

# RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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A stretch of Route 66 in East Hampton has been renamed in honor of the late Governor Bill O'Neill.

## Stretch of Route 66 Named for O'Neill

by Michael McCoy

Days after the two-year anniversary of his death, Governor Bill O'Neill was honored with his own stretch of Route 66.

The cozy bar of the East Hampton's Governor's Tavern was made even cozier Tuesday evening, as upwards of 50 people squeezed in to reminisce and honor their friend, who, in typical fashion, was mostly referred to as simply "Bill."

The reception commemorated the 5.6-mile stretch of Route in East Hampton being named the Governor William A. O'Neill Memorial Highway.

Put together by O'Neill's widow, Nikki, the celebration drew officials local (Superintendent of Schools Judy Golden, Town Council Chair Melissa Engel,) state Comptroller Nancy Wyman, State Senator Eileen Daily) and even a local celebrity in WDRC-AM's Brad Davis.

The impetus for the designation came from State Representative Gail Hamm, and was also championed by Daily. As with the rest of the Omnibus Transportation Bill, it was initially vetoed by Governor M. Jodi Rell. After the state legislature overrode that decision, Rell signed it on July 3.

But Nikki O'Neill wanted to hold out until Dec. 2, which would have been her and Bill's 47th wedding anniversary. (The signs, however, were put up the night before the ceremony.)

The green signs now greet drivers at the Route 66 entrances to Hampton, both on the

Portland and Marlborough borders. A third sign was given to Nikki Tuesday night

"My husband would be thrilled," said Nikki O'Neill, just before the ceremony.

Hamm said she birthed the idea "because he's beloved in my town. It's as simple as that."

"He belonged to our state...and each and every one of us," said Hamm. She credited him for reordering the state's higher education system, appointing the first female chief justice of the state Supreme Court, and championing the elderly disabled, and homeless.

In light with that, just before Nikki's remarks, Brad Davis barely overcame tears, when he said, "Nobody did more for the homeless than you O'Neills."

"He had a quiet touch," said Hamm, "that made each of us feel special and loved."

Moore (who is also chair of the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee chair) said just before the ceremony, "It's quite an honor and well deserved," adding she typically sought O'Neill's counsel when she had a political question.

Though Nikki O'Neill seemed quite moved to see so many friends gathered to honor her husband, not to mention crying for two hours after seeing the sign Monday night, her casual wit kept the evening buoyant. This included telling Hamm to "Just make it brief" before her remarks, and saying, "story of my life," when

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## RHAM Students Receive Message on Bullying

by Sarah McCoy

Students at RHAM Middle School heard a powerful message on bullying – from an organization with a lot of experience on the matter.

On Tuesday, Derek Kilgore of the national nonprofit organization Rachel's Challenge spoke to students about creating a "chain reaction of kindness and compassion."

Rachel's Challenge was formed by the family of Rachel Scott, the first person killed in the April 20, 1999, shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO. Using Rachel's writings and life examples, the organization spreads a message of kindness.

After her death, Rachel's father found six journals and school essays his daughter had written, many dedicated to promoting understanding and love.

In October, the RHAM Middle School guidance department attended the Connecticut School Counselor Association annual conference. It was here that they heard Craig Scott, Rachel's brother and survivor of Columbine, speak. The three counselors, Tiffany Krupp, Gretchen Finnegan and Jae Marano, were so inspired that they approached Principal Michael Seroussi about bringing Rachel's Challenge to RHAM.

Seroussi said the decision to go ahead with the program was an easy one. "When you have

three people you trust all telling you that this is worthwhile, you make it happen," Seroussi said Tuesday after the presentation.

Plus, the mission of Rachel's Challenge coincides with an area of focus for RHAM Middle School – anti-bullying. In a survey conducted last spring, 42 percent of students admitted to being verbally harassed every day. "That number is way too high," Seroussi said. "Any number is too high."

Seroussi approached AHM Youth and Family Services Director Joel Rosenberg about partnering for the program. Rosenberg was right on board and the AHM Substance Abuse and Violence Task Force co-sponsored the event and shared the costs.

Kilgore made presentations to seventh- and eighth-grade students separately on Tuesday morning and then again that evening for parents and other members of the community. His multimedia presentation highlighted Rachel's beliefs and hopes for the world.

"I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion then it will start a chain reaction of the same," Rachel wrote in an essay just weeks before her murder. "People will never know how far a little kindness can go."

He challenged students to take Rachel's

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Derek Kilgore from the organization Rachel's Challenge addresses students at RHAM Middle School on Tuesday morning. Rachel's Challenge is a nonprofit group that was founded by the family of Rachel Scott, the first victim at Columbine High School, and promotes an anti-bullying message.

### O'Neill cont. from Front Page

Davis briefly delayed her remarks.

Hamm also said this was the second of three memorials since O'Neill's death. The first was the state armory being named after him, while third is a park slated for the DiStefano property at the corner of Route 66 and Main Street. Hamm said the park had the support of the town's three parties, "no small feat in East Hampton."

Hamm also said, prior to his death, a terminal at Bradley Airport was named after him.

Daily said, "We know he's touched each and every one of us in this room," and, on a personal level, credited him for her tenure in the state senate.

She later said in a press release that the signs would mostly inform future generations, as, "current residents need no reminder that our much loved governor and his dedicated wife took great care of East Hampton and Connecticut."

East Hampton Town Council Chair Melissa Engel said O'Neill often espoused, "Small towns are the backbone of our state," and figured he could name all 169 Connecticut municipalities. "He made it his job to know where everything was."

O'Neill's close friends and former state legislator Tim Moynihan corroborated this. "He knew every Elks Club, VFW..." and other landmarks that only a town local would know. In fact, Moynihan said, when the two would hop around functions across the state, O'Neill would often tell police shortcuts in their own towns. He said the O'Neills were "out on the road" seven days a week for 40 years.

Engel was also one of several to remark on how appropriate it was for a road named in honor running by his old watering hole and the lake he loved so much.

Nikki O'Neill addressed the room: "You've been true friends to us, through the thick and through the thin."

Born in Hartford in 1930, O'Neill grew up in East Hampton, graduating from the high school in 1948. From 1950-53, he fought for the United States Air Force during the Korean War. O'Neill worked as an insurance salesman and served on the town's Zoning Board of Ap-



**Bill O'Neill's widow, Nikki, proudly displays the new highway sign at a ceremony Tuesday.**

peals, Board of Fire Commissioners and Board of Finance. He launched his state political career in 1967, was lieutenant governor from 1978, and served as governor from 1980 to 1991.

In addition to the aforementioned accolades, O'Neill has been called the "Harry Truman of Connecticut," the "Education Governor," and is credited for making "Yankee Doodle Dandy" the state song in 1979.

For 50 years, his family owned O'Neill's Taproom, where it's said he could often be found served up cold beer, even while he was governor, helping to solidify his reputation as an everyman. Despite two shifts in ownership, the spot is called the Governor's Tavern today.

O'Neill died of emphysema on Nov. 24, 2007.

### Bullying cont. from Front Page

Challenge which focuses on five goals- eliminating prejudice, daring to dream, choosing positive influences, practicing acts of kindness and starting a chain reaction.

Nearly all of the 700 students at RHAM Middle School signed up for the challenge and 250 signed up for the Chain Links Club that puts acts of kindness into action such as through a welcome committee for new students or by writing cards to underappreciated members of the school community.

Marano said there were some examples of immediate changes within the student body. For example, a student who typically ate lunch alone was joined at his table by classmates. "I think we're moving in the right direction," she said earlier in the week.

Abby Forsyth, a seventh grade student from Hebron, was only two years old when the at-

tack at Columbine High School occurred. She hadn't heard anything about it prior to the lessons about Rachel Scott that the guidance staff delivered last month. Nevertheless Tuesday's presentation had a profound effect on her. "It brought to my attention how bad bullying can get and how it needs to stop everywhere, not just at RHAM," she said earlier this week.

Zack Rodegher, also a seventh-grade student, said earlier this week that he appreciated the impact kindness could have. "It was good for our school to hear about her message," he said.

Rachel's Challenge has reached millions of individuals across the world. Each year the organization delivers over 1,200 presentations to elementary, middle, high school and college students as well as businesses. More information about the organization can be found at [www.rachelschallenge.org](http://www.rachelschallenge.org).

## Committee Looking at Options for Senior Center in Colchester

by Katy Nally

At their meeting on Nov. 19, members of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) charged a study group with three tasks regarding the senior center.

The 10-person group, which includes one alternate, will discuss the future of the senior center and make a recommendation to the BOS a year from now.

Patti White, director of the senior center, said the committee will "look at a number of options" for a new facility. Some possibilities include creating a new stand-alone structure, building a joint facility that will act as a community and senior center and moving to a new location. The group will also examine who should use the facility and what services should be provided.

The group held its first meeting yesterday after press time; it was set to appoint a chairperson at that meeting.

The 3,600-sq. ft. senior center, owned by the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, was once a school house, White said. With only four rooms in the building, White admitted there is "limited space" for programs.

Another area of concern seems to be the building's parking lot. At the senior center on Monday, Jan Dawnorowitz and Peggy Coulombe, who were playing setback, both said the parking lot needs to be expanded. Dawnorowitz said it's nearly impossible to find a space when the center hosts exercise sessions.

The two women, as well as a third card player, Gigi Sheremeta, all advocated a new stand-alone structure. "I think the seniors have done a lot for this town, so I think we deserve a

little something," Coulombe said, noting how neighboring towns also have stand-alone senior centers.

Sheremeta mentioned a shared space for the community and for seniors could get "complicated." Dawnorowitz agreed, saying there could be competition for space and seniors could miss out on programs.

Also, Coulombe noted, there would soon be an increase in the number of seniors who utilize the center when baby boomers come of age. White said Tuesday the center already has baby boomer users and said she suspects there will only be more to come as that demographic ages.

Coulombe also said it might be more difficult for a joint facility to receive grant money, as opposed to a stand-alone structure. But White was not so sure about that claim, saying the study group would look at all types of funding options from municipal, state and federal levels. She added, "different fund streams have different restrictions."

According to White, discussions regarding a new center have been ongoing since she began as director a year ago. She said a former study group called Friends of the Senior Center also recommended the town construct a stand-alone structure. First Selectman Gregg Schuster said the group "certainly had a valid opinion, but it's not the only one," and noted the group was not put in place by the BOS.

Unlike the friends group, this study committee was arranged by the BOS, and Schuster said he is confident in its upcoming recommendation.

The 10-member group, which will report to the Commission on Aging, includes members



**The Board of Selectmen has formed a 10-person study group to consider options for the Colchester Senior Center.**

from the Parks and Recreation Department, the Colchester Business Association, AARP and Youth Services, White said. The 10 are: Michele Komoroski, Norman Dupuis, Theresa Hendrickson, Pam Scheibelein, Jody Barr, Jack Faski, Winifred Standish, Patricia Nardella and Goldie Liverant, with Donna Skawinski serving as an alternate.

"The committee was designed to include

representatives from all over the community," White said.

After the group makes its recommendation to the BOS, Schuster said any possible construction depends on two factors: the recommendation and available resources. Schuster said actually breaking ground for a new facility would not occur for a few years.

# East Hampton Mother Dies in Head-on Crash

by Michael McCoy

An East Hampton woman was killed last weekend in a car crash in Portland, leaving behind a young child and a devastated family.

Cara Culbert, 27, died on the afternoon of Saturday, Nov. 28, after a head-on collision with a Hebron resident. The accident came just hours after Culbert had been arrested on DUI charges following another crash in East Hampton.

East Hampton Police Chief Matthew Reimondo said police received a report at around 1 p.m. Saturday that Culbert, who was driving a Chevrolet Monte Carlo, had rear-ended East Hampton resident Paul Annis' Volkswagen at the intersection of Route 66 and Old Middletown Road. Both vehicles were damaged somewhat, Reimondo said, but neither driver was injured. However, he said Culbert failed a field sobriety test administered by Officer Mark Pekar, and her car was towed.

Culbert was charged with DUI, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Reimondo said police also found a syringe in the car, calling it "indicative" of heroin, but made clear that police could not discern the source of intoxication until toxicology reports came back. Reimondo said this typically takes three to six weeks.

At around 3 p.m., Reimondo said, Culbert was released. Reimondo said protocol dictates that in such situations the charged person is

released only to a family member of "responsible adult." Reimondo said, in this case, that was a friend who he called "of sound mind and body."

But Culbert's mother, Christine Culbert, said, "The East Hampton police were very wrong in letting her go," and figured she wasn't fit to go home.

Christine Culbert said she last saw her daughter just before the arrest. She said Culbert was clearly tired, as well as sick with the flu. She said her husband Clifton, Culbert's father, advised her to stay home and get more rest.

According to Christine Culbert, no one was home when her daughter returned to the house and left in her Chevrolet Cavalier (the Monte Carlo she had been driving belonged to her father). She said Clifton Culbert told his daughter not to drive the vehicle, as it was not running correctly.

Just 20 minutes after Culbert was released by East Hampton Police, Portland Police responded to a report of a head-on collision on Route 66. Culbert was pronounced dead at the scene, Portland Police Sgt. Scott Cunningham said, as a result of "multiple blunt trauma injuries."

According to Portland Police Lt. Ron Milardo, Culbert, while driving westbound on Route 66, crossed into the eastbound lane and

struck the Mercury Mariner of Kevin McKenna, 55, of Hebron. McKenna sustained injuries including a broken leg, wrist, and kneecap, police said. As of Wednesday, he was in stable condition at Hartford Hospital, where he was taken immediately from the accident.

Milardo said both vehicles sustained "heavy damage" and were towed. Milardo said Officer Dave Bond is still reconstructing the scene. He only added that Bond found no skidmarks from Culbert's vehicle, while McKenna did brake. But Milardo would not speculate as to why Culbert had crossed the center line, saying that in addition to drugs or alcohol, she could have been using a cell phone, adjusting the radio or have fallen asleep.

The scene commanded 45 emergency personnel, Milardo said.

Christine Culbert said his daughter "was a very loving, giving person." Culbert spent a lot of time helping elderly people, her mother said, both professionally and in her free time.

"She loved life," Christine Culbert said, adding that Cara's 11-year-old son, Shane, was the most important thing in her life.

As a result of being quite young when becoming a mother, Culbert got her GED in 2000, in lieu of her high school diploma. She then went on to earn degrees as a medical assistant and teacher's aid from the Stratford Institute,

Christine Culbert said.

Christine Culbert said her daughter was big on flowers, as well as arts and crafts, especially with Shane and his friends. They also spent a lot of time riding bikes. Shane, who attends East Hampton Middle School, will remain at his home, under the care of his grandparents, Christine Culbert said.

"She made [Shane] a high honor student," Christine Culbert said, explaining that her daughter diligently focused on Shane's excellence in his studies.

Culbert was apparently quite attached to her father as well. When she was a little girl, "he'd scoop her up in her arms everyday" when he came home from work, Christine Culbert said. Later on, she'd help her dad out with his construction/excavation business. During off-hours, the two could be found together working on cars or the home. Christine Culbert said her daughter was in the process of painting their home at the time of the accident.

Culbert was a lifelong East Hampton resident, as were her parents. In addition to her son and parents, she is survived by her sister, Diane Krajewski, two nieces, and her grandfather, Frank Squier.

Culbert's wake and funeral were held Thursday morning. Her full obituary appears in Section II, Page 1.

# New Development Approved for Lebanon Avenue in Colchester

by Katy Nally

Lebanon Avenue might soon resemble a quaint New England village – that is, once Settlers Greene LLC is developed.

But the project, which was approved Wednesday, Nov. 18, is anything but old-fashioned. The plans call for 20 "live/work" units, six commercial buildings and 43 townhouses. The project manager, John Matheson, said he hopes to break ground for the \$20 million development next spring.

Matheson said the streetscape will be transformed to emulate colonial Connecticut when the structures are put in. "We took a lot of time to make sure the design matched the rest of Colchester," he said.

The live/work units however, will not be a throw back to old New England; in fact, they are the first of their kind in the state. Matheson said Colchester zoning regulations were changed in 2007 to allow one building to be used both commercially and residentially. He said the new regulations were "an opportunity to be pioneering...and put forth a mixed-use project."

The 20 units will have offices on the first floor and residences above them. Only those who use the work space are allowed to occupy the upstairs living areas.

Matheson said already he has some interested customers. He mentioned one person who needs an office for selling things on the auction website eBay, a retired school teacher who wants to teach handicapped students and a lawyer who needs office space. Matheson said the work space is for small businesses of four employees or less.

"The live/work unit is on the cutting edge for today's small business or home business owner," Matheson said.

Also included in the plans are the 43 townhouses, which will be open to anyone, and the six commercial units. Matheson said people who reside in the townhouses and the live/work units would likely be patrons of the surrounding retail buildings.

"You'll have a nice little community of like-minded people," he said.

Public hearings on the plans opened on Oct.

7 and closed two weeks later on Oct. 21. For the entire duration, no one spoke in opposition of Settlers Greene and many endorsed the project, according to meeting minutes.

According to minutes of the Oct. 6 Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) meeting, Mark Paradise, a Colchester business owner, called the proposal one of the most exciting he had seen in years. At the Oct. 21 meeting, Don Hurburt said the project would be a commercial asset for the town and Amelia Vespa said the project would create jobs for Colchester and add to its tax base, the minutes said.

"It's definitely an interesting proposal and we're excited to see how it develops," Town Planner Adam Turner said this week. According to Turner, 20 percent of the units will qualify as affordable housing under Connecticut guidelines.

Residents are eligible for affordable housing if a family's income is less than or equal to the town's median income, according to state statutes. If the family qualifies, they pay 30

percent or less of their annual income on housing.

Turner said developers presented their plans in July and the town spent about seven weeks discussing design elements with contractors, J. Healy Builders LLC, which also built Chestnut Hollow in 2007.

He said about half the application is focused on design because mixed-use is such a new concept.

Turner and Matheson both reviewed similar live/work buildings in Raleigh, NC, and drew inspiration from those structures.

"It's been a collective effort with the town planning department to make this project a reality," Matheson said.

Although Colchester is smaller than Raleigh, Matheson said he decided to introduce the innovative buildings to Connecticut because "Colchester is a growing town and it's a good place for growing businesses." He was confident the mixed-use would be well received with in the small-town community.

# RHAM Residents Approve Plan for Floor Money

by Sarah McCoy

It took just 15 minutes for residents from Hebron, Andover and Marlborough to affirm a spending plan for the money remaining from RHAM's flooring settlement.

At a special meeting Monday, Nov. 30, voters from the three towns unanimously supported using the bulk (\$190,000) of the \$218,000 leftover settlement money to pay down the debt associated with the construction of the administrative offices at the regional high school. The remainder of the money will be used to repair half of the practice football field along Wall Street in Hebron.

This decision comes three years after the school district received a \$1.1 million settlement with the parties responsible for improperly installing the flooring tiles at the high school. After paying legal fees and fixing the damaged floors, \$218,000 remained in the account.

At its meeting on Nov. 16 the RHAM Board of Education (BOE) voted in support of the aforementioned spending plan but the matter needed to be brought to a district meeting to make it official.

The meeting was held Monday. Seventeen residents voted in favor of the motion, and nobody voted against it.

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said on Tuesday that school officials will begin to plan for the field repairs to ensure

that RHAM's field is ready to go when the growing season begins in March. Earlier this fall, the BOE voted to fund the repairs on the other half of the field through a savings realized in magnet school tuition payments.

If all goes according to plan, Siminski said, the work will be completed in the spring and ready for use in the fall of 2011.

The \$190,000 allocation to the administrative building space will cut, by more than half, the amount owed for the project. The BOE approved \$300,000 for the project in 2008 with the intention of paying it back over the course of the next five years at a rate (\$70,000) equal to the amount spent in rent and utilities for the previous office location on Liberty Dr.

If the BOE holds to this plan the repayment could be complete by the 2011-12 fiscal year.

BOE Chair Sue Griffiths said she was "pleased" with Monday's decision. "There was a lot of agreement amongst the people who had come out to speak at various points of our discussion," she said on Tuesday.

Monday was also the last day in office for Griffiths and fellow board members Dieter Zimmer and T.J. Morelli-Wolfe. The first meeting for the new-look board, with recently-elected members Brenda Casoni, Laura Steiner and Sandy Sudduth, will be Monday, Dec. 14, at 6:30 p.m. in choral room at the high school.

# Residents OK Money for Village Green in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron voters last week unanimously approved an agreement that calls for the town to front money to begin improvements to the Village Green District.

Nearly 50 residents filed into Douglas Library last Monday, Nov. 23, all in support of a \$282,000 supplemental appropriation to jump start work on what has been described as Hebron's best opportunity for economic growth.

The measure calls for the town to provide the money to improve the property's infrastructure. This includes carrying utility lines into the parcel and installing a traffic light at the intersection of Route 66 and John E. Horton Blvd.

The two owners of the property in question – Horton Brothers LLC and the Tarca family – would then be responsible for repaying the money spent through a five-year special tax.

According to initial estimates, the tax would be around \$2,061 per acre over the course of five years – or \$412 per year – in addition to the property taxes the property owners would still be responsible for. The Horton Brothers LLC owns all but 6.17 acres of the 140-acre plot with the Tarcas owning the balance.

A Hebron Village Green District will now be formed of two representatives of the property owners and three representatives from the town to set the levy repayment schedule. Planning and Zoning member Lew Hinman, Economic Development Commission member Vicki Avelis and former Board of Finance Chair Brendan Shea will represent the town.

The idea was first proposed to the Board of

Selectmen (BOS) in early October. With unanimous support from the town's top board, it was brought to town meeting last week for voter approval.

"It's a nice first step," BOS Chair Jeff Watt said earlier this week. "There's obviously a lot that needs to get done but it's nice to see the town support economic growth in Hebron."

The town has been eyeing the parcel of land across from Ted's Supermarket for economic growth for over a decade. A master plan was approved in 2004 that called for a mix of both residential and commercial uses.

In 2007 the town received a Small Towns Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant to cover the majority of the costs associated with installing a roadway to the property. Since that time, the property has sat dormant leading to the road being dubbed the "Road to Nowhere" by some in the community.

Before the Town Meeting on Monday the Horton Brothers LLC and the Tarca family both approved the agreement, via a special ballot.

Sara Tarca has long-stated plans to open an aquatic center and health club on her property. Horton Brothers LLC hasn't stated what type of development it has in mind.

Watt said earlier this week that the Village Green District will meet in the near future to finalize plans going forth. He said he envisions bids to go out within the month for various aspects of the project, with work to tentatively start in March.

Once that work is complete, it's just a matter of time before the Road to Nowhere goes somewhere.

# Oakwood Soccer Kicks off in Portland

by Michael McCoy

After years of going unused, the 24.5-acre parcel behind the town garage is now a state-of-the-art outdoor soccer complex.

This complex, which is now two fields but will someday be four, is the fruit of Rick Derella's and Dave Farrell's labor. The duo has run Oakwood Sports Center, an indoor Glastonbury facility, since 2000. For 10 years, they'd been hoping to add an outdoor component, and in early 2007 were told about the property at 521 Glastonbury Tpke. in Portland. They purchased it that August, and plans to convert the land into a soccer complex were approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in November 2008.

The swift construction process began this past July and finished up in early September. By Sept. 12, the fields were in use. The fields measure 111 yards long by 71 yards wide.

"This is the latest and the greatest," Derella, 53, said of the field. He specified that each blade of turf grass has a spine, unlike most turf. So, it has the resilience of real grass.

"We need to be able to translate the game between indoor and outdoor," said Farrell, 52. He explained that abroad, where soccer is the premier sport, most fields are outdoor. One such complex in Holland featured 23 fields, Farrell said, likening the layout to an industrial park. He also noted a soccer complex in Germany that featured an adjoining beer garden. "There's a huge social value," he said of soccer complexes in Europe. "It's like a soccer community."

The outdoor fields also enhance the "flow of the game" as Farrell put it, as opposed to the indoor fields, which Derella said are "faster and tighter."

Farrell figured the Portland fields would get used 11 months out of the year, but said that even on a nice January day, Oakwood staff might spontaneously relocate a practice from Glastonbury to Portland.

Furthermore, Derella said, "The ambience is very good," and called the spot "very secluded." The fields are bookended by the town garage on one side and a hill on the other.

For years, Oakwood has held summer camps at Wesleyan University in Middletown, but Farrell and Derella now hope to do so at the new Portland fields. Down the line, the two are exploring a possible clubhouse or restaurant on the property.

Farrell and Derella met in 1975 as students at Ulster County Community College. Derella then went to Cornell University, while Farrell

attended the University of Baltimore. But the two ended up at graduate school together at the University of Akron in Ohio. Farrell earned his master's degree in education, but Derella wound up leaving to work at Oakwood in 1980. Farrell came aboard the following year.

Oakwood was originally a private tennis club, but Derella said the facility was overbuilt, and too large to be sustained by the membership of a small tennis club. Over the course of the 1980s, the tennis component was transitioned to soccer. In 1990, Oakwood eliminated its last tennis court. Derella said "we're glad it was overbuilt," because the complex now has four fields of various dimensions, and all the room gets plenty of use.

Farrell and Derella bought Oakwood Sports Center in 2000. Despite running a full-time business, Farrell and Derella find time to be two of the 30 coaches in the nonprofit Oakwood Soccer Club, which operates out of the Glastonbury complex and now the outdoor fields in Portland. The club consists of 24 teams in four different leagues. The teams range in age from under 8 to under 20, for boys and girls. However, the sports center hosts recreational teams, programs and instruction for ages 3 to well into adulthood. Adult teams include men, women and co-ed. Farrell estimated that about 500 people play on the Oakwood today.

Farrell and Derella regularly travel the globe (including Argentina, Germany and Sweden) coaching the Oakwood teams. In fact, Farrell left this past Thursday for the four-day U.S. Developmental Academy Showcase tournament in Phoenix. In addition to playing teams from across the country, Derella's players will get to watch the national team face off against teams from Portugal, Holland, and Brazil. Derella estimated about 3,200 players being there.

Another difference in U.S. soccer is the school structure. In the states, only about 20 percent of players play in private leagues, while the rest play for a school system. In Europe, for example, there are no school teams. (This applies to all sports.) Farrell said the American model can pose a problem, giving the example that if a town is hot on baseball, they often simply won't have the field space for soccer. So, the soccer kids are out of luck. He figured private leagues solved that.

The new Portland complex is one of just two private outdoor fields in the area. But soccer has seen quite a surge in popularity. According to Derella, in 1980 Oakwood was one of about eight indoor facilities in the country. Today there



The new Oakwood Soccer Park in Portland, located just behind the town garage, sees action virtually seven days a week. The two fields are connected by a practice space in between. Two future fields will be built just to the south, on the other side of the far-pictured field.

is upwards of 500, with 10 in Connecticut alone.

As for the two future fields, Derella said he and Farrell are waiting for a possible grant from the U.S. Soccer Foundation. The money would come from the \$40 million proceeds raised when the U.S. hosted the World Cup in 1994. Derella expected the decision in February.

Farrell said that Oakwood is not just about soccer, but also community, camaraderie, handling adversity and humility in victory. He said the players "feel like they're part of something bigger." He added that when parents become empty nesters, they often lament, "We miss the Oakwood years."

But that's not to say they don't love the sport itself. "Soccer is a unique game," Derella said. Because of the dearth of stoppages and timeouts he said that practically speaking, "the coaches are the players on the field."

Farrell said the game allows everyone to shine. "Every player on the soccer field is either the quarterback or the point guard."

But if they wanted to, the duo has ample reason to brag. Oakwood draws players from all over the state and further: Cheshire, Glastonbury, Farmington, Danbury, Colchester, and even Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Their teams have won 72 state champion-

ships and four national championships. They've produced 25 All-Americans, 18 National Team members, and 28 professionals. Six of their former players currently play Major League Soccer.

Back in their community college days, Derella and Farrell would hitchhike from New York to Chicago. There they catch a train to Minnesota, just to coach for \$50 a week. Now soccer enthusiasts travel from all over the world to come to them.

The Portland complex will only enhance this. "The possibilities are kind of unlimited," said Derella.

"People are googling Portland because of this field," he added.

Oakwood Soccer Park is located at 521 Glastonbury Tpke. in Portland. Oakwood Sports Center is at 40 Oakwood Dr. in Glastonbury. More information is available at [www.oakwoodsoccer.com](http://www.oakwoodsoccer.com). Oakwood can be contacted by e-mail at [rick@oakwoodsoccer.com](mailto:rick@oakwoodsoccer.com) or by phone at 860-633-3689.

Oakwood's next game is against the Boston Bolts. The Northeast Pre-Academy 15 League Game starts at 2 p.m. this Saturday, Dec. 5, at the Oakwood Soccer Park in Portland.

# Man Perishes in House Fire in Colchester

by Katy Nally

Flimsy, yellow police tape encompassed an unassuming raised ranch with a charred face this week. On Monday, the house's owner, John Janiak, died after he was pulled from his burning one-story house.

Firefighters found the 66-year-old in the dining room of his home on 28 Park Rd., Walter Cox, chief of Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department, said. He was found in "extremely serious condition" and rescue personnel immediately performed CPR on him, according to a public safety press release and Cox.

He later died at the Marlborough Medical Center, Cox said.

Firefighters were dispatched at 5:04 p.m. Monday, Cox said, and were on the scene within six minutes. Cox said officers were notified the house was filled with smoke and carbon monoxide, but when they arrived it was declared a structure fire.

According to Cox, Captain George Papp initiated a second alarm assignment and firefighters from Hebron, Bozrah, Salem, Gardner Lake and Marlborough fire departments were called in.

Cox said the man's son had come to see his father Monday afternoon when he noticed smoke and contacted the authorities. Cox said the son told firefighters he thought his father was in the bedroom, but Janiak was not recov-

ered after that area searched. Cox said after 15 to 20 minutes of searching, Janiak was eventually found in the rear of the house in the dining room. The man's black lab named Sindel was also found dead on the floor of the bathroom.

Janiak was then taken by Colchester Ambulance, with Middlesex paramedics onboard, to the Marlborough Clinic, Cox said. According to autopsy reports from the State Medical Examiner, Janiak died from asphyxiation caused by high levels of carbon monoxide.

The case has since been turned over to the state fire marshal's office because there was a death involved. According to the state, the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Colchester fire officials said Wednesday the family would soon board up the house.

Janiak was a retired UPS dispatcher who worked in Hartford for 29 years. Before that he served as a Marine medic in the Vietnam War. He leaves behind his wife Diane and his three sons, Matthew, Dean and Mark.

His funeral will begin tomorrow, Saturday, Dec. 5, at 10 a.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, then move to the St. Andrew Church on 128 Norwich Ave. at 11 a.m. Friends can call the funeral home today, Friday, Dec. 4, from 4 to 7 p.m. to offer condolences.

The full obituary is listed this week in section II on page 1.



A Colchester resident died after a fire at his Park Road residence Monday afternoon.

# Portland Fair Association Looking for New Members

by Michael McCoy

A decade after they rose the Portland Agricultural Fair from the ashes, members of the Portland Fair Association (PFA) are desperately seeking some new blood.

The PFA discussed this during its annual potluck meeting at the Grange Hall Wednesday night. Don Bascom, the association's president, opened the meeting by explaining that his father helped but the fair together as part of the Lions Club, which ran the fair before the PFA (and the Exchange Club ran it before the Lions). Bascom and PFA Vice President John Dillon resurrected the fair after a decade's dormancy because of the fond memories they had as children attending the fair. Other founding members still active today include Mike Lastrina, Cliff and Eleanor Robinson and Harriet, Bill, and Maureen Sanborn.

The PFA was started with seven or eight members. Bascom said his vision was for various town clubs and organizations to commit themselves to the fair. "When an individual club puts it on, they burn themselves out after while," said Bascom, who has seen it happen more than once.

However, 10 years later, the PFA is still mounting the fair, and the 20 active members of the association are largely getting older. In other instances, Bascom said, "Many of the people are getting tired; I know I am."

Though the PFA welcomes the involvement of help in all areas, there are a few spots that need special attention. This includes the slot of advertising manager, responsible for courting advertisers, organizing the ads and seeing them through to publication in the fair book.

The association also needs people for the Bread and Pastry, Needlework, Canned Goods and Youth departments. The latter department handles all the competitive submissions from kids. In all these jobs, the leader must handle the registration forms, and manage the necessary display space. They must also find their

own judges, place the award ribbons, and distribute prize money.

Bill Sanborn, who has lived in Portland all of his 78 years, has coordinated the Plant Science and Personal Skills tent for years. Though he plans to stay involved with the fair, he said, "I'm getting too old to handle that big tent."

The new coordinator will have to set up 46 tables in the huge tent, put fencing around the tables, and appoint superintendents for the various subcategories. They will also close down the tent each night, and oversee the cleanup Sunday night.

The PFA needs to fill another key role: treasurer. The current treasurer, Bill Thompson, has become limited by work travel. Bascom said of his replacement, "I want experience," specifically a professional, who also has computer savvy. The treasurer must handle an approximately \$129,000 budget.

Bascom also said he'd like someone to oversee insurance, a job he currently tackles himself. But, he admitted he hasn't had time "to see if there's a better price."

"It's gotten to the point [where] it's a business now," said Bascom. "If we don't run it like a business, it's gonna fail."

In addition to clubs as a whole buying into the fair, Bascom said the PFA welcomes not only Portland residents getting involved, but residents from all over. He also embraced the idea of high school students pitching in, which earns them community service hours required for graduation.

Current department leaders include Mike Colla with the truck (and other) pulls, secretary Joyce Murphy who runs the vendors and concessions and Candi Meadors who coordinates the nonprofit displays as provides food for the volunteers.

Harriet Sanborn leads the crafts and collections competition, while her daughter, Maureen, does the same for photography. Finally, Mike

Lastrina oversees grounds, and Carol Gilbert is the PFA assistant, whose responsibilities include distributing the fair books.

The fair has thrived financially the past few years, though, thanks largely notoriously bad weather, this is a new trend. The PFA has just recently paid off loans to the Grange and Portland Historical Society, whom Bascom credited for getting the fair off the ground.

Though the PFA has grown somewhat in 10 years, so has the scale of the fair. In 1999, the fair drew about 8,000 people. This year, Bascom figured 18,000 showed up. He also said many figured the fair to be something of a flash in the pan 10 years ago, but it has now has to stand up to state scrutiny, thanks to its growing reputation.

Despite this, the gate price has only increased \$2 in the last 10 years. Bascom admitted it would need to be higher in 2010.

Bascom also said, "We'd like to change the date." He said the Portland Fair is typically the area's last of the season (it's held the second weekend in October). By that time, said member Frank Renner, "People are fared out."

To put it another way, Bascom said, "they've already spent their money." Bascom also said the late date attracts less vendors, since they are reluctant to risk wasted overstock.

But changing the date means competing with other established fairs. Bascom said, the PFA may explore the option of a tri-town fair with Cromwell and Middletown in the future, something he declined in 2003.

One bright spot is the new parking arrangement for the fair. For several years, fair parking was behind the town garage, but that option expired with the construction of Oakwood Soccer Park this summer. This year, fair attendees parked on Penfield Jarvis' property, located off of Route 66, just east of Route 17. This location is much farther from the fairgrounds than past parking, but Bascom said it worked beau-

tifully. Though he said he expected more parking complaints than ever before he said there was "not one." He figured that was because for the first time there was no bottleneck at the intersection of routes 17 and 17A.

"I don't know what we would have done without that lot," said Bascom of Jarvis' property. (PFA members has similar praise for fair contributions by Connecticut Light and Power, Nichols Bus and countless others.) He added, "The Jarvis family has been real supportive of the fair."

Other highlights from the 2009 fair include the inaugural road race and a truck pull that drew a record 93 trucks.

In addition to the stagnant membership numbers, past hardships have included flooding, power failures, and a standoff with the Department of Environmental Protection.

So, with, endless headaches, why even bother with the fair at all?

Bascom's answer: "It's the six or eight people who come to me every year and say, 'This fair is so great. Keep it small; keep it in town.'"

"They love it," he said.

He also recalled his own adolescence, saying, "It was like a rite of passage for going into high school." He also said it's for the kids. (Dillon and Bascom relaunched the fair largest because they didn't want their own children to miss out.) "Friday night is kids' night. It's always been kids' night."

Portland Fair, Bascom said, is "part of [the town's] history," he said.

The association meets year round at 7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. More information is available at [www.portlandfair.com](http://www.portlandfair.com). Bascom welcomed anyone interested to call any members whose phone numbers are listed on the website. There is a "contact info" page under the "about the fair tab."

## Hundreds Sign Hodge Petition in Marlborough, But it May be Invalidated

by Katy Nally

Three hundred seventeen residents signed a petition that asked for one local veteran and his wife to become property tax exempt. However, it might all be for naught, as some speculate the petitions will likely be invalidated.

The petition, which was delivered Thursday morning, was the result of a lawsuit involving the town and Willy Hodge, a disabled veteran. Hodge sued the town for allegedly violating the Town Charter after the Board of Selectmen (BOS) attempted to adopt a controversial ordinance.

According to Connecticut General Statutes, the "legislative body" of Marlborough can make Hodge and his spouse property tax exempt. However, the ordinance the BOS proposed at their Oct. 6 meeting included a "sunset clause" that put a two-year expiration date on the exemption, and his wife was excluded from the benefit in the event of Hodge's death.

Hodge sued the town, saying the "legislative body" was not the BOS, but residents who could put the tax exemption to a vote at a town meeting.

When the lawsuit went to court on Oct. 26, the judge, Hodge's attorney Pasquale Amodeo and the town attorney Jack Bradley agreed the BOS would not take any action on the ordinance until Dec. 1. Amodeo said the judge asked the two lawyers to work together on a solution.

Amodeo said he e-mailed Bradley a copy of the petition shortly after both sides had met with the judge. The petition asks for a town meeting to be held where residents could vote yes or no on the tax exemption. In accordance with the Town Charter, the petition had to receive 200 signatures from people who are eligible to vote in Marlborough.

Amodeo said he received a response from the town attorney about a week later saying the

petition should include a proposed ordinance and not a resolution. Bradley said Tuesday, "It has always been the position of the town to do this by ordinance," instead of by a resolution.

Amodeo said he went ahead with the petition, despite the town's position, because otherwise he would "waste time going back and forth with an ordinance." He replied to Bradley, mentioning an ordinance was not necessary because the city of Hartford approved the tax exemption through a resolution.

Bradley disagreed with Amodeo Tuesday, saying an ordinance is preferred because it is more concrete than a resolution "when it comes to giving out tax exemptions."

To this Amodeo said, "Well maybe [the town] should tell that to the city of Hartford, because they're a lot more sophisticated than our three-member board." He continued, "It's their opinion we have to do this with an ordinance and it's mine that we can do this with a resolution."

However, Bradley added, if a petition with an ordinance had circulated, and received enough signatures, "It would have been approved."

But, Amodeo was not as optimistic. He said he thought it was unlikely even a petition with an ordinance would have passed. "If I had drafted a two-page ordinance we would have argued for three weeks," and missed out on collecting signatures he said. The attorney emphasized the week-long delay Bradley had when responding to the first e-mail. Amodeo said if it took Bradley one week to review the petition, then "hammering out every semicolon in an ordinance" would not have given him enough time to collect 200 signatures.

In the end, neither attorney was confident the town would approve the petitions. Amodeo reasoned this petition would follow the path of

three others that were invalidated by the town this year.

In May, Amodeo organized his own petition that asked for paper ballots be the method for voting on the 2009-10 budget at a May meeting, rather than raising hands or saying 'yes' or 'no.' But the town said petitioning for issues related to the annual budget was violating the Town Charter.

Resident David Durel then organized two petitions pertaining to the sewer project, which was approved through a referendum in 2002. Durel's petitions called for a town meeting where residents would vote on changes made to the fees for the project. But both were declined in September. A town attorney, Joseph Fasi, said a vote at a town meeting could not reverse a referendum vote.

Amodeo went one step further and asked the town to provide a bill of lawyer fees spent in connection with the two sewer petitions. According to an invoice from Sept. 10, signed by First Selectman Bill Black 19 days later, the town paid the Murtha Cullina firm \$15,441 for services related to the sewer petitions.

Since then, Hodge's wife Robin has filed her own Freedom of Information request asking for an invoice of lawyer fees related to the veteran tax exemption. On Nov. 18, Robin Hodge asked the town for a copy of the bill and received a reply six days later on Nov. 23. Black's response was that the information would not be ready for 20 town business days because of the upcoming holidays and the budget process that is now underway.

Robin Hodge and Amodeo said they were annoyed with the first selectman's response. Amodeo rhetorically asked, "How long does it take to photocopy a few pages?" Amodeo, a Board of Finance alternate, estimated the legal

fees for October were upwards of \$12,000. "When everyone has a bigger tax bill they can thank Bill for funding his personal vendetta against Robin or Willy or whoever," he said.

Despite lawyer fess, Amodeo warned the matter could still wind up in front of a judge. When asked if he would take the town to court again over the ordinance, Amodeo replied, "What choice do I have?" He said he would continue to fight the town until the proposed ordinance reflects the wishes of the town, specifically what was expressed at the Oct. 27 public hearing.

According to Bradley, the BOS is set to discuss the proposed ordinance at their next board meeting on Dec. 8, though the agenda was not posted before press time. He did not say if the ordinance would include a sunset clause or spouse exclusion.

Reached earlier this week, Black said he would not comment on the issue because it is a legal matter.

Robin Hodge said she was unsure what would come of the petitions and the ordinance, but she did emphasize how so many neighbors and residents were supportive of her fight and offered to help out.

Robin Hodge said she collected 180 signatures on her own and 137 more with the help of others. She said neighbors and residents were so passionate about helping her husband she did not resort to going door-to-door to collect signatures and even received phone calls from people asking to sign. "Most of it was from word of mouth," she said.

Even a few strangers who had never met her husband and heard about her situation offered to help out and sign the petition, she said.

Now the 317 signatures are up for review by the town.

## Hebron Fire Chief Resigns, Criticizes Selectmen

by Sarah McCoy

Just two months after his reappointment, Fire Chief Paul Burton resigned last week – and took some parting shots at town officials.

Burton becomes the third department head to leave in 2009. Former town manager Jared Clark resigned in March, and Jim Day, the town's finance director, was fired in October.

Burton was initially appointed as fire chief in 2006. He was reappointed in September to another three-year term.

In his time leading the department Burton said he's aimed for a more "professional" approach. This includes developing job descriptions and qualifications for officers.

In recent months, Burton's relationship with town officials seems to have soured. In a resignation letter sent last week to Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney, Burton wrote, "Over the past three years, I have witnessed a change from the professional town manager form of government as provided in our Town Charter to a management in which the town manager(s) are ineffective decision makers and the Board of Selectmen has micro-managed and undermined the prescribed authority of the town manager and the Town department heads."

Reached by phone this week, Burton went on to criticize the selectmen for listening to and discussing concerns about the department with fire department members. "We are a para-military organization just as almost every fire department in the country is," he said. "But, instead of respecting the chain of command that exists our selectmen feel that polling and taking a few people's word without question is the best form of leadership."

Board of Selectmen (BOS) Chair Jeff Watt said that was "absolutely not the case" and said he directed fire department members to express their concerns to the leadership of the fire department, not town officials. "I conveyed to the members that I spoke with that they don't need to be afraid to speak up," Watt said earlier in the week.

Just before his reappointment, Burton met with the BOS. At that meeting, Watt said, the selectmen asked the fire chief to take a nurturing and coaching approach in dealing with the fire department volunteers. Watt said that, while he appreciated no one is ever going to make a group of 90 people happy, he wanted to see Burton lead the department towards progress in a kind manner.

Instead, Watt said, Burton sent out letters to all lieutenants and captains asking them to reapply for their positions to ensure they met the qualifications the role demanded.

"This was not the friendly approach I envisioned," Watt said. "And, there's nothing in our policy manual to support this kind of action."

Burton, on the other hand, said this is just another example of how the selectmen take one side of the story. "This was a process that the selectmen requested as a way of having more opportunities for individuals to apply for officer positions," Burton said this week.

Burton said the process wasn't a surprise to anyone in the department.

Burton reiterated this week that he's resigning not because of an individual incident but an overarching frustration with "poor leadership."

"If the selectmen want to get into a pissing war and go speak for speak, I'll relish the opportunity," he added. "I've given more to the department than any of the selectmen have in their limited time in office."

Watt said earlier this week the selectmen were likely to speak about the issue at their meeting on Thursday, Dec. 3. (The meeting occurred after press time.) He indicated that current Deputy Fire Chief Fred Speno "most likely" will be named acting interim fire chief.

The Fire Chief position in Hebron includes a \$13,000 stipend for service each year. Burton said, on average, he put in about 44 hours of service each week as chief.

## Police: Man Shot Wife in Portland with BB Gun

by Michael McCoy

A local man is behind bars after, Portland Police said, he buried a BB in his wife's hand.

According to police, Francis Johnson, 25, and his wife had an argument Nov. 18 that ended with him firing an air rifle BB gun at her from close range, after pumping it 10-15 times. Police said this took place at around 4:30 a.m. at their 204 Main St. Apt. 3 residence. Johnson was arrested Nov. 30 and charged with second-degree assault, unlawful discharging of a firearm, reckless endangerment and disorderly conduct, police said.

The incident was uncovered in a roundabout sort of way, according to police. Officer Dan Knapp said that Johnson's wife visited the police station on Nov. 19, also at 4:30 a.m., and told police she was leaving her husband. She explained that the visit was to ensure that no missing person case commenced should her husband contact police.

But when she returned that day, around 1 p.m., she told police she was leaving to escape her husband's "violent behavior," and

said Johnson allegedly "put a nightstick around her neck" and tried to choke her. Police also saw her wounded hand, which at that time still had the BB inside of it, according to Lt. Ron Milardo. The victim initially said the wound was self-inflicted, but later blamed it on her husband, Milardo said.

Milardo confirmed, "He does have anger problems," and said police have had to visit the residence before for domestic disputes, but "never to this extent."

"They are a strange couple," said Knapp. Milardo recalled instances in town of BB guns being "used inappropriately" but nothing like this. Officer James Capello and Sgt. James Kelly led the investigation.

According to Milardo, Officer Dave Bond arrested Johnson at the Middletown Probation Department, where he was being held for unrelated reasons, on Nov. 30. He was held at Hartford Correctional Center on \$10,000 bond and was scheduled to appear in court on Dec. 14, Milardo said.

## East Hampton Man Arrested in Attempted September Break-In

A third man has been arrested in connection with an attempted robbery of a Wilkes Road home in September, East Hampton Police said.

Marshall Allen, 21, of 30 Banner Rd., Moodus, was arrested Nov. 24, pursuant to a warrant, on charges of criminal attempted third-degree burglary, conspiracy to commit third-degree burglary, criminal attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny, interfering with an officer and disobeying signal of an officer, police said.

The charges are related to a Sept. 11 incident, in which, police said, residents of a Wilkes Road address arrived home to find three men on the property. The men – Allen, Clarence "Eric" Braun, 24, and Joshua Markham, 19, both of East Haddam – said

they were out of state and were looking for the CL&P building, police said. The residents directed them to the Connecticut Yankee building but, police said, upon talking the matter over after the three left, grew suspicious. The residents also found a window and garage door opened, and notified police.

Braun and Markham were arrested the day of the incident, each charged with criminal attempt to commit burglary, criminal attempt to commit larceny, conspiracy to commit burglary and resisting arrest, police said. Allen initially eluded officers, although he was located the next day, police said. Police applied for an arrest warrant, and served it last week.

Bond for Allen was set at \$75,000, police said, and he was due in court Nov. 24.

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## Local Man Hit by Car in Salem

by Katy Nally

On Sunday, Nov. 29, a pedestrian was struck by a car traveling on Route 85 in Salem, and was flown by Life Star to Hartford Hospital, State Police said.

The accident, reported at 8:24 p.m., involved Colchester resident Michael Ritchotte, 27, who was "walking in the roadway" on Route 85 near Woodland Drive when he was hit by a 1982 Ford RNS that was traveling southbound, State Police said. The driver, Louis Johnson, 54, of East Lyme, was not injured, according to police reports.

Ritchotte was admitted to Hartford Hospital in critical condition Sunday, but was listed as stable on Tuesday, hospital staff said.

Eugene Mairorano, fire chief of the Salem Volunteer Fire Company, said he believes Ritchotte was walking northbound when he was hit, though he did not know if he was alone or where he was headed. He said Ritchotte sustained internal head and chest injuries after the accident.

Mairorano said Route 85 was closed in the area of the accident for two and a half hours, but that traffic was not too bad because the accident occurred in the evening.

The fire chief said a car accident involving a pedestrian happened about a year ago in the same area of Route 85.

The case is being investigated by Troop K of Colchester.

## Colchester Police News

11/22: Shawn Bettencourt, 25, of 123 Boulevard Rd., North Windham, was charged with sixth-degree larceny and issuing a bad check, State Police said.

11/23: Katherine Morse, 55, of 35 Holmes Rd., East Lyme, was charged with DUI and following too close, State Police said.

11/23: Christopher Zotynia, 19, of 4 Boulder Rd., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

11/25: Robert Gilmore, 24, of 195 Woodchuck Hill Rd., Canterbury, turned himself in for violation of probation, State Police said.

11/25: Judith Chetelat, 66, of 28 Douglas Dr., Enfield, was charged with DUI and failure to signal, State Police said.

11/25: Daniel James Manglinkx, 20, 70 Maple Ave, Apt. 2, New London, was charged with conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny and third-degree larceny, State Police said.

11/26: Connor London, 18, of 85 Heatherwood Dr., was charged with possession of less

than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

11/27: Michael Brogan, 21, of 23 Dogwood Dr., East Hampton, was charged with three counts of violation of probation, State Police said.

11/27: Jesse Benware, 27, of 215 Old Hartford Rd., turned himself in for failing to appear in court, State Police said.

11/28: Heather Kinney, 45, of 124 Westerly Terr., was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

11/28: Danielle Tyler, 25, of 5 Barton Hill Rd., Apt. B, East Hampton, was charged with making an improper turn and DUI, State Police said.

11/30: Michael Fiondella, 28, of 24 Hammond Crt, was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

12/1: Eric Huntriz, 23, of 42 Bass Lake, Hebron, was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

## East Hampton Police News

11/15 — Patricia Snarski, 22, of 536 Main St., Middletown, was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and improper brake lights, East Hampton Police said.

11/17 — Stephen Banning, 54, of 54 Edgerton St., was issued a ticket for failure to drive right, police said.

11/17 — Eric Haury, 22, of 37 Terp Rd., was issued a ticket for speeding, police said.

11/19 — Dale Oc elik, 49, of 74 Colchester Ave., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for larceny, police said.

11/20 — Kelly Naughton, 24, of 3 Bishop Hill Rd., was issued a ticket for failure to wear a seat belt, police said.

11/20 — William Burns, 34, of 11 Gear St., Cromwell, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for failure to obey a traffic signal, failure to obey an officer's signal, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating under suspension, operating a motor vehicle without insurance, misuse of marker plates and interfering with a police officer, police said.

11/22 — David Zaler, 28, of 225 West High St., was arrested for operating without insurance and defective headlamp, police said.

11/24 — Vanessa Chapman, 25, of 193 Thayer Rd., Higganum, was issued a ticket for failure to wear a seat belt, police said.

## Marlborough Police News

11/25: A burglary on West Road was reported at 9:36 p.m. after an unknown suspect forcibly entered a residence, State Police said. When the homeowner returned home, he heard someone upstairs then saw the suspect flee through the front door. The house was searched and nothing appeared to be missing, according to police reports. The case remains under investigation, police said.

## Portland Police News

11/25 — Ramon Ibarando, 45, of 21 Commerce St., was charged with possession of narcotics, Portland Police said.

11/28 — Clarence Wright, 42, of 12-25 Meriline Ave., Waterbury, was charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

# Obituaries

## Hebron

### Harry E. Armstrong

Harry E. Armstrong, 71, of Amston, beloved husband of Estelle (Pac) Armstrong, went home to the peace of Heaven on Friday, Nov. 27, surrounded by his loving family at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Born April 14, 1938, in Norwich, he was the son of the late Floyd and Norma (Wilkinson) Armstrong.

He was a 1956 graduate of Norwich Tech and worked as an automobile mechanic at Card McDonald Motors and later for Pratt & Whitney as a senior methods engineer for 38 years until his retirement. On Jan. 21, 1961, he and Estelle were married at St. Paul Church in Glastonbury. Mr. Armstrong served proudly with the US Marine Corps Reserve during the Vietnam War. He was an active communicant of the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron for many years.

In addition to his loving wife of 48 years, he is survived by his son and three daughters, Thomas and wife, Carol of Haddam, Bonnie Champion and husband, Dave of Manakin Sabat, VA, Maureen Zaslowsky of West Hartford and Colleen Armstrong of Andover; four grandchildren, Dylan Armstrong, Caitlin and Matthew Crossland and Jaime Zaslowsky; six siblings, Raymond and wife, Caroline of Norwich, Norman of Naples, FL, Donna LaBranche of Groton, Patti Lavelle and husband, Joseph of Canterbury, Donald and wife, Cheryl of Lisbon and Linda Caisse and her husband, Charles of Lisbon; and numerous nieces, nephews and extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by a sister, Alice "Sue" Masse and her husband, John.

Friends called Tuesday, Dec. 1, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Wednesday, Dec. 2, directly at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., (Route 85), Hebron, with Fr. Michael S. Smith as Principal Celebrant. Committal with full military honors will follow in the Marlborough Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Church of the Holy Family Elevator Fund, 185 Church St., Hebron, CT 06248.

## Colchester

### Raymond A. Palmer Jr.

Raymond A. Palmer Jr., 62, of Colchester, died Nov. 24, at Yale New Haven Hospital. He succumbed to the injuries and resulting disability he acquired as a result of a car accident in November 2006.

He was born Aug. 21, 1947, in Pawtucket, RI, the only child of Raymond A. Palmer Sr.

and Elinor (Haworth) Palmer, both of whom predeceased him. He was married to Linda Larson Oct. 4, 1984, in Port Clyde, ME.

Besides his loving wife and companion of 35 years, he is survived by cousins Linnea Hallee, Caroline Wandle and Tani Tierney; in-laws Terry, Karen and Florence Larson and numerous close friends and associates, among them Tony Veloso and Mary Bartelt, Deb and Jim Russel, Linda and Pete Johnson, Gail Brownell and Jay Supnick, Pat Howland, Beth Munana, Lillian Morales, Fran Bowen and Sally Power.

He graduated from Classical High School in Providence, RI, and went on to earn a B.S. in mathematics at the University of Vermont and an M.A. in education from the University of Connecticut. He spent his entire professional career at the University of Connecticut where he began in residential life, then became associate director of career services and was the assistant dean and director of the MBA Placement Program in the School of Business at the time of the accident, which resulted in his retirement.

His primary concern was always for the students and he was known for his kind, patient manner with all who sought his guidance. His style was one of quiet reserve overlaid upon a bright intellect and a dry sense of humor. He was a member of numerous professional organizations, routinely presented at professional conferences and was widely published in his field. Other interests were model trains, UConn women's basketball, cats, reading and travel with a particular fondness for the Maine coast.

Arrangements are being made by Potter Funeral Home in Willimantic. There will be no visitation or services. There will be a celebration of his life at a later date. Donations may be made to the Salvation Army, 855 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT 06105; or Mansfield Animal Shelter, 230 Clover Mill Rd. Mansfield, CT 06268; or Earth Justice, 156 Williams St. suite 800, New York, NY 10038 or any charity of your choice.

For online memorial guestbook, visit [www.potterfuneralhome.com](http://www.potterfuneralhome.com).



## East Hampton

### Robert John Sypek

Robert John Sypek, 76, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Mary (Barone) Sypek, died Saturday, Nov. 28, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Dec. 7, 1932 in Hartford, he was the son of the late Joseph and Helen (Dombrowski) Sypek.

He proudly served his country in the U.S. Army as an MP during the Korean War. Robert retired from the Union Local 33, where he had been employed as a union insulator. He was a communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton, a life member of the East Hampton V.F.W., a life member of the Middletown Elks Club Lodge 771, a member of Union Local 33, a life member of the Polish Falcons of Middletown, a former member of the Gov. Horse Guard, and was very active in East Hampton Little League, Boy Scouts Troop 47, as well as volunteering with the American Red Cross and the D.A.V. as a driver.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his two sons and their wives Lance and Eileen Sypek of East Hampton, Alfio and Cheryl Sypek of East Hampton; five grandchildren Andrea, Scott, Kristofer, Kayla, and Alexis; and his great-grandson Tyler James.

The funeral procession will leave the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, Friday, Dec. 4, at 9:15 a.m., followed by the funeral liturgy at 10 a.m. in St. Patrick Church. Burial will follow in St. Patrick Cemetery. Friends called at the funeral home Thursday evening, Dec. 3.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton V.F.W. Post 5095, North Maple Street, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

## Portland

### Violet Pozzetti

Violet (Panelli) Pozzetti of Portland, wife of the late William Pozzetti, died Friday, Nov. 27. She was born in New York City, NY, on Nov. 24, 1928, the daughter of the late Giuseppe and Letizia (Carzino) Panelli.

She is survived by her son, Paul William Pozzetti and his wife, Debra, of Portland; her daughter, Lisa A. Burr and her husband, Stanley, of Higganum; and her son, Peter Pozzetti of Cupertino, CA; also, her beloved grandchildren, Jeffrey Burr and his wife, Carrye, of Higganum, Samantha Burr of Higganum, Patrick and Natalie Pozzetti of Portland, Anthony Pozzetti of Cupertino, CA; and a great-grandchild, Charlotte Burr of Higganum.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 11 a.m. at St. Mary's Church in Portland.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Middlesex Hospice Care Unit, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457 or Saint Mary's Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

There are no calling hours. Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home 231 Main St., Portland. For directions, or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit [www.portlandmemorialfh.net](http://www.portlandmemorialfh.net).

## Colchester

### John S. Janiak

John S. Janiak, 66, of Colchester, passed away unexpectedly Monday, Nov. 30, in a house fire along with his beloved dog, Sindel. Born April 25, 1943 in New Britain, he was a son of the late Stanley and Bertha Janiak.

Mr. Janiak worked as a dispatcher for UPS in Hartford for 29 years before his retirement. A proud Navy veteran, he served during the Vietnam War as a Marine medic. In his spare time, he was an extremely talented photographer and also enjoyed cooking, playing his guitar and collecting knives.

In addition to his wife, Diane (Medeska) Janiak, he is survived by three sons, Matthew and wife, Carina of Colchester, Dean and wife, Cory of Edgewater, MD and Mark Janiak of Colchester; three grandsons, Nicholas, Riley and Bradley; a brother, Stanley; a sister, Claudia; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends may call from 4-7 p.m. today, Friday, Dec. 4, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral will assemble starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, at the funeral home before the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at 11 a.m. at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Interment will follow in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the charity of one's choice.

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

## Colchester

### Hyman Feldman

Hyman Feldman, 88, of Pleasant Street, Colchester, died Sunday, Nov. 29, at Fairview Odd Fellows Home of Connecticut in Groton. He was born April 9, 1921, in Colchester.

He leaves his wife of 69 years, Beatrice (Scott) Feldman, and two children, Attorney Jeffrey Feldman and his wife Regina of New London, and Harriet Shedroff and her husband Herbert of West Hartford. He also leaves his grandchildren, Susan Wilkinson and her husband Tim of Middletown, and Melissa Kirsch of New York. He also leaves his great-granddaughter, Emma Wilkinson, as well as his brother-in-law, Attorney Melvin Scott and his wife Mary-Jane, and several nieces and nephews.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, Abraham Feldman, and a sister, Sarah Kaufman.

He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II, serving in France and Germany. After returning from service, he settled in Colchester, opening Feldman's Locker Plant in New London which was the first where freezer space could be rented by private individuals. He and his brother then went on to open four more grocery stores around Connecticut. He was also a partner in Ben and Leo's in Colchester, as well as the owner of the Country Diner in Colchester. He was a devoted and loving husband, a terrific father and a great businessman as well as an avid golfer.

The family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the nurses and staff of Fairview for the skill, generosity and kindness they demonstrated.

A graveside funeral will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 1, at Colchester Jewish Aid Cemetery, Colchester.

Arrangements entrusted to Weinstein Mortuary, Hartford. For further information, directions, or to sign the guestbook for Hyman, visit online at [www.weinsteinmortuary.com](http://www.weinsteinmortuary.com).

## Salem

### Clifford M. Lyons

Clifford M. Lyons, 70, of Salem, passed away peacefully Wednesday evening, Nov. 25, at his residence with his family by his side. Born April 27, 1939 in Westfield, MA, he was the son of the late Earl and Irene (Long) Lyons.

Cliff attended Granby Memorial School in Granby, and also attended the Hartford Trade School and San Bernardino Valley College. Cliff proudly served his country with the U.S. Air Force from 1956 until being honorably discharged in 1960. He had owned and operated Cliff's Chevron in Granby from 1962 until 1972. He then worked as a mechanic for Mitchell Pontiac in Simsbury, and later worked at Finast Supermarket in Windsor Locks.

He and his family moved to Salem in 1987 where he became a self-employed farmer and mechanic. He also worked at Capital Tractor in Greenwich, NY until 2004. Following his retirement, Cliff and his wife traveled 40,000 miles in four years to see the United States. Cliff loved hunting, fishing and NASCAR Racing. He was a member of the Salem Pistol and Archery Club.

Cliff is survived by his wife of 46 years, Rosalyn Soules Lyons, whom he married March 30, 1963; his children, James Lyons and his wife Kim of Easthampton, MA, Steven Lyons and his friend Shannon Stout of Salem and Edwin Lyons and his companion, Brandy Burch of Schuylerville.

He is also survived by his grandchildren, Spenser, Cora, Jonathan and GraceAnn; his mother-in-law, Grace Soules of Westfield, MA and his hunting buddies, Ron Gavitt, Hank Duncan and Stan Chrzanowski.

In addition to his parents, Cliff was also predeceased by a brother, Robert Lyons and his father-in-law, Raymond Soules.

Calling hours were held Sunday, Nov. 29, at the McClellan Funeral Home, 19 East Broadway, Salem. Funeral services and interment were held privately.

Memorial contributions in memory of Cliff may be made to the CR Wood Cancer Center, 102 Park St., Glens Falls, NY 12801.

Cliff's family gives special thanks to the staff and volunteers of the Washington County Hospice for the wonderful care given to Cliff and compassion to his family during this most difficult time.

For directions to the funeral home or to share a special memory of Cliff, visit [www.mcclellanangriepy.com](http://www.mcclellanangriepy.com).

## East Hampton

### Joan Ellen Van Ingen

Joan Ellen Van Ingen, 73, died Friday, Nov. 27, at Cobalt Lodge in Cobalt. She was born March 31, 1936, in Long Island, NY, and resided primarily in Portland, East Hampton and Cobalt, in the later years of her life. She was the daughter of Donald and Mildred Van Ingen.

She had a deceased brother, Steven.

Joan leaves behind a sister, Susan Kaufman; three children, Michael Fabian, Melissa Fabian, Adam Fabian; and a niece, Dawn Hawn.

She was dearly loved by her three children and will be missed. The Lord was gracious to Joan.

## East Hampton

### Cara Lynn Culbert

Cara Lynn Culbert, 28, of East Hampton, died Saturday, Nov. 28, in Portland as a result of a traffic accident. Born Oct. 24, 1981, in Middletown, she was the daughter of Clifton and Christine (Squier) Culbert of East Hampton. She was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and had attended East Hampton schools.

Besides her parents, she is survived by her beloved son, Shane Chester; her maternal grandfather, Frank Squier of East Hampton; her sister, Diane Krajewski of East Hampton, and two nieces, Alexis and Morgan.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Dec. 3, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial private at the convenience of the family. Friends called at the funeral home Thursday morning, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Shane Chester Education Fund, c/o Liberty Bank, East High Street, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

## East Hampton

### Victor James Vernik

Victor James Vernik, 48, formerly of East Hampton, died at HPH Hospice in Dade City, FL, on Nov. 27. He was the son of the late Zenon L. Vernik and loving mother, Julie D. Vernik of Zephyrhills, FL.

He was predeceased by his brother Steven Vernik of East Hampton.

He is survived by his wife, Marie, his brother Bruce Vernik of Zephyrhills, FL, his two children, Samantha and Jesse Vernik of Portland, and his granddaughter, Gianna Rose Vincelett.

Victor was most recently a resident of Zephyrhills, FL, but lived most of his life in Middletown and East Hampton.

Private funeral arrangements will be at the convenience of the family.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Vincent DePaul Place, P.O. Box 398, Middletown, CT 06457.

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Well, I hope you all had a happy Thanksgiving. (Yes, I know last week's issue came out the day after Thanksgiving, but it was actually published *before* the holiday; hence, the inclusion of my Thanksgiving experience in this week's issue.) Mine was very nice, and began, as it had the year before, with me checking out the Manchester Road Race.

Okay, so I mainly checked out the end of it. (I couldn't quite get myself up there for the start.) But I still had a grand time watching it.

My view of the Manchester Road Race has changed somewhat over the years. When I was little, my dad used to run in the road race every Thanksgiving. And every year I'd walk with my family up to see how he fared. It was sort of an annual tradition. Also, being young, I had a rather narrow view of the rest of the world, as you so often do when you're a little kid. I kind of assumed other towns had Thanksgiving Day events like the road race.

Over time, I guess you could say I sort of grew to take the Manchester Road Race for granted.

That has changed recently. I've come to really appreciate the road race for the very unique event that it is. People literally do come from all over – not just the state, not just the country, but the entire world – to run in the race.

And while many runners take it very seriously, there are also many that do not, that are braving the cold – actually, this year it was fairly warm – just to have a good time. They run, lightly jog, or even walk with friends and family. Several of them are dressed in fun costumes, ranging from superheroes to Dr. Seuss characters (I saw two people clad in sweaters that read “Thing 1” and “Thing 2”) to video game stars (while I didn't see them personally, I saw a photo later on of people dressed as Mario and Luigi from *Super Mario Bros.*) to even, well, Christmas presents.

The race is just a lot of fun. To see so many people out there, having a good time, you can't help but have a smile on your face. It's a great way to begin a great holiday.

\* \* \*

Speaking of holidays, I haven't done any of my Christmas shopping yet. None of it.

This is not a shock. I traditionally wait until the middle of December to really throw myself into it. I get a kind of strange enjoyment out of it. There's the hustle and the bustle and the crowded malls and all that, but I don't really mind it. Many people abhor it – and some do all of their Christmas shopping online as a result – but not me. It's like we're all united for a common interest, and I rather like it.

But, while I haven't gotten any shopping done yet, I have been listening to Christmas music (another aspect of the holiday season that many people detest; I've always gotten a kick out of the yuletide tunes). So far, I'm listening to it sporadically; just a couple of songs before I change the channel (Lite 100.5 FM has been broadcasting Christmas music non-stop since before Thanksgiving, so I know where to go if I need a quick Christmas fix). As it gets closer to Dec. 25, I'll probably be listening to the music more and more.

One of the nicer things about Christmas music on the radio is it represents the only time many artists, like Frank Sinatra or The Carpenters, get any widespread airplay anymore, outside of college stations anyway. (Hey, I played The Carpenters on *my* college radio show; it was my show, I could do what I wanted.) It's also the only time you can hear songs from the 1940s played with any kind of regularity. (For example, the Gene Autry version of “Here Comes Santa Claus” – if you haven't heard it yet, you will, soon – is from 1947. And “The Christmas Song” as song by Nat “King” Cole is actually a year older, bowing in 1946.)

Here are two pieces of Christmas music trivia, courtesy of the American Society of Composers, Publishers and Authors (ASCAP): The classic “White Christmas,” taken from the movie of the same name, has been recorded more than 500 times, in dozens of languages. Also, the song “Sleigh Ride” was originally written as an instrumental piece for a symphony orchestra, and in fact made its debut at a May (yes, May; not exactly sleigh-riding weather) 1948 concert by the Boston Pops. Lyrics were added a year later.

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See you next week.