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Mary Kate Cannon (left) of Marlborough and Olivia Stalega of Hebron travel around the state four times a week with their hockey team. The Northern Lights U8 team is the only girl's team in the state at that age level.

Pink Hockey Sticks & A Desire to Win

by Sarah McCoy

On the surface, the Northern Lights are like any other 8-year old hockey team.

They play to have fun, although they do have a fondness for winning. They play hard.

By the end of the game there is more ice on their socks and sweaters than on the rink itself.

But the Northern Lights is different from other teams—and it's not just their pink shoelaces and occasional pink hockey stick.

The team is all girls. In fact, the U8 hockey team is the only girl's team in the state at that age level.

Drawing girls from across the state, the Northern Lights plays over 20 games a year—and almost all of them are against boy's teams. Consider this a disadvantage? Think again. The girls are 15-6-3 with just a few weeks remaining in the season.

Two of the team members, Mary Kate Cannon and Olivia Stalega, reside in Marlborough and Hebron, respectively. Twice a week the girls, along with a dozen others, descend on Simsbury for practices and then return on the weekends for games.

The commitment is tough for these third graders who are just beginning to determine what their true interests are. But Mary Kate and Olivia wouldn't have it any other way.

They both play other sports in the off-season—for Mary Kate, it's softball and swimming, while Olivia plays soccer—but both call hockey their true passion. "It's faster and more exciting," says Olivia.

Olivia can remember the very instant she became enthralled with the sport of hockey. Four years ago, her father, John Stalega, was just finishing up his practice for the men's hockey league in Cromwell when hundreds of girls began to file into the arena with their hockey equipment. John stuck around to watch and eagerly returned home to tell his family what he had witnessed.

It was the annual Polar Bears Christmas Tournament. The Polar Bears is another girls hockey program based out of New Haven. Their teams begin at age 10.

"You could not have begun to imagine the talent these girls had," Stalega recalled. "I brought my girls back the following day and Olivia was hooked immediately." She was four years old.

Since then Olivia has played on the ECHO boys team out of Bolton and then this year as a member of the Northern Lights.

Mary Kate, too, began by playing on a boys team. But by mid-season she had enough of the boys' rambunctious energy

and antics. The next year Mary Kate abandoned hockey rather than play another year with boys.

She is back this year, thriving on the girls team.

As it turns out, their timing was perfect. Just as Olivia and Mary Kate began to show interest in hockey, The Northern Lights came along.

The Northern Lights is the brainchild of former West Point hockey player and current U8 coach Ken Dixon. As a hockey father, Dixon wanted his daughter to have the same hockey opportunities that his son had. With that in mind, he and his wife began the all-girls hockey program.

Though his daughter has now grown out of youth hockey, Dixon still coaches.

He has coached at virtually every level, but has found a perfect match with the younger generation. "This is the age where we can focus on developing skills," Dixon explained. "If they don't learn the right way to do things now, it becomes harder to break players of bad habits later."

As he speaks, Dixon's passion for the sport pours out. He talks about practices and how he is just as demanding on the girls as he was on the boys teams. He talks about what he expects from players and

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parents. And, he talks about the game itself. From skating to stick handling, Dixon lives and loves the game of hockey.

And with the league up and running, he can focus on it.

Having begun as an off-shoot of the Avon Youth Hockey league, the girl's division fell to second-best when it came to ice time and practices. Two years later the two parties split, officially creating the Northern Lights Girls Hockey program.

"We are getting to a place where girls hockey is no longer a rarity," he said. "We are working so that any girl who wants to play hockey can do so with other girls."

Having this opportunity kept Mary Kate involved in the sport and gives both girls an opportunity to thrive at the growing sport.

Unlike men's hockey, there is no checking in women's hockey. As a result, greater emphasis is placed on skills rather than intimidation.

Even so, Mary Kate doesn't mind throwing her weight around, even against the boys. "I guess that's how I got my nickname," she explained.

Each member of the U8 team goes exclusively by a nickname. For Mary Kate it's "Boom Boom."

"She'd skate through a wall if it was necessary," Dixon said of the pint-size center.

Olivia, on the other hand, is more concerned with speed. She excels with the puck

on her stick and is able to weave her way to open spots.

"She has flourished into a player I can count on," coach said. "There aren't many at this age, girls or boys, who can play defense as hard as she does and have the finesse to bring the puck back up ice."

In just a few short weeks the girls will lace up their skates for their final games of the season. The Northern Lights are one of eight teams that will be competing in the Connecticut Hockey Conference Tournament. They are the first girls U8 team to ever be a part of the tournament.

While this in itself is an accomplishment, it puts a target on their back, so to speak. "No boys team wants to lose to girls," Mary Kate's father, Rick, said.

Rick Cannon, who has played hockey all his life, has seen teams go to great lengths to try and beat the Northern Lights. Earlier this season, the Lights were tied with a boys team late in the third period. Instead of playing for the tie, the opposing coach pulled his goalie for an additional shooter. His plan backfired as the Lights went on to score two goals in the closing minutes of the game.

The girls take it in stride though. They have learned to ignore the occasional teasing. And lately they've been having the last laugh. Both Mary Kate and Olivia agree; nothing compares to beating the boys!

Colchester Divided Into Voting Districts

by **Jim Salemi**

If you're registered to vote in the town of Colchester, you will soon find a letter in your mailbox, informing you of some big changes in the way you vote from now on.

New voting districts will bring new polling places for some residents. The machines you vote with will also be new. Gone will be the old lever type booths, replaced by the new electronic machines.

The Board of Selectmen recently approved a measure that would divide the town into voting districts to better accommodate the growing number of registered voters in town.

The state had been urging the town clerk and registrar of voters offices to redistrict Colchester for a number of years, but expense compelled the town to put it off until now.

Now the redistricting comes with a bonus: the two offices were able to take advantage of an offer by the state to provide, through a grant, the electronic machines for the town's new districts.

The Board of Selectmen approved the recommended districting by the office of the registrar of voters at its last meeting on Feb. 15.

"It's been something we've been trying to do, but couldn't afford it," Colchester Town Clerk Nancy Bray said.

According to the recommendation submitted to the selectmen by town registrars Dorothy Mrowka and Betty Wagner, the town would be divided into three districts. The registrars told the selectmen that the districting is still a work-in-progress but they did their best to divide the town up demographically.

District 1 would consist of the areas of the town borough, New London Road, McDonald Road, Old Hartford Road and their side streets. Town hall is the proposed polling place for this district.

District 2 would be the greater Westchester area, including Middletown Road (Route 16) and the side-roads. The polling place proposed for that district will likely be Westchester firehouse.

District 3 includes Norwich Avenue, Elm Street, Lebanon Avenue, Windham Avenue and their side roads. Bacon Academy would be the tentative polling place.

Bray said her office and the registrar's office decided to move now to divide the town into districts because the state will provide the voting machines to the town through a federal grant.

Further incentive was provided by a number of voters also complained that the wait to vote during the Presidential election last November was too long.

Bray said the state does not like more than 4,000 voters per any one polling place, because of the inconvenience of the long wait.

Help with the new machines will also pay off in a big way. "We now have 11 of the lever machines that we need to replace," said Bray. "If the town had to pay for it, we're looking at \$2,500 to \$3,000 per machine. It's expensive. Plus there is the cost of poll workers."

As a result, the delay in forming districts was a benefit. If Colchester had been divided up into districts previously, the town would be responsible for buying the expensive voting machines to spread out among the polling places.

Nor would there be any choice in the matter. The state has banned the mechanical lever machines for state and federal elections recently, mandating that towns use the electronic ones. The state is allowing towns to use the lever machines for local referenda such as budgets.

While the electronic machines have been criticized for their lack of accuracy and vulnerability to tampering, Bray said the machines passed the town clerk's test in a handful of towns selected to give the machines a trial-run.

"All of [the town clerks] supported them, they said they were great. Montville, for example was very supportive of the machines, they liked them," she said of the response of four town clerks who belong to the New London County Town Clerks Association. Four of the 25 towns the NLCA represents were selected to try the machines.

Bray said the machines the state will use are the kind that read a slip of paper after the voter colors in "bubbles" next to the name of the candidate of their choice. She said the bubble-card machines leave a paper trail, and if there are any mistakes on the card inserted by the voter, the machine will reject the card.

Hebron Finance Board Appointment Prompts Walk-Out

by **Sarah McCoy**

As budget season kicks off, the Hebron Board of Selectmen (BOS) filled the remaining Board of Finance (BOF) position last week amidst controversy.

Discussions ended with the appointment of unaffiliated candidate Donna Ferree, which prompted two Hebron selectmen to walk out in protest.

Republicans Victoria Avelis and David Schoolcraft packed up and left after the BOS appointed Ferree to the BOF over Republican-nominated candidate Clara O'Brien.

Ferree, an unaffiliated voter, garnered Democratic Town Committee support and was approved by the three BOS Democrats, Karen Strid, Mark Stuart and William Cox. O'Brien's bid had previously fallen short with only Avelis and Schoolcraft voting in the affirmative.

Avelis said afterwards that she felt the appointment process was "a farce," claiming the decision was pre-determined and O'Brien never stood a chance.

"Clara [O'Brien] called each of the Democratic selectmen multiple times and still they neglected to return her call," Avelis said. "I have never seen anything like this during my time on the board. It is a pitifully disguised attempt to swing the balance of the Board of Finance."

The vacancy on the BOF was created

when Republican Matt Daly moved to Glastonbury earlier this month. At that time, four Republicans and two Democrats sat on the BOF. Now there are three, two, and one unaffiliated.

Last Thursday seven individuals came to speak on behalf of O'Brien, all of them urging the BOS to keep the position a Republican spot. "Voters elected a Republican in 2003 and they will have a chance to speak again later this year," Republican Town Committee Chairman Scot Kauffman said.

There is a tradition on the BOS to fill a vacancy with the same party that created the spot as long as there is a qualified candidate willing to serve. On Thursday the BOS spent as much time debating whether or not this school of thought was something the board still subscribed to as they did interviewing the candidates.

Strid contended that when the BOS was in the process of developing its guidelines, the board agreed that qualifications came before parties.

Schoolcraft and Avelis disagreed. They both support the idea to replace an R with an R or a D with a D in hopes of avoiding the typical political bickering. "This board has always tried to rise above politics by appointing a member of the same party whenever possible," Schoolcraft said.

Stuart argued that this mindset "disenfranchises the large majority of unaffiliated voters."

"Please don't tell me what you are doing isn't political," Schoolcraft shot back. "You saw an opportunity to replace a Republican board member and you took that opportunity."

The one thing all the selectmen agreed upon was that both candidates were qualified for the position.

O'Brien has served the town for the past ten years on the WPCA. She was also elected to the Board of Assessment Appeals in 2003, where she continues to serve.

A mom of triplets and a manager of a multi-million dollar budget at work, O'Brien stood confident of her abilities to balance finances and priorities.

Ferree, too, has a long list of credentials. Up until a year and a half ago she worked for the Town of Hebron in the Finance Department. In total she has over 30 years of experience in municipal finance. Currently Ferree is employed by the Town of Coventry as an accountant.

The vote for her appointment passed 3-2, prompting Avelis and Schoolcraft to head for the door.

"I had had enough," Avelis said afterwards.

"There was not a single item on the agenda where my voice would have been considered. There was no reason to stay."

Board of Selectmen Chairman Karen Strid criticized the two Republicans for their actions. "I have sat as a minority on boards in the past, and I have never gotten up just because I didn't get the answer I wanted," she said.

In defending his vote, Selectman Mark Stuart expressed the need for someone who could step right in without the benefit of a learning curve. "We have a unique opportunity in Donna," he said Thursday night. "We have someone who has previous knowledge of how our town works and its budget."

Ferree said afterwards that her priority will be to balance the wants of the various departments with the tax burden it places on residents. "The issues regarding budgets don't tend to change," she said. "It's about finding a happy medium that everyone can live with."

Both Ferree and O'Brien have expressed interest in seeking a full term on the Board of Finance this November.

In the meantime, Avelis said she expects two things: "A lot of 3-3 votes on the Board of Finance and an openly divided Board of Selectmen."

Marlborough Sewers: Where & How Much?

by Sarah McCoy

Sewers. Where will they be and how much will it cost?

Those are the two questions the Marlborough Water Pollution Control Authority attempted to answer last Thursday at the public hearing for the town's sewer system.

Town Planning and Land Use Director Peter Hughes answered the questions of the over 100 residents in attendance.

At this point, the design for the project is "99.9% complete," according to Hughes, and the town is beginning to go out to bid with the project. In approximately two and a half months, the bids will be awarded with construction to follow immediately—quite possibly in June or July of this year, Hughes estimates.

Construction is anticipated to last 12-15 months.

The areas that are included in the first phase of the sewer construction include the center of town, School Drive, and areas both to the east and southwest of Lake Terramuggus. A forced main will be laid along North Main Street up to the intersection of Pettengill Road and along Route 66 to East Hampton.

All of Marlborough will pump to the pump station located next to the Marlborough Barn. From there the sewage will flow to a pump station in East Hampton located in front of Loco Perro restaurant.

In total, phase one will encompass 270 EDUs, or "Equivalent Dwelling Units." This is a mix of town buildings, residential homes, and commercial businesses.

The net cost for each EDU will be around \$11,546 to be paid over 20 years, approximately \$1,194 a year. A typical house is one EDU while the Elmer Thienes- Mary Hall Elementary School, for example, is between

20 and 22 EDUs.

Hughes warned residents that this number is not set in stone. The town will be unable to set a final cost until it receives word on funding from the state Clean Water Fund and obtains actual bids for the construction job.

Maps were distributed to meeting attendees Thursday night, color-coding the planned sewer district. Blue line indicated areas that would be included in phase one and red areas are ones that the town hopes to get to in later phases.

If bids come in lower than anticipated or if the town is able to save during construction, the WPCA will look to extend the sewer district this time around.

If the town is able to extend into any of the red district it would increase the number of EDUs in town, resulting in a lower cost for each unit. "Unfortunately," Hughes said, "we won't know [if this is a possibility] until we get there."

The total cost for construction and purchase of the materials per EDU comes to roughly \$18,889. That number does not represent the 30% town contribution and approximately 20% Clean Water Fund grant funding. Factoring in those two figures, the net total is \$11,546.

First Selectman Bill Black said the increase in home-value that sewers would bring is "about 10%, but to someone who has had a septic fail, it is worth much more."

The Town of Marlborough will be responsible for the excavation, installation of the lines and grinder pumps, and any necessary electrical upgrades. The WPCA will maintain ownership of the pumps until the 20-year lease is complete.

On Thursday many residents expressed

concern over the construction process. Hughes assured them the town would return the landscape to its original state after construction. He estimated it would take a day to install a grinder pump at each home and another for the clean-up crew to restore the lawn.

Recently every home in the proposed sewer district should have received a map of their lot with the location for the planned pump on their property. To aid in construction, Hughes implored each household to mark up the map with any changes or mistakes and mail it back to Town Hall.

In order to complete construction, the town is requiring a 10-foot easement on either side of the sewer line. If residents do not grant this easement, they will not be included in the construction.

"The WPCA is not forcing anyone to hook-up [to the sewers]," Hughes explained. "But, if you opt not to hook-up now and your septic fails, the Chatham Health District will."

At that point the resident would be responsible for the entire construction and materials cost, which is currently just under \$19,000.

Regardless of when residents join the sewer district, when they do, each homeowner will be responsible for the filling or crushing of the septic tank and cost for the hook-ups from the house to the grinder pump. Hughes estimated this to be between \$2,000 and \$2,500. This cost will depend on the location of the pump relative to the house.

The goal, Hughes said, is to locate the grinder pump as close as possible to the existing septic tank. But the pump must be at least 75-feet from the well. In order to find the best possible location, residents are asked

to write their requests on paper and mail in their maps to Town Hall.

While the vast majority of sewer connectors will be via a grinder pump, there are some that will operate on a gravity line. This method will be used on Keirstead Circle, Hillside Avenue, and Hall Trail.

With the absence of a grinder pump, homeowners will instead be responsible for hooking their house up to the town-installed connection located in front of each property. This construction is approximated at \$50-\$75 a foot.

Many residents Thursday voiced concerns over the apparent cost inequity for homeowners with gravity systems and those with pumps. Black has since asked the WPCA to look into the costs associated with the town laying the lines to the septic tank location in gravity areas. This would result in a shorter distance and smaller cost to homeowners located within the gravity district.

To decide on what route the sewers would take, the WPCA considered six different alternatives. "The hope," WPCA Chairman Jack Murray said, "is to provide for all the areas in the future. But this is what we felt needed to be done now."

On Thursday there were some criticisms that the town was not doing enough to protect the lake. Residents questioned why areas such as the town center were granted sewer lines and not the entire lake area. Hughes stood by the final choice calling it the "best scenario for the town at this time."

"There needs to be a balance of the dollars available, users and the environment," he continued. "I feel this plan addresses all of those. There will be additional phases in the future, but, at this point, we need to break ground on phase one."

Colchester Parks & Rec to Take Over Summer Concert Series

After 20 years, the Colchester Arts Commission has decided to step down from organizing its annual summer Concerts on the Green.

But don't despair. The events will continue.

Beginning this summer, Colchester Parks & Recreation will assume the honors of producing the summer Concerts on the Green in partnership with Colchester Chevrolet as this year's title sponsor.

For over 20 years, the Colchester Arts Commission delighted the community with its annual summer concerts. This band of devoted volunteers worked tirelessly week after week, and summer after summer, to develop and produce the events.

Each Sunday evening in July and August, the commission brought free concerts to the community, and the weekly attendance of hundreds demonstrated their appreciation.

But recently the commission decided it was time to pass the torch to Parks & Rec. And they're ready for the job.

"The entire department is excited for this opportunity to carry on many of the town's favorite traditions that the Arts Commission has developed over the years," said Parks & Recreation Director Jason Cohen.

The Arts Commission had broad support from businesses and individuals throughout Colchester. The Parks & Recreation will need the same. While new and returning supporters are encouraged and needed to donate toward this free program, Colchester Chevrolet is underwriting a major portion

of the cost of the series.

"It's an honor to be part of such a positive event for the community," said Scott Roys, Director of Fixed Operations at Colchester Chevrolet, speaking on behalf of owner Phillip Price. "We will be at the events with our families and hope we can make new friends in the area."

Parks & Recreation has already started work on the series. The dates of the Concerts on the Green have been set, and the entertainers have been contracted. Concert goers can look forward to music ranging from rock to country, from disco to Motown, and of course, a featured kid/family show.

The series will run for six Sundays, from July 8 to August 12, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Additional activities, such as the perennial "Teddy Bear Parade" and onsite barbecues, will start earlier.

The series will kick off on July 8 with the "All-Star Dyn-o-mite Disco Review", who were a smash hit at last year's "Colchester 57 Fest" with their endless energy and incredible performance.

The kid/family show on July 22 will feature "Steve Songs," a nationally known band led by Steve Roslonek, who has five hit children's CDs. Steve will also be appearing solo at an upcoming free community show in Colchester during April school vacation.

For complete information as it develops, including the band lineup and other fun activities and contests, visit www.colchesterchevy.com and click on the link to the concert series.

Andover Education Board Adopts Budget

by Jim Salemi

The Andover Board of Education last Wednesday adopted the superintendent's proposed budget of \$3.8 million budget, representing nearly a 4% increase over current year spending.

The board adopted the budget a week after school Superintendent Andrew Maneggia presented his budget on Feb. 7.

"I think it's a very sound budget. It came in under 4%," School Principal David Griffin said Wednesday.

The budget adopted by the board is for \$3,797,797, a difference of \$144,890 or 3.97% over the current year spending. The current year's operating budget is \$3,652,907.

A total of \$37,000 is earmarked in the adopted budget to implement the school's Technology Plan.

When the school board adopted the Technology Plan last April, members agreed to set aside 1% of the budget to put the plan in place, as opposed to borrowing the money. Maneggia said during his presentation that

by paying for the plan up front, money would be saved in the long run because the district is not paying on interest.

The money earmarked for technology will finance a portable computer lab, which will be on a cart and wheeled from place to place. Despite a redesign of the school's computer lab, there are still not enough workstations or computers to accommodate all the students who need to use them, Maneggia said.

A number of undetermined costs are included in the budget as well. The exact cost for heating and transportation fuel, for instance, cannot be calculated as the market has been unstable. Electricity costs are also not exactly known.

Enrollment is expected to remain the same and no unanticipated costs for such things as special education are expected—two factors that can otherwise drive a budget up substantially.

Now that the budget is adopted it will be passed on to the finance board for its review.

Kindergarteners in East Hampton Celebrate the Year of the Pig

by Michael McCoy

Gong hay fat choy.

In other words, "Congratulations and be prosperous." This is the traditional greeting used during the weeklong period known as Chinese New Year.

This past Sunday marked the beginning of the year of the pig—and the Memorial School kindergarteners in East Hampton celebrated it last Friday by learning a little bit about the event.

"We've been doing it for as many years as I can remember," said teacher Carol Kelly.

She, along with fellow kindergarten teachers Denise Cronen, Denise Kaczorowski and Kay Rosenfeld put the program together to expose the children to a different culture. "In kindergarten, we talk about different cultures and families," elaborated Kelly.

Students were treated to vegetable lo mein and vegetable fried rice from Hung Won Restaurant in Colchester, and were encouraged to give the chopsticks a try.

"They didn't seem to care for it this year," admitted Kelly. She added that there's never

any guarantee from year to year as to how a child will react to the food. "Some years they love it and ask for more."

The teachers handed out lai see, or red envelopes, to their children. Lai see are traditionally handed out by adults to children and are typically filled with money.

Kindergarteners also made some mementos of their own, including banners and the traditional red lanterns. Incidentally, the color red has been seen as good luck in Chinese tradition.

Before doing anything else, the kids also colored hats that displayed the face of the pig, signifying the New Year at hand.

To end their observation of the holiday, students watched a video called "Chinese New Year," which illustrates some of the other common practices such as fireworks as well as the iconic dragon parades.

Both the morning and afternoon kindergarteners took part in the celebration, which came to about 160 students in all.



Fifth-grader Ryan Taylor presents his Mop Stop invention. Explaining the genesis of his brainchild, Ryan explains, "My mom's been cleaning the floor a lot lately, so I made something to help her out."

East Hampton Student Inventions: From Mop Shoes to Nose Warmers

by Michael McCoy

What do a nose warmer, a grooming doggie door, and a portable I.V. pole have in common? They were all entries at this year's East Hampton Invention Convention.

East Hampton students have taken part in the annual event for at least the past 15 years, showing their inventive genius in displays at the Center School gymnasium. The competition is open to any interested 4th or 5th grader.

The creative process begins in early December when the students learn about the contest guidelines and begin pondering ideas for possible inventions. By the week after New Year's, the students hand in their "intent to invent" form, detailing their idea and plan.

Once their concept receives the go-ahead, each student has five weeks to create their device, prepare an informational display board and practice their presentation skills.

Four Center School teachers organized this year's convention: Jon Baine, Kate Cotie, Elaine Lukas and Sandi Warshaw.

The 42 inventors are judged by about 30 judges, including East Hampton High School students who formerly attended Center School; East Hampton High School and Middle School teachers; retired teachers and administrators; individuals from the East Hampton Senior Center; and members of the East Hampton/Marlborough Rotary Club. Incidentally, the Rotary sponsors the event every year.

The students are organized into groups for judging. After the judges fill out their evaluation forms, the student groups convene to discuss the merits of each invention. They then are charged with reaching a consensus on their favorite entry.

One entry from each group—ten entries in all—advance to the Connecticut Invention Convention, held at UConn's Gampel Pavilion on April 28. That day, East Hampton's representatives will mingle with 640 fellow student inventors from about 100 schools across the state.

This year will mark the 24th state convention. Their website, ctinvention.convention.org, deems the festivities "the

forum for Connecticut's schoolchildren to demonstrate thinking through the art of inventing."

Going beyond the obvious virtues of the event, such as public speaking experience and the exploration of practical scientific properties, Baine sees another dimension to the contest "Kids have to succeed scholastically in a fairly narrow band of study," he observes. "This is an opportunity for kids to excel at something that might not typically come up in a classroom."

Chosen to represent East Hampton at this year's convention at UConn were:

4th Grade:

—Tyler Anderson's Easy Roller Remover: The device lets you change paint rollers without changing the color of your hands.

—Mackenzie Caso's Squeaky Clean Erasers: This improvement takes much of the annoying dust and debris out of writing process.

—Troy Christian's Wiper Wizard: Useful for weeks like the past one, this gadget uses a wire to melt ice from windshield wipers.

—Jenna Erubin's Sooper-Dooper Sprinkle Scooper: The special scooper allows easy access to a number of sundae toppings

—Taylor Muncy's Adjustable Plate Brush: This extendable brush prevents umpires from needing to stoop to clean home plate.

—Abigayle Tuttle's Portable I.V. Pole: This medical apparatus offers more mobility to those who need an I.V.

5th Grade:

—Shayla Belanger's Light Shoes: With the help of miniature lights, this invention makes pets more visible after dark.

—Jenna Cordeiro's Cozy Nosey: This hybrid winter accessory made of Model Magic and toe-warmers, seeks to shelter a body part that is too often left in the cold.

—Nick Costa's Helping Hand Mittens: Thanks to adhesive, this equipment lets the wearer carry more items than normal mittens would allow.

—Ryan Taylor's Mop Stop: Sponges attached to the feet make cleaning floors a snap—much more fun!

Hearing Set on Water Rate Structure Change in Colchester

A rate study authorized by the Colchester Sewer and Water Commission has been completed and will be being presented to the public at a hearing on Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall along with the 2007/2008 fiscal year budgets.

The commission contracted with rate authority Chris Woodcock of Woodcock & Associates, Inc. to evaluate the quarterly use charges. The evaluation was to take several key factors into consideration, including a desire to promote conservation, to equitably allocate costs among all users (low, medium, and high), and to differentiate between residential use and commercial use.

"The commission currently uses an inclined block rate scale—the more you use, the higher the per unit charge," explained Public Works Director Mark Decker. This is an effective conservation technique for residential users and is endorsed by the state Department of Environmental Protection Public Health, he said.

"However, because the commission doesn't have a separate rate structure for commercial users, they are locked into this same rate structure and the only way they can reduce their consumption is to reduce their business activity," noted Decker. "Given that Colchester is trying to encourage and attract commercial development, rates that discourage commercial use send a different message."

In an effort to correct the problem, the commission proposes a separate rate structure for larger size water meters, which are typically used in commercial developments. High use commercial properties, schools, and institutions would experience a moderate decrease in their quarterly bills under the change.

Commission Chairman, Robert Tarlow said, "We looked very hard at trying to keep the average homeowner who uses water wisely to be unaffected or only marginally affected by any revision in the rate structure."

Through proper allocation of costs based on demands, the low users (up to about 6,000 gallons per quarter) will see no increase or even a slight decrease, according to the commission. This portion represents about 25 percent of the users.

The 'average' user of about 12,000 to 13,000 gallons per quarter will see an increase of about \$4 to \$5 per month on the combined water and sewer bill.

Roughly 75 percent of the customers use less than 18,000 to 20,000 gallons per quarter. At that usage level, customers will experience a \$7 to \$8 increase per month in the combined bill.

Above that level, national data indicates much of the use is discretionary—if the user wants to use that extra amount, it will cost them more.

The rate change also takes into account the increase in expenses of about 8 percent on the Sewer Operating budget and 4 percent on the Water Operating budget.

The commission is presenting budget and rate information earlier than in previous years. Because the commission bills in arrears, the July billing was previously based on the prior fiscal year rates. This one-time switch will make rates coincide with the fiscal year.

Budgets and rate information is available on-line at www.colchesterct.net and in the Town Clerk and Public Works offices at the Town Hall.

Colchester Police News

2/7—Police are investigating a break-in to a car parked on Lebanon Avenue. The owner reported \$1,490 was stolen, according to reports.

2/9—Thomas Anadore, 23, of 43 Kramer Rd., was arrested for DUI and making an improper turn, according to reports.

2/11—Nicholas Free, 28, of 24B Elm St., was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, according to reports.

2/13—Heather Lynn Powell, 22, of Norwich, was arrested and charged with reckless driving after police clocked the school bus she was driving at 91 mph in a 65 mph zone. Powell was arrested at the scene after she was pulled over on Route 2 near exit 17. Two schoolchildren were on the bus, according to reports.

2/20—Joseph Stankievich, 37, of 240 Lebanon Ave., was arrested for taking a vehicle without permission, driving with a suspended license and evading responsibility, according to police.

Marlborough Police News

2/10—Police are investigating the theft of a 2006 Dodge pickup truck. The truck was later found at the Blackledge River fishing area on South Main Street, according to police.

2/17—Robert Rogers, 44, of 36 James Ln., was arrested for DUI, speeding and reckless driving, according to reports.

Two Injured in Accident on Route 151 in East Hampton

Two local teenagers were injured in one-vehicle accident early Wednesday morning on Route 151 in East Hampton.

According to police, a Chevrolet pick-up truck was traveling east at about 2:30 a.m. Wednesday when the vehicle crossed to the left of the center line and struck several guardrails. The truck rolled over several times and the driver and a passenger were ejected from the vehicle.

The driver was transported to Hartford Hospital by Life Star helicopter. He was

Hebron Police News

2/12—Robert Welch, 20, of 12 Wood Acres Rd., Amston, was arrested for threatening and disorderly conduct following an alleged domestic disturbance, according to reports.

2/13—Eric J. Hunter, 20, of 42 Bass Lake Rd., Amston, was arrested on a warrant charging him with third degree arson for an incident that happened back last August, and filing a false report with police, according to reports.

2/14—Steven Langley, 25, of 34 Kingley Dr., Andover, was arrested for interfering with police and disorderly conduct, according to reports.

2/17—Karin Anne Bertero, 40, of 170 Charles Ln., was arrested and charged with third degree assault on a minor, risk of injury to a minor and disorderly conduct following an alleged domestic incident, according to police. Police went to the home after a 911 hang-up call was placed, according to reports.

2/18—Police are investigating three car break-ins at the Airline Trail parking area near Grayville Road. Windows were smashed on two of the vehicles to gain entry, reports said.

2/19—Kaylee Bailey, 19, of 1 Carolyn Dr., was arrested for assault on a minor following an alleged domestic dispute that reportedly involved her 17-year-old brother, according to reports.

treated for moderate injuries, said police. The passenger sustained minor injuries and declined treatment.

Neither the driver nor the passenger was identified by police due to their ages. A recently enacted state law forbids police to reveal the identity of victims or criminal suspects under the age of 18 except in special circumstances.

The accident is under investigation, said police. No charges have been filed.

Obituaries

Portland

Marjorie Ingraham Ous

Marjorie E. Ingraham Ous, 77, of Summer St., Portland, died Thursday, Feb. 15 in her home. She was the wife of the late John Ous.

Born in East Hampton, March 17, 1929, a daughter of the late Harold and Annie Strickland Ingraham, she was a lifelong area resident. She is survived by her two daughters, Linda Poole and her husband Richard of Middletown, and Patricia Gaffney and her husband Martin of Portland; her son John Ous and his wife Cheryl Jordan of Portland; her grandchildren Lisa Parker and her husband Dave, Richard Poole and his wife Arlene, Karl Lee and his wife Brandi, Danielle Lee, Joshua Gaffney, Nicholas Gaffney, Dylan Ous and Shane Ous; her great-grandchildren Brandon Parker, Alex Parker, Adam Balch, Brittani Lee and Kaylee Gaffney; her sisters Marion (Mrs. Fred) Schmidl and Janette Shelton, both of Portland; her brother Norman Ingraham of Middletown and several nieces and nephews.

Calling hours were Monday evening in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Funeral services were Tuesday at Portland Memorial. Interment will be in the State Veterans Cemetery at a later date.

East Hampton

Richard A. Schooner

Richard Albert Schooner, 81, of Old Skinner St. East Hampton, died Feb. 14 in Middletown.

Born March 8, 1925 in Bowling Green, Ohio the son of the late Albert L. Schooner and Rose Mogensen (Schooner) Beranek he had lived in East Hampton for 70 years. His formal education was through the East Hampton school system but basically he was a self-taught man. Richard, “Dick” to his many friends, was an avid collector of minerals starting at age 12 under the guidance of the late Louis W. Little of East Hampton. His quest led him to many quarries in Central Connecticut and New England. He freely disseminated mineral information to other collectors and made hundreds of field trips. His expansive knowledge of minerals of Central, Connecticut, led him to publish several manuscripts on the subject, one of which can be found in the East Hampton Library. He worked as curate of minerals at Harvard University and his collection was on display at Wesleyan University. His proudest moment came when a former “student” of his, Professor Paul Moore of the University of Chicago, proposed and was later approved by The American Mineralogy Association, that a new mineral first found in Palermo #1 Mine in North Groton, New Hampshire and later found in Hagenenof, Germany, be named “Schoonerite” in his honor.

Richard was a lover of hiking, nature, birds, flowers, sunsets and a cat named “Baby.” His love of classical music and poetry led him to write hundreds of poems and sonnets and to compose symphonies of his own, many of which are yet to be published.

He leaves his sister, Lorraine (Schooner) (Bidwell) Sampson; a niece, Marcia (Bidwell) Addy and her husband Wayne and family Anthony Labbadia Jr., Meghan Addy and granddaughter Tessa Labbadia; a niece Allison (Bidwell) Fuller and her husband Keith; nephew Benjamin H. Bidwell III, and nephew Brenden M. Bidwell and his wife Kelly and their children Amber Barron and Khira Bidwell.

Funeral services were held Saturday, Feb. 17 in the Spencer Funeral Home 112 Main St. East Hampton with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial will be in the family plot in Lakeview cemetery in the spring. Calling hours were Saturday prior to the service.

East Hampton

Robert E. Mercier

Robert E. Mercier, 61, of East Hampton, died Friday, Feb. 16, at Hartford Hospital.

He was born in Hartford, son of the late Albert and Lena (Georgia) Mercier and had lived in East Hampton for 16 years. He was a Marine sergeant and drill instructor serving in the Vietnam Conflict. He was a truck driver for Butler Construction, Portland.

He is survived by a sister; three nieces and a nephew; and many good friends. Funeral services were private with military honors. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to a charity of the donor’s choice.

The Tolland Memorial Funeral Home, 375 Merrow Rd., Tolland, had charge of arrangements.

Hebron

Margaret E. Braley

Margaret E. (Brown) Braley, 81, of Deepwood Drive, Amston, widow of the late Lee Braley, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 14, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester.

Born May 30, 1925 in Roxbury, ME, she was a daughter of the late Chester and Bertha (White) Brown.

She was the former owner and operator of The Friendly Inn in Rumford, ME, a dinner and dance establishment, for many years before retiring to Connecticut.

Mrs. Braley was a member of the Colchester Bible Baptist Church.

She is survived by her son, Chester Sargent of Lebanon; four stepdaughters, Jill Allen of Rangley, ME, Becky Wing of Dixfield, ME, Kim Braley of Auburn, ME and Carrie Knox of West Peru, ME; 14 grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her beloved husband of 37 years, who died on Feb. 21, 2003; she was predeceased by her brother, Merl Brown and two sisters, Isabel Canwell and Marjorie Chase.

Private graveside funeral services will be observed at the New Lebanon Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Russell Mercier Senior Center Outreach Program, 14 Stonecroft Dr., Hebron 06248 or to the Hebron Vol. Fire Dept., 44 Main St., Hebron 06248.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

Colchester

Dorothy M. Birdsey

Dorothy M. Birdsey, 87, wife of the late Robert F. Birdsey Sr. of William Palmer Road, Moodus, passed away on Wednesday, Feb. 14, at the Liberty Hall Nursing Home in Colchester.

She was born on January 25, 1920 in Middletown, daughter of the late Harry and Maude Scully Haling.

Surviving are a daughter, Diane Jordon of Illinois; a brother, Gerald Haling of Meriden; two granddaughters, two great-grandsons, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by a son, Robert F. Birdsey Jr.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, Feb. 17, at Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. Burial was private in the Middletown Veterans cemetery.

Portland

Carol McGann

Carol J. (Foster) McGann, 72, beloved wife of 50 years of Edward, died peacefully in her home surrounded by her loving family on Wednesday, Feb. 21.

She was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. Her greatest love was her family. She enjoyed crafts, ceramics, and quiet times playing the organ.

Besides her devoted husband, her “Hero” as she often called him, she is survived by her loving children, Debbie and Mark Bepko of Portland, Donna Bellingham of Sacramento, CA, David and Lisa McGann of Woodstock, and Darren McGann of Portland. She is also survived by her four grandchildren who brought her great joy, Ryan McGann, Christopher Bepko, Rachel Bepko, and Kali Foster McGann. She was predeceased by her granddaughter, Christina Bepko.

Calling hours at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, will be held Saturday from 8:30-9:30 a.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10 a.m. in the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial will follow in Rose Hill Memorial Park in Rocky Hill.