will cost \$136,108.

Using the lease funds toward the purchase leaves about \$122,000 on it, Higgins said.

"It's a good deal for the town and a critical piece of equipment that the town needs," he said.

The public works department has asked for the payloader for the past three years, according to Board of Finance member Adrian Mandeville. The finance board turned down the requests due to lack of information about it and because, at \$170,000, the one the department previously asked for "was too expensive," he said. In addition, it was too big for the garage.

The old payloader is unsafe and rotted out, Mandeville said.

Voters overwhelmingly agreed to the purchase during a Feb. 27 town meeting in a 42-to-1 vote on the payloader and a 40-to-3 vote on the plow. While the vote triggered a refer-

endum based on town charter, no mention was made of a referendum that night. It was discussed briefly at last Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting.

In a phone call last Tuesday, Vice First Selectman Jeff Maguire told the *Rivereast* the board did not know a referendum was needed on the purchases. After reaching out to the town attorney, selectmen determined it would need to go to referendum, Maguire said.

Town charter dictates any spending amounting to more than 0.5 percent of the current budget that occurs outside of the budget planning process must go to referendum. If voters approve the supplemental appropriation, it must go to referendum on the "second following Tuesday."

Maguire said the board needs to be updated on the charter.

Hebron Maple Festival Returns This Weekend

by Sloan Brewster

This weekend the annual Maple Festival will fill the center of town for the 29th year running.

While there will be the usual food and maple syrup offerings, this year's festivities will include some new fun. Diane Nadeau, president and CEO of the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce, said.

Included in that list is a partnership with Colebrook Village, the senior living facility on John E. Horton Boulevard. As part of the partnership, the facility is sponsoring "Little Miss Maple," a contest for children between the ages of 6 and 8, who live in Hebron or nearby towns of Columbia, Andover, Marlborough, Lebanon, Coventry, Colchester, Glastonbury or Bolton. The contest includes a talent show that will take place at Colebrook Village at 6 p.m. tonight – the first time the festival has expanded past its normal two days, Nadeau said.

Little Miss Maple was part of the festival years ago, Nadeau said.

A festival king and queen will also be named. Nominees must be over the age of 55, live in Hebron and have a history of volunteerism and helping others. The winners will be crowned tomorrow at a sock hop dance at Colebrook Village.

Little Miss Maple and the king and queen will also participate in the tractor parade Sunday at 1:30 p.m. "That's Connecticut's largest tractor parade," Nadeau said.

This year, Town Manager Andrew Tierney won't be making his usual run atop a tractor in the parade. Instead, he plans to watch.

He said that, after the long winter, he's glad good weather is in the forecast for the festival – and added he hopes the fun spills over to local businesses that should get lots of traffic throughout the weekend.

Tierney said he enjoys the festival food and looks forward to seeing folks come out with their families and dogs.

"It seems like a lot of families bring their dogs out," he said.

Mr. Maple Leaf – an annual face at the festival – will make his usual appearance in the parade. While the identity of the man in the costume is a secret, the same guy has been wearing it for years, Nadeau said. "He bought the costume and has been doing it for years."

While the majority of festival activities and food vendors will take place in the Douglas Library parking lot, there will also be events in

other locations.

One such activity is a newbie to the festival – "a big huge arts and crafts sale at RHAM Middle School," Nadeau said.

The majority of crafters will be local and from the surrounding communities, and "they have some beautiful things," Nadeau said.

On Saturday, AHM will host Adventure Day, with birds of prey and outdoor programs.

At Hebron's Old Town Hall the Hebron Historical Society will have quilts, gift baskets and food and drink, including maple milk, maple baked beans and bags of maple cookies. According to Maryann Foote, Historical Society president, everything will be made locally from local maple syrup.

The Historical Society will also host the 30th annual quilt show in the Old Town Hall – an event that has been going on since before the 1990 start of the fest – and Connecticut Quilts of Valor will be on hand to present quilts to local veterans.

The Douglas Library will have programs by the Lutz Children's Museum.

Nadeau singled out some of her favorite festival eats. "The adult in me likes the maple kettle corn," she said. "The child in me likes the maple cotton candy."

She's also a fan of sugar on snow, which will be available at the Company 1 Fire Station on Main Street.

Sugar Houses Open

While the center of town will be bustling, Nadeau said her favorite part of the Maple Festival is going to the sugar houses. Two in town will be open this weekend – the Wenzel Sugar House on East Street and the Woodyacres Sugar House on Cone Road.

When you walk into a sugar house, "the steam is in the air with the [aroma of] maple syrup," Nadeau said – and added, "I'm a farmer at heart."

Nadeau said the reason she was drawn to organizing the festival when the chamber took it over was because of her own history with farming, which includes gardening, raising pigs and chickens and making her own maple syrup.

When the children in the family were growing up, they would gather and collect sap to boil for syrup, Nadeau said. Now that they have grown, she has given her evaporator to her nephew to let the next generation take over the process.

At the Wenzel Sugar House, Ron Wenzel will



The Maple Fest returns to Hebron this weekend. Pictured here from last year's festival is Ron Wenzel, owner of The Wenzel Sugarhouse, demonstrating how to make maple syrup on his evaporator.

make maple syrup, while the ladies from the Gilead Congregational Church Women's Fellowship will sell maple pudding cake down in his garage.

Ned Ellis of Farmer's Cow will also be at Wenzel's with a cow and calf.

Last year, Wenzel estimates about 2,000 people visited his sugarhouse in the two days of the festival.

"It's a great event and it's free; it doesn't cost a nickel to come," he said.

In anticipation of a muddy weekend, Wenzel warned attendees to avoid wearing high heels.

The process of making maple syrup hasn't changed since Native Americans showed colonists how to do it, Wenzel said.

"It's the same process, except with evaporators," he said.

Prior to the invention of the modern machinery, sap drawn from a maple tree was boiled when hot rocks were placed in it.

Native Americans who used the old fash-

ioned technique, however, did not make syrup, Wenzel said. Instead, they made it into sugar crystals, which they carried with them while hunting.

Wenzel learned to make syrup the modern way, with an evaporator. His first teacher was his wife's grandfather. Later, when Seldon Wells, who passed away in 2001, founded the first Maple Fest, he became Wenzel's mentor.

Russ Schaller of Woodyacres Sugarhouse will also be demonstrating how to make maple syrup. Like he did last year, Schaller will be selling maple coated walnuts in memory of his wife, Denise Schaller, who made the tasty treat for the festival every year until she passed away Dec. 24, 2017. They were married for 33 years.

Schaller will also have maple candy and maple cream.

After tonight's talent show, hours of the Maple Festival are 10 a.m.-4 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday.

Head of Town Democrats Steps Down in Hebron

By Sloan Brewster

Ted Bromley has stepped down as chairman of the Hebron Democratic Town Committee, citing clashes with the committee's direction.

However, when contacted this week by the *Rivereast*, Bromley refused to comment further on the matter.

"After much reflection, it has become clear that the committee is moving in a direction that may not be one I personally choose," Bromley told the committee Sunday in an email that was obtained by the *Rivereast*. "That being said, the committee majority, and not my personal ideals, is what should rule."

He did not clarify what the direction he didn't choose was.

In the email, Bromley tendered his resignation as chairman after nearly nine years but said he would remain a member of the committee, and said he would be available to assist the new chair.

He wrote that he "always supported core Democratic values but leaned slightly to the center," adding he "never disagreed with an idea just because the idea came from the 'wrong' party" and that he ran meetings to "ensure everyone and every idea was considered."

Bromley went on to thank committee members for their support and kindness and said work and family also contributed to his decision to quit the leadership role.

"Recently, family issues both positive and difficult have required me to focus my attention away from the committee," he wrote. "Additionally, new career opportunities with the newly-elected administration at the state level will require even more of my attention and I feel it would no longer be fair to hold the chairmanship while not being able to devote the energy necessary to fulfill that role."

Malcolm Leichter, committee vice chairman, who spoke to the *Rivereast* Tuesday, said he was not surprised by the resignation and that he knew it was coming.

"He had a lot of family issues," Leichter said. "He's now looking at a career change – positive career change."

Leichter said Bromley had served the committee well during his tenure and had done good things, including increasing membership.

"We were lucky to get six to nine people [at meetings] before," he said. "Now the room is full."

An excellent leader, Bromley will be missed, according to Leichter.

"He led by consensus and did not try to steer people in other directions if he did not happen to be on the same side of the majority," he said. "He did not try to push his agenda. He had no agenda other than trying to rebuild the committee from the pits of no membership."

In his resignation email, Bromley recommended Tiffany Thiele – who in November tried to unseat Republican Robin Green as representative for the 55th Assembly District – as the next chair.

"She has devoted countless hours to the committee and has the best understanding of our situation," Bromley wrote. "She put so much of herself into the 55th Assembly District campaign, garnered a great understanding of the values and needs of the district, and met countless voters. Arguably, the 55th Assembly District is the most important position within our town and she campaigned in an honorable manner."

Thiele said she was humbled by the recommendation – but would not say if she's inter-

ested in the role.

"I was humbled to hear that, but that's indicative of how Ted was as chair: fully supportive of our local Democrats while growing our membership," she said. "He will be missed, but I'm glad he's staying a member of the committee."

Carol Connolly, former member of the Hebron Board of Education and also wife of former gubernatorial candidate Sean Connolly, said this week she had been approached to take the leadership seat and declined.

"I was deeply flattered by those who reached out and asked if they could nominate me as chair – but the answer is a definite no! (Laughingly)," she wrote in a statement. "I need a break from politics!"

Leichter said he was not aware Connolly had been approached.

The committee will next meet on March 19 at which time members will nominate and vote for a new chair, Leichter said.

"It comes down to who gets nominated that night," he said.

Hebron Voters Approve 89-Acre Land Purchase

by Sloan Brewster

Voters at a lengthy town meeting last Thursday, with more than 100 in attendance, agreed to the \$600,000 purchase of 89 acres behind Colebrook Village for a new Public Works Complex.

But it was not a foregone conclusion. Many speakers adamantly opposed the notion of putting town buildings on a parcel with wetlands and historic value. After the vote, town officials, including Town Manager Andrew Tierney, admitted they were nervous about the outcome.

In the end, the ayes had it, 63 to 29. Officials were surprised and gratified by the number of people who showed and moderator Catherine Marx opened the meeting with some wit.

"We have over 100 in attendance, so therefore we do have a quorum," she said, eliciting a chuckle from the audience.

The funds for the purchase will be split, with \$440,000 coming from the unassigned fund balance and \$160,000 from the Open Space Land Acquisition fund.

The property is on John E. Horton Boulevard, tucked behind the senior living facility and is part of the Village Green District, a 130-acre parcel behind CVS owned by Horton Brothers, LLC. It was appraised at \$630,000 and the town has an agreement with the seller to purchase it for \$600,000.

According to town officials, it is an ideal location to build an approximate \$9 million public works facility and other municipal buildings, including a firehouse to replace the aging Company 1 Fire Station on Main Street.

One by one, Board of Selectmen members rose to the microphone and shared their support for the purchase. Chairman Dan Larson said the property's value to the town "cannot be overstated."

Larson stressed the vote was only for the land purchase and not for any future town complex that may be built there. Still, he used East Hampton as an example of why the purchase

was important, describing town facilities there as being "spread all over town because they did not have a long-range plan."

Brian O'Connell, selectman and chairman of the Open Space Land Acquisition Committee, said the committee voted in favor of the purchase for "a myriad of reasons," including that it will allow for an additional connection to the Air Line Trail, bringing it closer to the center of town.

Officials have said the plan for the parcel, which abuts the town-owned Raymond Brook Preserve, includes creating trails linked to an existing trail system.

He also commented that while putting a town complex on the land may have an effect on the Kinney Road neighborhood, which is on the northern side of the parcel, it's better than a high-density residential development.

Last week, Tierney told the *Rivereast* he had been contacted by an affordable housing developer interested in putting a development on that parcel.

"The town is a low-impact user," O'Connell said. "It's not a big city; we don't have a lot of vehicles and we want to be a good steward."

Some residents were not convinced, stating that if Public Works goes there, truck traffic would ruin their peaceful rural road.

Residents were also concerned that the department's salt shed would harm the 35 acres of wetlands on the property. Town officials have stated the opposite, insisting that the best way to protect the wetlands is for them to be town-owned.

Mary Anne Zeh, of Kinney Road, said the Village Green District was created to draw in economic development and increase tax revenue to the town. She questioned how that could happen if the town builds there. She also said the property would be better served as protected land.

Instead of selling it for development, the family should "donate their father's beloved land," which during his lifetime he refused to parcel



Voters at a town meeting last Thursday agreed to a town purchase of the 89-acre Horton Property on John E. Horton Boulevard, behind the senior living facility in the Village Green District. This is the back portion of the property on Kinney Road near the intersection with Church Street.

off, and protect it in his name as the John E. Horton Wildlife Preserve, Zeh said.

Other speakers decried the loss of history that would result if the land is developed, saying historic mills once occupied it.

Maryann Foote, chairman of the Historic Properties Commission, said the commission should have been involved in considering the purchase.

Foote also had reservations about making a new town green on a portion of the property. Town Planner Mike O'Leary said at a public hearing earlier this month that the space could be used as a larger town green, where local activities, such as the Maple Fest, could be held.

But Foote said she liked the green in its current location.

"The Town Green was there from the begin-

nings of town; the Plan of Conservation and Development says the green is to remain in the center of town," Foote said.

The Town Green that starts beside Old Town Hall on Route 66, and stretches down to the intersection of routes 85 and 66.

Foote forwarded the *Rivereast* a line from page 111 of the Plan of Conservation and Development to emphasize her point.

"The Hebron Green should remain the focal point of the town and should continue to serve as an attractive entrance to the Town Center," the excerpt reads.

"Town greens are historic locations; they can neither be bought nor moved," Foote said.

After all the speakers said their piece, the vote was held, first by voice but to be certain she had it correct, Marx requested a hand vote.

Marriage at Marlborough Health and Rehab

by Allison Lazur

Love can often be found in the most unexpected places and – for Patricia Rossi and David DePaolis it was at Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center.

Rossi, 77, and DePaolis, 75, are both residents at the facility and when the *Rivereast* arrived for an interview with the couple, they were patiently waiting, hands intertwined, outside of their joint room.

The two decided to tie the knot last Saturday in the center's recreation room after meeting nearly one year ago.

"I showed him how to play bingo," Rossi said.

DePaolis said the relationship began when one of the nurses suggested he play bingo after dinner, but he didn't know how.

It was at that bingo game about 11 months ago that "we [first] caught a glance at each other," he said.

The relationship progressed and DePaolis said the couple's "first date" was at a family night hosted in the center's dining room.

"We went to a family night here and it escalated from there," he said.

But decades ago, destiny was already at work, as Rossi revealed the pair attended the same high school and grew up two streets apart from one another in the south end of Hartford, but never met as teenagers.

Unbeknownst to the future lovebirds, ro-

mance would be in the air more than 50 years later.

Rossi said what she loves most about DePaolis is the way he treats her calling their relationship "a special bond." DePaolis said "seeing each other every day" made him realize he "wanted to be with her."

Part of why he wanted to marry Rossi was because "we get along," he said through chuckles.

So last Saturday, March 2, the two were married by Pastor Dan Earhart of Marlborough Fellowship Church surrounded by about 25 family, friends and staff members.

Rossi's friend Donna Benard-Florindo was the maid of honor while friend Walter Tracz – who is also another Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation resident – served as best man.

Director of Admissions/Marketing Allison Schmauder said this was the first time the facility had ever hosted a wedding.

Callie the border collie served dual roles as the flower girl and ring bearer, while Town Clerk Lauren Griffin arrived at the facility to complete the newlyweds' marriage license.

The decorative tulle and arch were borrowed from It's So Ranunculus Flower Shoppe.

"It felt like young love," Schmauder said. "There was a lot of love in the room both from their residents and friends and family. You could tell they have a really good support system."



Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation residents Patricia Rossi and David DePaolis married last Saturday, after meeting at the facility nearly a year ago. Pastor Dan Earhart of Fellowship Community Church officiated the wedding while Donna Benard-Florindo (standing, left) and Walter Tracz (standing, right) served as maid of honor and best man, respectively.

East Hampton Champion Wrestler Finds ‘Success from Within’

by Elizabeth Regan

State champion East Hampton wrestler Dylan Levesque is a team of one.

The 15-year-old East Hampton High School student is the only wrestler currently competing under his school’s banner. He trains and travels with the Portland High School wrestling team under coach Drew DeBowsky.

Levesque earned the Class S state title on Feb. 16 at Windham High School when he bested Windham’s Elijah Vertefeuille 3 to 1 in the 113-pound weight class.

Levesque went on to beat Vertefeuille again in the State Open – which brings together the best athletes from schools of all sizes – but missed a spot in the New England Championships by one place.

East Hampton’s only other state wrestling champion won the title in 1989, according to DeBowsky. That was also the last year East Hampton had its own wrestling team.

As a team of one, Levesque’s scores did not contribute to the Portland’s totals this year. But DeBowsky said the champion wrestler’s commitment to the sport inspires the Portland athlete.

“I think with his work ethic, knowledge and his drive, it helped make everybody on the Portland team a better wrestler,” DeBowsky said.

Laura Levesque described her son as “nervous” the first time she dropped him off at Portland High School for practice.

“But right when I picked him up, he was like ‘I’ve already made friends.’ They were warm, welcoming,” she said.

Levesque said the Portland wrestlers didn’t act differently toward him because he’s on his own.

“They treat me like I’m on the team,” Levesque said.

Levesque has been wrestling for about five years with MarcAurele Wrestling, a Niantic-based club. He and his brother, Kyle – who is in seventh grade at East Hampton Middle



East Hampton wrestler Dylan Levesque, 15, (shown at left on top) has wrestled his way to success this year, and captured the Class S state title last month. He trains and travels with the Portland High School wrestling team under coach Drew DeBowsky (shown with Levesque at right).



School – have amassed numerous tournament wins.

Levesque credits a year-round training schedule for his success.

“During the off-season, I worked really hard and I didn’t stop wrestling. It kind of helped keep me in shape and allowed me to build more on my technique,” he said.

Levesque trains three times a week at the wrestling club during the off-season and works out every day for one to two hours.

Levesque said the individual aspect of wrestling is the main thing that drew him to the sport.

“I like how it’s just you out there. You have no excuses,” he said.

His coach described wrestling as “success from within.”

“The sport builds a lot of character,” DeBowsky said. “It’s just you out there. There’s nobody else you can blame for your mistakes or nobody else you can look to for your failures. You’ve got to look within yourself.”

But there’s still a team aspect – and that’s what DeBowsky said he hopes to build on by expanding the team of one concept into a larger-scale cooperative effort between the two schools. He would like to create a Portland/East Hampton “co-op” that would allow interested athletes from East Hampton to compete even though there aren’t enough of them to form their own team.

A co-op would enhance the experience for wrestlers from both schools, according to

DeBowsky

“[Levesque] has obviously been a huge asset to the team and all, but at the end of the day there’s times he’s actually competing against a Portland guy. With a co-op, it allows us to combine forces and be able to score as one team,” DeBowsky said.

Successful co-op teams in class S include Lyman Memorial High School and Windham Technical High School as well as Suffield and Windsor Locks, according to DeBowsky.

A co-op program would have to be approved by the participating schools as well as the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference. DeBowsky said the idea of a Portland/East Hampton co-op is still in the discussion phase.

Gun, Drugs, Cash Found in Raid of East Hampton Home

by Elizabeth Regan

An East Hampton man was arrested this week after members of the East Hampton Police Department found a gun, bullets, drugs and almost a thousand dollars in cash during a search of his White Birch Road residence.



Addison Clegg

Addison Clegg, 18, of 35 White Birch Rd., was arrested March 11 and charged with first-degree robbery, second-degree larceny, second-degree threatening, criminal use of a firearm, sale of a controlled substance, possession of heroin and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Court documents state the arrest stemmed from a March 5 incident during which Clegg allegedly stole about \$2,040 from a guest at his home.

East Hampton and Middletown police had a history of “extensive contact” with Clegg on roughly 40 occasions, according to an incident report written by East Hampton police officer John Wilson. Clegg has no criminal record on file, but Wilson noted any juvenile offenses would not be accessible.

In a sworn statement, the alleged victim told police he went to Clegg’s house with an unnamed friend to play the video game *Fortnite*. He said he was robbed during the visit by several men. He described one as a black man, one as a Hispanic man and one as a white man.

The alleged victim met Clegg about a week prior and had been corresponding with him through the social media platform Snapchat, according to the report.

The alleged victim told police Clegg showed him a shopping bag containing roughly a pound of marijuana before grabbing a gun from the vicinity of the refrigerator and shooting a blank round into the air.

According to the sworn statement, Clegg

demanded his satchel while the Hispanic man held a knife with a four-inch blade against the alleged victim’s stomach.

The alleged victim said Clegg took a wallet containing \$2,000 from his satchel along with \$40 from another wallet in the bag. He told police he was carrying that amount of money because he was going to look at a Ford Mustang later in the day.

The alleged robbers continued to search the man and his unnamed friend, according to the statement. The alleged victim said they made race-related comments like “whatcha gonna do cracker” before he and his friend left through the front door.

Court documents state the victim called 911 to report the alleged robbery on his way to drop off his friend, who did not want any involvement with the police.

Officers who responded immediately to the White Birch Road residence found Clegg and his brother in the house, the report said. The brothers denied any sort of disturbance at the house and made no mention of the alleged victim or his friend having been there. Clegg claimed the officers were harassing him, according to the report.

An officer during the same visit got permission from Clegg and his brother to look in the area of the refrigerator for the gun they’d been told was shown during the incident, the report said. No gun was found.

The alleged victim in his statement told police he had visited Clegg the day before to buy THC vape pen cartridges. He stayed at the house to play video games, smoke and “have a good time” and saw Clegg open a package that had just come in the mail. The alleged victim said the package contained a “ghost gun,” which he described as a firearm made by assembling parts from an unfinished kit.

Clegg was wearing a locator bracelet on his ankle as a condition of probation for a previous incident, according to the police report.

Police returned to the house on March 11 around 6:50 p.m. with a search warrant for guns



East Hampton police seized 25 items during the March 11 search of a White Birch Road residence in connection with a robbery investigation. The items included 4.103 ounces of marijuana in prepackaged bags, \$980 in cash and a Kahr 380 handgun.

or gun-related components authorized by a Middlesex Superior Court judge, the court documents said.

Wilson’s report said a team of six officers forced their way into the house after nobody answered the door. They secured Clegg and read him his rights, which he waived. He observed the search from the living room while saying things like “you ain’t gonna find sh-t” and “you’re going to be looking for a long time,” according to the report.

Court documents show police seized 25 items, including scales with white powder that later tested positive for heroin, 4.103 ounces of marijuana in prepackaged bags, \$980 in cash

and a Kahr 380 handgun.

Clegg was taken into custody and processed at the East Hampton Police Department, the report said. He denied any involvement in the alleged robbery.

Clegg was unable to post a \$100,000 bond and was held at the Middletown Police Department until a court appearance the next day.

He has been held at the New Haven Correctional Center since March 12, according to the state Department of Correction website.

Clegg has not yet entered a plea. He is next scheduled to appear at the Middletown courthouse on March 18.

East Hampton Voters Approve \$1.80M Worth of Projects

by Elizabeth Regan

Voters at this week's town meeting unanimously approved three separate resolutions allocating a total of \$1.80 million on projects affecting local emergency services, the fire department and Center School.

There were no dissenting voices when moderator Alan Hurst called the votes on \$845,000 in public safety radio upgrades, \$679,000 for a new pumper-rescue fire truck and \$277,000 to replace the failing boiler at the town's school for fourth and fifth grade students.

Voting officials checked in 86 taxpayers as they filed into the East Hampton High School auditorium Monday night, according to Town Clerk Kelly Bilodeau.

Members of the Capital Improvement Committee, Board of Finance and Town Council previously identified the three projects as pressing needs that must be addressed before the proposed budget goes to referendum in May.

Fire Chief Greg Voelker said the \$679,000 fire truck will replace Engine 212, a 1994 Pierce Manufacturing pumper truck stationed at the Company 2 firehouse in Cobalt. Engine 212 will move to Company 3 on White Birch Road, where it will replace a 1989 Pierce pumper truck the department plans to retire and send to

auction.

Voelker said after the meeting officials will be putting together the specifications they want in the new truck and will either put it out to bid or buy it through a state contract or purchasing consortium, if that's an option. He expects delivery to take 9-12 months, which means the new truck could roll in sometime around December or January.

Upgrades to the radio system used by police, firefighters, the fire marshal's office, ambulance personnel and the public works employees includes about \$800,000 for infrastructure improvements and equipment and another \$45,000 for contingencies and financing costs.

The current system was described in an independent 2018 public safety communications analysis as "substandard" due to a lack of investment by town officials over the years.

East Hampton Police Department Union President Hardie Burgin said Tuesday that officers are overwhelmed by the support from voters, which he said will benefit the town's emergency services for years to come.

"The ability for the officers of the police department to communicate with dispatch is vital

for the safety of both the officers involved, and the citizens in need. The passing of this vote was yet another step forward for the town of East Hampton towards the much needed modernization of its police department," Burgin said in a statement. "The union would like to thank all who came out to vote. By doing so, voters helped to ensure officers can continue to do their job and do it as safe as possible."

The upgrades will add a communication tower on Young Street and will make sure responders have up-to-date radios. The new digital system could be encrypted when law enforcement officials deem it necessary to prevent public access to the communications, according to Police Chief Dennis Woessner.

The plan was selected over options from another private communications company and a state-managed radio system.

Woessner said Tuesday he does not yet have an anticipated start date or end date for the upgrades.

The final project garnering approval on Monday will replace the unreliable and inefficient boiler at Center School with two smaller, natural gas-fired boilers for \$277,000. The plan

leaves the current piping system in place.

The 34-year-old boiler has broken down on numerous occasions over the years and, unlike at other schools in the district, there is no backup boiler in the building. District facilities director Donald Harwood told town councilors in January that officials spent nearly \$200,000 in repair costs over the past five years.

Harwood said major construction work would take place over the summer break when the school is not occupied. The project is estimated to take about 10-12 weeks.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said the town meeting approval means officials can "move forward aggressively" to make sure the replacement is on schedule to start as soon as the school closes for the summer.

"Over the last three years, we have sunk tens of thousands each year to keep the boiler going and have experienced numerous shutdowns. There are no replacement parts at this point for the boiler and we are very lucky that we did not have a catastrophic loss of heat at the school," Smith said. "I'm grateful that the town boards recognized the urgent need and prioritized this replacement."



Police said a driver of a dump truck was to blame for a three-car crash on Route 6 Monday morning that left four people with minor injuries, and left one lane of the road closed for four hours.

Dump Truck Crash and Cleanup Closes Route 6 in Andover

by Sloan Brewster

A three-vehicle crash on Monday morning involving a dump truck and two cars led to the closure of one lane of Route 6 for four hours while an environmental cleanup crew addressed the resulting fuel spill.

Minor injuries were reported.

The accident, which took place at about 7:24 a.m., was caused by road conditions, said Andover Fire Chief Ron Mike.

"It was pretty slick and glazed over that morning," he said.

In the aftermath of the crash, the fuel tank of the dump truck was leaking and about 40 gallons of diesel spilled onto the roadway, the fire chief said. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection was called to the scene and in turn called Kropp Environmental Services to perform the cleanup.

According to an accident summary from the Connecticut State Police, the crash occurred on Route 6 about one-tenth of a mile from the intersection with Route 87 in Andover. Police said a 2014 Subaru Legacy driven by Garrett Boulanger, of Vernon, and a 2015 Chevrolet Equinox driven by Kent Tedford, of Williman-

tic, were travelling west on Route 6 when an eastbound Mack 700 dump truck, driven by Cecil Boyd, of Middlefield, lost control due to icy road conditions, spun out and struck the cars.

Boyd was issued an infraction for travelling too fast for the road conditions.

All three drivers and Maebel Kent, of Willimantic, a passenger in the Equinox, suffered minor injuries and were transported to area hospitals, Mike said. Ambulances from Andover, Columbia and Hebron responded to the accident.

It took about four hours to clean the mess, during which time the eastbound lane of the road was closed, Mike said. Eastbound traffic was redirected through Columbia.

In the half hour directly after the crash, both lanes of Route 6 were shut down while folks were patched into ambulances and sent off to hospitals.

The Andover Fire Department stayed on to assist state troopers directing traffic and the road was fully reopened at about 11:30 a.m., Mike said.

Marlborough Man Helps in Hartford Fire

by Allison Lazur

Marlborough resident Vinnie Zito was on his way to his Hartford-based machine shop, Metal Industries Inc., last Thursday, March 7, when he saw "smoke billowing into the sky."

"I said to myself, 'This is either my building, or the apartment building next to it,'" Zito said this week.

It was the apartment building.

The 42-unit building located at 820 Wethersfield Ave. sits adjacent to the machine shop and had flames coming out of the north side of the building Zito said.

Zito sprang into action to help the building's residents to safety while, unbeknownst to him, two of his employees were already assisting residents trapped in the fire.

Zito said there were sounds of sirens in the distance, but no rescue personnel had yet arrived.

He said he drove past the burning building to pull into the driveway of his business, which abuts 820 Wethersfield Ave.

"I then saw my employees, Joe Lauzon and Dan Tripp, along with tenants from the apartment in the front yard, scrambling to the south side where people were screaming and breaking windows," Zito said.

According to Hartford Deputy Fire Chief Alvaro Cucuta, the fire broke out on the second floor of the apartment building at approximately 7:18 a.m.

"Citizens were frantically calling for help via several windows," the department's Facebook page said.

Zito said "instinct took over" and he ran inside the machine shop to get an extension ladder, but it was gone.

"It was then when I found that [Lauzon and Tripp] had already gotten it and were working

on extending it."

Zito said he witnessed parents in the burning building dropping their children into the arms of Tripp and Lauzon and other helpers who were below.

He said he assisted in bringing the tenants of the building to safety and brought those displaced by the fire to the customer area of Metal Industries Inc. where he offered candy and hot chocolate to the children and coffee to the adults.

Zito said his only thought during the chaos was to help those in trouble to safety.

According to the Hartford Fire Department, 10 residents were transported to the hospital in total – nine for smoke inhalation and one for a hand burn.

The fire was put out by 7:54 a.m. after firefighters struggled to position the fire trucks close enough to the building because of fencing, Cucuta said.

The fire was ruled arson by the Hartford Fire Marshal and 38-year-old Eladia Vazquez, of 169 Center St., Manchester, was arrested and charged with first-degree arson, first-degree criminal mischief, first-degree reckless endangerment, risk of injury and violation of probation.

Alvaro said there was some sort of dispute between Vazquez – whose boyfriend lived in the building – and another resident, which resulted in Vazquez setting clothes on fire in front of the other resident's door.

Zito said this week he decided to jump in because in his mind, there were no other options.

"It never crossed my mind to do anything other than help," he said. "Instincts took over and I'd like to believe most people would do the same in this situation."

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

At 39 years old, I know I'm not exactly the network nightly newscast's target audience. That tends to be a little bit older. But I'd still rather watch the half-hour nightly national newscast – preferably on NBC – than flip over to the drone of 24-hour cable news outlets.

Why is this? Because I actually want the news.

I've noticed it before, and Tuesday really drove the point home: if you want just the news – no dreaded analysis, no talking heads there to tell you what you just saw with your own two eyes – there's really no place like the half-hour national news.

Tuesday brought a bevy of major news stories: There was the college admissions bribery scandal, the biggest such scandal in U.S. history (and one that involved a pair of famous Hollywood actresses too, strangely). There was the fact that yet another Brexit deal was voted down, the latest chapter in an ugly, ugly mess in Europe – a mess that could have repercussions throughout the world (and has sparked very real fears of renewed violence in beautiful Ireland). And then there's the controversy with Boeing 737 Max jets, which, after having been involved in two deadly crashes in the past six months, have been grounded by most countries in the world except, troublingly, Canada and the United States (though on Wednesday, they followed suit).

In short: lots of stuff going on. Should've given the cable news channels plenty to chew on, no?

No.

A friend of mine shared with me Tuesday evening that, despite all that had gone on in the world that day, he flipped over to CNN and was greeted with yet more wall-to-wall Trump coverage. And it wasn't even news about the Mueller investigation or anything like that, my friend said; as he put it, "it's just people sitting in the studio, trying to read tea leaves."

Contrast that with what I got on the *NBC Nightly News* that night. The broadcast led with a big story on the admissions scandal, and also included two lengthy (for half-hour newscasts anyway) stories about Brexit and the Boeing jets being grounded – even featuring a handy way to see if you're actually due to fly a Boeing 737 Max and what you can do about it.

The only Trump-related story was the news that Nancy Pelosi said she wasn't

going to focus on possible impeachment, at least for now. It was brief and it was actual news.

Look, I've made it quite clear in this space that I'm no fan of Donald Trump, and I enjoy a good takedown of him. But I'm also realistic enough to see there are other things going on in the world that need our attention. And on Tuesday, a lot of other things.

The NBC broadcast gave you what you needed, not much of what you didn't, all in the span of half an hour. Then it was on to *Extra*.

It's a little weird, when we have three cable channels devoted to nothing but news 24 hours a day (and that's not even including business news channels like CNBC), your most reliable source for television news is the half-hour network newscast – a format that's been around as long as television itself.

The reason, again, is simple: due to time constraints, the broadcasts don't have time for analysis, or huge panels, or posting tweets from viewers, or any of that other time-wasting stuff. They've got 30 minutes to recap the news – so they do exactly that.

A newscast presenting the news. What a concept.

* * *

Here are some of life's great questions, as posed by the late, brilliant George Carlin:

"What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?"

"Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?"

"Why is the man who invests all your money called a broker?"

"If you ate pasta and antipasto, would you still be hungry?"

"If all the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?"

"If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?"

"If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?"

"How do they get the deer to cross at that yellow road sign?"

"Before they invented drawing boards, what did they go back to?"

"If the #2 pencil is the most popular, why is it still #2?"

And lastly, not a question but this is such a fantastic, and wise, quote: "Inside every cynical person, there is a disappointed idealist."

East Hampton Police News

2/22: Asia Thompson, 42, of 24 Fowler St., Middletown, was arrested and charged with operating under suspension, drinking while driving, possession of drug paraphernalia and sale of narcotics, East Hampton Police said.

2/27: Dianna Aldrich, 35, of 16 Hayes Rd., was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle while under suspension, police said.

3/3: Michael Casey, 43, of 74 Main St., was arrested and charged with DUI, failure to drive right and failure to drive in the right lane, police said.

Also, from Feb. 25-March 3, officers responded to 12 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and five alarms, and made 12 traffic stops, police said.

Colchester Police News

3/6: State Police said Andrew Frame, 29, of 20 Pershing St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

3/8: State Police said Michael A. Ferguson, 24, of 40 High St., Portland, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Colchester Police Respond to Alarm

State Police said at approximately 2:32 a.m. on March 5, troopers responded to an alarm at a business located at 199 Old Hartford Rd.

Police said a shattered front window was discovered, but did not disclose at which business the incident occurred.

There were no suspects or witnesses at the scene, and the business owner was notified, police said.

This incident is currently under investigation and anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper Daniel Gonzalez at 860-465-5400.

Portland Police News

3/4: Victoria Amenta, 32, of 183 Rose Hill Rd., was charged with fifth-degree larceny, credit card theft and illegal use of credit card, as well as three counts of failure to appear, Portland Police said.

3/6: Todd Bower, 30, of 324 Main St., was charged with two counts of probation violation, police said.

Marlborough Police News

3/6: State Police said Sarah N. Green, 19, of 63 High Point Commons, was arrested and charged with assault of public safety or emergency medical personnel and disorderly conduct.

3/10: State Police said Brian M. Eastman, 37, of 191 East Hampton Rd., was arrested and charged with failure to keep narcotics in original container, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of narcotic substance with intent to sell and possession of less than one-half ounce of cannabis.

Andover Police News

3/7: State Police said Manuel Torres, 36, of 220 Valley St., Windham, was arrested and charged with third-degree larceny, interfering with officer/resisting arrest and second-degree reckless endangerment.

3/8: State Police said Cynthia Conant, 20, of 72 Bristol St., Fl. 2, Southington, was arrested and charged with failure to respond to infraction.

Theft at Colchester Toyota Dealer

Colchester Police said at approximately 2:21 p.m. on March 4, a theft was reported from the Toyota dealer located on Old Hartford Road.

The general manager of the car dealership reported that \$1,000 had been stolen, police said.

This incident is currently under investigation.

Two-Vehicle Collision in Marlborough, Minor Injuries

State Police said failure to yield at a stop sign caused a head on collision, leaving a man and woman with minor injuries.

At approximately 4:54 p.m. on March 5, a Chevrolet S10 driven by Charles M. Cole, 67, of 28 Portland Rd., was traveling north on North Main Street entering the intersection with Austin Drive.

A Subaru Impreza, driven by Debra

Chapman, 55, of 16 Fuller Rd., failed to stop at a stop sign on Austin Drive before attempting to make a left turn on North Main Street and collided head on with the Chevrolet.

State Police said Cole and Chapman were both transported by Marlborough Ambulance to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center with minor injuries.

Obituaries continued

East Hampton

Gina Marie Garofalo

Gina Marie Garofalo, 53, of Southington, formerly of East Hampton, died Sunday, March 10, at John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington. Born Aug. 28, 1965, in Middletown, she was the daughter of Rosemary (Anderson) Garofalo and the late Guy Garofalo Jr.

Gina grew up in East Hampton and attended Vinal Tech High School. She was employed by Subway Sandwich Shop. Gina enjoyed bingo and crocheting, but what gave her the most joy in her life was caring for her grandchildren.

She is survived by her mother, Rosemary Garofalo of East Hampton; her son, Shawn Beaulieu and wife Stacey of Florida; daughter, Nicole Beaulieu and fiancé Tom Cedeno of Southington; two brothers, Ricky Garofalo of East Hampton, Justin Garofalo and wife Madalyn of East Hampton; sister, Laurie Taylor of East Hampton; sister-in-law, Cathie Garofalo of East Hampton; six grandchildren, Christian, Aidan, Isabella, Mason, Tiffany and Shawn II.

She was predeceased by her brother Guy Garofalo III.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., today, March 15, from 5-7 p.m. To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Correction

In an article published on page 16 of the March 8 *Rivereast*, it was incorrectly stated that Andover Board of Finance member Adrian Mandeville said the purchase of a plow truck would knock the town's \$2.4 million fund balance to 10 percent of the town's overall budget. Mandeville actually stated that the fund balance, which is currently 16 percent of the budget, needs to be reduced further to get to 10 percent.

The *Rivereast* regrets the error.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Shirley Lewis Cooke Dunning

Shirley Lewis Cooke Dunning, 98, of Reading, Vt. and East Hampton died peacefully on March 2 in the home she shared with her daughter and son-in-law, Leslie and John O'Kelly in East Hampton.

She was born February 4, 1921 in Camden, N.J., the daughter of Dwight Whitmore Cooke and Katharine Fiske Cooke. She lived in Merchantville and Haddonfield, N.J. and graduated from Haddonfield Memorial High School in 1938. She then moved to Winchester, Mass., where she lived with her grandmother, Mrs. Fiske-Bradford, and attended school. Later she took courses at Middlebury College while living in Middlebury, Vt. and in past years enjoyed their Alumni College.

In 1942, she and George R. Dunning were married in Winchester and they lived in Marblehead, Mass. During the war years she was in Walnut Ridge, Ark., Dothan, Ala., and Fort Myers, Fla. until her husband went to England as a P-51 fighter pilot. At that point, she moved to the family farm in Reading, Vt., the seventh generation of her family to live in Reading.

She was co-president with her husband of the Reading P.T.A., a Den Mother of Cub Scouts, active in the Reading Christian Union (Reading Community Church) as secretary for many years, and was on the Planning Committee and Zoning Board for the town. She was a member of the Reading Historical Society and was an associate member of the Perkinsville Community Church.

Shirley and her husband George owned and operated the Mt. Ascutney (Vt.) Ski Shop in the base lodge for fifteen years. She continued skiing in her later life. She was happy hiking the hills around her home and was a competent hunter into her eighties.

Being an avid traveler, she had visited all seven continents and over thirty countries and had given talks and shown her slides on many occasions. Sailing was a passion and she had made many long passages – the Virgin Islands to Bermuda; two trips from Massachusetts to the Bahamas; Picton, Ontario to North Carolina and return; down the St. Lawrence to New Brunswick; Washington State to Alaska; as well as yearly sailing cruises on the coast of Maine, and exciting sails in Alaska and other places.

Her husband, George, died in an automobile accident in 1978. She will be remembered with love by her three children: Dwight and his wife Judy of Cornwall, Vt. and their two children – Rebecca (and her husband Brian) Jones, and Tim (and his wife Tiffany) Dunning; Richard and his wife Lori Kincaid of Anchorage, Alaska and their children – Kitty Kincaid, Kris Kincaid, and Karen Kincaid; Leslie and her husband John O'Kelly of East Hampton and their children – Aimee (and her husband Len) Carlson, Kristie (and her husband Josh) Cannon, Stephen O'Kelly, and Matthew O'Kelly. Ten great-grandchildren: Eowyn Jones, Lyra Jones, Peter Sweetman, James Sweetman, McKenna Kincaid, Payton Kincaid, Ashley Carlson, Hunter Carlson, Cole Cannon, and Milo Cannon; and one great-great-granddaughter – Zoe Carlson. She is also survived by her nephews, Randy and Michael Mulligan, and her niece Kathy Mulligan Lord and their families.

In addition to her parents and her husband, Shirley was predeceased by her treasured sister Katharine (Kay) Mulligan, her brother-in-law E.W. (Pat) Mulligan, and by her grandson David Kincaid.

She was the niece of noted raconteur Dwight Fiske and a descendent of Mayflower passengers and founding fathers.

She will be missed by all who knew her – especially all her Reading, Vt. neighbors and Virginia friends, including Vicki Van Mater and Sandy Smith of Virginia (daughters of the late Bob Van Mater – Shirley's high school beau, and her dear companion in later years) with whom she spent many special winters.

Her family thanks the Middlesex Hospital Homecare Hospice nurses and aides for their wonderful and compassionate care, and the helpers from Companions and Homemakers. A Celebration of Life will be held in Vermont at a later date. Friends are invited to Leslie and John O'Kelly's home on Saturday, March 16, between 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at 10 Sherry Dr.

Contributions may be made in Shirley's name to Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457.



East Hampton

Audrey L. Heidel

Audrey L. (Shaw) Heidel, 84, known for her boundless energy, quick intelligence and vibrant personality, died peacefully early March 1 at her home in Haddam. A wife of one, a mother of four and a friend to many, Audrey was a vivacious spirit with a thirst for learning and life who danced to her own drummer.

Audrey was born Oct. 2, 1934, in Yonkers, N.Y., to James and Gladys (Dolly) Shaw. After graduating from high school in Fairlawn, N.J., she attended nursing school before turning to a secretarial job, where she met her future husband, Robert H. Heidel. After marrying, she was soon a fulltime mom with four children, whom she taught to swim, ski and play tennis. She also became a lifeguard at this time. She later earned a bachelor's degree in biology and education from Eastern Connecticut State University, and then a master's degree. After teaching high school, she worked as a teacher at a psychiatric facility for youths, as executive secretary to the dean of students and assistant to the dean of the college at Wesleyan University, for the state welfare department, as a realtor, and as a deputy sheriff in Middlesex County.

She lived most of her life in East Hampton, and was very involved in her community, volunteering for many civic organizations. She served as chairwoman of the East Hampton Board of Education, was a member of the Governor's Health Task Force and a representative to the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, served on the board of Middlesex Community Health Services, was an active member of the PTA, helped out with Little League and the Girl Scouts, was a volunteer at Middlesex Memorial Hospital, and served as an acolyte at St. Patrick Catholic Church.

Audrey enjoyed music and musical theater, playing the piano, swimming, tennis, bowling, golfing, gardening, and socializing with family and friends. She also loved the ocean and spent many weekend days basking in the sun and reading.

She was predeceased by her husband, Robert H. Heidel, to whom she was married for 51 years; brother, Robert Shaw; and daughter-in-law, Mary Bridget (O'Sullivan) Heidel.

She is survived by her children, Paul Heidel of Middle Haddam; Ken Heidel and his wife Lisa Hayden of Sturbridge, Mass.; Kathleen (Heidel) Conklin of East Hampton; and Thomas Heidel of East Hampton; grandchildren, Chris and Kelly Conklin, Ryan and Nora Heidel, and Eric and Evan Heidel; sisters Jacqueline Foley of Cleveland, Ohio, Beverly Millson of Aurora, Colo.; and several nieces and nephews.

There was a wake on Monday, March 4, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. A funeral Mass was celebrated Tuesday, March 5, at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 47 W. High St., East Hampton. Burial followed at Rock Landing Cemetery in Haddam Neck.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424.



Marlborough

Anetta Caffyn

Anetta (Marsh) Caffyn, 98, of Marlborough, widow of the late William Caffyn Jr., died peacefully Thursday, March 7 at Middlesex Hospital. Born Dec. 13, 1920 in Glastonbury, she was the daughter of the late Arthur and Marion (Royce) Marsh.

Anetta was a lifelong member of the Marlborough Congregational Church and a member of the Moose Club both in Marlborough and in Alaska. Anetta loved to travel and spent summers in Alaska. She also loved to bake and won many Blue Ribbons in Alaska.

She is survived by her son William Caffyn III and his wife Mary Jane of Marlborough; two daughters, Marion York and husband Morris of Marlborough and Linda McKelvey of Marlborough; 13 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and 5 great-great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her son Lawrence Caffyn, her brother Anson Marsh and her great-great-grandson Leon.

Friends may call Monday, March 11 from 5-7 p.m. at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Funeral services will be private with burial in Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Assoc., P.O. Box 308, Marlborough, CT 06447.

For online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Thomas Henry Manning Jr.

Thomas Henry Manning Jr., 86, of Portland, passed away in the early morning of Thursday, Feb. 21, after a valiant and lengthy battle with melanoma, oral cancer and heart disease. He was born in Gloucester, Mass., on Sept. 7, 1932, to Thomas Henry Manning Sr. and Frances (Clancy) Manning.

He, along with his sisters, was raised and educated in Rocky Hill. After high school he proudly served in the United States Air Force during the Korean Conflict. After his service he had a varied and interesting career path. From builder to door to door sales for both Fuller Brush and Electrolux he moved on to car sales followed by diner owner/cook/food service. He then, along with his sons, returned to the building trade forming their company Manning Home Builders. At the time of his passing he was president, remaining active until illness slowed him down in March 2018.

Always active, he and his wife Eileen were often seen on the sidelines of many sporting, dance or school events supporting their seven children. After many years supporting his children he happily resumed his place in the stands for many sporting, educational, or cultural activities of his grandchildren. He was a proud member of the Portland community and contributed in many ways. As a businessman he supported many community organizations with donations of goods and services. He served on many boards of youth organizations for his children. He attended many town board and commission meetings delivering insightful commentary after much study and research of the prevailing issues.

He is survived by his second wife Ann Marie Drozd of Portland; his seven children and their spouses, Kim and Bill Hanna, Sheila and Kurt Peterson, Colleen and Don Kimball, Tom and Chris Manning, Kelly and Larry Mainetti, Tim and Penny Manning and Shaun and Teri Manning; his beloved grandchildren, Will (Brenda), Kevin and Brian (Ashley) Hanna, Rachel (Erin) Peterson-Lemke and Andrew Peterson, Kerilyn, Matt and Claire Kimball, Taryn (Drew) Schroll, Logan and Hayden Manning, Jessica (Tom) DeBeaumont, Joshua (Vicki) and Casey Mainetti, Luke Manning, and Stephanie (Shawn) Murray; his great-grandchildren, Makayla, Ayden, Emma, Theo and Aria; his beloved sister, Rachel Wiltsie and brother-in-law Richard Drozd. He is also survived by many beloved nieces, nephews and friends including special friends George and Patricia Kalber.

He was predeceased by his beloved first wife, Eileen (Coleman) Manning; his sisters and brothers-in law, Virginia and Frank Partridge, Rita and Glen Smith, Marcia and Earl Fisher, Patricia Mannix, Charles Wiltsie; and his niece Brenda Mannix.

The funeral will be held Saturday, March 2, in St. Mary's Church, Portland. Burial with full military honors will be in Middlefield Cemetery, Middlefield at a later date. Friends called at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Friday, March 1.

Donations may be made to the Portland Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480 or Middlesex Hospice Unit, c/o Development Office, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

East Hampton

Alice Grimshaw

Alice Grimshaw, 86, of East Hampton, passed away Friday, March 1, at Hartford Hospital Hospice, with loving family by her side. She was born in Norwich Oct. 27, 1937, to Albert Z. and Marceline Godaire Babbitt.

She was a loving, devoted mother, leaving behind a son, John Grimshaw Jr. and his wife Jamie Grimshaw, and a daughter, Melaney McHale and husband Norman McHale, and a granddaughter, Katelyn Grimshaw.

Alice was soon to be a great-grandmother this month, to a son that will carry out the Grimshaw name. She was so proud to hear that.

Alice worked for the State of Connecticut for over 30 years. She loved gardening, building puzzles, watching old movies and reading books. Earlier this year, she also was awarded a Certificate of Acknowledgment by Father Flanagan's Boys' Home in appreciation of her contribution to the children of Boys Town.



Hebron

Richard Earl Verizzi

Richard Earl Verizzi, 80, of Hebron, passed away Sunday, March 10, at Windham Hospital, surrounded by his family. Born Aug. 16, 1938, in Hartford, he was a son of the late Vito Verizzi and Evelyn (Allhouse) Strickland.

Rich married his beloved wife, Nancy Graves, on Oct. 10, 1959. Soon after, the couple made their home and raised their family in Hebron. Richard was a proud veteran having served our country in the U.S. Marine Corps. He later went to work for the state, retiring after 37 years with the DOT bridge department as a general supervisor.

Rich was an avid outdoorsman who loved fishing, hunting, and camping, especially in Ontario, with family and friends. He was a skilled pie baker and gardener. Rich will be remembered fondly by his family as a hardworking family man who put his all into every endeavor.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by his wife of 59 years, Nancy; his children, Richard Verizzi (Halina Kilroy) of Colchester, Michael Verizzi of Houston Texas, Steven (Lisa) Verizzi of Lebanon, Donna (Rodney) Small of Conway, Ark., and Jodie (Mark) Lebreux of Lebanon; siblings, Mark (Margaret) Verizzi of Columbia, Gail Novakowski of New London, Tina (Jay) Clapper of Plantation, Fla.; friend and brother-in-law, Dick Carpenter; 10 grandchildren, who lovingly knew him as Poppy: Anthony, Steven, Catherine, Michael Jr., Samantha, Shelby, Tyler, David, Meg, and Emma; great-grandchildren, Harmony and Dawson; his pet cat, Mitchie; and numerous extended family members and friends.

The family would like to thank Masonic Healthcare and all the wonderful caregivers that helped Dad.

Calling hours will be held Sunday, March 17, from noon-1 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A memorial service will follow at 1 p.m. at the funeral home. Burial will be private in the Columbia Center Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the animal shelter of one's choice.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Edward E. Kerwin

Edward E. Kerwin, 67, of Colchester, formerly of Warwick, R.I., passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, Feb. 27, at Hartford Hospital, with his longtime girlfriend, Donna Bigalbal, at his side. He was born Feb. 5, 1952 in Providence, R.I.

Ed will be loved and missed by many. He'll forever be remembered by those whom he touched with his selfless life, in always thinking of others first. Ed always gave a helping hand to those in need and was a generous and loyal friend with his kind disposition.

Ed lived in Rhode Island most of his life, but spent his last remaining nine years in Colchester. He coached Little League in Rhode Island for 20 years and for the most part had a winning team. He attended Westchester Congregational Church in Colchester for the past two years, at which he made a lot of new friends. Ed was very fond of sports. He was an avid fan of both the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots. He loved to go for long walks and was known for out walking others. In addition, he enjoyed spending time with his close friends and had a great sense of humor.

Besides being survived by his girlfriend, Donna Bigalbal, and her daughter, Heather Bigalbal of Colchester, Ed leaves behind a daughter, Dorothy McNutt, her husband, and his granddaughter, Alexis McNutt, of Florida. He leaves behind a large family, including many nieces and nephews. Ed is survived by seven siblings. They are Caroline ("Lucky") of Florida, Kay of Florida, Nancy (unknown address), Alice of New Hampshire, John of Warwick, R.I., Sandy of Cranston, R.I., and Doris of Maine.

There will be no calling hours. A private burial service will be held with family members and close friends at a later date.



Amston

Richard Frank Alfano

Richard Frank Alfano, 83, of Amston Lake, formerly of Kensington, passed away Tuesday, March 5. Born April 3, 1935, in New Britain, he was a son of the late Dominic Alfano and Jane (Labieniec) Parson.



Richard was a veteran who served our nation by enlisting in the United States Navy in 1952. After being discharged from the navy, he became a familiar face around the town of Kensington where he worked as a U.S.P.S Mail Carrier for 37 years and was a registered member of the National Arm of Letter Carriers. While he was still a resident of Kensington, Richard went into business as a co-owner of the Parsons Catering Service. He was a loving husband, father and grandfather who enjoyed golfing, bowling and spending time cooking for his family and friends.

He will be forever loved and missed by his loving wife of 61 years, Georgette (Albert) Alfano; his son, Gregory (Cheryl) Alfano of Hebron; his daughter, Brenda (Thomas) Gutner of Denver, Colo.; sisters, Elizabeth Chiger of New Britain and Sharon Mercaldi of Rocky Hill; and his six grandchildren, Jessica, Jennifer, Todd, Chad, Lindsey and Tyler, plus six great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his brother, Robert Alfano.

The family will receive guests from 4-7 p.m. today, March 15, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 16, directly at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., Hebron. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Church of The Holy Family or to the Disabled American Veterans Connecticut Chapter, 33 Oak St., Watertown, CT 06795.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Harold Woltag

Harold "Hal" Woltag, 82, of Colchester, beloved husband of Fay (Gelbert) Woltag, passed away peacefully surrounded by his loving family Wednesday, March 13. Born March 30, 1936, in Brooklyn, N.Y., he was the son of the late David and Eva (Marenberg) Woltag.



He served proudly with the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War. Hal went on to work as a quality assurance inspector for Pratt & Whitney for many years before his retirement in 1999.

His involvement in the community over the years was vast and his associations included former membership with (the former) Jewish Aid Congregation, Colchester-Hayward VFC, the Antique Veterans Honor Guard and serving as Scoutmaster of Troop 72 and currently with Congregation Ahavath Achim, the Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut, American Legion Post 54, Wooster Lodge AF & AM No. 10, Colchester AARP, the Connecticut State Police Auxiliary and the P&W Aircraft Club.

In addition to his loving wife of 61 years, he leaves their three children, Diane Dias (and her husband Fernando) of Deltona, Fla., Michael of Charlestown, Mass., and Robert (and his wife, Christine) of Wilmington, Mass.; and three grandchildren, Nathan, David and Evan. Hal was predeceased by his brother-in-law, Max Gilbert.

Funeral services will be observed at 2 p.m. today, March 15, in the sanctuary of Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester. Burial with military honors will follow in the Jewish Aid Cemetery, Colchester. Shiva Minyan will be observed this evening at 7:30 p.m. at the synagogue and at the home Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m.

Donations in his memory may be made online at cancer.org, diabetes.org or heart.org.

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

Colchester

Walter James Sawchuk

Walter James "Corky" Sawchuk, 53, of West Chester, Ohio, formerly of Colchester, passed away at home unexpectedly after a brief illness Sunday, March 3. He was born June 16, 1965, in Middletown, loving son of Dolores (Bengston) Sawchuk of Colchester and the late Walter Henry Sawchuk.



Corky grew up in Colchester and graduated in 1983 from Bacon Academy and went on to earn his bachelor's degree from Lincoln Memorial University (Harrogate, Tenn.) in 1987. Early on, he acquired a love of travel from his parents. Cork's life journey found him navigating the country for school, ball games, concerts, visiting friends, and later for work.

His lifelong love of baseball began as just a little guy wearing "1/2" as batboy for the champion Walt's Country Motors softball team. It continued from Little League, through Legion, to the Bacon Academy High School and LMU college teams. Just a few years ago, his White Sox baseball team captured the city league championship, with Cork still playing. He loved to coach, play, watch and talk sports. He also learned the love of horse racing from his dad.

During his school years, he honed his writing skills as editor of both his high school and college newspapers, even writing a weekly article for a Kentucky newspaper titled "That's Life." These skills would serve him well throughout the years to the many organizational newsletters, notes and letters to friends and his love of social media. Walt's career path brought him to many states and positions, where he made a myriad of lifelong connections and friends, culminating in his current position and successful career with Deufol North American, Inc. as regional business development manager. He was able to find balance in life while traveling for work by exploring each city and what they had to offer.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by children, Cameron Sawchuk and Olivia Sawchuk, both of Ohio; brothers, William (Teri) Sawchuk and John Sawchuk, all of Colchester and Charles (Sherrrie) Sawchuk of Plainfield; nephews and nieces, Justin, Matthew, Amanda and Madeline; an aunt, Annette Bengston of Florida; and many other extended family members and friends.

The family will receive guests starting at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 16, at the Colchester Federated Church (located at 60 Main St. on the Green) before a celebration of his life at noon.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Federated Church, where the funds will be used for the much needed replacement of a tree that was dedicated in honor of his grandfather, Carl A. Bengston, and will be rededicated in both their names.

An additional service for Mr. Sawchuk will be held in Ohio at a later date. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Kristopher Paul Kahle

Kristopher Paul Kahle, 35, died the weekend of March 9 of an apparent opioid overdose, after a decade-long battle with a substance use disorder.



Kris was born Sept. 20, 1983. He had a love for all things technical and mechanical. He had a particular interest in cars, but he was enraptured by anything with speed and power. He was known for his charisma, his recklessly adventurous spirit, and his quick wit.

Kris was preceded in death by his beloved grandfather, Richard Parsons. He is survived by grandmother, Lillian Parsons; mother, Linda Parsons; mother's partner, Scott Corey Sr.; aunt, Laura Parsons; father, Paul Kahle; uncle, John Kahle; grandmother, Catherine Kahle; sister, Katherine Kahle; and brother-in-law, Kyle Marrotte.

The family has decided to list his cause of death publicly in order to break the pervasive silence and shame of opioid abuse. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Southeastern Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependency (SCADD). If you are still using, please let Kris's death serve as your wake-up call.

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

Marlborough

Gregory Edward Bader

Gregory Edward Bader, 24, of Norwich, formerly of Colchester and Marlborough, passed away unexpectedly Friday, March 8. He was a 2012 graduate of RHAM High School.



Greg was a loving, generous, young man who found life to be both a joy and a struggle. He was very warm-hearted, outgoing and fun-loving. Greg was an extremely hard worker and very proud of his work ethic and accomplishments. His ability to work non-stop for hours, performing labor-intensive tasks that few would see through completion, such as spreading countless yards of mulch on the hottest summer day, was truly admirable. An avid Yankees fan, he loved to play baseball and basketball. He took great joy in all types of accomplishments, like climbing Mt. Washington and learning to drive a stick shift car.

He was very proud of his most recent jobs at Lucas Tree Experts in Norwich and Friends and Family, LLC in Marlborough, where he viewed all of his coworkers as his friends and the latter as his "second" family. These connections and relationships had placed him proudly on the path to becoming the Greg Bader he believed he was meant to be, but he had a misstep that took our beloved Gregory from us. Our hearts are broken and will never fully mend, but we will move forward in his honor, focusing on all the things Greg taught us about how wonderful life can be.

Greg and his brother, Kevin Bader, were not only brothers, but also best friends. Greg was always there for Kevin or anyone who faced any type of struggles. Greg would never think twice about taking a risk to help someone in distress. We will always remember what he would do without giving it a second thought....from swimming out to the middle of Lake Terramugus to help a child who fell out of a flipped canoe, to proudly helping his parents, sisters and friends with everything from home renovations to the messiest clean-ups of all types.

Greg inspired his immediate family to always be and do better. His father and mother, Edward and Nancy Bader, learned to be the best parents they could be in a world very different from the one of their own youth. Gregory would become the parent and help them understand and deal with these differences. He was never embarrassed to have parents old enough to be his grandparents and a sister old enough to be his mother. His sisters, Suzanne Salemi and Christine Peach, helped him grow up, and in the process became forever grateful about what he taught them so that they could be better parents and classroom teachers.

In addition, no words can sum up how important Gregory and his brother, Kevin Bader, were to each other. They were adopted from the same orphanage and shared their lives, joys, and misfortunes as only true brothers could.

Above all else, Gregory was a complicated young man. He always played his favorite song loudly in his bedroom from the time he started really listening to music and lyrics: Louis Armstrong "What a Wonderful World." He would want us to share these words with you as you remember him.

*I see trees of green, red roses too,
I see them bloom for me and you
And I think to myself what a wonderful world.*

*I see skies of blue and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself what a wonderful world*

*The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky
And also on the faces of people going by
I see friends shaking hands saying 'how do you do'
They're really saying 'I love you'*

*I hear babies crying, I watch them grow,
They'll learn much more than I'll ever know
And I think to myself what a wonderful world.
And I think to myself what a wonderful world.*

Greg was predeceased by his grandparents, Nena and Russell Schlitter of Hebron. He is survived by his immediate family members, Edward and Nancy Bader of Colchester and formerly of Marlborough, Kevin Bader of New London, Suzanne Salemi of Colchester, Christine and Collin Peach of Marlborough, and his four nephews Sam and Ben Salemi and Nicolas and Finnley Peach. In addition, we, his immediate family, will be forever grateful to the role his second families played in his life - Greg and Erica Barker of Hebron and Jim and Mary Anne Salemi of Haddam.

Private memorial services will be held at a later date to be announced.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations in memory of Gregory Bader to AHM Youth and Family Services, Children's Trust Fund, 25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron CT. 06248.

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

Hebron

Charles Bartkowski

Charles "Chuck" Bartkowski, 72, of Amston, died Thursday, Feb. 28, after a long illness.



Chuck is survived by his wife, Karen Larson Bartkowski; son David Bartkowski and his wife Stephanie Bartkowski, of Torrington; and son Matthew Bartkowski, his children Morgan and Zachary Bartkowski, his partner Kelly Larson and her son Jordan Morales, of Waterford. Chuck was predeceased by his parents, Stephen Bartkowski and Eunice Pratt Bartkowski; sister Dorothy Champowick; and brother Stephen Bartkowski.

Chuck was born Sept. 5, 1946 and grew up in New Britain. He attended New Britain High School and graduated in 1964. He continued his education at the Ward Technical Institute, graduating in 1966. He then went on to serve our country in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War era from 1966-1970.

Chuck married Karen Larson in 1967. Karen accompanied Chuck on his tour of duty as he served in Germany and England. When Chuck was off duty, they enjoyed traveling and exploring various parts of Germany, England, and Scotland. At the conclusion of Chuck's service, he and Karen returned to the United States where they eventually made their home and raised their family in Amston.

After returning to the states, Chuck went to work for United Technologies in East Hartford, Connecticut, where he worked as an Instrumental Technician at the Research Center until his retirement. His hobbies included woodworking, reading, and volunteering at the local food bank.

Services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hebron Interfaith Human Services, P.O. Box 634, Hebron, CT 06248.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements.

Colchester

Allan David MacInnis

Allan David MacInnis, 82, of Colchester, formerly of East Lyme, beloved husband of Sandra (Grillo) MacInnis, passed away unexpectedly from natural causes at home on Ash Wednesday, March 6. Born July 25, 1936, in New London, he was the son of the late Daniel and Frances (Delmore) MacInnis.

Mr. MacInnis had worked as stockroom head for many years at Northeast Utilities before his retirement. A devout Catholic, he was an active communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester, where in recent years he served on the altar for countless Masses, most of them funeral liturgies. While living in East Lyme, he was a Eucharistic Minister at St. Matthias Church. Al was a 4th Degree member of the Knights of Columbus as well.

In addition to his beloved wife of 60 years, he leaves three children, Jeffrey MacInnis of Waterford, Pamela Cunningham and her husband Daniel of San Jose, Calif., and MariJo MacInnis of Colchester; two grandchildren, Nicholas and Tyler; a sister, Marjorie; and numerous extended family and friends.

The family received guests Monday, March 11, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, before the celebration of the funeral liturgy that morning. Burial will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery, New London.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Heart Association (heart.org).

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