



RIVEREAST

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Former Hebron resident Matthew Troy recently took home a regional Emmy award for a public service announcement designed to help recruit volunteer firefighters.

Belltown School Board Approves Armed Officer

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Board of Education this week authorized a pilot program that will allow an armed security officer on the high school campus.

East Hampton High School security officer Dave Luke will wear a concealed handgun when school starts in September, based on the terms of the newly approved policy.

Luke, who retired from the Connecticut State Police in 2017, was a first responder to the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012 as part of the state police tactical team. He said he was directly involved in searching, clearing and securing both the school and shooter Adam Lanza's home.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said a recent survey revealed about 72% of high school students and roughly the same percentage of staff members were in favor of having an armed security officer (ASO) in the school. The question was part of a larger survey administered to students through the East Hampton Prevention Partnership, he said.

The pilot program will last through March 9.

Smith said the district will survey students and staff again about halfway through the trial period to help the school board decide if the program should become permanent.

The policy allows the armed security officer "to act when students, visitors or staff are placed in imminent life-threatening danger."

The officer must be a retired member of the state police or a local police department with at least 15 years of experience in law enforcement. Annual training is required.

Goff said Luke is already scheduled to attend training this summer.

The armed security guard is paid for by the school district to work in the schools only. The position is different and less expensive than a School Resource Officer (SRO), who would be a member of the local police force and would be paid out of both the general government and education budgets.

The school board voted 6-1 to approve the program, according to school board Chairman Christopher Goff. He said member Lois Villa voted against the motion; members Jarod Bushey and Jeff Carlson were absent.

The polarizing issue led to vigorous debate on social media and drew about 100 people to a school board meeting back in May while the officials weighed their decision. Numerous parents and students spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting, with more coming out in favor of the proposal than against it.

East Hampton Police Chief Dennis Woessner told school board members that having an armed officer in the school saves valuable time in an emergency.

"Highly-trained individuals can help you, even if they're going up against an assault rifle," Woessner said at the time. "I know Dave Luke; he's going to protect the kids and the teachers in this school. But he needs the tools to be able to do that."

Luke has been the school's security officer since last September.

Goff this week emphasized that the policy includes a probationary period for any new hires. It specifies a security officer will not be armed until the superintendent and members of the administration, in consultation with the police chief, are satisfied the officer is familiar

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Two of Hebron's Own Take Home Emmys

by Sloan Brewster

Two of Hebron's own recently won Emmy awards.

See You Out There, a public service announcement written and directed by cinematographer Matthew Troy, formerly of Hebron, won a Boston/New England Regional Emmy Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences [NATAS], according to a press release and Troy, who spoke to the *RiverEast* last week.

The win followed one this spring by Skylar Haines, Hebron resident and 2019 RHAM High School graduate, who took home a student Emmy from NATAS for a Long-Form Nonfiction Student Production for an episode of her documentary series *Speaking Through Stories*. The episode, entitled "Connecticut's Response to Gun Violence," was a look at both sides of the gun debate in Connecticut.

Troy's project, *See You Out There*, was launched by the Everyday Hero CT volunteer firefighter recruitment campaign, according to the press release.

In 2017, the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association, in conjunction with the International Association of Fire Chiefs, received a federal grant to facilitate volunteer firefighter recruitment throughout the state, Troy said in a phone call Tuesday. That grant covered a variety of tasks including a media campaign for TV, movie theaters and advertising.

Although he currently lives in Fairfield, Troy still volunteers for the Hebron Fire Department, something he has been doing since high school.

"What a lot of departments are doing, they are asking members to fill shifts because everywhere is hurting," he said. "I come back and try to fulfill my part."

A professional cinematographer, who works in film and TV in New York, he pitched an idea for a public service announcement to the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association when he learned of the grant. In August 2017, he was awarded the contract and co-produced the film with Christopher Casey, from Westport – a college friend – and a crew of friends and colleagues, most of whom were from the New York area, and more than 80 volunteer firefighters

from 16 Connecticut departments.

Filming also took place in August 2017, mostly in Hebron but also in the area towns of Salem, Portland and Willimantic.

"We set out to try to recreate just the pace of what volunteer firefighters do and we endeavored to show it's more than just putting out fires for volunteer firefighters," Troy said.

In making the film, they dressed a training center in Salem to look like a kitchen and then did a controlled burn there, which according to Troy, "was the pinnacle moment" of the film. They filmed a mock water rescue in the Connecticut River in Portland, and a car accident and a wildland rescue with an all-terrain vehicle in Hebron. They also created a faux parade for the film in Willimantic.

They also did some filming at RHAM High School.

"This was my writing and kind of imagination," Troy said. "I have been thinking for a long time about how I wanted to portray the firefighters and service in an interesting way that was honest and cinematic."

Three versions of the video were produced – one at 30 seconds, one at 60, and one at 90. Troy submitted the 60-second version for the Emmy award; the version shows firefighters at the various scenes taking a moment to introduce themselves to the camera.

"I'm a high school math teacher and a firefighter," says a firefighter wielding a hydraulic cutter at a car wreck.

"I'm a retired VP of business," says a firefighter directing traffic.

"I'm a student," says a firefighter in a fire engine.

"And I'm a mother," says a firefighter marching in a parade.

The idea was to be as diverse as possible and show viewers that anyone can help their volunteer fire department, Troy said, adding that they used non-actors in filming, which took three days to complete.

After that, it took about two months to finish the film. It was ready for distribution by November and premiered on Easter weekend in

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Rattlesnakes Like to Slither Around Marlborough

by Allison Lazur

An approximately 5-year-old female timber rattlesnake slithered through a grassy patch near the Marlborough Town Hall Wednesday.

The heart-shaped head, slightly elevated from the earth, led a dark-colored 3-foot body that ended with a distinctive rattle. The snake seemed unbothered by the presence of Director of Public Safety Services Jay Kehoe who let the reptile briefly slither in the sun, before putting her back in the cage from which she had just been released.

The snake was found in a residential yard on the Glastonbury/Marlborough line earlier this week.

Last year, Kehoe said he relocated a dozen rattlesnakes primarily in the Marlborough and Glastonbury area.

"I have snakes that go to the same houses," he said, adding that some of them even make appearances at the same home at the same time of year.

Kehoe is one of four individuals the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) recommends calling for a nuisance snake, as well as the DEEP dispatch office.

"Basically we get them, keep them safe, store them until which time they can be weighed, measured and checked for a microchip and we try to never do that only with one person just because of the dangers involved," Kehoe, who has been handling nuisance snake calls since 1990, said.

"It kind of gets passed on to those who have an interest," he said.

Kehoe said a long-term study, conducted by Siena College and coordinated by retired biology professor Doug Fraser, who has been tracking the timber rattlesnake for decades, includes a "loose-knit group of people who have all been trained in handling snakes by our predecessors."

The Meshomasic State Forest located in areas of Marlborough, East Hampton, Portland, Hebron and Glastonbury is home to a "healthy population" of timber rattlesnakes, said Fraser.

Fraser, called by Kehoe to microchip and release the snake Wednesday, said he visits the area once a week in the summer to do just that.

"The more you know about these animals the more you really start to appreciate them,"

Fraser said.

The typically three-to-five-foot long snakes live 25 to 35 years, Kehoe said, adding, "I've been catching the same snakes since 1990."

The snakes typically shed once a year and every time they shed, a new segment is added to their rattle, Kehoe said. However, after about 12 to 15 segments, the rattles can break off. In some cases, rattlesnakes are without rattles altogether because of fights in the wild, he said.

State-endangered, the timber rattlesnake is docile, moves slowly with a heavy body and will not strike unless bothered, Kehoe said.

"I've stepped on them in the field and they haven't struck me," he added.

Relying on camouflage as its primary defense, when the snakes are "tucked away" in their dens, they are very hard to see, he said.

Currently, the snakes largest predators are land development, traffic and illegal poaching. Because the snakes like to sun themselves, "We see them killed on roads more than anywhere else," Kehoe said.

Fraser said last year 10 timber rattlesnakes were killed by area cars.

"Most are accidental," he said, adding "A very large number of people living in the snake areas know about them and have relatively positive attitudes toward them."

Kehoe said people often travel to the area from out of state to attempt to capture the creatures and sell as pets on the black market, causing DEEP to keep watch over the areas where the snakes are most at risk of capture.

Aside from the limits of the approximately 10,000-acre Meshomasic State Forest, timber rattlesnakes are also seen in the northeast corner of the state.

"I have never seen a rattlesnake south of [Route] 66," Kehoe said. "They're imprinted at birth to their den areas and they usually don't wander more than a mile, mile and a half, but they always take the same trails."

When the timber rattlesnake hunts, it moves about 30 to 40 feet a day and returns to its den once the first frost hits.

Females don't mate until they're 7 to 10 years old, only having a litter every three years of 6 to 10 snakes.



While the endangered timber rattlesnake calls the Meshomasic State Forest home, often times the venomous snake can land in residential yards and local roadways. The forest runs through the towns of Marlborough, Portland, East Hampton, Hebron and Glastonbury.

"There's a high mortality rate when they're young," Kehoe said because baby timber rattlesnakes are eaten by birds of prey and black racer snakes.

He also said opossums eat timber rattlesnakes "like they're candy," as they are "impervious to rattlesnake bites."

When a timber rattlesnake bites, its fangs inject venom that paralyze the prey, but also start to digest the prey as well, "it's kind of a pretty fancy thing," Kehoe said.

In the last 30 years, there have been four confirmed snake bites in the area, three of which were to experienced snake handlers, Kehoe said.

The fourth was a bite that occurred in Marlborough in 2009 at a July 4 party at a residential home on West Road.

"Alcohol was involved," Kehoe said, "and it

wasn't the snake that was drinking."

The man tried "to be Steve Irwin" and grab the 5-foot male snake from behind the head, he said.

"Well he grabbed it back a little too far and the snake just turned around and nailed him," he said.

Kehoe said he ended up needing 19 units of anti-venom called CroFab which costs \$24,000 a unit.

Nationwide, 80% of snakebites are alcohol-related, Kehoe said.

If you see a timber rattlesnake DEEP advises slowly and calmly backing away from it and avoiding quick movements or agitating the snake in any way.

"All snakes will retreat from humans if given a chance," DEEP states.

Marlborough Schools Superintendent Gets 2.3% Raise

by Allison Lazur

Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz was approved unanimously by the Board of Education last week to receive a 2.3% raise beginning July 1.

The increase brings his annual base salary to \$85,981.

His contract was also extended a year, initially negotiated to run July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020. Board of Education member Louise Concodello said the school board looks at the superintendent's contract every year. The contract will now end June 30, 2021.

Sklarz, who is part-time, works on average 10 days a month, Concodello said, adding that he doesn't receive any vacation or sick time.

"We're really lucky," she said.

Concodello said the raise was determined to be an average increase of the other recently negotiated contracts which included the custodians, teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators.

Sklarz, who is entering his 11th year as superintendent at the elementary school, spent 14 years in the West Hartford school district prior to coming to Marlborough. Before coming to Connecticut, he held a superintendent position in Santa Cruz, Calif., for four years.

Concodello and Board of Education Chairman Ruth Kelly praised Sklarz's abilities and experience.

"He's happy, we're happy and he does a great job for us with so much expertise and so many years under his belt," Concodello said.

Kelly said Sklarz helped successfully and amicably negotiate the four contracts as well as present a school budget that was not cut at all by the Board of Finance and later passed in May as part of the town's \$25.99 million 2019-20 budget. The school budget totals \$7.41 million.

"He's so professional and so knowledgeable [and] good with the numbers," Kelly said. "The

budget is always very transparent."

She said Sklarz played a part in successfully negotiating the four contracts, which in turn saved money in legal fees.

Concodello said the school board is "pleased" with his working relationship with administrators and teachers and his love of the children.

Kelly shared similar thoughts with the *Rivereast* Tuesday.

"He gives the board continual updates and helps unify the board because of his communications," adding, "We are completely happy with him," she said.

Sklarz also expressed his contentment with working in the district.

"It's nice to be at this point in my career," Sklarz said. "I love the students; I love the parents."

He said the joy of working with Marlborough Elementary stems from being of the same

mindset as the "wonderful staff" and board members who have a "unanimous" view of him and of the school's mission while looking for ways to better serve the students.

"Every year we just continue to raise expectations and we're going to keep raising those expectations," Sklarz said.

He said this past year had resulted in further expansion of the art and music program and an increase in students learning Spanish at higher levels.

Sklarz said the focus next year will be finding ways to increase test scores, better serve special education students and looking at the social and emotional needs of the student population.

When asked by the *Rivereast* if he had any plans to retire, Sklarz said: "I'll leave when my work is done, but right now I have nine board members who are as excited about me staying as I am and we all have a unity of purpose."

Hebron Charter Commission OKs Appointed Town Clerk

by Sloan Brewster

Despite an initial recommendation by the Charter Revision Commission to keep the town clerk as an elected office, the Board of Selectmen is looking to transition the position to one hired by the town.

The Charter Revision Commission decided on Wednesday to recommend the town clerk be appointed. The move was a response to a June 21 letter from selectmen asking the commission to reconsider its decision to leave the position unchanged.

“Transition the town clerk from elected to appointed,” selectmen recommended in the letter.

The Board of Selectmen appointed the commission last August for the sole purpose of revising the charter. The commission released its recommended changes at a Board of Selectman meeting on May 2 with a provision that the town clerk remain an elected position.

The selectmen’s memo came after chairman Daniel Larson asked that the commission “re-address” the town clerk’s position at a selectmen’s meeting early this month.

“I personally feel that the town clerk should be someone who is hired by the town,” he said. “As I said, we have a town clerk who does a great job, but all of us will go the way of the dodo bird.”

According to the selectmen’s memo, Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz “would be grandfathered in the position until she chooses to retire.” At the end of her current term, she would transition to a full-time town employee.

“Anything that we do, Carla would be grandfathered in so it wouldn’t affect the town clerk that’s been elected,” Town Administrator Andrew Tierney said in a meeting with the *Rivereast* Monday, echoing the memo.

The position has been elected since its inception and even before Pomproicz there have been good people in the slot, including Marian Celio, Tierney said.

Celio was town clerk for 25 years and passed away in 1998.

“Hebron’s been very fortunate with the town clerk, but with the changing world and its society I don’t think that’s going to be the case,” Tierney said.

Selectmen are concerned that anyone can run and folks who chose to do so may not be qualified, he said.

In addition, the town prefers that town clerks be certified, which can be a time-consuming process of up to three years. Tierney said he had asked Pomproicz if she knew of anyone else in town who was a certified town clerk and

said her answer was no.

Pomproicz herself was not certified when she took office in 2000, she said Monday. The then-assistant town clerk trained her to perform the job and Pomproicz underwent the three-year certification program, which involved a series of modules followed by a test.

“No clerk that has ever been a Hebron town clerk was certified prior to being elected,” Pomproicz said.

To remain abreast of regulation changes, Pomproicz also completes ongoing trainings with state, New England, and international city and town clerk associations.

“If you feel you need to brush up on something you can go [to a training],” she said.

She also attends conferences with educational components.

Pomproicz pointed to state statute 7-103, which allows for the removal of a town clerk.

“In Connecticut, town clerks are one of the select few of public servants that may be removed for negligence, incompetence or non-compliance with state law,” she wrote in a letter to the commission in February.

In the letter, Pomproicz went on to argue the benefits of an elected versus appointed town clerk.

“An elected town clerk works autonomously in the best interest of the town and is accountable directly to the electorate,” she wrote. “It is in the best interest of the community to have a representative that is free to act independently without fear of retaliation.”

Based on input from Pomproicz and Tierney, the commission made the recommendation to keep the position as an elected office, Scot Kauffman, chairman of the nine-member commission, said last month.

The two biggest considerations were the town clerk position and the budget, which it considered bifurcating, he said. The commission decided not to recommend changing either the budget or the clerk’s position.

“We reviewed everything and found that it was in our best interest to leave it elected,” Kauffman said of the clerk’s position. “We all came to the consensus to leave it untouched after reviewing the data.”

Kauffman on Thursday said the revised recommendation approved by the commission at Wednesday’s meeting has been forwarded to the selectmen.

The public will weigh in on changes to the charter at a referendum that will be held during the general election in November.

New Colchester Troop K Commander Touts Community

by Allison Lazur

Lieutenant Marc Petruzzi is calling the shots as the new commanding officer of the Connecticut State Police Troop K barracks in Colchester.

Petruzzi has been overseeing nearly 80 people since March, including state troopers, sergeants, civilian staff and local police officers.

Petruzzi brings 20 years of experience from serving in roles such as commanding officer and patrol trooper at Troop H in Hartford, Somers resident state trooper, sergeant and chief of staff for the Office of Administrative Services in Middletown, and resident trooper sergeant for the town of Colchester.

“I learned a lot there; that was a very interesting and educational experience for me,” Petruzzi said of his time in Colchester.

As the town’s resident trooper sergeant, Petruzzi said he was involved with budgeting, policies, discipline, and “everything but having hiring and firing power.”

Petruzzi called Troop H his “home troop” because of regularly returning to the barracks after receiving a promotion.

He said Troop H is considered one of the “highway troops,” which includes police coverage of 280 miles of interstate highways, plus state facilities, prisons, Bradley International Airport and CTfastrak. Troop K on the other hand is considered one of the “country troops,” Petruzzi said.

“It’s much more community oriented,” he

said, adding that troopers deal with “full service policing” from motor vehicle accidents and smashed mailboxes to sexual assaults and missing persons.

“One of the advantages of our agency is that you have such a spectrum of policing that you can do within the same agency,” Petruzzi said.

As Troop K’s commanding officer, Petruzzi said he enjoys being connected to the community, while maintaining an “open line of communication” with town officials.

“We are your police department,” he said. “We want to make sure we are providing services that you and the people in your town feel they need.”

Petruzzi, 43, wasn’t always on the path to rise to the top of the state police agency, and it was only after an internship with the South Windsor Police Department that he realized how much he enjoyed law enforcement.

Attending the University of Connecticut in the late 1990s as an international relations major, Petruzzi said his plan was to go into the field of foreign counterintelligence and “do counter terrorism-type work.”

Also a criminal justice minor, he was required to do an internship and landed at the police department in South Windsor, where he grew up.

“It was a phenomenal program,” he said. “It wasn’t just an internship where I just sat in the clerk’s office and filed stuff. One week I was with traffic, the next week I was with the de-

tectives, the next week I was on patrol and the next week I was with community service officers, and about six weeks into it, I realized how much fun it was,” he said, adding that “state police is what worked out.”

Petruzzi said a big part of his job as commanding officer is supporting the staff and providing them with the resources that they need.

Throughout his interview with the *Rivereast*, he emphasized just how important it is for Troop K to be considered part of the communities it serves.

“We are as much a part of the community as the parks and rec department or the fire department; most of troopers here live in the troop area,” he said.

He added that the relationship with the local fire departments is one he would like to “enhance.”

“I found out very quickly that when you have a good relationship with the local fire department and you need lights at a crash scene at 2 in the morning, they have the trucks with the lights,” he said.

The self-proclaimed “last remaining UConn football fan” lives in Glastonbury with his wife and two kids. He concluded his interview by sharing his first rule: “Everyone goes home safe at the end of the night”

“My people really do care about the community and care about the people that they’re serving and I care about my people; I want to make sure they’re successful,” he said.



The Connecticut State Police barracks in Colchester has a new commanding officer. Marc Petruzzi brings 20 years of experience to Troop K.

Hebron Police News

6/19: Stephen R. Daloisio, 45, of 85 Gulf St., was arrested and charged with possession of an assault weapon, sale/purchase of a high-capacity magazine, three counts risk of injury to child and second-degree reckless endangerment, State Police said, after police conducted a well-being check on a 7-, 11- and 13-year-old and discovered several unsecured firearms and ammunition located in the residence with the three children.

Portland Police News

6/14: Jacob Coleman, 20, of 52 Indian Hill Ave., was charged with third-degree assault, Portland Police said.

6/17: Blaire Ocelik, 37, of 17 Summit St., East Hampton, was charged with operating under the influence, operating under suspension, and failure to drive in proper lane, police said.

East Hampton Police News

6/13: Dylan M. Foster, 23, of 605 E. Main St., Norwich, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

6/17: Malik Carter, 22, of 8 Mountain Trl., was arrested and charged with speeding, driving under the influence, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

6/17: Allison Leue, 33, of 7 Markham Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

Also, from June 10-16, officers responded to nine medical calls, five motor vehicle accidents and seven alarms, and made 20 traffic stops, police said.

Colchester Police News

6/17: Jonathan A. Diaz Guzman, 37, 46 Hill-top Dr., Windham, was arrested and charged with interfering with officer/resisting arrest, State Police said.

6/18: Tyler Kisner, 30, of 91 Reidy Hill Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, State Police said.

6/18: Joseph Arruda, 26, of 87 Boothbay St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with oper-

ating an unregistered motor vehicle, improper use of license/registration, theft of plates/inserts, operating a motor vehicle without minimum insurance, engaging police in pursuit, DUI, failure to have headlamps, interfering with officer/resisting arrest and disobeying signal of officer after engaging police in pursuit on Route 2 eastbound in the area of exit 13. Stop sticks were used by police to disable the vehicle driven by Arruda near exit 17, State Police said.

Andover Police News

6/17: Manuel J. Gonzalez, 29, of 156 Main St., Apt. 3, Terryville, was arrested and charged with failure to keep narcotics in original container and illegal possession of narcotics, State Police said.



Signs on the lawn of Melissa Gerrier-Satagaj and Robert Satagaj are a visible manifestation of a years-long neighborhood zoning dispute. The photo on the left shows a vandalized sign in the trees and a larger sign erected by the homeowners in response. The file photo on the right shows signs in place last July that were allegedly stolen this April.

Sign Skirmish Leads to Arrests in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

A neighborhood dispute going on for almost six years has escalated into allegations of criminal activity on one side and defamation on the other.

Both the police department and the blight enforcement officer are involved.

Portland Police last week made two arrests related to the alleged theft and vandalism of several signs put up in the front yard of a private residence next to Quarry Ridge Golf Course.

Joseph "J.T." Kelley, 38, of Cox Rd., was arrested June 20 and charged with sixth-degree larceny. His mother, Christina Kelley, 66, of 1 Rose Hill Rd., was arrested June 21 and charged with third-degree criminal mischief. Both are misdemeanor charges.

The signs were put up by Bob Satagaj and Melissa Gerrier-Satagaj in the front yard of their 111 Collins Hill Rd. home related to the long-standing dispute, which began when golf course founder John "Joe" Kelley Sr. and Christina Kelley, his wife, installed a paved driveway without a permit back in 2013.

The Satagajs said some signs were stolen while another was vandalized, according to the arrest warrant affidavits.

Meanwhile, a pending blight complaint made by Joe and Christina Kelley on June 11 accused the Satagajs of harassment due to the number and size of the signs.

Gerrier-Satagaj said this week the signs were variations on the same theme, with messages like "Ask 1 Rose Hill about the water issues," "Kelley Zoning Violation" and "Why, Bransfield?"

The Kelleys did not return a call for comment.

The Satagajs have long alleged the Kelleys' paved driveway caused flooding issues that affected downstream properties and compromised safety on Rose Hill Road.

The Satagajs also claim successful business owners in town benefit from favoritism by elected and appointed officials when it comes to enforcing rules and regulations.

A cease-and-desist order was issued at the time of the paving by then-Zoning Enforcement Officer Bob Spencer and was upheld by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The golf course developer then filed a lawsuit against the ZBA, whose decision that the driveway should be re-

turned to its natural state was in turn upheld by a Middlesex Superior Court judge in a 2016 ruling.

A subsequent agreement with the town allowed the driveway to remain partially paved, according to officials.

Criminal Charges

The arrest warrant for J.T. Kelley detailed a May 1 complaint from Robert Satagaj alleging three yard signs had been stolen from his yard during the overnight hours. Satagaj said two other signs had been stolen from the yard a couple weeks prior.

Gerrier-Satagaj told police later in the month that the signs had been located in a trash can belonging to one of J.T. Kelley's landscaping clients on Penny Corner Road, the warrant said. It was neighbor Sharon Hoy who figured out where the signs were located after she spoke with the Penny Corner Road resident during the Town-Wide Tag Sale, according to the warrant.

Both Hoy and Gerrier-Satagaj were involved in the Kelley lawsuit and subsequent negotiations after they added themselves as defendants to the civil proceedings.

J.T. Kelley was reached by police in a phone call on May 31, the warrant said. He told the officer he took the signs one night while driving by the yard because he was frustrated by the situation between his parents and the Satagajs.

The arrest warrant for Christina Kelley said Gerrier-Satagaj on May 27 called police to report a sign had been defaced with green spray paint that afternoon. Gerrier-Satagaj told them she suspected someone associated with the Kelley family was responsible for the vandalism due to the ongoing dispute.

Gerrier-Satagaj on June 9 called police back to their home to tell them Christina Kelley had stopped in front of the Satagaj house and told

them she spray-painted the sign and her son stole the others, according to the warrant.

Christina Kelley admitted to police she spray-painted the sign because she was frustrated and upset by the messages.

Blight Complaint

Blight enforcement officer Lincoln White told the *Rivereast* he issued a violation notice to the Satagajs after Joe Kelley came into the land use department to complain about the signs on June 10. The Kelleys followed up with a written complaint the next day at White's request, he said.

The Kelleys' written complaint stated the signs were placed to affect the sale of their property "in a negative way" and were interfering with traffic because people were slowing down to read them.

The violation notice was dated June 10 but was sent out on June 11, according to White.

The notice said White inspected the Satagaj's property and identified it as blighted based on a provision of the ordinance that prohibits any building, structure, or parcel of land that creates "a substantial interference with the reasonable and lawful use and enjoyment of abutting premises" or interferes with the use of public or private streets.

The notice said the signs must be removed from public view by July 1 or the owners will face a possible fine of \$100 per day.

Gerrier-Satagaj said her right to protest is protected by the First Amendment.

"I believe the protest signs exposing the favoritism and how much one can get away with are a way to communicate with others that it's ok to stand up," she said.

She also objected to the Kelley's allegation that the signs were placed to affect the sale of their home, adding there have been signs in the yard going back to 2013.

The Kelley's house was listed for \$749,900 on April 1, according to Realtor.com. It was also listed for periods of time in 2018 and 2014.

Gerrier-Satagaj said she has appealed the violation notice. A hearing has been scheduled for July 30 in front of the citation hearing board.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the four members of the citation board have been notified of the scheduled hearing.

The ordinance does not specify how many hearing officers should be appointed and does not specify a quorum.

Bransfield said town attorney Kari Olson, of Murtha Cullina, is reviewing the issue.

Portland Voters Approve Funds Transfer for Capital Work

by Elizabeth Regan

Voters at a town meeting Wednesday approved the transfer of \$100,875 in funds for already-approved capital projects.

While the items were included in the capital plan as part of the budget process, the town charter requires a vote by taxpayers on any supplemental appropriations exceeding 0.5% of the total operating budget. A public hearing on the appropriation was held June 19.

The vote passed 35-1, according to Town Clerk Ryan Curley.

The money for the items came from the sale of surplus equipment, according to First Selectman Susan Bransfield.

The items approved at the town meeting affect the schools, public works department, and police department.

The supplemental appropriation allocated \$60,000 for improvements to the tennis courts on the secondary school campus.

The highway division will purchase a hot box, road sensors and a diagnostic machine with \$25,875, while the grounds maintenance crews will get a 16-foot enclosed trailer for \$9,000.

The police department will purchase two solar-powered radar speed signs for a total of

\$6,000. Bransfield said last week that signs be installed on Ames Hollow Road and High Street to let people know how fast they're traveling as they pass by. The purchase is part of a grassroots effort to curb speeding in town.

Bransfield said data from the new radar signs will be collected and analyzed to see if the signs made a difference in drivers' speeds. She said the units can be installed in other locations based on resident input.

Voters also approved a supplemental appropriation of \$105,000 to adjust for higher-than-anticipated revenue from police private duty jobs.

Bransfield said the city of Middletown used Portland police officers for private duty functions more than usual. There was also work on roads and power lines in town that required private duty coverage, she said.

Private contractors paid for the services, which Bransfield said had to be accounted for in the budget.

"It's an accounting necessity, according to our auditors," she said. "But it's not that we're spending more money."

That vote passed 32-1, Curley said.

State Coaches Association Lauds RHAM Leadership

by Sloan Brewster

RHAM's Mark Logan and Paul Steiner have been recognized by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association.

At a gala dinner at the Aqua Turf in Southington on May 9, the association honored Logan as the state's Athletic Director of the Year and Steiner as Baseball Coach of the Year.

Principal Scott Leslie, who spoke to the *Rivereast* on Wednesday from John F. Kennedy International Airport while getting ready to fly to Italy, said the honors were "well-deserved."

"Both Mark and Paul have been outstanding contributors to the RHAM athletic program for many, many years," he said. "As athletic director, Mark has done a stellar job of building our program and making it work."

In particular, Leslie lauded Logan for dealing with challenges related to athletic field drainage issues and games being cancelled or moved because it was wet.

Logan, who started his career at RHAM in 1979 and has also been a coach for boys and girls cross country and track, retired at the end of the school year. He was a social studies and AP History teacher.

Logan said he thought receiving the honor was "a fitting tribute to my career."

Leslie said Logan has received other awards as well, including a national award for cross country and track.

"The success of our teams can be attributed partly to Mark making sure the athletes and coaches had what they needed," Leslie said.

Logan said he would not have succeeded without the efforts of others.

"You have to hire good coaches, you have to have good practice facilities," he said. "[You need] people that are dedicated to the idea of performing well."

Logan said one of the things that benefitted RHAM athletes was the switch 12 years ago from the Northwest Athletic Conference to the Central Connecticut Conference, which pits the

teams against better competition and allows them to win conference and state championships in a variety of competitions.

Because of the switch, the athletic program became stronger and more competitive in multiple sports, he said.

"It's a tough league," he said. "We compete with schools that are bigger than us, like Glastonbury."

Dan Trudeau, athletic director in Westfield Massachusetts, will take over as athletic director in the fall, Leslie said.

"He's really excited and eager to go. He's local to us, lives in Glastonbury," Leslie said. "He's familiar with the RHAM program and we're really excited to have him come aboard. I think he's going to do a great job and pick up where Mark left off."

About Steiner, who has been the baseball head coach at RHAM for 27 years, Leslie said he was truly focused on baseball.

"Not many high school coaches can brag they have former athletes in the major leagues," he said.

RHAM graduate A.J. Pollock, who is temporarily out of the game while he heals from an elbow injury, signed a \$55 million contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers, Steiner said in a phone call Tuesday.

Steiner and Pollock keep in touch, the coach said. He texted with Pollock last week.

Steiner said Pollock is just about ready to get back on the field.

The player always "went above and beyond," according to Steiner.

"He just kind of worked hard," he said. "He's a hard worker. When you get to that level, nothing is given to you."

Like Logan, Steiner gave all the credit for his success to everyone with whom he works.

"[Awards are] based on the kids you've had, the assistant coaches," he said. "I'm only as good as my players and the assistant coaches that work for me."



The Connecticut High School Coaches Association honored RHAM's own Mark Logan as Athletic Director of the Year and Paul Steiner as Baseball Coach of the Year at a gala dinner at the Aqua Turf on May 9. From left are Natalie Jellinek, Mark Logan, Judy Logan, Sue Steiner and Paul Steiner.

He said the athletes worked toward achieving goals, which is why they keep winning.

"You try to do the best you can, you try to win as many games as you can," he said.

He cited accomplishments including 360 wins, a state title and seven conference championships, 14 All-State players and "one kid in the major leagues."

To keep the victories flowing, Logan said he attends clinics and workshops, always tries to be prepared, works hard in the off-season and

tries to get kids to do the same.

Before his 2014 retirement from teaching, Logan was a physical education teacher for 40 years. He started out at Hebron Elementary and Gilead Hill Schools before landing at RHAM Middle School for 33 years.

Logan said the awards dinner "was a very nice evening."

"It just shows you that you're doing things the right way," he said.

State Tells Council Water System a Top Priority in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

The head of the state Department of Health's drinking water section told the East Hampton Town Council this week that helping the town establish a centralized water system is a top priority.

Drinking Water Section Chief Lori Mathieu was on hand at the council's Tuesday meeting to brief members on funding options that could ease the burden on local taxpayers who would bear the brunt of the project. Cost estimates from two private water companies range from \$12.5 million to \$42.88 million.

The two plans currently under consideration were submitted by Connecticut Water Company and Aquarion Water Company in response to an informal request for proposals from Town Manager Michael Maniscalco this spring.

She recommended the town hire an independent consultant to review both proposals in order to come up with a preferred option. Having a firm plan in place when the next legislative session begins in February could help local leaders secure funding from the state, according to Mathieu.

"You have what we think are two very good proposals," Mathieu said. "They took a nice, hard look at what you have in town and where there might be excess water."

The need for a centralized water system in town goes back to the 1960s, when the first referendum to fund the system was shot down by voters. Historic industrial contamination in the Village Center combined with high iron and manganese levels in aquifers throughout town have led to water quality concerns since then.

Previous studies had identified a price tag of at least \$80 million to build out a wellfield in the Cobalt section of town or bring in water from the

Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) through Portland.

"We're impressed with what we read, because [Connecticut Water and Aquarion] started looking at creative ways to get water into this area without having to bring the water from beautiful Barkhamsted," Mathieu said, referring to the plan that would have piped in water from MDC. The quasi-public agency's main reservoir is situated in the northwestern part of the state about 30 miles from Hartford.

Maniscalco initiated talks with Portland officials last year about creating a pipeline from Grove Street in Portland to the current East Hampton town hall that would carry MDC water. But the talks with Portland have stalled and MDC in April pulled out of contention to be East Hampton's water provider.

The Connecticut Water and Aquarion proposals, both submitted on May 20, were similar when it came to securing new water sources as part of a phased approach. They each said they would explore the acquisition of wells at the site of a South Main Street affordable housing development that never came to fruition as well as the Edgemere Condominium water system.

Both companies recommended focusing first on the Village Center and a nearby portion of Route 66 that includes witch hazel producer American Distilling. The two companies identified the area of Route 66 in the vicinity of the lake as part of the second phase.

Connecticut Water's proposal would cost roughly \$12.5-17.5 million to connect existing systems and add one or two wellfields in the downtown area. The company did not specify how many properties might be served under the pro-

posal.

Connecticut Water vice president of service delivery Craig Patla told councilors earlier this month that the company already operates four water systems in local subdivisions, including the Spice Hill, Baker Hill and Laurel Ridge systems.

The company provides water to a total of 95,000 customers in the state, according to the proposal.

Aquarion's proposal had a price tag of about \$15.94 million for the first phase. But the big departure came in the next phase, during which the company would work to bring on line the town's Oakum Dock wellfield in Cobalt for an additional \$26.94 million.

Aquarion operates a water system in East Hampton on the north end of Lake Pocotopaug. The company, which was acquired in 2017 by Eversource Energy, serves more than 700,000 people across Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Aquarion officials said the company could serve about 1,096 properties in town upon completion of the first two phases.

Engineering studies going back to 1996 have pointed to wells in the Cobalt section of town as an integral part of the solution to the town's water woes. A proposed system based on the Oakum Dock buildout failed at a 2007 referendum largely due to the cost and fears that too much development was not in keeping with the town's rural character.

The town acquired an easement for the Oakum Dock wellfield in 2009 from Saint Clements Castle and Marina owner Edward Doherty.

While the Connecticut Water proposal did not

provide details or cost estimates for a potential third phase, it said developing the Cobalt supply or connecting with Portland could be considered if further supply was needed.

Independent Review

Mathieu told councilors an outside consultant can provide the expertise the town needs to make its decision.

She said the state has a loan program that offers a 2% interest rate good for 20 years that could potentially help pay for the consultant and eventually build the water system.

She described the consultant as an "independent third party" who could look at what's best for the community.

The state public health department and members of the state legislature will be in a better position to seek out funding sources for the town if local officials are able to bring a finalized plan to Hartford when the legislature's next session convenes in February, according to Mathieu.

Previous local efforts to gain support from state officials and lawmakers occurred under the Malloy administration but must "restart" under new Gov. Ned Lamont, Mathieu told councilors.

Maniscalco had been hopeful that the legislature would approve a \$40 million bond request — which had been endorsed by the state public health department — earlier this year. That did not happen.

Mathieu said returning to Hartford in the new year with "good information" will help the town's case for financial aid from the state.

"I know I don't come with money in hand, but next year if we continue to work together, we want to be as supportive as we can," she said.

Burbank Back in the Saddle – For Now

by Sloan Brewster

While Bob Burbank settles in to his new-but-familiar role of interim town administrator, incoming town officials are wasting no time in searching for a permanent replacement.

Next Monday, July 1, the Board of Selectmen will hold a special meeting where it expects to appoint a search committee to find a new town administrator. July 1 also happens to be the very day the new board members take office, and when Jeff Maguire officially becomes first selectman.

The committee will include two members of each of the boards of finance and selectmen, as well as two non-elected “at large” Andover residents, said Adrian Mandeville, incoming selectman.

The agenda was due to be posted yesterday, Maguire said.

Maguire and Mandeville said the meeting was the new board’s way of moving the town forward and that members wanted to do some things ahead of the regular meeting on July 10.

“We don’t want to wait, we need to get the town rolling,” Mandeville said.

“There’s a lot of things that we have to get accomplished and we need to have a faster start than July 10,” Maguire echoed.

Maguire said the “biggest focus” of the meeting would be to put in place the hiring process for a new town administrator.

The previous town administrator, Joseph Higgins, handed in his resignation on May 6, and that very night, according to Putnam radio station WINY, the Putnam Board of Selectmen hired him to be that town’s new administrator. Higgins’ last day in Andover was June 6 and, according to the *Norwich Bulletin*, he will start in Putnam in July.

On June 5 – the literal eve of Higgins’ departure from Andover – the outgoing Board of Selectmen named Burbank, who is first selectman until the end of the month, as interim town administrator.

It was a move not supported by Maguire, who was the sole ‘no’ vote, and said immediately following the meeting that he was “disgusted.”

This week, Mandeville said what Maguire had emphasized at that June 5 meeting – that he and other elected officials would be willing to fill in as town administrator for free until a permanent one is found; he said they would each put in a day per week.

“We were willing to do the position that Bob is currently doing for free and instead, the Board of Selectmen – that were there and are now outgoing – decided to put Bob in,” he said.

Neither Maguire nor Mandeville would say if Monday’s meeting would mark an end to Burbank’s short time in the seat.

They did, however, say they had concerns with Burbank’s performance.

“There is a concern that Bob has been out of touch with the position for a while and maybe he’s not on board with everything that the incoming board would like him to do,” Mandeville said. “And given that and his lack of deference for the incoming board, he may not be the best person for the interim position.”

Maguire said he had met with Burbank that day “and requested information about where he’s at and what he’s done.”

“We have to take a different direction for our community,” Maguire said. “The new Board of Selectmen is trying to make the town as efficient and productive as we possibly can and that’s what we’re going to get started with immediately.”

Sitting at the town administrator’s desk on Tuesday, Burbank said he had been busy since he took over the post. He said he comes in at 7 a.m. every morning to meet with the Public Works Department and works until the end of the day.

Burbank ran through the list of what he did on his first day, including reviewing contracts and purchase orders, working with the FBI on an issue with getting background checks for pistol permits, working to resolve problems with sink holes on Bunker Hill Road and dealing with maintenance on a toilet that backed up in town hall.

“It tends to show that, you know, you just don’t sit here and twiddle your thumbs,” he said.

One day, he and Resident State Trooper Darrell Tetreault worked together to move a tree that was blocking the road.

“We had a tree down,” he said. “Myself and the state trooper moved the tree to open Lake Road.”

When asked if he thought Higgins would have personally gone out and moved a tree, he said he doubted it.

“Joe delegated,” he said. “I’m a hands-on kind of guy.”

Burbank said that he has heard from residents who appreciate that he has stepped into the position.

“At least 20 people came into my office and thanked me for taking the job, some of which I didn’t even know,” he said. “I felt appreciated.”

Burbank added that he hopes the next town administrator has more experience than Higgins.

“It would be my hope that they find somebody that has prior town experience, even if it’s as an assistant town manager,” he said.



First Selectman Robert Burbank said he has been keeping busy as interim town administrator, a position he has filled for about two weeks.

When Burbank took over as first selectman in 2006 – before the town switched to a town administrator – he said he was unexperienced and had to quickly get up to speed on working with the state and on procedures that have to be followed.

“I was floundering,” he said. “There’s a lot of learning that’s involved.”

Obituaries

Colchester

Evelyn Turner

Evelyn (Clark) Turner, 97, joined her husband Howell and her beloved daughter Carol in Heaven on Thursday, June 20. She was born April 17, 1922, in North Westchester, the daughter of the late Frederick B. Clark and Mary (Odermann) Clark.



She was married to Howell Turner at the Old St. Andrew Church in Colchester on July 11, 1945. She graduated from Bacon Academy in 1940 and went on to graduate from Mitchell College in 1942. She worked as the secretary and bookkeeper for her family's business, the Fred B. Clark Corporation.

Evelyn was committed to the education of the children in Colchester, serving many years on the Board of Education and on the Bacon Academy Scholarship Committee. In her younger days, she and Howell loved square dancing, where they met many of their longtime friends. They enjoyed traveling throughout the United States. Evelyn was an avid Red Sox and UConn Women's Basketball fan. Her passion was for playing bridge and the friends that she made playing the game were amongst her favorites.

She is survived by her sister, Mary Lu Wall; her daughter, Nancy Triou and her husband Ken; her grandsons, S Sgt. Brian Linden and Michael Linden and his wife Jody Gray-Linden; and her great grandchildren Anneliese Linden, Kieran Linden, Owen Linden and Amalia Linden, who all made her very proud. She will also be missed by her many nieces, nephews and friends.

She was predeceased by her husband, Howell Turner; her daughter, Carol Linden; her sisters, Dorothy Johnston and Margaret Clark; and her brothers, Fred B. Clark Jr. and Everett J. Clark.

In lieu of flowers, Evelyn requested that memorial donations should be made to the Bacon Academy Scholarship Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 213, Colchester, CT 06415.

Amston

Donald Gilbert Coates Jr.

Donald Gilbert Coates Jr., 81, of Amston, passed away peacefully on the morning of June 26, at Middlesex Hospital. Born March 4, 1938, in Willimantic, he was a son of the late Donald and Margaret (Barry) Coates.

Those who knew him will remember Donald as a hardworking man who enjoyed to play a game of setback, and loved his friends and family.

He is survived by his sisters, Virginia Phelps and Carleen Coates, both of Amston; his sister-in-law, Christine Coates of Colchester; his niece, Julie Terp and her husband Michael of Norwich; and numerous extended family and friends. In addition to his parents he was predeceased by his brother Gordon Coates, and sister Patricia Biron.

The family would like to express their gratitude to Donald's caregiver Osel "Jose" Agyel who assisted him for several years.

Calling hours will be held Monday, July 1, from 4-6 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester. Burial will take place directly at the New Hebron Cemetery on Wall Street on Tuesday, July 2, at 11 a.m.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Penny Marie Tarsi

Penny Marie (Wise) Tarsi, 62, of East Hampton, passed away Sunday, June 23, at her home. Born Aug. 21, 1956, in Middletown, she was the daughter of Clifford E. Wise and the late Betty J. (Biondi) Wise.

Penny was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was a graduate of East Hampton High School Class of 1974. Penny had worked most of her career at Connecticut Yankee Power Plant in the Information Center. Penny loved to cook and to spend time with her grandchildren and her dog Bailey. She had the time of her life on a cruise last year with her family.

Penny is survived by her father, Clifford Wise of East Hampton; her son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Lisa Varni of East Haddam; her daughter and son-in-law, Kristina and Jason Adams of Manchester; a sister and brother-in-law, Lisa and Bill D'Erocle of Cobalt; her two beloved grandchildren, Olivia and Logan Varni; her cousin, Nancy Grant of Middletown; her nieces; her former husband and father of her children, Michael Varni of East Hampton and her companion Jim Dake of Rocky Hill.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Saturday June 29, from 10 a.m.-noon. There will be a service at noon. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family in Lake View Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the CT Humane Society 701 Russell Rd. Newington, CT 06111.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Hebron

Eva L. LeBaron

Eva L. LeBaron, 71, of Hebron, passed away unexpectedly Saturday, June 22. Born in Lincoln, Maine, daughter of the late Leslie and Eva LeBaron, she moved to Marlborough as a child and graduated from RHAM High School before settling in Andover.

She worked as a radiology technician before returning to school to obtain a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Connecticut. She was an avid and devoted UConn alumni and fan with an amazing devotion to both basketball teams. She retired from the Manchester Probate Court a few years ago from a clerk position she truly loved.

Eva is predeceased by her parents and younger brother, Errol Boober, whom she missed every day.

She is survived by her loving husband, William Borst and his two daughters Ally and Stephanie; her brother, Roger Boober of Marlborough; her son, Chad LeBaron of Holyoke Massachusetts; and her son and daughter-in-law, Sean and Erika LeBaron and grandson Colin of Tolland; her first husband, Robert LeBaron of Florida; as well as many cousins, nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life service was held Thursday, June 27 at the First Congregational Church of Andover, with reception following. Burial will be private at a date still to be determined.



Portland

Ruth Olson

Ruth (Lucey) Olson, 92, of Portland, began her final journey Monday, June 24. She is survived by her loving travel companion and husband of 72 years, Walter "Bill" Olson.

Ruth grew up in Middletown and graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1945. She and Bill married in 1947, moved to Portland, raised their two children and were active members of the community.

In retirement they took yearly RV trips, eventually reaching all 48 contiguous states and parts of Canada. Ruth and Bill also flew to Alaska and Hawaii as well as many foreign countries, such as Iceland, Sweden, Great Britain and Ireland where they would usually meet up with daughter Arlene O. Estey, husband Dwight Estey, Dr. Robert Olson and wife Dr. Virginia Nunez Olson.

Ruth adored her grandchildren and spouses, Ethan Estey, fiancée Keri Stebenne; Emily Estey Taylor, husband Matt Taylor; Dr. Ben Olson, wife Dr. Sarah Winzelberg Olson; Tessa Olson and husband John Baker. Her two great grandchildren are Grace Taylor and Fleet Taylor. Children and grandchildren gave her an excuse to visit Disney World on biannual trips.

Her surviving sister is Janice Johnson of Portland. She is predeceased by her dear identical twin, Regina Lucey Seiferman, and brothers Joseph Lucey, John Lucey and Joan Lucey Tice.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday, July 2, at 1 p.m. in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Friends may call at the funeral home Monday, July 1, from 5-7 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that any donations in Ruth's memory be made to the National Park Foundation or any cause of the donor's choice.