

RIVEREAST

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Kwame Ocansey meets the two of the children he personally sponsors during his most recent trip to Ghana. Yen and Yenbilla are 9-year-old twins who live in Damorgo.

A Helping Hand from Portland to Ghana

by Michael McCoy

Geographically, Connecticut is a long way from Ghana.

But when it comes to helping hands and hearts, the two places are closer than you might think, thanks in large part to Portland resident Kwame Ocansey.

Ocansey is the founder and prime mover behind LEEAD International Inc. (LEEAD stands for Leaders Educated, Empowered and Directed.) Their mission is to provide educational opportunities to African children who would otherwise never have the opportunity for schooling.

"Typically, a 9-year-old has seen school no more than a month in their life," noted Ocansey. "The important thing for me is to give these kids a chance, one child at a time."

LEEAD does this by providing school supplies, uniforms, sandals, backpacks, books and meals—and even the school itself if necessary.

In most cases in Ghana, schools are available to children, and they are free—often with volunteer teachers—but they are often some distance from where the children live. In addition, large numbers of children don't have the basic needs to attend.

This is where LEEAD steps in by helping provide school items for the children.

While children may attend school without the proper uniform or sandals, other children will tease them, which discourages them from continuing to attend, explained Ocansey.

"We try to find out why kids go to school or don't go to school," he said and then LEEAD tries to offer the necessary encouragement.

Located on the Gulf of Guinea just north of the equator, Ghana is about the size of Oregon. The population is about 21 million. Though in better economic shape than many other African nations, abject poverty is widespread.

Ocansey knows a thing or two about the realities of his native Ghana and the stark contrast between the African nation and the United States.

Born in 1944, by 1976 he was employed as a training specialist for the Ghana Highway Department. This led to an association with the World Bank Project, which was looking to help advance Ghana's highway infrastructure.

Over a period of about a year, Ocansey toured the U.S., including Maryland, Ohio, North Dakota, New Mexico and Texas, to gain insight into options for bettering Ghana's road system. He also taught high school mathematics in Ohio during that

year.

In 1980, Ocansey moved to the States for good, and began working as an applications programmer for Travelers in 1982.

In his spare time, he loaned his services to a number of programs, including the Connecticut Rehabilitation Council, Positive Solutions, Inc., and Rite of Passage, which incorporates African ideas on maturity and personal development into a mentoring program not unlike Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Then, in 1999, folk legend Pete Seeger recruited him as a board member on his East River Apprenticeshop. The program, operated out of Queens, taught inner city children to build boats, so that they might experience the joys of sailing—an opportunity that rarely come to those in impoverished urban areas.

Ocansey had a long history of public service with other organizations, but Seeger inspired him to start something of his own. With his friend's help, Ocansey began LEEAD, which was incorporated in 2000, to help African children.

His first step was to obtain some funding for the organization. During a keynote speech for Positive Solutions Inc. (an organization that provides relief to AIDS and

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HIV victims where Ocansey serves on the board of directors), he asked audience members to raise their hands if they were willing to help. "Almost everybody raised up their hands," remembered Ocansey.

Because of personal contacts and familiarity with the area, Ocansey chose to focus LEEAD on Ghana. "For one year I wrote letters to people in Ghana," he said.

He asked people he knew to collect the names of children in need, such as orphans and AIDS victims. "Give me the poorest," he told them.

Due to the immense need of so many in the nation, Ocansey wanted only the names of those who had absolutely no other avenue to receive aid. "They don't even know how poor they are," he said sadly.

Life is hard even when routine. In some Ghanaian villages, such as Damorgo, all the adults leave from November until April, when the ground is completely parched. They flee to urban areas, searching for any work they can find, leaving the children and the elderly alone.

After Ocansey's year of research was finished, he contacted those from Positive Solutions who had raised their hands and showed them the names. According to Ocansey, about half of them agreed to support a child.

But Ocansey wasn't prepared to just throw money at the problem. First and foremost, he is determined to make sure that all those the program sets out to help actually commit and take advantage of education. "Anyone who isn't going to school is dropped from the program," he promised. LEEAD currently sponsors 25 children.

Ocansey said he realizes that people may be wary of donating funds to a new and relatively unknown group. To assure both himself and any donors that the money was being used as intended, he traveled to Ghana from Feb. 23-April 10 of this year to check on the program. He found everything to be in order, he said.

While Ocansey was happy to see the money being put to good use, he found that conditions were just as dire there as he had expected. For instance, he saw that one local preschool was operating out of a tiny grain shed. "If I hadn't gone, I wouldn't have known that." He added, "If somebody had told me that, I probably wouldn't believe it." Thus, LEEAD's first construction project will be to build a new preschool.

The poverty defies the imagination. When Ocansey visited Damorgo two years ago, he met 9-year-old Kalbon Tinaba. During his most recent visit, he found Kalbon wearing the same clothing, he had worn every day for those two years.

Hebron Budget Squeaks by in Close Voting

by Sarah McCoy

The Hebron budget passed by the slimmest of margins.

On Tuesday voters approved the 6.84% increase in spending by 22 votes. There were 497 affirmative votes and 475 negative.

The 964 total voters represents a sharp decline from last year's referendum when only 1,236 voters cast ballots. There are currently 5,908 registered voters in the town.

"I think it means people are not upset with the way things are going," said Town Manager Jared Clark. "When people are upset or there is something very controversial, they'll turn out to vote."

This year the Board of Finance heard very few complaints regarding the \$31 million budget. The complaints that were issued did not focus on one particular budget item but rather the overall budget amount.

The approved budget includes a 6.16% increase to the Hebron Board of Education budget, a 5.3% increase to Hebron's portion of the RHAM BOE budget, and a 6.05% increase in spending for General Government.

The Hebron BOE budget was widely praised for coming in at the lowest increase the town has seen in almost a decade. It includes ramped up security measures for both elementary schools and turning the part-time curriculum director position into a full-time job.

The General Government increase includes

The item that children are often most excited to receive is a bicycle—which enables them to get back and forth from school. "They are so proud of that," mentioned Ocansey. At \$25 each, bicycles are virtually nonexistent in rural Ghana.

In this country, Ocansey said, people truly believe in the American dream—they are certain that people can do anything that they set their mind to. That is not the case in Ghana—and much of the reason is lack of educational opportunities.

While private universities are slowly beginning to develop, there have traditionally been just four government universities in Ghana. They are only available to the super rich, and children must display extraordinary aptitude from the age of about 5 to even be considered for admittance.

LEEAD seeks to help children beginning at age 5 up to 16 year-olds. Donors who volunteer to help fund one of these students are asked to donate a minimum of \$20 per month, which is collected three times a year. LEEAD currently sponsors 28 children.

Ocansey retired from Traveler's in 1999, just before founding LEEAD. However, he still works part-time as a consultant for companies such as Signa Health in Bloomfield and Advo in Windsor. He has lived in Portland since 1990. His wife Frances is an accountant for Citigroup.

Ocansey also teaches Sunday school at Cross Street AME Zion Church in Middletown. He and Frances have three grown children, as well as three granddaughters.

Pete Seeger, who in some ways can be credited with starting Ocansey on this path, has maintained an interest in LEEAD. Seeger has performed two concert fundraisers at Trinity Church in Middletown for LEEAD.

Ocansey said he hopes to schedule another Seeger concert soon, this time adding folk musician Koo Nimo, a music and mathematics professor in Ghana.

He is also optimistic about LEEAD's future. He said he hopes to one day expand LEEAD to all of Western Africa.

He has found some inspiration for his efforts from Tony Blair's 2004 Commission For Africa, as well as Jeffrey Sach's 2005 book *The End of Poverty*. "I was reading about those projects, and I realized, we don't have to wait for organizations like those," he remarked. "Individuals can do their part."

Anyone interested in contributing to LEEAD may send checks made out to LEEAD International, Inc. to 20 Riverside Street in Portland. More information may also be obtained at www.lead.org or by calling Ocansey himself at 342-5490.

the addition of a second Resident State Trooper for the town and turning the part-time Fire Department secretary position into a full-time one. "I am glad we are going to address some of the town's shortcomings in a better way than in the past," Clark said of the two new positions.

He expects the second trooper to address some of the noise, speeding, and traffic issues the town has been experiencing. Clark is even more ecstatic about the Fire Department position. "Hebron cannot afford a career fire department," he said. "Therefore it become extremely important to relieve the fire officers from significant clerical work in order to continue to entice residents to participate in the department."

Also approved on Tuesday was the \$875,000 Capital Improvements Plan budget. The budget, which represents a \$4,000 increase from 2006, passed 518 to 449.

However, the CIP advisory question failed to garner residents' support as it failed 406 to 540. The advisory question asked residents whether or not they would support an increase to the CIP budget. This year the town received over \$2 million in project requests but could only fund \$875,000.

The approved budget will go into effect on July 1. Around that same time residents should receive their new tax bill for the 2007-08 fiscal year.

Close Andover Election Brings Recounts

by Jim Salemi

Results of last Monday's municipal election are in, with a recount pending for three of the boards.

Election moderator Catherine Palazzi has called for a recount of the ballots for the Board of Finance, Planning & Zoning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals. The recount will be conducted Monday, May 14 at 12 p.m. at the Old Firehouse on Center Street. Anyone may attend the recount.

The recount is expected to take approximately three to four hours.

State statutes require that margins of 20 or less votes be subject to a recount. There were a number of such close races in the May 7 balloting.

One race that will not be subject to a recount was that for first selectman. Current Republican First Selectman Robert Burbank will serve another term after receiving 481 votes in an uncontested race.

In the Board of Selectmen race, all candidates won seats. Incumbent Jay Linddy received 356 votes and David Holder Ziff, 234 votes for the Republicans. Incumbent Susan England received 362 and newcomer Elaine Buchardt received 220 for the Democrats.

A recount will be held for the Board of Finance contest where seven candidates ran for four available seats. Incumbent member Cathy Desrosiers, who was endorsed by both parties received 505 votes; Democratic incumbent and current Chairman Steven Reade garnered 310 votes; Michelle Davidson got 321 and Joan Foran received 342. Running on the Republican ticket, Linda Fish received 327 votes; Wallace Barton received 265 and incumbent Donald Denley received 230. If the results stand, Reade, Barton and Denley will be out.

For the Board of Education race, incumbent Jay Linddy received 340 votes and newcomer Sharyn Keeney 270 for the Republicans. Kimberly Hawes received 294 votes and incumbent Scott David Sauyet 285 for the Democratic ticket. All will be seated on the board.

In the contest for the two available seats on

the RHAM Board of Education, Republican Danny Holtsclaw received 400 votes; Republican Kenneth Lee, endorsed by both parties, received 438 votes, and Democrat Mark Madore received 320 votes.

Carol Lee, endorsed by both parties for Town Clerk and ran uncontested, garnered 588 votes.

Five candidates vied for three seats on the Board of Assessment Appeals. Republicans running for the Board of Assessment Appeals included Christine Dunnack, who received 272 votes, Ed Turn, who received 412 votes and incumbent Georgette Conrad with 295. Democrats include incumbents Lillian Gasper with 368 and Julia Haverl with 318.

In the Planning and Zoning race, five candidates vied for three seats. Democrat Susan England received 387 votes and Democrat Scott Kuhn received 291. Republican Robert Russell received 304 votes and Republican Jeanne Gagnon received 324, while Republican Erich Siismets received 340. This race is subject to a recount May 14.

Also subject to a recount is the Zoning Board of Appeals race where there were four candidates for three seats. Republican Jennifer McDonald garnered 321 votes and Republican Evelyn Russell received 323. For the Democrats, Connie Stanley received 324 votes and Dorothy Yeomans 440.

In the Board of Fire Commissioners race four candidates vied for three seats. Republican Curt Dowling received 403 votes and fellow Republican John R. Colli, who was endorsed by both parties, received 497 votes. Republican Wallace E. Barton received 384 votes. The only candidate in the Democratic slot, James McCann, received 317 votes.

After the May 14 recount, all candidates will be notified by a written summons hand delivered by the moderator prior to the Monday recount. The candidates are welcome to call Palazzi at 916-6122 on the recount day to inquire of the expected time of the recount announcement.

Colchester Budget Going to Referendum Without Change

by Jim Salemi

Residents voted to send the finance board's recommended budget to referendum last Tuesday—though not before some motions and over an hour's worth of discussion about decreasing both the school and town budgets before they go to referendum.

None of the motions passed, so the \$47.9 million recommended combined school and town budget will go to referendum as presented. The referendum will be held this Tuesday, May 15 at the town hall, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

The school board's requested portion of the overall budget is \$33.8 million and the town's request is \$14.1 million, which includes \$5 million in debt service and capital projects.

Not everyone was happy with the total.

"A 24.5 mill rate will not be approved by the majority of taxpayers" said resident Steven Schuster. "If you want multiple referendums, send this to referendum. We will be right back here (at another town meeting to send a revised budget to referendum)."

Schuster said he did not believe the school district was losing good teachers to other districts because of below-competitive salaries.

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle had made that claim in budget presentations during public hearings last month to justify an across-the-board salary increase for teachers of 3% over three years. Loiselle said Colchester was below towns of similar demographics in terms of teacher compensation.

"I don't believe in keeping up with the Joneses," said Schuster.

While Schuster and roughly a third of the 100 residents on hand for the meeting thought the request was too high, a motion by another resident to slash the school budget by \$1 million found little support.

Resident Gregory Morgan made the motion to slash the education portion of the budget by \$1 million.

"I think better controls can be put in place and I think we can do better monitoring the budget," he said. "Limit the increase to 3% and be a model town. We can't afford these tax increases every year."

School board Chairman Bill Hettrick said the district's budget request was only \$82,000 over fixed costs (such as salary and benefits and utility costs), which are at record levels.

"This is a large town with a large school district. The [budget] number represents the minimum cost per pupil. Last year we became non-competitive; we were at the bottom in wages. The contract did little to help that—we needed to be competitive. We are losing teachers over money," he said.

Hettrick also cautioned residents about approving a \$1 million cut to the education budget.

"We'll be going into staff. We'll be going deep into staff," he said. "We have four large buildings powered by oil. There are increases. We currently have 3,300 kids in the system," he said.

Resident Diana Giles said she felt the budget should be reduced, but \$1 million was too high of a reduction.

"You should look at \$700,000. That's a lot of money, but with oil, electricity and taxes going up, the budget's too high for a lot of people," she said.

Resident Gary Harris told the audience that six homes in town went up for foreclosure in just one week.

"It's a sign of the times. Salaries are going up 3%. The budget is going up 5-6%. Times are hard. Yes, we need an education system. We approved the portables, now we can't use them. And things aren't getting better. Just look at the communities and towns around us," he said.

Hebron Roadway Will Open Access to Major Parcel

by Sarah McCoy

Construction has begun for, what Hebron Town Manager Jared Clark calls, “the road to our future.”

Along Route 66 across from Ted’s Supermarket a 1,200 foot roadway is currently in the works. The roadway will provide access to the 194-acre parcel that is slated to be the Village Green for mixed use business and housing.

The Horton family currently owns the majority of the property, with Sara Tarca and William Focci owning additional pieces.

The Town of Hebron has received two Small Town Economic Assistance Program, or STEAP, grants to pave the way into these parcels.

“To have a public road takes out the unknowns of the project,” Clark explained. “Even though the Town of Hebron does not own the property, we do want to make it enticing for potential developers.”

Clark likened the situation to that of the town’s relationship with the athletic leagues. “We provide playing fields that enable parents to run athletic leagues,” he said. “In the same way, we are enabling private developers to fill the Village Green by providing an access way.”

The grants received totaled \$875,000 and will cover the entire roadway creation. The project is being handled by Gerber Construction and is expected to wrap up this July.

At the present time there are many questions looming around the property. Namely, who will come into the space?

Clark reported that the town has not received any formal applications, but he did say that property owner Sara Tarca has expressed interest.

For the past five years Tarca has been in discussion with the town regarding an aquatic center and health club. Her plans include an 8-lane indoor swimming pool, an outdoor pool, a gymnasium, and other recreation areas.

“We live in a growing community and a social community,” she said. “We’re looking to create an environment where people can recreate with their neighbors and satisfy some of the

space needs the town of Hebron has.”

With the roadway construction underway, Tarca has begun the approval process to begin building.

Clark felt it unlikely that Hebron would attract any interest from national chains, but said regional chains have looked at the property. “Private developers have tried to interest CVS to the property,” he reported. “Banks are another possibility. Bank of America, for example, has an ATM but no branch in town.”

A major grocery store, according to Clark, would be unlikely because of the close proximity of other options.

“We are expecting that growth will occur gradually,” he said. “As important as bringing convenience to Hebron is, it is just as important to broaden the town’s tax base. With that being said, we want to build the Hebron way to keep with the character of the town.”

The Village Green is zoned as a mixed-use property with building regulations imposed to maintain the look of Hebron. Also, as a mixed-use property, Clark did not rule out the possibility of additional housing being included in the Village Green. In fact, he encouraged it.

“One way to keep a center area safe is to have people there,” he explained. “That is one way to maintain safety without having to expand the town’s police services.”

Before any construction can begin the parties involved with the property must settle the outstanding bond issue. The Department of Transportation is requiring a \$1.2 million bond to be posted prior to construction to guarantee traffic improvements are done concurrently with development. At the time of publication no agreement had been reached between the town, the landowners, and the potential developers.

No building permits will be issued until the bond is posted.

With this controversy still unsettled and no building applications filed, it is unlikely that the Village Green will be anything more than a road to nowhere for this year.

Hebron Noise Ordinance on Hold, But Study Continues

by Sarah McCoy

In the past, Hebron police officers have been relatively lenient when it comes to people who misuse recreational vehicles such as ATVs.

Those days are over.

After discussion regarding adoption of a noise ordinance—a debate inspired in part by noisy ATVs—the Board of Selectmen has opted instead to monitor the problem closely for the next six months and address it again in November.

In the meantime, police officers will collect data regarding the number of complaints and where they are coming from. The town has also adopted a zero tolerance policy for those abusing recreational vehicles.

“I’ve given you breaks in the past,” Resident State Trooper Kelly Kraynak said to the 70 or so residents in attendance at the Noise Ordinance Public Hearing last month. “Now you’ve given me no other option.”

The Board of Selectmen began considering a noise ordinance last year after receiving numerous complaints from residents. The ordinance would limit construction times, idling trucks, consistent horn honking and recreational vehicle riding.

Last month the town held two public hearings regarding the proposed noise ordinance to gauge public opinion. Overwhelmingly, residents turned up to voice their displeasure with the proposal, specifically as it pertained to recreational vehicle enthusiasts.

But the Board of Selectmen isn’t ready to abandon the idea entirely. Board Chairman Karen Strid said she has fielded many calls from residents in support of the ordinance but afraid to do so publicly for fear of retaliation.

After the last public hearing there was one

report of vandalism to the house of a supporter of the noise ordinance.

“We are in the information gathering phase,” Strid said. “We will revisit the idea after the summer and judge how effective the new enforcement has handled the noise issue.”

In order to do so, Strid implored all residents who find their quality of life hindered by noise to file a formal complaint. “We cannot stand up for you if you don’t do it yourself,” she warned.

There are currently a host of state statutes on the books limiting the rights of recreational vehicle riders. For instance, all vehicles must be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles unless solely ridden on the owner’s own property. Once a bike leaves your property it must be registered. Also, riding on public roads is forbidden.

Despite the absence of an official notice, Hebron officers can slap a \$103 ticket on inconsiderate riders for disorderly conduct or arrest them for breach of peace.

It is because of the existing statutes that many residents expressed opposition to the proposed noise ordinance. “I think we should put our effort into helping police enforce the laws we have, rather than make new legislation,” Scott Warner said at the April 26 public hearing.

During the six-month hiatus the town also suggested pursuing other methods of recreational vehicle abuse prevention. At the most recent public hearing, one Hebron resident, who is also a certified Tread Lightly trainer, volunteered to hold classes on riding etiquette.

Trooper Kelly Kraynak welcomed any calls from individuals looking for clarification on the currently enforceable state statutes. She can be reached at (860) 228-3710.

Annual Portland Town-Wide Tag Sale Saturday

by Michael McCoy

Ten years ago, Phyllis Frisbee had recently become aware of a town-wide tag sale in New Hampshire that had proven to be a successful fundraiser. Former Portland Finance Director Don Goodrich had heard similar things.

They broached the idea to the Portland Historical Society, which set out to organize a town-wide tag sale of their own. That first effort, with 30 registered sale sites, was a hit and the historical society was encouraged to continue with the annual event.

Today, the 30 sales of that first effort seem almost pathetic. This Saturday’s 11th annual town-wide sale has 129 registered sites for tag salers to descend upon in search of treasures.

As in other years, anyone interested in hosting a tag sale simply registers with the historical society for \$20 or \$25, depending on whether the early registration deadline is met. The registration money goes to the historical society, which organizes the event and prints a map showing all the sites. The seller keeps the money raised at each sale.

The historical society also stands to raise funds from their own tag sales. One will be held at the Portland Historical Society Museum garage along Route 17A, and the other will be at the Grange Hall grounds on Sage Hollow Road.

Sales will take place at residences throughout the town, as well as the Cellar Savers Museum, Methodist Church, Firehouses 1 and 2, and the high school.

Virtually anything one could think of will be available, including appliances, crafts, antiques, clothing, toys, furniture, DVDs, video games, computers, a weight bench, a dirt bike and perennial plants.

“Everybody has something a little different,” remarked Frisbee.

The museum sale will have a special section for a number of unique items, including ten pairs of wooden shoetrees and a brass Victo-

rian overhead lamp. As it happens, the aforementioned items were once owned by Carl Oscar Hedstrom, co-founder of Indian Motorcycles.

Incidentally, Frisbee’s husband Bill, along with their daughter Claire, designed and produced the maps to help shoppers navigate from sale to sale. Claire comes back to Portland from Wisconsin each year to do her part.

The tag sale map displays a layout of the town, with numbers showing the locations of particular sales. A corresponding table on the map lists the sort of items that will be offered at each numbered location.

For those not up for the challenge of hunting for deals, or those who simply want a little break, there are other activities. The Callander House will host a Chinese Auction, and Project Graduation will conduct a Cow Chip Raffle. The Grange Hall will add a bake sale to its piles of merchandise, as well as coffee and hot dogs. Fire House #1 will offer a pancake breakfast from 7am until noon.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield offered her endorsement of the tag sale, calling it “a wonderful annual event.”

“Tag sales are a lot of fun. It’s a great fundraiser for our historical society,” she remarked. She urged sale hoppers to, “Be gracious; be safe; and have a good time.”

Phyllis Frisbee, who is one of over 300 members of the Portland Historical Society, noted the drawing power that their event has created. She listed New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts as some of the places that people have been willing to travel from to attend the event in previous years.

Anyone with last minute questions about the tag sale may contact Ruth Freeburg at 342-3636. The tag sale runs from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday. Maps are available in the town clerk’s office, as well as at the public library.

Belltown Wastes No Time Adopting a Budget

by Michael McCoy

Last year the proposed East Hampton budget was rejected four times by voters, so town officials could be pardoned for being a little gun shy about the reception for this year’s proposal.

They needn’t have worried.

When the numbers were finally tallied around 8:15 p.m. Tuesday, the budget had passed on its first try with 991 “yes” and 725 “no” votes.

Of all eligible voters in town, 23% turned out to vote on the budget, which came in under \$35.2 million, marking a 5.22% increase over the 2006-2007 budget.

Notable budget items included \$59,000 for the retiling of the middle school as a result of asbestos issues and \$73,000 for a GVW Mason dump truck.

Board of Finance Vice Chairman Sharon Kjellquist said she thought voters realized the budget was not extravagant. “I think it’s a reasonable budget,” she said. “We had the support from all the boards and various parties.”

Rapid passage will also have a positive impact in other ways. “It will make sure that the Town Council and Board of Finance can start moving forward,” observed Kjellquist. “There were things last year that got delayed.”

Echoing those sentiments was Town Councilman Kyle Dostaler. In addition to speaking on the efficiency that is realized during a first-round budget adoption, Dostaler said, “It’s

progress for the town.”

“I think it was a joint effort of the Town Council and Board of Finance. It was a united front,” he added.

He also credited Finance Director Jeff Jyllka and Town Manager Alan Bergren with making sure the public was provided with accurate and sufficient information concerning the budget. “It’s great news,” he said of the vote.

Fellow Councilman Bill Devine praised the Board of Finance. “I think the Board of Finance did any excellent job,” he said. “It was very bipartisan. They spent months working this out.”

Further crediting the finance board on a job well done, he added, “They tried to keep it as low a they could.”

Town Manager Alan Bergren was also pleased. “It’s very good,” he said. “We can move forward with a number of initiatives. We thank all the voters today.”

Bergren also pointed out that with a situation like last year’s fiasco, “All you can do is maintain. We lost the whole season of construction last year.”

During a brief meeting held seconds after the budget results were announced, the Board of Finance, through consensus, opted to delay setting a mill rate until they have a clearer picture of what state grant money to expect. However, the projected mill rate is 23.3, just a 0.82 increase over the current one.

Finalized Budget Proposal Headed to Town Meeting in Marlborough

Marlborough voters will vote on the proposed town budget of \$20,088,775 at the Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, May 14 at 7 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria.

The budget, which represents a 5.14% increase over the current year’s budget, includes the addition of two staff positions at the Senior Center; an increase in staff hours at Town Hall; the addition of tax clerks to the Tax Office; office renovations at Town Hall; and a sand volleyball court at Blish Park.

Other items funded included include back stop fencing at the Park Road ball field and

bleachers at Memorial Field.

If approved, the budget will generate a .50 mill rate increase from the existing rate of 24.71, according to First Selectman Bill Black.

Capital items for voters’ consideration include \$12,000 for repairs to the playscape at Blish Park; \$11,200 for carpeting at Town Hall; and \$3,010 for office furniture for the Registrars at Town Hall.

The Marlborough Board of Finance unanimously approved the proposed budget of \$20,088,775 at the April 30 public hearing. The public can view the entire budget on the town website: <http://www.marlboroughct.net>

Colchester Land Trust Announces Salmon River Run Winners

A total of 125 participants turned out for the inaugural Salmon River 5.5 Mile Run (and Hike) held last Saturday at the Comstock covered bridge on the East Hampton/Colchester town line to benefit the Colchester Land Trust.

Runners and walkers were greeted with sunny skies and warm, spring time weather. Colchester's own Jimmy Grant was the overall winner and now holds the course record with a finish time of 30:05.

The winner of the women's division was Deborah Livingston of Bolton who won, pushing a baby jogger, with a finish time of 40:40.

Below are the top ten finishers, followed by the names and finishing times of Rivereast town participants.

First place Jimmy Grant, Colchester (30:05); 2nd place Jacob Edwards, N. Stonington (30:36); 3rd place, David McKay, Marlborough (31:27); 4th place, Matthew Roloff, East Hampton (33:30); 5th place, Tim Donahue, Gales Ferry (33:32); 6th place, Scott Livingston, Bolton, (34:19); 7th place, Ken Pacileo, Colchester, (34:25); 8th place, Paul Dominy, East Haddam (36:15); 9th place, Jon Schlidt, East Hartford (37:19); 10th place, Joe Balavender, Colchester (37:33).

Other finishers were: Patrick Reavey, Colchester (38:46); Don Quinn, Colchester (39:27); Tim Adams, Portland (40:05); John Mullaney, Colchester (40:19); Darrell Netto, Colchester (41:05); Dean Montgomery, Colchester (41:24); Jennifer Appleby, Colchester (41:28); William Carson, Colchester

(41:30); Mike Underwood, Hebron (42:18); Renie Besaw, Colchester (43:04); John Appleby, Colchester (43:50); Tim Curtis, Colchester (45:19); MaryBeth Dadona, Colchester (45:27); Courtney Witt, Colchester (45:38); Thomas Clarke, Colchester (45:46); Robin Lynch, Colchester (46:22); Dan Hageman, Colchester (47:02); John Perra, Portland (47:26); Nicole Weddell, Colchester (48:08); Wally Squier, East Hampton (48:20); Steve Lima, Colchester (48:35); Jamie Roach-Decker, Colchester (49:00); John Barnowski, Colchester (49:16); John Ceruti, Colchester (49:44); Andrea Birmingham, Colchester (49:46); Jen Lima, Colchester (50:21); Bruce Grisafe, Salem (51:45); Kathy Arbuckle, Colchester (51:57); Cole Maurer, Amston (53:03); Trent Sullivan, East Hampton (55:00); Angela Sotomeyor, Colchester (55:07); Gina Konen, Colchester (55:08); Bryan Shogren, East Hampton (55:52); Tonya Maurer, Amston (55:57); Louise Wickham, Colchester (57:13); Tim Kyser, Colchester (58:29); Joan Hageman, Colchester (59:12); Don Lerro, Colchester (60:07); Janlyn Neri, Colchester (61:17); Jane Carson, Colchester (61:21); Cecelia Grisafe, Salem (72:40); William Hochholzer, Colchester (89:08); Helene Hochholzer, Colchester (89:08); Melissa Alfieri, Hebron (93:12); Karen Ceruti, Colchester (93:12); Candy Webb, Colchester (94:34); Lorraine Levine, Colchester (94:34); Lisa Kessler, Colchester (94:52); Marlene Hageman, Colchester (100:06); Lynette Braunhardt, Amston (116:33).

Portland Prepares for Annual Budget Referendum

by Michael McCoy

Portland voters will go to the polls on Monday for the town's annual budget referendum.

The Board of Selectmen voted 6-1 in April to send the budget to the voters. The decision was relatively harmonious. Selectman John Anderson, who was critical of a \$25,000 allotment to fix the entrance to the library, cast the only dissenting vote.

The proposed budget comes to just under \$28.4 million, and reflects almost \$346,000 in cuts from the original proposal prepared by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and Finance Director Rob Buden. This budget carries a 3.37% increase over the current year's.

During that same April meeting, the Board of Selectmen, in an effort to provide further tax relief to the town, voted unanimously to enact an immediate hiring freeze. This means that all department heads would be required to approach the selectmen on a case-by-case basis when proposing to hire a new employee.

The vote does not mean there will be no hires. Bransfield noted that a hire deemed to be essential would not be denied. "We may need to fill every one," she said.

If the town votes to accept this 2007-08 budget, the estimated mill rate would be 27.53, though an exact number will be impossible to

compute until the town receives a clearer picture of what state money it can expect. The current year's mill rate is 38.91.

(The dramatic drop is a result of the 47% jump of the grand list during this year's reevaluation.)

On Monday, the budget went to a town meeting, where residents had a final chance to comment, though it was too late for any alterations.

"The town meeting went very well," said Bransfield. "I think that there were some really good questions. Both boards are very fiscally responsible. I think that came through at the town meeting."

As for the budget itself, Bransfield expressed relative satisfaction. "I think it is one of the most modest increases," she said.

"We're really trying to hold the line for the elderly and those with fixed incomes," she added. "We've made every effort to increase services and have a minimal increase in expenditures."

Finally, Bransfield promised, "As soon as the town knows, I will let everyone know what the final grants will be."

The referendum for the proposed 2007-08 budget will be held from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in the public library's Mary Flood Room.

PZC Clears Way for Elmcrest Site Proposal in Portland

by Michael McCoy

A decision on Thursday, May 3, by the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) could be the first step in a process to bring a 140,000 square foot development to downtown Portland.

During their meeting at Brownstone Intermediate School, which followed a continuation of a public hearing, the PZC voted 3-0-2 to amend the zoning regulations to allow "mixed use" of commercial development and housing.

That would open the way for Portland Town Center to develop the former Elmcrest property off Route 66 with a mix of housing and retail.

The 3-0-2 vote reflected 3 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 2 abstentions. Robert Spencer and Ellen Roman opted to abstain, saying that they would prefer more time to further review the application.

Portland Town Center is a newly established collective, which proposes developing the Elmcrest property with commercial establishments, such as a bookstore, a grocery store, restaurants and office space, alongside residential buildings.

That parcel is currently zoned B3, which would basically allow all of these aims to be achieved, with the exception of the residential buildings.

In its application, Portland Town Center proposed that all B1, B2, B3, and IP Zones be al-

lowed to apply for a Mixed Use Development Special Permit. This would allow for commercial and residential property to exist side by side on the same parcel.

The proposal is not site specific, and does not entail a permanent change to the particular zoning of the Elmcrest property.

The May 3 hearing was a continuation of the public hearing that began on April 5. At that time many residents spoke both for and against the change. That dialogue continued last Thursday.

During the hearing, Ellen Roman, who abstained from voting, seemed wary of the proposal. "We have to be sure that we have the control," she stated. "We don't want to end up with a mess." She cited a similar proposal in Plainville that apparently did not work out as hoped.

In addition to the mixed-use change, one controversial element involved the so-called "big box debate."

When the PZC was putting together the town's new Plan of Conservation and Development (PoCD), it established that no single entity could inhabit a commercial space that exceeded a 40,000 square foot footprint.

Now, in exchange for certain provisos, most notably the inclusion of no less than 20% permanent green space, properties that qualify for the mixed-use change will be allowed one

single entity space of no more than 65,000 square feet.

PZC member Bruce Tyler reminded the public of the gravity of this decision. "I think the key thing to remember here is that we are affecting our business district for the next 100 years," he observed.

One resident pointed to the Glen Lochen development in downtown Glastonbury, expressing doubts as to the success of mixed use there.

Portland Town Center legal counsel Peter Alter, whose firm is based in Glastonbury, disagreed. "It's reasonably successful for what it is," he said of Glen Lochen. "It's a unique building."

Tom Flood expressed whole-hearted support. "I feel so strongly about this," he said. "It's a slam dunk, and I endorse it." He added, "This is absolutely necessary," referring to the tax relief the Portland Town Center project it would bring to the town.

Dave Sundell was PZC chairman last year during its PoCD deliberations. He has since stepped down from the commission after a long tenure. Speaking to the guidelines he helped put in place, Sundell said, "I think this falls right in line with them." He continued, "It has the potential to hurt some businesses in town. However, in the long run, it benefits the town, and it benefits the town tremendously."

Marlborough Police News

Colchester Police News

5/2—Eric J. Koch, 18, of 235 Old Hartford Rd., was arrested for possession of marijuana, possession of paraphernalia and possession of prescription medication not in its original container, according to reports.

5/2—Michael Balsar, 28, of 2 Country Place, was arrested for assault and disorderly conduct following an alleged domestic dispute, according to reports.

5/4—Constance Griffin, 57, of Groton, was arrested for DWI, according to police.

5/7—Two juveniles were arrested at Bacon Academy for breach of peace following a fight, according to police.

Andover Police News

A 15-year-old juvenile was arrested for driving without a license, threatening, assault and breach of peace following an alleged "road rage" incident, according to reports.

5/9—Colleen Leary, 18, of 264 Millstream Rd., was arrested for possession of narcotics, possession of paraphernalia and the illegal storage of a narcotic, according to police.

Portland Police News

5/9—Mary Dondero, 60, of Glastonbury was arrested for DWI and using a cell phone while driving, according to state police.

East Hampton Police News

4/24 — Daniel R. Hill, 19, of 60 Lake St., Middletown, was arrested for reckless driving and failure to carry an insurance card.

4/27 — John Marchinkowski, 39, no address listed, was arrested for larceny 4th degree.

4/27 — Oddvar Breiland, 64, of 33 Wangonk Trail, East Hampton, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to obey a stop sign.

4/28 — Robert F. Rainville, 18, of 130 Tartia Rd., East Hampton, was issued a ticket for negligent operation of an ATV and operating an ATV on a public highway.

4/28 — Bryan Zingle, 21, of 24 Harland Place, East Hampton, was arrested for operating under suspension.

4/28 — A 16-year-old female juvenile was issued a ticket for operating without a license and failure to obey a traffic light.

On the other hand, Sari Rosenbaum worried that the special perks that a group like Portland Town Center would receive may be unwarranted. "I think we're giving away the store," she said. "Are they threatening you and saying that they'll walk away if they don't get 65,000 square feet? Maybe you need to call their bluff."

Howard Rosenbaum seemed to concur. "I do have a problem with the 65,000," he admitted. "I got the impression that the vast majority of the town wanted to stay away from that."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield who had supported the change, expressed appreciation for the work the Planning & Zoning Commission did on the request. "The public had a lot of good questions and a lot of good comments," she added. "I look forward to seeing how this project will proceed."

She also expressed her support of the proposal, and noted her preference for the special permit process as opposed to an outright zone change to the property. "It's a good way to control the project as it goes forward," suggested Bransfield.

Finally, referring to the many steps involved in a project of this magnitude Portland Town Center proposes, she reminded the public, "This is not by any means finished."

The next step for Portland Town Center will be to submit a site plan to the PZC.

4/28 — Robert C. Thomassian, 52, of 204 Lake Vista Dr., East Hampton, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right.

5/1 — A 17-year-old male juvenile was arrested pursuant to seven warrants on the following charges: criminal mischief 3rd degree (three counts), criminal attempt to commit burglary (two counts), criminal mischief 2nd degree, burglary 3rd degree (three counts), larceny 5th degree (two counts), criminal mischief 1st degree, larceny 6th degree and larceny 4th degree.

5/1 — George E. Hall 3rd, 48, of 129 Tartia Rd., East Hampton, was arrested for disorderly conduct and assault third.

5/2 — A 17-year-old male juvenile was arrested for breach of peace 2nd degree and threatening.

RHAM Budget Passes in Low Turnout

by Sarah McCoy

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski and members of the Board of Education (BOE) let out a sigh of relief Tuesday night. Their budget passed by 112 votes after tallies from the three towns had been counted.

The budget calls for an overall increase of 5.1% over the current year's budget. Roughly 3% of the increase will go toward continuing the programming currently in place. The bulk of the remaining 2% comes from costs associated with a student enrollment increase, an increase in Special Education students, health insurance, and utilities.

Siminski began the budget process last December and recommended a 5.89% increase to the BOE in February. The BOE then made adjustments in March and April to reduce the number to 5.1%.

Andover voters shot down the \$22.5 budget with 77 in favor of the proposal and 163 opposed. But voters in Hebron and Marlborough more than made up for the difference. Hebron approved the budget 525-446 and

Marlborough 277-158.

"I am obviously happy it passed," Siminski said late Tuesday night. "But the low voter turnout is troublesome."

Last year 2,019 voters cast their ballots in the three towns. This year the number declined to 1,647.

Siminski guessed that the voters didn't take issue with any items on the budget and therefore didn't feel a need to vote. "I'd like to think that voters were genuinely pleased with the budget we put forth and, for whatever reason, just weren't able to get to the polls," he said.

According to Siminski, the district handled publicizing the budget and the referendum the same as in past years.

Even though the budget cycle has come to a close for 2007, Dr. Siminski insists that the need for "fiscal responsibly" still continues. He is estimating a surplus from the current year's budget due to fuel and electricity savings from a mild winter, health insurance, and a higher-than-expected state contribution to the district's Special Education Department.

Marlborough Business Group Pitches in for Local Family in Need

by Sarah McCoy

When Maryjane Fay of All Phase Heating and Cooling responded to a call for a broken boiler she didn't think much of it. As a heating, ventilation and air conditioning contractor, these calls are common.

But when Maryjane and her husband Kevin got to the home, the situation was anything but common. They found a single parent and two kids who had been living with only a kerosene heater since their furnace broke in 2004.

Fixing the 1950 American Standard furnace would provide only a temporary solution, but replacing it was more than the family could afford. "I couldn't, in good conscious, fix this [heating] system knowing that it wasn't going to work for long," said Maryjane.

But she felt she had to do something. "They were such a kind family and in need of a little extra help."

The Fays brought the situation up with Paul Currie, chairman of the Giving Back Commission for the Southeast Chapter of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of Connecticut (PHCC). Currie and the Fays returned to the property to determine the project's worthiness for free assistance. As Currie shook the ice cold hand of the young son, the deal was done.

At their following meeting the Southeast PHCC unanimously approved the Marlborough project.

The PHCC is a statewide group of contractors whose mission is to bring about advancement in the trade with focuses on education, safety, the environment and the comfort of so-

ciety. The Southeast chapter is the largest in the state with representation from 35 companies.

Eight of those companies came out last Friday to Marlborough to volunteer their time installing a new boiler for the family in need. Arriving at around 9 a.m., it took the group until the late afternoon to finish the necessary work.

In addition to installing the boiler, the volunteers also installed a dishwasher for the family and did some minor plumbing work.

"We are trying to steer away from the stereotypical views that surround our profession," PHCC Southeast chapter President Jack Cawley said. "This is a great time for us to get together as friends and help out a great family."

Cawley estimated that the chapter does about two or three pro bono projects a year but none have been as extensive as this. Between the supplies and labor, installing the heating system would have cost the family around \$5,000.

Viking Supply Company out of Norwich and Shetucket Plumbing, out of Colchester, donated the materials for the installation. Volunteers on the project include All Phase Heating and Cooling of East Haddam; Cawley Plumbing and Heating; ASI Plumbing, Heating, and Air; B&S Plumbing; Currie's Plumbing and Heating; Efficient Plumbing and Heating; Doc's Plumbing; Maruzzo Plumbing and Heating; and James Brown Plumbing and Heating.

"We all will walk away from this home feeling proud," said Cawley. "The family is very grateful to us and we are just happy to be in a position where we could make a difference."

New East Hampton Business Offers T-shirts, Screen-printing & More

by Michael McCoy

The East Hampton Economic Development Commission (EDC) is welcoming another business to the fold, just in time for summer. Tees and More on the Lake celebrated their grand opening last Saturday. EDC Chairman Mary Ann Dostaler and Town Manager Alan Bergren were on hand to congratulate the owner.

Cherry Haddock is the friendly proprietor that patrons can expect to meet when visiting Tees and More on the Lake. Originally from New York City, she and her husband Michael most recently lived in Westchester, NY before moving to East Hampton in 2005. Together they have three children, Jaden, Jaren, and Maliya, who are 7, 5, and 3 respectively.

Haddock works at Tees and More in Hartford, which, similar to her new venture, is an outfitter specializing in screen-printing. That shop is owned and operated by Marco Venditti, who Haddock cites as a major asset in helping her start her own business.

Tees and More on the Lake offers a host of items such as shoes, sweatshirts, uniforms, wallets, jackets, jerseys, sunglasses, and even jewelry. "I just love jewelry; it's my personal hobby," says Haddock. They also sell t-shirts.

Brands include Champion, American Apparel, Bella, Columbia, and a number of others.

However, their specialty is screen-printing and embroidery, which can be added to virtually anything that the shop offers. "There is no

one around here who does that," says Cherry, who added that those in the area seeking this service have previously been forced to drive in to Hartford.

Haddock does request a minimum of 12 items for screen-printing and six pieces for embroidery orders. She especially hopes to serve business, athletic teams and other organizations looking for specialized items like uniforms, signs, banners or promotional goods. Tees also offers engraving services, which would apply to things such as trophies or plaques.

Tees and More on the Lake is located at 7 West High Street/Route 66 in East Hampton in a red brick building that Cherry had her eye on since moving into town. "The moment I saw this building, it hit me right away that I would open a store here," remembers Haddock.

Soon after realizing that the location was available, she secured the spot and spent the next two weeks preparing. The most notable change to the building was the new eye-catching paint scheme. Added to the bright colors of all the apparel is a vivid green and purple interior.

Other than Haddock's affinity for vibrant colors, the idea for the colors, which extend to part of the exterior as well was put this way: "I wanted to get people to say, 'Hmm...I wonder what's in there.'" Indeed, Haddock said, "People are talking about the color already."

"The location is easier and more convenient



Town Manager Alan Bergren, Cherry and Michael Haddock, and EDC member Mary Ann Dostaler at Tees and More on the Lake during the new store's sunny, Saturday grand opening.

for people in town," says Haddock. "It's basically a one-stop shop." Haddock also praised the friendly vibe that the business has received so far from the town, especially the EDC which she says has "been very supportive and communicative."

During the weekend, Tees and More adds a

mini tag sale to their storefront. Hours of operations are Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m.-7p.m. and Sunday from 12-5pm. More information can also be found at www.teesandmore1.com. They can be reached by phone at 267-1600 or by e-mail at accounts@teesandmore1.com

Portland Motorist Faces Jail After No Contest Plea

A 20-year-old Portland woman pleaded no contest last week to 2nd degree manslaughter in a plea deal that is expected to put her behind bars for at least five years.

Jennifer Mazzotta was charged in connection with the death of Mary Heidel of East Hampton in a head-on collision on Route 151 in Middle Haddam the evening of August 12, 2006.

According to police, Mazzotta, then 19, was drinking blackberry brandy and hard lemonade she had purchased at a package store in Middletown that Saturday evening about an hour before her Chevrolet Blazer swerved across the center line on a curve on Route 151 at about 8:20 p.m. and struck another Blazer operated by Heidel.

A police investigation indicated that neither driver apparently had time or opportunity to apply the brakes.

Heidel, 40, died at the scene. Mazzotta and three teenaged passengers, all from Portland, were severely injured in the crash.

Mazzotta suffered two broken legs; her 15-year-old brother Joseph suffered internal injuries which required the removal of his spleen and segments of his intestines; Kathryn Visone, 15, broke her wrist and left leg; Kyle Day, 14, injured his spine and had fractured ribs.

A four-month investigation into the accident by East Hampton police resulted in Mazzotta being charged in December with second degree manslaughter with a motor vehicle, three counts of second degree assault, driving while intoxicated and failure to drive in the right-hand lane.

According to court documents, Mazzotta's blood-alcohol level registered at 0.16 in tests following the accident. That is twice the legal limit in the state for adults and far more

than the 0.2 limit applied to minors.

Urine samples taken from Mazzotta that night tested positive for chemicals indicating marijuana use, according to court records.

The police arrest warrant indicated that Mazzotta was drinking as she drove her three passengers around town in what began as a trip to visit her grandmother. A police search of the SUV she was driving that night revealed an unopened bottle of Mike's Hard Crisp Apple alcoholic drink, a pill bottle containing Prozac, a glass smoking pipe and Zig-Zag brand rolling papers, according to the police report.

In a court appearance last February, Mazzotta pleaded not guilty to the charges resulting from the crash. But on May 2, in Middletown Superior Court, she changed her plea to no contest. The plea does not admit guilt, but is the equivalent of a guilty plea insofar as sentencing is concerned.

Under the plea bargain with prosecutors, Mazzotta, who spent months in a wheelchair and now relies on a walker to get around, would be sentenced to ten years in prison. This sentence would be suspended after she serves between five and seven years, to be followed by probation.

Mazzotta is due back in court July 13 for a pre-sentence investigation after which the judge decides on the actual sentence to be imposed.

Mary Heidel's husband, Thomas, is suing various parties in connection with his wife's death. Included among the defendants are Jennifer Mazzotta; Mazzotta's mother, Michelle Sofianos, who owned the SUV she was driving; and North End Package Store, d/b/a Forest City Wine, according to court records. He is seeking in excess of \$15,000.

The lawsuit was filed Oct. 24, 2006

Obituaries

Colchester

Ernest Leff

Ernest Leff, formerly of Colchester and Westport, died Wednesday, May 2, at the age of 82 near his home in Los Angeles, CA.

Since 1963 Mr. Leff lived and practiced law in Los Angeles, specializing in financial institutions. Among his professional accomplishments, he argued and won a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, Fidelity Federal Savings & Loan Association v. DeLaCuesta.

Mr. Leff graduated from Bacon Academy in Colchester in 1942. He was an infantryman during World War II, surviving the Battle of the Bulge and capture by the Germans.

After the war, he graduated from the University of Connecticut and New York University School of Law. He worked as an attorney in the Justice Department's Antitrust Division and then followed his mentor, Thurman Arnold, to the Washington, D.C. firm of Arnold, Fortas & Porter.

Moving to Los Angeles, Leff became general counsel to Home Savings & Loan Association and American Savings & Loan Association and then became a name partner in several downtown Los Angeles law firms.

He is survived by his devoted wife of 52 years, Ada G. Leff; his daughter, Laurel Leff, her husband, Jeremy Paul and their sons Jason and Russell Paul, of West Hartford; his son, Andrew Leff, his wife Shellie Leff, and their daughters Rebecca and Jennifer Leff of Calabasas, CA. He is also survived by his brother, Eugene Lefkowitz and his wife, Annette, of Goulsboro, PA; and his brother, Sanford Leff, and his wife, Deborah, of Woodbury, NY; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services took place at Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., Colchester, on Sunday, May 6. The family will observe shiva at the Leff-Paul residence, 141 Steele Rd., West Hartford. Contributions in Leff's memory can be made to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), 31 Center Dr., 8A07, Bethesda, MD 20892-2540.

Hebron

Kathleen F. Andrews

Kathleen Frances (O'Mara) Andrews, 72, of Hebron, beloved wife of Joseph Andrews died Friday, May 4, at her home with her husband by her side.

Born Sept. 28, 1934 in Greensberg, PA, the daughter of the late John Francis and Frances (Urban) O'Mara, she had lived in Hebron for 33 years. She was a 1953 graduate of Latrobe High School, Latrobe PA.

Kathleen and Joseph were married in Ligonier, PA in 1953 and moved to Connecticut in 1957 where they settled in Marlborough. Kathleen was a Cub Scout leader and worked as a real estate agent, she was elected Constable in Marlborough in 1968. She was a member of St. Patrick Church Women's Guild, and a member of the Republican Town Committee.

She was a 1971 graduate of Middlesex Memorial Hospital School of Nursing where she received her LPN degree and had served as the class president. Upon her graduation she worked as a nurse at Marlborough Manor.

Kathleen was recognized for her service to the town of Marlborough, and was awarded the Marlborough Tricentennial Medal commemorating the 350th anniversary of Connecticut.

Kathleen and Joseph moved to Hebron where she served with the Hebron Police Department. During the Hebron Harvest Fair Kathleen performed her duties as a police officer on horseback; she also worked as the "in school suspension monitor" at RHAM High School. She retired as a police officer after 18 years of service to the Town of Hebron. Kay as she was affectionately known took in many animals over the years and cared for them.

Besides her husband she is survived by her four sons, John Andrews of East Hartford, James Andrews of Parker, CO, Joseph Andrews of Castle Rock, CO, and Jeffrey Andrews of Hebron; she also leaves her granddaughter Jamie Andrews and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her sister, Patricia Grote.

A memorial Mass was celebrated Wednesday morning in St. Patrick Church, East Hampton. Burial was in the family plot in New Hebron Cemetery, Hebron. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions can be made to the Hebron Volunteer Ambulance Assoc, PO Box 911, Hebron, CT 06248. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton has care of arrangements.

Hebron

Pasqualina Meli

Pasqualina (Zappulla) Meli, "Pat", 86, of Amston, formerly of Hartford and Newington, widow of the late Charles "Jet" Meli, Sr., passed away Sunday morning, May 6, at the Windham Community Memorial Hospital in Willimantic.

Born April 6, 1921 in Hartford, she was a daughter of the late Sebastiano Zappulla and Carmela (Faraci) Zappulla Guarino. On Feb. 22, 1941, she wed Charles and together they shared 56 years of marriage before he predeceased her on May 16, 1997.

She was a former member of the Warburton Chapel in Hartford and was a 50+ year member of Center Church (First Church of Christ Congregational) in Hartford. An avid animal lover, she especially loved her cats and had also worked at her daughter's pet grooming shop in Hartford for seven years. In her spare time, she enjoyed opera music, was a talented baker, an avid reader and always kept abreast of current issues. Mrs. Meli was very proud to have received her Honorary High School Diploma from Bulkeley High School in Hartford in 2006.

Most importantly, she will be remembered for her warm and inviting home and her undying devotion to her family, which over the years would grow to include numerous individuals that would call her "Mom." She is survived by six children, Patricia Mancini of Columbia, Thomas Meli and his wife, Theresa of Hampton, Joaneen Soucy and her husband, Gilbert of Andover, Carmel Meli of Andover, Dorothy Normand and her husband, Richard of Goffstown, NH and Florence Meli of Hebron; a daughter-in-law, Gayle Meli of Kentucky; 15 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; three sisters, Pauline Carbone of Old Lyme, Mary Carlson of Portland and Carol DiNatale of West Hartford; and numerous extended family members and friends. In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by a son, Charles Meli, Jr.; a great granddaughter, Kathryn Mae Hart and a sister, Carmela "Millie" Pellegrino.

Calling hours were Wednesday evening at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Funeral services were Thursday morning at the funeral home. Interment was in St. Peter's Cemetery, Hebron.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Center Church Camp Asto Wamah, 60 Gold St., Hartford 06103, the Willimantic Dial-A-Ride, 968 Main St., Willimantic 06226 or to the Hebron Senior Center, 14 Stonecroft Dr., Hebron 06248.

Colchester

Chester J. Chmiel

Chester J. Chmiel, 93, of Stuart, FL, formerly of Colchester, passed peacefully on April 21 at Martin Nursing Home and Restorative Care in Florida.

Born Aug. 23, 1913 in Bronx, NY, he was a son to the late Stanislaus and Rosalia Chmiel. In 1920 the family moved to Colchester and bought a farm. He worked the farm with his family, along with many other jobs, graduated from Bacon Academy and then moved back to New York.

He attended RCA and RTI Institute to learn radio and TV repair. He then went on to own and operate R&H radio and TV store. Mr. Chmiel then joined the NYC Fire Department and retired after 20 years of service. He was very active in their Holy Name Society. He had also worked for Grumman Aircraft on Long Island on the LEM program for seven years.

He moved back to Colchester in 1966 to their cottage on Pickerel Lake, where he shared many wonderful memories with family and friends. Chester was very civic minded. He was vice president of the St. Joseph Polish Society in Colchester, chairman of the Building Committee Rules Commission, Rotary Club past president, treasurer of Colchester Taxpayers Association, chairman of Zoning & Planning Commission of Colchester, COAP Economic Development Commission, member of the Moose Club. He also owned and operated two package stores in Colchester.

He moved back to Florida in 1981 and served on several boards for his condo association. Chester was an avid golfer and belonged to several golf and country clubs.

He married on Sept. 3, 1936 to Helen T. (Kaminski) Chmiel, who predeceased him. He is survived by a son, Eugene and wife Florence Chmiel of East Hampton; two grandsons, Eugene and wife Audra of Clinton, Jason and wife Julie of Florence, KY; four great grandchildren, Nicholas, Jesse, Kaitlin and Megan Chmiel; and many loving nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by four brothers, Ted, Mack, Ed and Ray Chmiel, and two sisters, Stella Wolk and Tess Tarnowski.

A graveside service will be held Friday, May 18 at 10 a.m. in the St. Joseph Cemetery in Colchester. Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, has been entrusted with arrangements.

Colchester

Helen T. Chmiel

Helen T. (Kaminski) Chmiel, 90, of Stuart, FL, formerly of Colchester, died April 3 at Martin Nursing and Restorative Care in Florida.

Helen was born Sept. 5, 1916, the daughter of the late Frank and Mary Kaminski. She was married to the late Chester Chmiel for 71 wonderful years. Mr. Chmiel passed away April 21. Together they owned and operated two package stores in Colchester.

Helen loved to knit, crochet and embroider.

She is survived by a son, Eugene and wife Audra of Clinton; Jason and wife Julie of Florence, KY; four great grandchildren, Nicolas, Jesse, Katilin and Megan Chmiel; a sister, Andzia Hryszuk of Bellmore, NY; and many loving nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held Friday, May 18 at 10 a.m. in the St. Joseph Cemetery, Colchester. Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, has been entrusted with arrangements.

Hebron

Steven T. McSweeney

Steven Taylor McSweeney, 47, of Amston, beloved husband of Catherine (Weaving) McSweeney, passed away Sunday morning, May 6, after a long, courageous battle with Crohn's Disease.

Born March 30, 1960 in Hartford, he was a son of the late Thomas and Jane (Murray) McSweeney.

Steve grew up in Hartford and West Hartford, studying at the Loomis Chaffee School and later attending Northeastern University, where he majored in Business Management.

On Sept. 30, 1989, he and Cathy were married in Hartford.

Early on, Steve worked for The Hartford in the claims department and went on to join Aetna for the past 19 years, where he was currently an Underwriting Manager.

He always enjoyed sports, especially golfing and had volunteered as a basketball coach for his daughter's team in Hebron. His talents were many and diverse, from his beautiful gardens and landscaped yard, wonderful culinary creations, beautiful paintings; exceptionally crafted pieces of fine furniture, and his skill as a Blues harpist, as he held a love for both Jazz and Blues music – all of these and many more will be treasured by all who knew Steve. Most importantly, he will be remembered for his love for his family, to whom he was ever devoted.

In addition to his loving wife of 17 years, he is survived by his beloved daughter, Jessica; his brothers and sisters-in-law, Terence and Joyce McSweeney and Tim McSweeney and Anne Gustafson; his stepmother, Doris McSweeney; his aunt, Deborah Murray; his wife's family - parents, Bill and Polly Weaving and her siblings and their spouses, Donna and Chris Cobb, Raymond and Michelle Weaving and Shelley and Joseph Drost; his nieces and nephews, Adam and Cara McSweeney, Maryellen and Melissa Weaving, Ariana Nardella and Holden Drost; and numerous cousins, extended family members and friends.

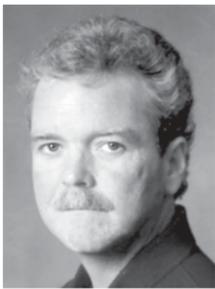
Steven lived with many wonderful cats over his lifetime and leaves his three beloved cats, Heidi, Harvey and Hubert.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his uncle, Raymond Murray and his cousin, Peter Murray

Calling hours were Thursday evening at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester.

The Funeral Liturgy will be celebrated today (Friday, May 11) at 11 a.m. directly at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., (Rte. 85), Hebron, with Fr. Michael Smith, officiating. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, 386 Park Avenue So., 17th Fl., New York, NY 10016-8804 or to the animal charity of one's choice or Meriden Humane Society, 311 Murdock Ave., Meriden, CT 06450.



East Hampton

John W. "Jack" Whitty

John W. "Jack" Whitty, age 80, of Milton, DE, formerly of East Hampton, died Friday, April 13, at his residence in Milton.

Mr. Whitty was born in Hartford, son of the late John W. and Alice (Wall) Whitty. He was in the insurance industry all of his working life and was owner of the J.W. Whitty Insurance Agency in East Hampton for 45 years.

A long-time resident of East Hampton, he graduated from E.H. High School and lived in the community for 40 years. He served on the Board of Education and was active in local politics.

He moved to Old Lyme, in 1976 and after retirement in 1997 moved to Milton, DE. His son and son-in-law are the owners of Dynamic Mortgage in Rehoboth Beach.

Mr. Whitty served in the U.S. Navy during World War II with the rank of Machinists Mate 3rd Class. He was a member of the Rotary Club, an avid golfer and reader.

Most dear to him were his loving wife and family. He is survived by his wife Diane M. (Lent) Whitty; four daughters, Laura, Elizabeth, Diane Marie and Katie; six sons, David, Dennis, John, Stephen, Chris and Ray; one sister, Laura Connelly of Glastonbury; two brothers, Tom Whitty of Sarasota, FL and Robert Whitty of West Yarmouth, MA; and 21 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

No one could have loved his family more than Jack Whitty and no one was loved more in return.

A Memorial Mass will be held at St. Patrick's Church in East Hampton on May 12, at 10 a.m. Services in Delaware were held previously. Memorial contributions are suggested to: Delaware Hospice, 20167 Office Circle, Georgetown, DE 19947.

Arrangements by Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium, Lewes, DE.

Send on-line condolences to: condolences@parsellfuneralhomes.com.



East Hampton

Kent H. Hadley

Kent Hammond Hadley, 76, of North Main St., East Hampton, husband of Janice (Wright) Hadley died at Middlesex Hospital on Sunday, May 6.

Born in Meriden, he was the son of the late Donald Lee and Irene (Robinson) Hadley, and lived in East Hampton for the past six years. Before moving to East Hampton he lived in Killingworth, and Benton, PA.

He received his bachelor's degree in Economics from UConn and his master's degree from Southern Connecticut State College. He retired from the Southern New England Telephone Company in New Haven in 1985, where he had worked for 30 years.

He was a member of the Madison Rod and Gun Club, the Heartland Golden Retriever Rescue, and was a Life Member of the National Rifle Association. Kent was an avid outdoorsman. In his younger years, he was involved in Scouting, and enjoyed hunting and fishing. In his later years, he enjoyed shooting, and walking in the woods with his dogs. He was an ardent supporter of the Second Constitutional Amendment, which gives law-abiding citizens the right to keep and bear arms.

Besides his wife he is survived by one son, Jonathan Hadley and his wife Tina of Haddam; one daughter, Jacalyn Penyak and her husband Mark of Bethel; one brother, Glen R. Hadley and his wife Ruthanne of Hebron; his grandchildren, Katie and Jeffrey Penyak and Matt and Michelle Plum; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at the Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown on Monday evening, May 14. The service will begin promptly at 6 p.m. A time of visitation will follow the service until 7:30 p.m. Reception to follow. Interment will be in Winsor Family Cemetery, Johnston, RI at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers contributions may be made in his memory to Weiss Hospice Unit, c/o Dept. of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457, www.middlesexhospital.org/donate or the Heartland Golden Retriever Rescue, 1508 Bickerstaff Blvd., Knoxville, TN 37922.

Portland

Arthur W. Johnson

Arthur W. (Buster) Johnson, Jr., 77, of Woodstock, husband for over 55 years of Barbara (Blatchley) Johnson died Monday, May 7, at Day Kimball Hospital in Putnam.

Born Nov. 8, 1929 in Brooklyn, NY, the son of the late Arthur W. and Eva (Kruger) Johnson, he was raised in Haddam Neck and lived in Middletown and Portland before moving to Woodstock in 1989. He graduated from East Hampton High School and attended Upsalla College before serving as a corporal in the U.S. Army from 1951-1953 in Korea during the Korean War.

He and his wife owned and operated the Quarry Town Stables horse farm in Portland for 30 years, before buying and continuing to operate the Woodstock Acres Riding Stable in Woodstock. He was very active in the horse world over the years and was a past President and Senior Director of the Connecticut Horse Shows Assn., served as Treasurer of the Connecticut Quarter Horse Assn., was President of the Connecticut Horsemen, and was a charter member of the Connecticut Horse Council. He attended numerous horse shows as a truck driver, coach, and groom for his children and students. His voice will be missed at shows where he announced over the years and throughout the Southern New England area.

Arthur operated two service stations after leaving the service. He then served as a Regional Manager of Real Estate & Construction for several major companies including: Hardee's Restaurants, Pizza Hut, Wendy's Restaurants, Gulf Oil Corp. and Firestone, procuring properties and overseeing the construction of buildings throughout the Northeast for over 40 years until his semi-retirement to the farm.

Known as "Buster" by family and friends, he was always there with a helping hand for anyone in need and enjoyed building and repairing many of the things on both farms. He loved to operate his "John Deere" and liked to go deep sea fishing. He was an avid sports fan of UConn Men's and Women's Basketball, Boston Red Sox, New England Patriots, New York Giants and NASCAR Racing.

Besides his wife he is survived by two sons, Dr. Donald Johnson, living and teaching in Thailand, Robert Johnson who still operates the farm in Portland; a daughter, Patricia Stovel of Chester Springs, PA; two sisters, Barbara Johnson of Chagrin Falls, OH, and Jean Schleidt of Haddam Neck; a grandson, Kyle Johnson; granddaughters Rebecca and Rachel Johnson and Alexis Stovel; and several nephews, a niece and cousins.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 12 at 10 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will follow in Rock Landing Cemetery in Haddam Neck. Friends may call at the funeral home on Saturday from 9 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions can be made to the American Cancer Society, Franklin Commons 106 Route 32 Franklin, CT 06254-1800.