

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

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**Countdown to Cinco de Mayo!... The Colchester Rotary Club is getting ready to serve the public today, May 3, from 6-8 p.m., at a Cinco de Mayo dinner at the Colchester Fish & Game Club on Amston Road. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$5 for kids, and can be purchased at the door. Pictured here are Katrina and Caleb Evans.**

## Plastic Bag Ban Floated in Belltown

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton resident Nicholas Piscatelli says there is no good solution for getting rid of the single-use plastic shopping bags that he estimates are discarded at least 8,000 times per day in town.

The answer is to not use them in the first place, according to Piscatelli. That's why he's proposing a local ban that would prevent local businesses from providing most plastic shopping bags to customers.

It would also implement a 10-cent fee for paper bags or biodegradable plastic bags. The fee would go back to the business – not into town coffers.

Piscatelli calls it the "Bring Your Own Bag" campaign. In February and again in April, he stood before the Town Council asking for a public hearing on a draft ordinance he wrote after reviewing similar laws in other towns.

The University of Connecticut senior said the ubiquitous plastic checkout bags end up littering the streets and the lake, sitting in landfills, or getting jammed up in sorting equipment at recycling centers because otherwise conscientious citizens don't realize the bags shouldn't be thrown into blue bins with the rest of their plastic.

"There's one in the tree outside the town hall right now, flapping in the wind," he told the council during their April 23 meeting.

The fine for businesses violating the ban would be \$90 per day, under Piscatelli's proposal. The language in his draft ordinance allows 14 days for a business to come into compliance before fines begin to accrue.

The ban would not apply to the kind of bags used in grocery store produce or meat departments. It would also not apply to bags used by nonprofit organizations to distribute food, clothes or household items to clients.

The council has not taken any action on Piscatelli's request for a public hearing.

Republican council Chairman Melissa Engel said this week she will be visiting East Hampton's retailers over the next few weeks to discuss the issue.

"What I intend to do is check the pulse of our local businesses," she said. "I'd rather have them do it compliantly and nicely, because it's the right thing to do, rather than pass a law."

The idea of a plastic bag ban is also circulating in Hartford, where lawmakers in the General Assembly's Environment Committee approved a bill in March that would stop businesses from providing plastic bags beginning Jan. 1, 2020. The bill has not yet been taken up by the House or Senate.

Gov. Ned Lamont's budget proposal, released in February, also included a 10-cent tax on single-use plastic bags. It's up to lawmakers in the Democrat-led legislature to negotiate and approve a final budget before the governor signs it into law.

Connecticut Food Association President Wayne Pesce, whose organization advocates for grocers and food suppliers in the state, told lawmakers in March that he did not support an all-out ban but is in favor of charging shoppers a "fee" of at least 5 cents for plastic bags.

He said more than 20 municipalities in the state have instituted bans or fees so far, including Westport, Greenwich, Hamden and Stamford.

"With 169 towns and cities in Connecticut, a one-by-one plan doesn't make much sense. This scenario is not broad enough, makes it difficult for retailers to comply and is confusing for consumers," he said in written testimony.

Middletown last month joined the growing  
**See Plastic Bag Ban page 2**

## Students Asked to Speak Out Against Hate

by Elizabeth Regan

The story of posthumous civil rights icon Emmett Till – delivered by a schoolmate of his back in Chicago who now preaches for justice as a deacon with the Catholic Church – is part of a burgeoning conversation about diversity and acceptance at Portland High School.

Deacon Arthur Miller warned sophomores this week that Emmett Till was killed by hatred that lurked in silence.

"The reason that Emmett Till was murdered was because that town of Money, Mississippi allowed hatred to flourish," Miller told the class, which had assembled in the auditorium Wednesday during G and H periods for the mid-day talk.

Till, a 14-year-old Chicago native, was visiting family in Mississippi during the summer

of 1955 when he was brutally murdered for whistling at a white woman. The crime is widely recognized as a catalyst of the civil rights movement.

His mutilated body, seen from an open casket at the request of his mother, was imprinted on the national consciousness through photographs in the Chicago-based Jet Magazine.

Two white men were acquitted by an all-white jury in the murder. They later admitted in a magazine interview they had killed Till.

"Emmett Till wasn't murdered because he was black," Miller said. "He was murdered because they harbored hatred and were silent in the face of hatred."

Ten-year-old Miller was a few years behind Till back in 1955. He said his older brother was

Till's classmate and good friend.

Miller called Till a shy child; he said he was a smart kid with a stutter who whistled when he was nervous.

"He didn't want to be a martyr," Miller said. "He was just a little boy who they murdered and butchered and tortured because they were filled with hatred."

The deacon said he still remembers his brother's scream when their mother sat them down to tell them of Till's death. That brother, who grew up to become a nuclear scientist, had always said Till was smarter than he was.

"So when those men murdered Emmett Till, they murdered a future. They murdered all kinds of things that we don't know," Miller said.

That's what's wrong with hatred, Miller told

the students.

"You don't know what somebody can be. You don't know who you can be. You can be spectacular – every single one of you," he said.

The deacon, with the kind yet insistent cadence of an activist-turned-businessman-turned-preacher, warned the 99-member sophomore class to stand up and make noise in the face of injustice.

They don't have to look far to find it, according to Miller.

"In this school right now, there are people getting bullied – and you know who the hell it is," he said. "Some of you are too quiet right now. You cannot let it happen."

Miller is a Catholic deacon at St. Mary's  
**See Portland Students page 2**



**Plastic Bag Ban cont. from Front Page**

group when its Common Council passed a ban on single-use plastic bags and a 10-cent fee for paper bags. *The Day* of New London reported last month that Stonington approved a ban on plastic bags and straws.

Piscatelli said he'd rather see East Hampton address the issue on its own terms rather than wait for the state to make a move.

He gave councilors a list of 12 retailers in support of his campaign, including Paul's and Sandy's Too and the Lucky Goat.

Lucky Goat owner Jim Gworek said this week he already uses biodegradable plastic bags, which he orders 20,000 at a time.

He said the bags cost twice as much as the non-biodegradable version.

"Honestly, I don't think the customers would make a big deal out of the dime," he said of the proposed fee. "I might get a couple people that would ask, and if they did, we would just say it's a town ordinance."

Gworek said the problem with rolling out a fee is educating customers, especially those who don't live in town.

"They're not going to be prepared," he said – which might be enough of an inconvenience to lead to lost business.

Stop and Shop spokesman Amy Thibault did not comment on the ordinance proposal itself, but said in an email that all of the supermarket chain's plastic packaging will be "fully reusable, recyclable or compostable" by 2025.

"We encourage all of our customers to utilize reusable bags since it is the most sustainable choice for transporting their groceries," she wrote.

Piscatelli told the *Rivereast* this week it's ultimately up to community members at the hoped-for public hearing and members of the council to determine what the ordinance will look like.

He said that could include revisiting the draft language that currently specifies retailers "must" charge customers 10 cents for every paper bag, compostable plastic bag or marine degradable plastic bag.

"In theory, I think that's a great idea, but the word 'must' may be a little too heavy there," he said.

Piscatelli's efforts have drawn support from the community, including at last week's stand-

ing-room-only council meeting.

Elaine Pellegrino during the public comment period said it might take a few trips before it becomes a habit for residents to bring their reusable bags on shopping trips.

"Will it be maybe a little bit irritating the first few times if you forget them? Sure. But you'll quickly adapt," she said.

Amanda Pizzoferrato, owner of the Sleepy Rooster Cafe in the Cobalt section of town, said her customers tend to be environmentally conscious.

"We personally use paper bags and a lot of people have been pleased with the fact that we use it," she said.

But not everyone in the room was a fan of the government deciding what's best for its citizens.

Richard Brown, who serves as chairman of the Board of Finance, stood up to say a reusable bag isn't quite the environmental cure-all it's sometimes made out to be.

According to the online business news outlet Quartz, a 2018 study by Denmark's ministry of environment found the production of reusable, non-woven polypropylene bags often available for purchase at grocery stores are much harder on the environment – in terms of water and energy use – than the production of typical single-use plastic bags.

The production of an organic cotton bag causes even more harm than the production of a polypropylene bag, according to the study.

For Piscatelli, it comes down to the sheer amount of single-use plastic bags used and discarded every day.

"Even at a very conservative estimate, we're using 8,000 plastic bags in East Hampton in a day," he said. "They all have to go somewhere."

He said he's committed to using the next several months to win council support for the local Bring Your Own Bag initiative. Then he's off to New York City to begin his career as an associate analyst at Moody's Investors Services.

"My approach is to be equally persistent and respectful and make sure the Town Council is aware that this isn't something that's going to go away, that there are environmental consequences and general quality of life consequences if we're not able to take action on something like this sooner rather than later," he said.



**Deacon Arthur Miller, of Saint Mary's Church in Simsbury, talked to Portland High School sophomores on Wednesday about the civil rights legacy of Emmett Till. Miller attended school with Till in Chicago in the 1950s before the young man was brutally murdered while visiting family in Money, Mississippi.**

**Portland Students cont. from Front Page**

Church in Simsbury and chaplain at Capital Community College in Hartford. He speaks nationally on issues of faith and social justice. His 2005 book, *The Journey to Chatham: Why Emmett Till's Murder Changed America*, tells the story of Till's murder from the perspective of his neighborhood friends.

Ahlaysha McCoy, part of the American literature class that introduced Miller's talk with a presentation about Emmett Till's life and death, told the *Rivereast* she took the deacon's message to heart.

She said standing up to bullies is something she can – and has – done to make a difference in someone's life.

"I know at my cousin's school, her and one of her friends used to get bullied," she said. "I used to pick her up after school and I witnessed it. I stood up for her and told the girl to leave her alone. Ever since then, no one has bothered her. I'm there to watch out for her."

That's her way of starting to stand up for social justice – for now.

"Then as I go on, if I witness more [problems], I can stand up for that," she said.

McCoy, who lives in Hartford, said she does not see racism as a problem at Portland High School. She said the school, which participates in the state's Open Choice program, has a diverse student body.

But on the flip side, McCoy said that means there's not much focus on education about racism.

"Since it's not happening as people might think it would, there's not much going on to stop it because it's not really a problem we have to worry about here," she said.

The Open Choice program stems from the landmark Sheff vs. O'Neill desegregation case, giving Hartford students the opportunity to go to school in suburban towns for free and vice versa.

Carla McKay, a Portland parent who attended Miller's talk, emphasized the importance of having a conversation about issues of diversity, inclusion and acceptance.

McKay identified herself as a person of color. She said she became concerned when her

second grade son said another student made a comment about "building a wall" during class.

"And my son's class is very diverse," she said. "It broke my heart."

She has since brought the issue to the Portland Board of Education, where she asked members to think about how the school community can work together to teach students the value of acceptance.

"We do have a lot of families of color in town and families of color who send their children to town," she said after Miller's talk. "Let's be that open community. Let's not be that community who does not want to have anybody from the outside."

McKay said she hopes to organize some meetings with parents in the coming months to come up with a list of ideas for "a few key points" they can change to make the school curriculum more inclusive. Then she wants to bring the list to the Board of Education for help putting them into action.

"There are small things we can incorporate in our learning. There are things we can take away that are very outdated," she said.

Miller, after his talk, reiterated the point he made to students about black historical figures who are not typically examined in the American history curriculum.

He cited the story of Crispus Attucks, a black man who at the Boston Massacre became the first casualty of the American Revolution.

Miller noted none of the Portland students raised their hands when he asked them if they'd heard of Crispus Attucks.

"Everyone knows who Paul Revere is," Miller said. "All he did was ride a horse. This dude died."

He said his hope when he speaks across the country is that his message will inspire just a few people to carry on the conversation.

After all, only 5% of the American population participated in the Civil Rights Movement.

Out of the sophomore class, that figure translates to 5 students.

"Only 5%," he said. "Five percent changed the world."

# Changes Mulled for Middle Haddam Library

by Elizabeth Regan

Governing members of the gambrel-roofed library on the corner of Knowles and Middle Haddam roads are trying to figure out how the historic resource fits into the 21st century landscape.

The volunteer Middle Haddam Public Library Board of Directors recently put out a survey looking for input on how to update the 110-year old library, citing changing demographics and evolving ideas about what book-based community centers mean to the people they serve.

Board members are awaiting the results of the survey as they prepare to host multiple public forums about the future of the library.

The survey contemplates changes small and large, like reconfiguring existing space to accommodate groups or constructing an addition to make the building accessible to those with disabilities.

It also broaches the idea of ceasing library operations completely.

The latter is a “worst case scenario,” according to board Vice President Donna Roberts.

Board member Deborah Battit put it this way: “We don’t want it to happen, or we wouldn’t all be here. But we know the reality for nonprofits is tough. . . . We’re trying to be clear eyed about the options. While that is absolutely our last one, we want to be smart about it and considerate about it.”

The close-knit and cloistered village of Middle Haddam – where improvements to old homes must be certified as appropriate by the Historic District Commission and the members-only Belfry Club meets monthly for potluck camaraderie – rose up on the banks of the Connecticut River as a shipbuilding village in the early 1700s.

The library was established in 1909 in a building previously used as a general store, dwelling house, bonnet-bleaching establishment and private school, according to the organization’s website.

Board members who gathered together at the library earlier this month said the building has been a community hub ever since. It grew in 1965 to include a children’s wing, with students from the nearby Middle Haddam School filling through the doors every other week for roughly half a century to check out books before the school closed due to low enrollment in 1980.

Now, Roberts said Middle Haddam’s population is aging.

“New families coming in? Unfortunately, not so much,” she said.

Board President Mattie Walton, a self-described “East Hamptonian,” said there used to be a lot more kids back when he was one of the few out-of-village kids attending Middle Haddam School with the locals.

“Today, that’s not the case. You don’t see that many kids down here. They’re few and far between. The demographics are changing drastically,” Walton said.

Roberts said longtime residents of the enclave are dying or moving on, only to be replaced by well-established individuals who appreciate historic properties – and can afford them.

“We’re getting middle-aged people with no young kids,” she said.

Board member JoAnn Hewett said the technological swing from paper to electronics is also having an impact.

“Everyone is experiencing changes, and libraries are trying to rethink their value,” she said.

But change only goes so far in Middle Haddam.

Hewett rejected concepts implemented in nearby towns like Hebron and Glastonbury that include the formation of a dedicated area for teens or a makerspace where young inventors can turn their ideas into reality.

“We know we’re not going to do that, so we’re trying to look at adding value to our services that will make people continue to come, donate [and] support us,” Hewett said.

The Middle Haddam library currently receives \$10,000 from the town. The annual appropriation is down from \$20,000 in 2014.

Roberts said the majority of the library’s funding comes from private donations.

A sizable donation left to the library in a late patron’s 2009 will spurred controversy when some Middle Haddam residents objected to plans to add an annex and wheelchair ramp to the library.

The \$335,301 bequest from Leonard Blake specified the gift was to be used to construct a “glass-enclosed porch area overlooking the wildlife areas surrounding the library” in memory of Blake and his partner, Paul Carrier.

Opponents of the annex plan cited a lack of community input in the planning process as well as questions about whether the idea is financially and environmentally feasible or befitting the historic character of the building.

One of the most vocal opponents was Margaret Faber, who spearheaded a petition that amassed 93 signatures and helped stopped the plan from coming to fruition in 2015.

The board also rejected a plan submitted by Middle Haddam librarian Janet McDonald and assistant Gail Scranton that would have created a freestanding annex. The outdoor space, which would face a stream on the property, would be connected to the lower level by a flagstone pathway. There would also be granite benches dedicated to each man. The librarians said the rest of the money could be used for maintenance.

Faber remains committed to resisting any additions to the building. She said the Middle Haddam community made it clear through the 2015 petition, previous surveys and public forums that they don’t want the building expanded.

Faber said it’s more important to preserve the building as part of the village’s history than it is to make it fully accessible.

She noted there’s curbside service for anyone who cannot get into the building and that librarians can deliver books to homebound patrons.

“It is important to note that the MHPL is not a ‘town library,’ but a small privately-owned secondary facility that is known more for its rich archival material, quaint antique building, and friendly librarians, than its collection and programming,” she told the *Rivereast* in an email. “We have a fully accessible town library located within two miles. Our library represents a vestige of an historic lending library – with irreplaceable archival material relating to Middle Haddam – and should be respected and honored as such.”

Accessibility requirements in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are triggered when a building is “altered” through activities like remodeling, renovation, and structural changes. Routine maintenance like roofing, painting and electrical work don’t trigger compliance, according to the United States Department of Justice.

Faber said the outdoor improvements recommended by the librarians to honor the Blake bequest would not require ADA updates.

Faber also accused the board of excessive spending and a lack of transparency related to architectural plans, legal counsel and consultants over more than a decade. She described the current survey, which was created by the strategic planning consulting firm Fios Partners, as an unnecessary expense.

Board members declined to disclose the cost of the survey. When pressed by the *Rivereast*, they said they are not required to let donors or East Hampton taxpayers know how much they are spending.

State Freedom of Information Commission spokesman Tom Hennick said it’s unlikely the organization is subject to the provisions of the state’s sunshine law. If the library were considered a public agency, it would be required to let the public inspect its records.

Hennick said he would argue that the \$10,000 provided by the town is not enough to qualify the nonprofit organization as a public agency at this point.

He noted most public libraries in the state started out as nonprofits but “sort of slid into the FOI world by getting more and more money

from the town.”

According to Hewett, the board is comfortable with the distinction between the main, public library and its private counterpart in Middle Haddam.

“We know we’re not the town library. We don’t pretend to be the town library. We think we function as a nice satellite and a different option for a library experience,” she said.

Roberts told the *Rivereast* some anonymous donations covered the cost of the survey, which Battit described as a “delightful” surprise.

“I don’t know who they are,” Battit said.

Hewett reiterated the importance of the survey as an unbiased way to listen to the wider community – not just a few “very loud voices.”

Battit put it this way: “We have an obligation to do this: to hear from people in a way that’s accountable and has integrity.”

Roberts said Blake’s bequest is sitting in a bank account separate from the organization’s operating funds while the board focuses on developing a strategic plan to guide the library into the future.

The annex plan is “in neutral,” according to Hewett.

“Whatever was there before is not what we’re doing now. It happened, it was a different board, they had a completely different idea. That’s not where we are,” Hewett said.

Walton and Roberts, who have each been in their respective positions as president and vice president for three years, said they are looking at every possibility.

“We kind of came in at a hard time. I think [the controversy] divided unfortunately this community as well as others, so it was a really tough job for us,” Roberts said.

Now, she said, board members are looking ahead.

“Old wounds, old surveys, old petitions,” she said. “We’re not even addressing that anymore. It’s not even relevant.”

It’s about doing their due diligence now, the board members said.

“If you can download a book, read a newspaper online, why do people need to come to a physical building?” Hewett asked. “We’re trying to be strategic about looking ahead and taking a 21st century view.”

These are big questions for a little library that still operates with a handshake and a promise when it comes to taking out books.

“We don’t have library cards,” Roberts said with a laugh.

Each time someone checks out a book, CD or DVD, the librarian stamps a card with the due date and files it away.

“We are the library where everybody knows your name,” Walton said. “But how do we expand on that – and keep it that way?”

# Colchester Athletic Field Closed After Bird Eggs Found

by Allison Lazur

A nest of four bird eggs caused the closure of an athletic field at the Colchester recreation complex Monday – and will likely keep the field closed for at least the next three weeks, impacting several activities that take place there.

Parks and Recreation Director Tiffany Quinn said the killdeer eggs were discovered by a family at a men’s softball practice Sunday night, prompting the closure the following day at the recommendation of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection [DEEP].

Quinn said in addition to one mother bird and a nest of at least four eggs, a second mother bird has been spotted.

“There could be two nests, but we don’t know for sure; we haven’t been out there because we don’t want to disturb them,” she said Wednesday.

Killdeer, although not endangered, are listed as a species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

The statute requires federal permission be-

fore moving any migratory bird listed in the act or its eggs and nest.

According to the National Audubon Society, Killdeer nest on ground in an open area such as bare soil, a short grass field, gravel road or on occasion a gravel roof, laying typically four eggs that are described as being “buff” and “blotched” with black and brown coloring.

The common shorebird, as identified by DEEP, is “fairly common” in the state and is often found in close proximity to human activity.

The National Audubon Society states the birds are often found at the water’s edge, but also live in pastures and fields away from water.

“Many a person has been fooled by the bird’s ‘broken-wing’ act, in which it flutters along the ground in a show of injury, luring intruders away from its nest,” the Audubon Society states.

Incubation of eggs typically takes 28 days, Quinn said, meaning the field, which is booked

seven days a week, could be closed for at least the next three weeks.

A number of teams use the field including the town’s youth baseball softball league and men’s and women’s softball, she said.

Colchester Women’s Softball League President Lynne Stephenson said the league’s season was supposed to begin the same day the field was closed.

“We were supposed to start this past Monday,” she said. “We are just putting it on hold because there’s really no other field we can play on.”

Despite the team having its first game scheduled in less than two weeks, Stephenson said the players have been understanding of the situation.

“We’ll probably just keep pushing the schedule off until we can play,” she said, adding “We hope those eggs hatch soon.”

In her approximate 20 years as the league’s

president, Stephenson said she doesn’t remember a time when the field was closed, other than for routine repairs and maintenance.

Colchester Little League President Pat Walsh said that, with some slight scheduling changes, the teams have found other space among the town’s recreational fields to play.

“We have to make the best of what we’ve got,” he said. “Hopefully the birds hatch soon, they fly away and we can get on with playing baseball and softball.”

Colchester is not alone in dealing with closures caused by fowl.

The *Washington Post* reported last month that a new turf field at a California high school was unable to open due to the presence of killdeer and four eggs. And a report by local media outlets in North Carolina revealed about a week ago that sections of a parking lot – scheduled to be used for a music festival – were blocked off to protect a killdeer and her eggs.



# Marlborough Family Shares Struggle with Juvenile Arthritis

by Allison Lazur

Maci Wolfe is a third-grader at Marlborough Elementary School, loves giraffes and still smiles despite dealing with chronic, daily pain.

Lisa Wolfe said her daughter was diagnosed at age two with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), an autoimmune disease with no known cause and no cure. Lisa serves as chairman of the Connecticut chapter of the Juvenile Arthritis Foundation.

"It's when your immune system is overacting and attacking your own body," Lisa said. "There is a version of juvenile arthritis that is systemic and it starts attacking vital organs – luckily she's not there yet."

Lisa said Maci began showing symptoms of the disease when she was 18 months old, evidenced through walking "stiff legged" when she would wake up. Then the toddler went from walking to crawling and even "army dragging" herself across the floor on her elbows, her mom said.

"It came to a head one morning right after she turned two," Lisa said. "We woke up and her knees were hugely swollen."

After a "whirlwind of 72 hours" between the local pediatrician, Waterbury Hospital and Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Maci was

diagnosed with JIA.

"I think when people hear arthritis they think 'oh it's aches and pains, give the kid some Tylenol' but it actually has a fatality level, shortened life expectancy and a lifetime of pain... You can have great days. You can have terrible days," Lisa said.

According to the Juvenile Arthritis Foundation, JA affects nearly 300,000 children in the United States under the age of 16. JIA is considered the most common type of arthritis, causing inflammation in joints and other areas of the body as a result of the body's immune system "mistakenly attacking" the body's tissues.

After learning of Maci's diagnosis, Lisa said she and her husband Adam "dived deep into helping the arthritis foundation," including participating in the Walk to Cure Arthritis.

Lisa said this will be her family's sixth year as members of the Maci's Minions team, scheduled to walk Sunday at St. Joseph University in West Hartford.

She described the walk as "a giant reunion" where kids that have nothing in common other than arthritis come together, adding that commonality "to them is the world."

Through the Arthritis Foundation, Lisa said her family has found support.

"We went from being very isolated and very alone to feeling like we have this whole other family that now supports us," she said.

After growing up in Marlborough and then moving back 18 months ago, Lisa said her support system has also extended to neighbors, school and the wider community.

She cited understanding and accommodating staff at Maci's school and a past fundraiser that was shared on the town's Facebook page.

"For the community to kind of rally around us is amazing," she said.

In turn, Lisa said she hopes she's able to help and share her experiences with other families dealing with similar challenges.

"If we already went through the struggle, don't you go through the struggle," she said. "That's really why we got involved; since I can't fix her I'm gonna make sure someone else has an easier time."

\* \* \*

Anyone interested in donating to Maci's Minions or participating in the Walk to Cure Arthritis can visit [www.walktocurearthritis.org/hartford](http://www.walktocurearthritis.org/hartford). The walk will take place from 9 a.m. to noon on Sunday, May 5 at St. Joseph University, 1678 Asylum Ave., West Hartford.



Maci Wolfe (right) pictured with her sister Kyla, was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis six years ago at the age of two. Her family and community have since rallied around her to raise awareness and to support the 8-year-old who is living a life of chronic pain.

## Dedication Party Tomorrow for New Church Sanctuary in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

The Worship Center, a non-denominational Christian church, will hold a dedication party Saturday.

In December, the doors to the sanctuary – at 99 Marjorie Circle – opened and parishioners crowded into the pews, celebrating the new space, giving worship and offering thanks after the near completion of the three-year building project.

Now, a few months after that start, the church has added, and continues to add, finishing touches and will dedicate and celebrate the space tomorrow.

On Tuesday, contractors and volunteers built a stonewall in front of the church.

Vin Colonna, a church member on the building team, in a phone call Tuesday said he raked last Friday and Saturday and yesterday and today the plan was to lay grass seed and do some grading, spreading 40 dump loads of top soil, which he hoped would be spread in time for the celebration. Tuesday, the soil was waiting in large piles in the lot.

Colonna said the parking lot would not be paved for a couple years.

"It's processes," he said.

The Rev. Mark Santostefano, Worship Center pastor, said there have been a lot of changes in the church since the first service, including adding banners in the back of the sanctuary.

The celebration and dedication will include members of the community, the pastor said. The Rev. Denise Esslinger, pastor of Gilead Congregational Church, will perform the benediction, a pastor from Bolton will do the invocation and a couple of elders will say blessings.

Santostefano will give a vision on where the church goes from here.

"A lot of people will be coming that through the years have supported us," he said.

He said he and members of the congregation are looking forward to seeing folks that have moved away, including some former church musicians.

One of the folks who is returning to the nest is Santostefano's son Nicolaus, who has moved to Boston and will lead worship in the service.

Santostefano said the new church was what he had hoped for.

"What we wanted to do I think we accomplished in that the people who come really enjoy being in this space and remark that it has a sense of worship to it," he said. "That's what we wanted to achieve – to have the very architecture denote a sense of worship."

Church member Ann Ketelhut said 700 invitations were sent out for the celebration, including to past members, people who attend services but are not members, and people who have donated to the church project.

People are so excited about the church's new digs that two former elders are flying in, Ketelhut said. One is coming from Arizona and the other is coming from Virginia.

"It's a big deal for us," she said.

Jim Mattison, who was an elder from 1988-92, and his wife Jody are coming from Arizona, where they now live. Mattison said he expects Santostefano will call him to speak during the service.

When the Mattisons left Hebron in 1992, Florence Boucher – who passed away in 2005 – had just donated the land for the church.

Mattison said the Worship Center was special to them and it was "kind of dream" to come and see the church.

"It was a vision and a dream to have the



Contractors and volunteers work to build a stone wall in front of The Worship Center Wednesday, ahead of tomorrow's dedication party.

church built there," Mattison said. "I think it'll be joy and excitement and kind of overwhelming that a dream that happened 30-plus years ago has come to fruition."

Colonna said the building process started in 2016.

"We were digging trenches and laying conduit and laying blocks and concrete," he said.

Colonna recalled years of services at RHAM High School and the 8 a.m. Sunday morning runs to set up music equipment and children's toys before the 10 a.m. start to services and the time it took to break it all down and load it back into trailers.

He said it was also nice to be able to hold

services at the church's discretion and not to have to worry that the school would be closed, such as on holiday weeks.

He said the first service in December was really special.

While the celebration also initially included a ribbon-cutting, that has been postponed due to scheduling issues, to give town officials an opportunity to be there. Colonna said the ribbon-cutting should take place later in the month – and added that May 18 was a possibility.

The dedication and celebration will take place from 4-6 p.m. tomorrow, May 4. The event will include worship, speakers and refreshments.



# \$35.65M Budget Heads to Vote Next Week in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

Town Manager Andy Tierney wants to make sure people come out and vote at next Tuesday's budget referendum.

In a phone call to the *Rivereast* Wednesday, Tierney said it's been really quiet around town about the proposed \$35.65 million 2019-20 budget – perhaps a little too quiet.

"There's nothing on social media, for or against, hardly anyone came out [to the public hearings], there are no absentee ballots," he said. "That's really unusual. I'm nervous. I want to make sure the people come out and vote."

The proposed spending package represents an overall decrease of \$149,076, or .42%, from the current year. Tierney said town officials "were working hard to come in at no increase."

Tierney also boasted that the proposed budget will likely contain no tax increase – though he doesn't know for sure because the state aid numbers haven't come in yet.

"This year the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, along with myself, are very proud that there's no tax increase for the people of Hebron," Tierney said. "The mill rate is probably going to end up flat."

The budget proposal projects the mill rate at 37.05 mill rate – a reduction of .39 mills.

One mill is equivalent to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property, meaning a 37.05 mill rate would result in a resident paying about \$9,262

in taxes on a home assessed at \$250,000. That's a decrease of roughly \$98 compared to the current tax bill.

The \$9.02 million in town government expenditures package represents a \$110,290 or 1.24% increase over the current year's spending.

Also included in the budget package is \$11.34 million for the Hebron Board of Education, a decrease of \$146,000, or 1.27% from the current year; \$13.93 million for Hebron's portion of the RHAM Board of Education budget minus debt service – a decrease of \$118,000 or .84%; and \$1.28 million for RHAM's debt, a drop of \$67,000, or 4.99%. The proposed budget also includes \$71,039 to cover teacher retirement obligations – a response to a proposal by Gov. Ned Lamont to shift 25% the cost of retirements from the state to municipalities.

Items in the town's side of the budget include a \$702,000 contribution to capital improvement projects; a \$140,000 contribution to open space; \$2,000 toward capital non-recurring projects; a \$40,000 contribution to the town's revaluation; and \$728,000 for debt service.

A bone of contention in the numbers has been the funding for school resource officers (SROs) at local elementary schools. Last month, the Board of Finance unanimously agreed to move

\$90,000 from the education budget to the town's budget in an effort to put all policing funds in the same line item.

Once the board moved the funds, it cut \$85,000 from the town's budget.

While finance board members touted the cut as a way to achieve a Board of Selectmen directive to reduce the mill rate, not everyone was buying it. Some residents suggested it was an effort to prevent the education board from hiring SROs, though doing so falls outside the finance board's authority.

Board of Education Chairman Erica Bromley also decried the shift, saying the public should have been allowed to vote on her board's SRO proposal to fund four part-time SROs for the two schools in the district.

Selectmen have proposed adding three additional part-time officers, one of which would be an SRO who would work 35 hours a week, with the hours spread between the two elementary schools.

At an April 18 meeting, the Board of Selectmen approved a motion to create a Public Safety Task Force whose mission is to look at data and advise selectmen on ways to staff the police department in town, cost-effective ways to reduce crime in town and how to best protect local schools.

The nine-member, two-alternate task force

includes representation from the boards of selectmen and education, a juvenile prosecutor, a retired state police sergeant, a Hartford police sergeant, a local parent and a Hebron firefighter.

The task force will meet May 15 and specifically look at strategies to protect schools, with a presentation by Marc Rubera, a Hebron police sergeant and also RHAM High School's school resource officer.

Tierney said he hopes voters stop at the polls Tuesday and approve the budget. He reiterated taxes would stay flat if the budget is approved.

"Read my lips: no tax increase for Hebron residents," he said.

The four questions on the ballot are: whether the town should approve the \$35.65 million town budget, if it should approve the \$702,029 capital improvement program for the town, if it should approve the \$29.63 million RHAM budget and if it should approve the \$516,976 RHAM capital improvement program.

There are also three advisory questions asking whether the town budget is too high or low, if the Board of Education budget is too high or low and if the RHAM Board of Education budget is too high or too low.

The budget referendum will be held Tuesday, May 7. Voting will be from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St.

## Hebron Resident Hopes to Build Hospital in Guinea

by Sloan Brewster

Carla Pomproicz wants to build a hospital in a remote village in Guinea.

Pomproicz, who is Hebron's town clerk, founded the Bolokada and Friends Village Project and has seen the 501c3 successfully complete fundraising efforts to improve life in the village of Morowaya in Guinea, a country in West Africa. Through the non-profit, Bolokada Conde, a world renowned drummer from the village, whom Pomproicz met at a drumming conference, was able to purchase materials and organize efforts to have two wells dug and build a large bridge.

Villagers now have access to the cleanest water in the region and can get to a nearby village to buy and sell food and goods, Pomproicz said.

Now, with plans to raise enough money to build a hospital in Morowaya, Pomproicz is taking her non-profit to the next level, but admits she's traversing new territory.

"I'm thinking I don't know the first thing about building a hospital," she quipped in a meeting with the *Rivereast* last week.

The hospital – the latest addition to a list of wants and needs that Conde has for his home village – would be more like a small medical clinic in the U.S. The \$30,000 price tag includes patient rooms, storage for medical supplies, an office for the doctor, and a machine in a sterile environment for doing blood tests and other testing to help determine the causes of patient's illness, Conde and Pomproicz said.

"Because of the parasites from not having clean water, many of [the villagers] could get better if they could figure out what's wrong with them," Pomproicz said.

The village has already designated land for the project and villagers will also build a home for the doctor and his family next door to the hospital, she said.

The plan began to unfold when Conde spoke with Sekouba Conde, a doctor and surgeon who grew up in Morowaya and lives and works in Conakry – the Guinea capital – and asked him if he would return to the village.

"He said, 'If you build me a hospital, I will come back to Morowaya,'" Conde said.

Then, representatives from the Guinea government reached out to Conde to thank him for the large bridge, as it has increased commerce

in the area and benefits more folks than just the local villagers.

"You're not helping your village," he said they told him. "You're helping the whole government."

To show their gratitude, they donated toward Conde's next project, giving 10 kola nuts and 100,000 Guinea franks, which converts to \$10.84 and "is an enormous amount of money," according to Conde and Pomproicz.

Since Conde was out of the country performing at the time, they gave the money to the mayor of Duako to pass onto him. When the mayor gave him the money, they had a discussion about building a hospital. As a result, the mayor reached out to the doctor and asked approximately what building a hospital would cost.

The doctor agreed to look into it.

Last Monday, shortly before meeting with the *Rivereast*, Conde heard from the doctor, who gave him the numbers.

"Now we're on the quest to raise this money," Pomproicz said.

Conde started working toward improving the life of the people of his village long before he met Pomproicz two years ago. His first project was to build a road to the village, then a small bridge over the road where it was getting flooded. Then in 2005, with help from the village people, he built a school.

Then, shortly before meeting Pomproicz, he built a mosque for the village.

Conde used much of his own money to complete the projects, setting aside funds from his work as a musician to buy tools and then getting people he knows to help with the labor.

After meeting Conde, Pomproicz and a group went on a tour with him, his family and a band of musicians and visited Morowaya. While there, she began to think about doing something to improve the lives, health and wellbeing of the villagers.

"While we were there as guests it became apparent there was no access to clean water," she said. "We carried our own water but everyone in the village had to use water from the stream."

With no indoor plumbing in the village, Pomproicz soon realized that whenever she needed water to shower, someone from the village had to go get it.



**This bridge between the villages of Morowaya and Duako in Guinea, West Africa was sponsored by the Bolokada and Friends Village Project, which was founded by Hebron's own Carla Pomproicz. The next project on the list for the non-profit is to build a hospital in Morowaya.**

"I see these children struggling with water in buckets," she said.

Then, while taking a walk, Pomproicz and others in her group realized the stream was three-quarters of a mile away.

"The people from the village, to keep their visitors happy, were walking all that way," she said. "That was a light bulb moment for us."

After that, Pomproicz started the non-profit, which successfully sponsored two wells and the large bridge to Duako.

Pomproicz will be spreading the word on social media that Bolakada and Friends is accepting donations to build the hospital and holding various fundraisers with the anticipation it will take a year and a half to raise enough money to complete the project. The goal is to start construction in 2021.

Tonight at 7 p.m., Conde will perform at the AHM Youth and Family Services sixth annual African Drumming and Dance Party – an interactive cultural drumming event. The event will give folks the opportunity to learn about West African culture, drumming and the hospital project. Bring an African drum or use one of the drums that will be on hand during the event.

The event will be held at 7 p.m. in AHM's performing arts hall, located at 25 Pendleton Drive in Hebron.

The \$8 per person admission or \$25 per family will go toward the hospital project.

For more information about the Bolokada and Friends Village Project or to make a donation, visit [bolokadaandfriends.org](http://bolokadaandfriends.org).



# It's Time to Vote in Andover

by Sloan Brewster

Polls will open Monday to give voters the chance to fill seats on local boards and commissions – and two of the candidates are each looking to fill two seats.

Democrats Eric Anderson, 49, and Scott Person, 62 – both current members of the Planning and Zoning Commission – are looking to retain seats on that commission and fill seats on the Board of Selectmen.

Anderson, who has been a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for 10 years and chairman for five, said he does not plan to remain chairman and has been grooming member Robert Hamburger to take over in his stead. Anderson also said if he wins both races, he will drop some of his other commitments, including chairing Bike Walk Andover and possibly his seat on the Capital Improvement Planning Committee.

Anderson said last week he wants to get strategic with planning, including budgeting for projects. He said the Planning and Zoning Commission over the past few years has been chiseling the town's zoning regulations and has made some changes.

Included in those rule changes is a new floating zone that he said permits residential and mixed-use commercial development in some commercial and industrial zones.

The commission also drafted a rule allowing cluster development when a significant portion of the development is set aside as open space, he said.

The commission is also working on regulation changes to make it easier for folks to put in solar panels as local permitting does not currently address that, Anderson said. It is also working on regulations to allow folks to keep a small number of farm animals without a permit and on other small issues "to clean up where we've had problems."

The other big thing the commission is working on is regulations to decrease nitrogen and phosphorous runoff in Andover Lake, which Anderson and Person said were pertinent to keeping the water clean and keeping the state from forcing the town to put in sewers.

At Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting, Anderson stressed to the board that the plan was not just to decrease the rate at which the level of the toxins is increasing but to bring it down from where it is now.

"There's so much at stake with the lake," Person said. "If the state finds that the lake isn't

being taken care of and Andover Lake isn't clean enough, the state could step in and make us put sewers in and the town doesn't want that."

Person, who has been on the commission for six years, echoed much of what Anderson said about the successful changes it has made in recent years.

"We accomplished a lot of things on the Planning and Zoning Commission," he said. "We really did."

Person's big thing going forward is wrapping up the lake regulations.

"When I got on the P&Z, the one thing I wanted to accomplish was the lake regulations," he said. "It's better for the town to have a clean lake."

Republican William "Jed" Larson, 65, who has been a Planning and Zoning Commission alternate for two years, is also running for that commission. Larson, who has lived in town for 10 years, said he wants to attract "smart growth" and progress in town while maintaining the rural character and "the quality of life that drew me here initially."

He also reiterated the importance of completing the lake regulations.

"The lake is one of the things that drew us to Andover working on smart regulations to protect the water quality to provide that resource for Andover [is crucial]," he said.

According to Town Clerk Carol Lee, despite a restrictive voting law in the state that permits voters to vote for only a certain number of candidates in each slot, most of the candidates running will ultimately be seated.

There are contested seats for first selectman, Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Zoning Board of Appeals and Region 8 Board of Education, according to Lee. Everyone else on the ballot will automatically win, she said.

## Contested and Uncontested Seats

First Selectman Robert Burbank is not seeking reelection. All the seats on the non-staggered Board of Selectmen are up for grabs. Maguire, who is currently vice first selectman, is the only one seeking reelection. Republicans Cathleen Desrosiers and Jay Linddy are not seeking reelection; nor is Democrat Julia Haverl.

Linddy has not attended a selectmen's meeting since fall 2017 following allegations of sexual harassment in Town Hall.

Current Vice First Selectman Jeff Maguire, 53, is running for first selectman against Re-

publican Adrian Mandeville, 46.

Per the town charter, if the loser in the first selectmen's race gets enough votes, he has the option to take a seat on the board.

Maguire said one of the things on his to-do list is evaluating how things are done in Town Hall for cost and efficiency.

Like other candidates who spoke with the *Rivereast*, Maguire said the town should put more effort into services for seniors, including providing them with a center. He also wants to make sure there are adequate recreational opportunities for local children.

Mandeville, 46, who has been on the Board of Finance for three and a half years, said a big issue he's hoping to fix is the lack of public engagement in local activities and politics. He said he'd liked to increase opportunities to get folks involved.

"There's not a lot of civic engagement," he said. "I don't know; it could be a little ambivalence."

Mandeville also wants to clean up the town's website. Last Monday, at a Board of Finance meeting, he supported a motion to add \$20,000 to the proposed 2019-2020 budget to have a new website built.

Of the six candidates running for the staggered finance board – Republicans Linda Fish, Leigh Ann Hutchinson and Carol W. Barton and Democrats Annmarie G. Daigle, Louise H. Goodwin, Sarah R. Moon and Dennis S. Williams – four will be seated.

Of those, Fish is the only one currently on the board who is seeking reelection. Democrats Daniel Warren and Eric Shevchenko have terms ending June 30 and are not seeking reelection. Mandeville is not seeking reelection.

Winners of the race will join Democrat Robert England and Republicans David Hewett and Jeffrey Murray, whose seats expire in 2021.

Out of the four candidates running for Board of Assessment Appeals – Republicans Penny Auer and Georgette M. Conrad and Democrats Linda L. Armstrong and Catherine A. Magaldi-Lewis – three will be seated on the 3-member board.

Of the four candidates running for Zoning Board of Appeals – Republicans William M. Desrosiers and Kathleen D. Skorka and Democrats Jay R. Kamins and Dorothy I. Yeomans – three will be seated. They will join Democrats Caren Osborn and Walter N. Weir on the 5-member board.

On the uncontested side, Lee is running unopposed to retain the town clerk position.

The three candidates running for Planning & Zoning – Anderson, Person and Larson – will all be seated. They will join Hamburger, who is unaffiliated and Republican Leigh Ann Hutchinson on the 5-member board.

Of the three running for the Fire Commission Republican Wallace Barton, Jr., Democrat Mark Williams and Curtis Dowling, who is cross endorsed – all three will be seated. They will join Republican Gerald Wright and Democrat Scott Yeomans on the 5-member staggered board.

## The Ballot

Republicans on the ballot are Mandeville for first selectman; Brian Clate and Jeffrey A. Murray for selectman; Linda Fish, Leigh Ann Hutchinson and Carol W. Barton for finance board; Wallace E. Barton, Jr. and Curtis Dowling for Fire Commission; Amy L. Knox and Steven D. Fuss for the Andover Board of Education; David G. Gostanian for Region 8 Board of Education; William M. Desrosiers and Kathleen D. Skorka for Zoning Board of Appeals; William J. "Jed" Larson for Planning and Zoning Commission; George E. Knox for Planning and Zoning Commission alternate; and Penny Auer and Georgette M. Conrad for Board of Assessment Appeals.

Democrats on the ballot are Maguire for first selectman; Anderson and Person for selectman; Carol H. Lee for town clerk; Annmarie G. Daigle, Louise H. Goodwin, Sarah R. Moon and Dennis S. Williams for finance board; Daniel J. Foran, Shannon O. Louden for Andover Board of Education; Linda L. Armstrong and Catherine A. Magaldi-Lewis for Board of Assessment Appeals, Eric Anderson and Scott Person for Planning and Zoning Commission; Kathleen M. Barrett and Anne P. Crème for Planning and Zoning Commission alternate; Jay R. Kamins and Dorothy I. Yeomans for Zoning Board of Appeals; Gerard J. Crème and Danielle Maguire for Zoning Board of Appeals alternate; Curtis W. Dowling and Mark Williams for Fire Commission; and Edmund Johnston Smith and Stephanie Smith for Region 8 Board of Education.

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The election will take place Monday, May 6 in the Town Hall Community Room. The polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

# Three Newbies to Join Andover School Board

by Sloan Brewster

There are about to be some new faces on the local Board of Education.

When taxpayers head to the voting booth next Monday, they'll see names of four school board candidates on the ballot – and all four will win.

Of the four, only one is a board incumbent: Democrat Shannon Louden, the current chairman of the school board. The other three – Republican Daniel Foran and Democrats Steven Fuss and Amy Knox – are all newcomers.

Foran, Fuss and Knox will be replacing Jay Linddy, Danielle Maguire and Mike Russo, who are all not seeking re-election. Linddy has not attended a school board meeting since fall 2017 following allegations of sexual harassment in Town Hall.

The terms of the other members of the seven-person board – Gerard Crème, Lisa Hewett and Cynthia Murray – aren't up until 2021.

Louden, 56, has been on the board for the past four years. She stressed that now is a critical time for Andover Elementary School – and cited declining enrollment as a problem in need of a solution.

"I'd like to be part of the solution," she said. "I certainly believe the biggest challenge we're facing is the declining enrollment of our student body."

Over the past five years, the number of students in the school has dropped by 25%, she said, adding that the district's budget has also been reduced by 6%.

Louden said she hopes to help determine what is best for the community and school moving forward.

"We need to continue to meet the continued needs of our students," she said.

Louden noted that the school was named a school of distinction by Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability Results for the 2017-18 school year. The school is one of only 13 schools in the state that was distinguished in all five categories of high growth and achievement: high performance, English language arts, math, high-needs English language arts and high-needs math.

"I was very proud of our elementary school for being named a school of distinction and all that goes into that," Louden said.

In her time on the board, the board has put a new roof on the school and now is trying to convert the third and fourth grade wing into a senior center.

Converting the school wing is a result of the closing of the Old Firehouse on Center Street, which has been used as a senior center since the early 1990s and was also a meeting spot for boards and commissions. Last fall, selectmen officially shuttered the building after air quality tests confirmed the building is infested with mold.

The education board offered the wing, which is largely vacant due to declining enrollment.

"I feel pretty good about what I've done," Louden said.

Foran, 34, has three children enrolled at Andover Elementary.

"I've always been big into community," he said. "Education is a building block of a strong community."

Foran said that, according to [nationsreport](#)

[card.gov](#), one-third of U.S. students can read at their grade level and two-thirds cannot. Foran explained that is why he believes now is the time to sit on the education board.

"What I can say though is Andover Public Schools have been great," he said. "We have great tests scores, we have great teachers, we have small classes."

Foran may be new to election but he has become a regular audience member at education board meetings. In those meetings, he said he learned how well local students score on tests and wants to keep it that way.

Foran also noted that he support the board's endeavor to convert the school wing to a senior center, saying that he "was really impressed" with the idea because seniors are without a center and the wing is generally unused.

"I was very impressed with how in touch with the community that the Board of Education is," he said.

Foran said he was against full regionalization – an idea that that has been proposed at the state level – and felt that it would be bad for the town.

Knox, 48, said the same thing about full regionalization.

"We don't want to do it," Knox said. "We live in a small town because of the awesome school system that we have – the small school and small classes."

Knox also thinks converting the wing would be a good idea. She said that while some parents were initially concerned with the safety of the students, they "felt better" about the plan once they realized how the wing would be used. Some residents at a public hearing earlier this

year decried the plan to make the wing into a community center, citing safety concerns. The plan has since been tweaked and the wing would be a senior center only – and would be separated from the school by security doors and/or fire walls.

Knox, however, is not so sure folks will be willing to pay the bill to complete the project. According to a report by Silver/Petrucci & Associates, the project would run between \$400,000 and \$550,000.

"A lot of people feel that that much money could be better used to provide the community and the seniors a separate space," she said.

With two children in Andover Elementary School and one at RHAM Middle School and parents who live in town, Knox said wants to make sure "every voice is heard."

Fuss, 35, has three children at Andover Elementary School. He said that if full regionalization happens, it needs to be done in a way that benefits Andover.

"I want to make sure if and when we go that route that Andover still has a voice," he said. "That we don't end up in some big region where Andover is kind of trumped by being small."

If regionalization happens, class sizes should be kept small, he added.

"I think we have an incredible school system," he said. "One of the things that draws people to Andover is our school and I'm hoping to keep it that way."

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Election Day is Monday, May 6. Voting takes place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in the Town Hall Community Room.



## Amston Man Arrested on Spate of Charges

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton Police last week arrested an Amston man at his home over a month after he allegedly engaged them in a chase on Route 66 into Marlborough.

Police on April 24 arrested Alexander Ayers, 27, of 29 Lake Rd. in Amston, on a spate of misdemeanor charges: disobeying the signal of an officer, first-degree reckless endangerment, drinking while driving, reckless driving, passing in a no-passing zone, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operation of a motor vehicle without insurance, operation under suspension, reckless driving, failure to obey a stop sign, obstructed windshield and misuse of a registration plate.

The March 18 incident began at the Food Bag on Route 66 after a man described by employees as intoxicated got into a red Ford F250 pickup truck and drove off, according to the arrest warrant affidavit. Officers Hardie Burgin and David Gionfriddo followed directly behind him, where they said they saw the driver cross the fog line on the side and the double lines in the middle of the road multiple times.

The driver continued to cross the center lines and pass vehicles in a no-passing zone after Burgin activated his lights and siren in an attempt to pull over the truck near Laurel Ridge Road, the affidavit said.

Police said the chase began in earnest when the driver turned onto Saner Road in Marlborough, driving over the speed limit and straddling the center lines. But officers called

off the pursuit after the driver rolled through a stop sign in the area of Chapman Road and crossed onto the opposite side of the road toward a pedestrian.

East Hampton Police Chief Dennis Woessner said the car was going too fast and the situation was too dangerous to continue following him.

"If your actions create more of a danger than the dangers associated with the person you're trying to stop, then you don't go after him," Woessner said.

According to the affidavit, a White Birch Road resident a short time later called police to tell them a red pickup truck was stuck in the mud on his property. Police found two empty bottles of Smirnoff vodka and a receipt from a scrap yard with Ayers' name on it. Police canine Ardo tried to track the driver but couldn't find him.

The arrest warrant affidavit was submitted by East Hampton Police to the Middletown Superior Court on March 21, but it wasn't signed by Judge Maureen Price-Boreland until April 22.

Police said Ayers has previous convictions for driving under the influence, drinking while driving and violation of probation, as well as three separate failure to appear cases.

Ayers was arrested without incident, Woessner said. He was released on a \$5,000 bond and is scheduled to appear in court on May 7.

## Colchester Multi-Car Crash Caused by Seizure

A seizure suffered by a driver traveling on Linwood Avenue resulted in a multiple-car collision and a man being transported to Hartford Hospital by Lifestar, state police said.

At approximately 9:40 a.m. on April 27, a Kia Sportage driven by Mark Miceli, 21, of 27 Baldwin Rd., was traveling eastbound on Linwood Avenue when he suffered a seizure and lost control of his vehicle, police said.

The Kia subsequently traveled across the intersection of Linwood Avenue and South Main Street, colliding with at least two other vehicles – a Toyota Tacoma driven by Robert Norris, 58, of 43 Cherry Tree Ln. and a Ford truck driven by Michelle McComiskey, 52, of 104 Pleasant St.

A third vehicle, described as a red pickup

truck by a witness on scene, may also have been struck during the collision but left the scene prior to the arrival of police and Emergency Medical Services, police said.

The Kia then continued onto the town green where it collided with a bus stop enclosure and a tree.

Miceli was transported to Hartford Hospital by Lifestar helicopter and was later determined to have non-life threatening injuries, police said.

Miceli's passenger, Anne C. Miceli, 51, of 7 Christy Lane Ext., Apt. 2C, was transported by the Colchester Fire Department to Hartford Hospital with non-life threatening injuries, police said.

## Colchester Two-Vehicle Collision, Minor Injuries Suspected

Colchester Police said failing to grant the right of way is to blame for a two-vehicle collision that occurred Monday.

At approximately 7:27 a.m., an Acura RDX driven by Sara M. Randazzo, 20, of 528 Old Colchester Rd., Hebron, was traveling eastbound on Old Hebron Road, stopping at the intersection with Old Hartford Road and continuing into the intersection.

The Acura subsequently struck the front end of a Ford van, driven by Lisa Donnel, 57, of 16 Concord Ct., Groton, and traveling westbound on Old Hartford Road.

Donnel was transported by the Colchester Fire Department with suspected minor injuries and Randazzo was issued a written warning for failure to grant right of way, police said.

## Car Fire Sparks Search for Wanted Man in Marlborough

by Allison Lazur

A car fire Monday resulted in a police search for the man who was allegedly driving the 1996 Chevy Lumina that became engulfed in flames at approximately 10:13 a.m.

Fire Chief Kevin Asklar said the car fire occurred on Route 66 in the area of Johnson Road and Parker Road.

A search for "wanted person" Timothy Douchette was announced on the Marlborough Resident State Trooper Facebook page a short time later. State Police said Douchette currently has an active arrest warrant for a larceny offense out of Waterford.

State police terminated the Marlborough search for Douchette around 12:30 p.m., according to Marlborough Director of Public Safety Services Jay Kehoe. He said Douchette

was no longer in the area.

Kehoe told the *Rivereast* he initially located Douchette on foot approximately 400 to 500 yards away from the car after an eyewitness said the vehicle's only occupant had walked away from the fiery site.

Kehoe said Douchette appeared "a bit distressed" when asked about the car fire, but did not admit to knowing anything about it.

Kehoe said Douchette "took off" when he returned to his vehicle to run Douchette's license.

Kehoe said he was unable to catch Douchette.

Asklar said the cause of the fire is undetermined, but that the Chevy was completely totaled.

## Colchester Police News

4/22: State Police said a 17-year-old was arrested and charged with failure to keep narcotics in original container and possession of controlled substance or greater than one-half ounce of cannabis.

4/23: Colchester Police said James R. Girouard, 24, of 7 School Rd., Apt. 4, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to obey traffic control signals.

4/23: State Police said a 15-year-old male was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than one-half ounce of cannabis.

## East Hampton Police News

4/14: Zachary Scutnik, 25, of 120 Pine Brook Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

4/18: Kerri Devine, 31, of 4 Summit St., was issued a summons for second-degree criminal trespass, police said. Two days later, on April 20, she was arrested and charged with first-degree criminal trespass, police said.

4/21: Elizabeth Warzecha, 27, of 244 Atkins Ext. St., Meriden, was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for her arrest and charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

4/24: Alexander Ayers, 27, of 29 Lake Rd., Amston, was taken into custody pursuant to a warrant and charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, drinking while driving, disobeying an officer's signal, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating an uninsured motor vehicle, operating under suspension, failure to obey a stop sign, reckless driving, improper use of marker plate, articles obstructing view, and passing in a no-passing zone, police said.

Also, from April 15-21, officers responded to nine medical calls, two motor vehicle crashes and eight alarms, and made 20 traffic stops, police said.

## Obituaries continued

### Colchester

#### Barbara Jane Douma

Barbara Jane Douma, 82, of Colchester, passed away suddenly Wednesday, April 24, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on June 20, 1936, she was the daughter of the late Francis and Rose (Beyer) Hannon.

She married her beloved husband, William Douma, on July 30, 1955, in Newton, N.J. The couple worked in their lifelong labor of love as dairy farmers for most of their years together. They had farms in Hackettstown, N.J., Triple Pond Farm in Fort Plain then Jamestown, N.Y., before moving to Connecticut.

In Connecticut, they managed dairy farms in Bridgewater, Hillsdale and finally Eddy Farm in Newington. Three years ago, the couple retired to their home in Colchester; they were communicants of the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron. In addition to dairy farming, Barbara loved goat farming, working outdoors and watching the UConn girls' basketball team.

Most importantly, she loved spending time with her best friend and husband of 64 years, William; her six wonderful children, Caryn Douma, and husband Eric Eichenwald of Philadelphia, Pa., William and his wife Maria Douma of Mahopac, N.Y., Janice Douma Lange of Los Angeles, Calif., Colleen Douma of Newington, Kevin Douma of Woodbury, Michele and husband Jim Thorn of Columbia; 10 beautiful grandchildren, Zachary, Taylor, Connor, Michael, Megan, Madison, Hallie, Julia, Caroline, Jocelyn; and a great-grandson, Ryan.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated at a future date at St. Joseph's Church in Newton, N.J.; burial will be in St. Joseph's Cemetery immediately following the Mass.

Barbara was a kind and generous woman, who loved her fellow man and all creatures great and small.

In lieu of flowers, and in her memory, the family will be donating to her favorite charities; if you would like to contribute, you can send donations c/o Michele Thorn, 186 Pine St., Columbia, CT 06237.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of funeral arrangements. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Jeffrey Zigmont

Jeffrey Zigmont, 64, resident of East Hampton for 25 years and Life Partner of Bonnie McLean, died Tuesday, April 30, at Middlesex Hospital. He was born April 23, 1955, the son of John Zigmont and Shirley (Atwater) Zigmont. He was born and raised in Southington.

Before retirement, Jeff worked as a supervisor in healthcare facilities, and drove delivery trucks for a bakery company, furniture store and piping company. After he retired, he worked part time for the East Hampton Board of Education as a substitute custodian.

Jeff enjoyed working at his garage restoring different machinery equipment, doing wood-working and his greatest passion was his vegetable garden. He also enjoyed growing fig trees. He was a master gardener. Jeff loved classic cars and guitars and many other projects he would get himself involved in.

He is survived by his daughter, Katherine Zigmont of Southington; a grandson, Brandon Robinson of Naugatuck; stepdaughter, Amy Weber and husband Todd of East Hampton; and several close cousins.

He was predeceased by his stepdaughter, Kelly McLean.

A graveside service is planned for Saturday, May 11, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Cemetery in East Hampton.

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

## Andover Correction

A story published on page 21 of last week's *Rivereast* incorrectly stated that the town budget includes \$350,000 for a multi-use building. It actually includes \$250,000 for the building.

The *Rivereast* regrets the error.

## Marlborough Police News

4/26: State Police said Anthony J. Scott, 34, of 22 Labossiere Ln, Putnam, was arrested and charged with DUI and improper parking.



# Obituaries

## Colchester

### Beverly A. Winter

Beverly A. Winter, "Bev," of Colchester, formerly of Rhode Island, beloved wife of Robert, passed away peacefully Sunday, April 14, just days before her 86th birthday. She was born in Shrewsbury, Mass., on April 18, 1933, to the late John and Marion (Smith) Lund.



Beverly worked for many years as a medical secretary. An active Episcopalian throughout her life, she volunteered countless hours to whatever parish she belonged especially as a Sunday School teacher. Beverly was well-known by family and friends alike for her artistic talents – be it painting, scrapbooking and decorating her warm, inviting home. She especially enjoyed combing the Maine and Rhode Island beaches for driftwood.

She leaves behind her loving husband of 66 years who cared tirelessly for her, Robert Winter; three children; Karen Winter of Benzonia, Mich., Cheryl (Bruce) Rafferty of Ronkonkoma, N.Y., and Jill (Gary) Spelucin of Leland, N.C.; son-in-law, Peter Stadnick of Quaker Hill; five grandchildren, Christopher, Erin, Robert, Bruce and Corie; eight great-grandchildren; and numerous extended friends and family.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by a daughter, Carrie Lou Winter-Stadnick, and four brothers.

The family would like to extend their gratitude to the many caregivers, especially Paulette, Janet, Gretchen, Betty, Hilery, Lydia, and Harrington Court for their genuine care and concern for Beverly.

Services will be observed Friday, May 10, directly at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 30 Church St., Hebron, CT 06248. The family will receive guests starting at 1 p.m., before a memorial service celebrating her life at 3 p.m. Burial and a reception will follow. Donations in her memory may be made to the church.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Gerald St. Peter Jr.

Gerald F. St. Peter Jr., known to some as Gary and others as Gerry, 63, of Colchester, passed away Friday, April 26, at Hartford Hospital, after a long and arduous illness. His family was there by his side. Born in New London July 16, 1955, he was a son of the late Gerald and Viola (Rogers) St. Peter.



Gary grew up in Colchester and graduated from Bacon Academy with the Class of 1973. He went to work for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft right out of high school and dedicated his long and successful career of over 43 years as a professional truck driver there. He also served for a time as a steward for the Machinist Union for many years.

He married his beloved wife, Catherine Cowper, on April 22, 1997. The couple made their home and raised their family in Colchester. Gary enjoyed playing league bowling and darts. Most importantly, he will be remembered for his hard work ethic and for his love and devotion as a family man.

In addition to his wife of 22 years, he leaves two children, Jennifer Horeczy of Florida, Stephanie Lee of East Hampton; a brother, John St. Peter of Colchester; two sisters, Cheryl and husband Mike Montgomery of Lebanon, Meredith and husband John Cable of St. Cloud, Fla.; four grandchildren, Tony, Danny, Lydia and Johnny Lee, all of East Hampton; nieces and nephews, Heath St. Peter, Morgan and Justin Jennings, Ian and Connor Montgomery; and numerous extended family and friends.

He was predeceased by a brother, Herbert St. Peter.

Calling hours were held Thursday, May 2. A memorial followed immediately at 7 p.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center, 85 Retreat Ave., Hartford, CT 06106

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

## East Hampton

### Anne Marie Aloia

Anne Marie (Delldonna) Aloia (1953-2019)

On April 24, I was called to God's side. There I will join my twin sons Steven and David, born prematurely on June 20, 1980.

I was diagnosed at age 46 with breast cancer. I had five years in remission and then a different form of breast cancer showed its face. After a bilateral mastectomy I thought I had done what was needed to enjoy a long life. I was right; I got to see my sons get married and have their first children.

My luck at staying cancer-free ended May 2017. I was diagnosed with MDS (pre-leukemia syndrome). My only chance to be helped was by having a bone marrow transplant. My youngest brother Thomas was a perfect match. My transplant didn't take (thank you my dear brother for trying) and neither did all the chemo and pills.

In my lifetime, with my wonderful husband Frank, I enjoyed 42 years of great memories. We also enjoyed many trips with our special friends and many family get-togethers. My church, St. James in Higganum, was always a special place for me. We were married there, had our first baby baptized there and our oldest son got married there.

I leave in God's hands my precious family: Frank, my husband; Brian, our oldest son; Darin, our youngest son and their wives Ashley and Chrissie respectively. I also leave the biggest loves of my life, my grandsons – Cayden Daniel (Darin and Chrissie) and Witten David (Brian and Ashley). I will always be watching you grow. I also leave my mother Winifred DiStefano, my sister Deborah Amenta; my brother Gary Delldonna; my brother Thomas Delldonna; my stepsisters Elise Cotrone and Hilary Phelps; and many other loved ones.

I have chosen cremation as my way to leave this earth. I ask you at my celebration of life service that you DO NOT SEND FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS. Instead it is my wish that everyone in attendance bring a single rose that will be placed in a vase all together. This will symbolize how you all came together to be the great parts and relationships of my life. Please take a rose when you leave.

A memorial service will be held today, May 3, at 5 p.m., in St. James Episcopal Church, 501 Killingworth Rd., Higganum, CT.

In remembrance, my family and I would love for you to make a donation to: St. James Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 574, Higganum, CT 06441. (In memo line of check please write "general fund.")

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.

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

## Colchester

### Gregory Bader Celebration of Life

Gregory Bader, 24, of Norwich, formerly of Colchester, passed away Friday, March 8. A celebration of Greg's life will be observed from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, May 11, at St. Peter's Church Phelps Hall, 30 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron.

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

## Marlborough

### Betty-Ann Burke Celebration of Life

A celebration of the life of Betty-Ann Burke of Marlborough, who died Jan. 13 at Marlborough Health Care, will be held at Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 S. Main St., Thursday, May 9, at 6 p.m.

Betty was a 49-year member of the church, participated in the Dorcas Women's Fellowship, and was a former Chancel Choir member.

A reception in the Thienes Lounge, hosted by Dorcas Women's Fellowship, will immediately follow the service. All are welcome.

## East Hampton

### Don Adams Connelly

Don Adams Connelly, 75, of East Hampton, beloved husband of his true love Dorothy (Cooke) Connelly of 58 years, passed away Thursday, April 25. Born on Saint Patrick's Day, March 17, 1944, in Northfield, Vt., he was the son of the late Francis Connelly and Harriett (Adams) Connelly and had resided in the family home on Lake Poctopaug, East Hampton for the past 40 years.



Don is survived by his wife, Dorothy (Cooke) Connelly; three children, daughters Catherine (Connelly) L'Hote, Colleen (Connelly) Pratt and husband Craig Pratt of East Hampton and son Don Connelly Jr. of Soldotna, Alaska; five grandchildren, Jason Hyde and his wife Lauren (Greiger) Hyde, Christen Pratt and her partner Jason Burdick of East Hampton, Craig Pratt II and wife Rebecca (Neiweem) Pratt of Salem, Miranda (Kromish) Legault and husband Jason Legault of Coventry; seven great-grandchildren, Abigail, Marjorie and Craig Pratt III, Liam and Henry Hyde, Jaxon and Cole Legault. He was predeceased by granddaughter Makayla Colleen Korpinen.

Don is also survived by his siblings, Bette (Connelly) Darrah and her late husband William Darrah of Essex Junction, Vt.; late brother, Edward Connelly and his wife Frances (Delfs) Connelly of East Hampton; late sister, Geraldine (Connelly) Schoenberger and late husband William Schoenberger of Columbus, Ohio; brother, Francis Connelly of Roanoke, Va.; brother, Peter Connolly and his wife Carol Connolly of New Hampshire; and sister JoAnn (Connelly) Dinello of Middletown; lastly, numerous extended family, friends and neighbors.

Don was a humble, hardworking man with positive work ethic that earned him respect from all he knew. A true "union man" by trade, he was proud to be a member of Teamster Local 671. After his retirement, he continued to attend union meetings and gatherings. Don was known to have many lively conversations regarding unions, politics and was an avid NASCAR fan. A truly selfless man, he was always willing and able to lend a hand or an ear to anyone at a moment's notice.

Don was passionate about all he did and it was reflected in work – the endless hours he spent on his home, yardwork, lake front, boats, automobiles and especially stone walls he built clearly showed he was a master of the masonry trade. He would say that every rock has a perfect spot and with ease he would create works of art that will be treasured forever.

A true Irishman, Don had a complete devotion to his family. He loved a good party; music, dancing, drinking, talking, laughing, he loved women, his elders and adored babies. Don loved to watch vintage movies of "The Duke" John Wayne. He had a unique way of expressing himself and to know him was to love him. Don was fierce yet fragile; being unafraid of the judgment of others gave Don one of the greatest gifts in life – freedom! The other gift he had was that he was so forgiving. He could get really mad and yet forgive relatively quickly.

We were proud to call him our father and grew up feeling safe and shielded from the trials and tribulations he had endured as a child. He was known as a second father to many and referred to as "Pop." Family members considered Don to be the patriarch of the Connelly family. The sense of loss felt by all is immense – a confirmation that he truly made a difference in our lives. A beautiful life that came to an end, he died as he lived, everyone's friend. In our hearts a memory will always be kept, of one we loved, and will never forget.

Don was a past member of the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, Motorcycle club, current retired member of Teamster Local 671 and Zion Lutheran Church, Portland.

The family would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Middlesex Health Hospice. With an honorable mention of nurse and angel Mary Rogalski, who not only cared for Don gently, but cared for his children as well.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, May 4, at 11 a.m., in Zion Lutheran Church, 183 William St., Portland, with the Rev. Cathy Rohrs officiating. Burial will follow in Lakeview Cemetery, East Hampton. Calling hours are at Zion Lutheran Church Saturday from 10 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Don Adams Connelly Memorial Scholarship, EHHS c/o Linda Malavasi, Guidance Office, 15 North Maple St., East Hampton, CT.

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

## East Hampton

### Anthony Joseph Aloisi

Anthony Joseph Aloisi, 77, of East Hampton, passed away Friday, April 26, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by his loving family.



Anthony ("Tony" to his loved ones and "Gumpa" to his grandchildren) was a communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton, and former communicant of St. Francis Church in Middletown.

A native of Rockland, Massachusetts, he moved to Middletown, where he attended Woodrow Wilson High School, worked as one of the first employees of Bob's Surplus stores, and attended the University of Hartford. It was during this time that he would meet and marry his first and only true love, Pat, after a blind date and a wonderful ride in his convertible.

Despite having suffered many strokes brought on by a diagnosis of lupus in his 20s, he refused to let any disabilities stand in his way of whatever he was determined to do. Even with his verbal skills taken away, he would always find ways to relate to others, and his smiles and greetings would say more than many people's words could. His compassion for family was center to his universe.

His hobbies included woodworking, gardening, fishing, and spending time on the lake. Always having either a cottage, lake house, or boat on the water, you could see the joy and peace that this brought to him. A devoted Red Sox and Patriots fan, he converted many family members over the years, and was rarely seen without wearing one of his many Red Sox caps.

The many trips to Disney World with his wife, children and grandchildren were where the biggest smiles were always found. When tooling around the parks in his motorized scooter, family members could be seen running to catch up as he headed off towards the familiar Animal Kingdom. His recent friendship came in the form of caregiver and companion Charles LeBlanc, whose quiet presence brought reassurance and comfort into their home.

In addition to leaving behind his soulmate and devoted wife of 57 years, Patricia Marie Lincavicks, he also leaves his loving family: his daughters, Katherine and her husband Charles Gary, Karen McGinn, and Christine and her husband Jonathan Chiu. Additionally, he leaves his most cherished grandchildren, Alexander, Matthew, Adam, Katie and Erin.

Tony will be missed by his sister, Joanne Aloisi; sister-in-law, Carol Aloisi; his niece, Jennifer and her husband Christopher Colebourn and their children; and his nephew, Kevin and his wife Sarah Aloisi and their children. Other family members include brother-in-law Roy and his wife Becky Lincavicks and their children; sisters-in-law Lynda Healey and her sons; Lori and her husband John Perron and their daughter; and brother-in-law Robert and his wife Debbie Lincavicks and their children.

He joins those family members that have passed before him: his mother and father, Josephine and Samuel Aloisi; older brother, Joseph Aloisi; brothers-in-law, Michael Healey, John Lincavicks; and sister-in-law, Judy Dansereau. He also joins his most dearly missed younger brother, Ralph, who brought him friendship, love, and laughter for many years.

Friends may call at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, May 3, from 5-7 p.m. A funeral liturgy will be held Saturday, May 4, at 10 a.m., in St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., East Hampton. Burial will follow in St. Patrick Cemetery.

Anyone wishing to honor Tony's life with a donation should do so to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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



*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I was saddened to read this week of the latest tough development for RHAM's most famous baseball alum, 2006 grad AJ Pollock. AJ, who signed a four-year \$55 million contract with the Dodgers in January, landed on the injured list earlier this week after an infection of his surgically-repaired elbow.

AJ, unfortunately, has been beset by injuries throughout his big-league career. However, every injury has been unique upon itself; it was a collection of broken bones in different areas rather than the types of ones that tend to be chronic, like bad hamstrings. So I was hopeful that, when he signed his big contract with Los Angeles in the offseason, he'd be able to enjoy a healthy, productive four years.

Unfortunately, it wasn't meant to be.

This latest injury development is an infection that, according to Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, is likely related to AJ's two previous elbow surgeries – one from 2010 after he broke his elbow in the minors while diving for a ball (in this surgery, a plate and screw were inserted), and then a second, similar surgery after re-fracturing his elbow in 2016.

AJ was put on antibiotics to treat the infection, but they were ineffective, Roberts told the *Los Angeles Times*. So Tuesday, he underwent exploratory surgery to determine what the problem is – and if a third operation on his elbow would be needed. At the time of this writing, the results of that exploratory procedure haven't been made public.

But I hope AJ can avoid another operation. I feel so bad for all the injuries he's had to deal with in his career, both in the minors and the majors. When he's healthy, he's shown why the Arizona Diamondbacks thought so highly of him they took him with their first pick in the 2009 draft. He's superbly talented, both offensively and defensively, and made the All-Star team in 2015.

He's also, as I've written here before, a heck of a nice guy – so it's impossible not to root for him.

I hope this latest setback is a very short-lived one, and that by this time next week, AJ will be back on the field at Chavez Ravine, cracking homers and making boffo plays in center field.

\* \* \*

Close friends of mine know that I'm big Lucille Ball fan. It started when I was a little kid, watching *I Love Lucy* repeats on TV, and it just expanded from there. I'm still not a big fan of her follow-up shows, *The Lucy Show* and *Here's Lucy*, but the woman was a comedic genius, and her life was fascinating. Did you know, for example, she was the first woman to head a television production stu-

dio? Further, in that role she's credited with helping to keep the original *Star Trek* on the air in the 1960s, when it looked destined for cancelation after its first season.

Lucy was the epitome of a hard worker, traveling from her poor hometown of Jamestown, N.Y., to New York City where she busted her butt to become an actress. She eventually made it to Hollywood, where she never gave up her hard-working attitude. Even at the height of her popularity on *I Love Lucy*, she would never rest on her laurels, and was known for being quite the perfectionist. One week, the show called for the Lucy Ricardo character to play the saxophone. Real-life Lucy rehearsed so hard on that saxophone, she in fact got *too* good. The writers had to tell her to dial it back a bit, that Lucy Ricardo wasn't supposed to be as good with the sax as Lucille Ball was becoming.

Anyway, last Friday, April 26, marked the 30th anniversary of her death, so I thought I'd share some wise quotes from her. The thing about Lucy was – as she'd always be the first to admit – she was not an inherently funny person. She was brilliant, but only with the right writers and the right direction. She wasn't an ad-libber. She didn't, in her own words, *think* funny.

But she was very wise. And here's some of the wisdom she shared during her long run as the Queen of Comedy:

“It's a helluva start, being able to recognize what makes you happy.”

“Luck? I don't know anything about luck. I've never banked on it and I'm afraid of people who do. Luck to me is something else: Hard work – and realizing what is opportunity and what isn't.”

“Love yourself first and everything else falls into line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world.”

“I'm not sure that I want to be without some lack of confidence. If you are too sure of yourself, you don't grow. You may feel confident in some things, but other fields come up as a challenge. And if you don't anticipate trouble, you will be in trouble.”

“One of the things I learned the hard way was that it doesn't pay to get discouraged. Keeping busy and making optimism a way of life can restore your faith in yourself.”

“The more things you do, the more you can do.”

“In life, all good things come hard, but wisdom is the hardest to come by.”

“Ability is of little account without opportunity.”

“I'm not funny. What I am is brave.”

\* \* \*

See you next week.