

RIVEREAST

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Nineteen cars make their move during the first round of the demolition derby last Thursday night (Sept. 6) at the Hebron Harvest Fair. The demolition derby drew thousands of spectators watching 60 cars compete for the \$1,000 grand prize. Overall, attendance at the four-day fair was down, though it still drew more than 145,000.

Attendance Dips, But Hebron Harvest Fair Considered Success

by Sarah McCoy

Despite beautiful weather and a problem-free weekend, the Hebron Harvest Fair's attendance continues to decline.

This year total attendance for the four-day fair, which was held Sept. 6-9, was down 10 percent from last year, putting a damper on the fundraising efforts of many organizations that have come to rely on the fair for exposure.

"Nationally we are seeing a trend," Hebron Lions Club immediate past president Richard Griswold said. "Is it the economy? Is it something else? It is something we are going to have to look into."

Still, even with the attendance drop, 145,000 people went to the fair. So the Hebron Lions will still likely be able to pay their bills and then some. Each spring the organization holds a "Night of Giving," where the Lions make the bulk of their annual donations to local and national organizations. Much of this money comes from the Hebron Harvest Fair.

Neither Griswold nor Fair Superintendent Robert Lee are ready to hit the panic button. The Hebron Harvest Fair continued to be, as it has in the past, an experience for the senses, with offers ranging from cars slamming into one another to the sounds of the country setting to the tastes of hot fried dough, doused with powdered sugar.

"We like to think of it as the event that

unites Hebron and puts the town on the map," Lee said. "It's a good thing to be known for."

This year the Lions made some changes to attempt to appeal to a wider audience. They introduced a third stage and agricultural education area specifically for children and families. It was here that kids laughed with Bella the Clown, stood in amazement at Michael Michaels the magician and learned what it means to be a farmer. The Lions received positive feedback on the inaugural section but said the smaller-sized venue didn't draw the attention they had hoped for.

"It's an area for reevaluation but it's certainly not an idea we're ready to scrap," Lee said. "By the end of the weekend we saw kids learning and enjoying it, which is, obviously, something we'd like to continue."

There were also new carnival rides this year. With a roller coaster and a large selection of rides, Reithoffer's Shows proved successful, easing the fears of Lee.

"The rides were a big focus for us this year after last's year trouble," he said. "I think we hit a home run with Reithoffer's."

Last year Amusement of America failed to open about two-thirds of their rides, resulting in negative publicity from several news outlets. This year Reithoffer's was up and running by Thursday and contin-

ued through Sunday. Lines stretched on for the Dutch Wheel ferris wheel and teens clamored for another ride on the Indy 500 roller coaster.

"We were very, very pleased," Griswold said of the carnival provider. The Lions Club has a contract with Reithoffer's for the coming year but it is contingent upon an annual review that will be conducted later this year.

Local band Columbia Fields drew one of the largest crowds of the fair with hundreds of onlookers dancing and singing along with the foursome.

This year the Hebron Lions also reported great success with their online endeavors. For the first time the Club invited visitors to purchase admission and ride tickets from home and print them out to ease their fair experience.

"What we saw was a smoother transaction for our volunteers as well as for our guests," Griswold reported. "It also enabled us to get a better idea of how many people are coming to the fair and when. These are all things we'll take into consideration when we plan for next year."

And though next year might seem far off, it really isn't as far as the Lions are concerned. This past Wednesday, mere days after the festival ended, they got together to begin planning the 2008 edition of the Hebron Harvest Fair.

Court Upholds Colchester PZC Decision

by Jim Salemi

A Connecticut Superior Court judge has rejected an appeal by a local farmer and others who filed suit against the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, contending that it acted illegally and arbitrarily when in 2002 it approved a big-box shopping plaza on Parum Road.

The proposed plaza site is across the road from the Fedus farm. The plaintiffs in the suit – John Fedus, Rose Fedus, Mae Fedus, Steven Fedus and Alyce Daggett – also contended that runoff from paved surfaces such as the parking lot would adversely affect their farming, as the runoff would be channeled into a nearby brook, where the Fedus' water their crops and livestock.

The plaintiffs questioned whether or not the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) had the authority to approve a "limited site plan." The plaintiffs said that approval was illegal since the plan was incomplete and against zoning regulations. The commission contended that it was within its rights to approve the plan under the "footprint approval" rule.

The commission approved only the footprint of the anchor store, as the developer, Colchester LLC, did not have a tenant for the retail space at the time.

Superior Court Judge Seymour Hendel concluded in his 21-page decision that the plaintiffs "[had] not met their burden of proving that the commission acted arbitrarily, illegally or in abuse of its discretion."

The appeal was first filed in 2004 in Appellate Court, and was later handed to the Superior Court. A Superior Court judge at the time dismissed the appeal based on a clerical error on the part of the plaintiffs, as well as on the grounds that the plaintiff's claims were "specu-

lative at best," and "completely unsupported by the record," and added that the developer has made every effort to handle water runoff from the property.

The plaintiffs appealed this decision to Supreme Court, which in 2006 reversed the decision of the Superior Court and sent it back to them.

As for the contention that the runoff would impact property values, the Superior Court judge, in this latest decision, said that contention is not under the jurisdiction of local commissions, and "that the plaintiffs have not demonstrated, by way of record or evidence, that the proposed development will negatively impact their property."

The cost to the town to fight this latest appeal is not yet known. For the first time around, when the plaintiffs appealed to Appellate Court, the town spent about \$100,000 in legal fees defending the commission's decision, and lost between \$600,000 and \$800,000 in potential tax revenue that the development would have generated.

First Selectman Stan Soby said he was pleased with the court's decision.

"The important thing is that Planning and Zoning consistently followed the regulations," he said. "The judge made his decision based on the evidence in front of him. I think this is a strong finding for the town and Planning and Zoning."

John Fedus did not immediately return phone calls for comment on the decision.

The plaintiffs had 20 days to appeal the decision from the date it was handed down, which was Aug. 13. As of press time, no appeal has been received at Town Hall.

Town Buildings in Portland Getting Worked On

by Michael McCoy

As people driving through town lately might have noticed, the police station and Town Hall are undergoing renovations. It's not cosmetic surgery, though; the construction work is necessary, according to Public Works Director Rick Kelsey.

Kelsey says sideways-driving rain during severe storms over the past couple of years has caused a leak in the clock tower on the front of Town Hall on East Main Street. This water has periodically made its way through the attic and into the front stairwell, he says.

Meanwhile, the police department side of the Buck-Foreman Building on Main Street has a roof Kelsey estimates is 50-60 years old. In 1996, he says, the roof was patched, but that merely served as a Band-Aid. "I have been informing [the town] for the past 4 or 5 years that the roof is in need of replacement," Kelsey says.

With both buildings needing work, the town decided to bid the projects simultaneously. The clock tower project will cost \$35,000, while the Buck-Foreman roof replacement carries a \$156,000 price tag.

Of that \$191,000 total, \$50,000 comes from the Local Capital Improvement Planning (LoCIP) fund, which is state money, while \$120,000 comes from the capital budget, and \$21,000 will be taken from the maintenance fund.

"It's a very unusual condition," Kelsey says about the clock tower damage at Town Hall. He says that strictly vertical rain does not harm the roof; only the sideways-driving rain does.

"The rain saturated the wood, which acted like a sponge," Kelsey says. In addition, he says, he found that a significant amount of paint had been damaged. Also, since the top of Town Hall contains four large chimneys which were in need of some masonry work, the town decided to take care of that as well.

As for the Buck-Foreman roof, Kelsey says it is made of primarily fiberboard, with various coatings and different layers. The roof's trim will also be replaced, as, Kelsey says, it is "so raggedy."

Last year, the town replaced the roof on the other side of the Buck-Foreman building which used to be the library, and now contains the Youth Services Department. Eagle Rivet Roof Service of West Hartford did that work, and they are doing the current jobs at both Buck Foreman and Town Hall.

The police department roof project started the middle of last week, while work on the clock tower began this past Saturday, Sept. 8.

Kelsey estimates that, for both buildings, "The work should be complete within the next few weeks."

Firms Present Their Plans to East Hampton

by Michael McCoy

Residents should expect to hear a lot about the town's proposed water system in coming weeks.

Tuesday's Town Council meeting featured representatives from a public relations firm hired to educate the town on the proposed water system, a \$28.5 million project that will be voted on Nov. 6.

At its Aug. 28 meeting, the Town Council voted to allow town engineers The Maguire Group to begin looking for a PR firm. According to Town Manager Alan Bergren, the employment of an outside firm is protocol for a project of this magnitude.

With the \$40,000 allotted by the Town Council, The Maguire Group opted to hire Baldwin Media Marketing of Simsbury. A number of representatives from the firm, including President Ann Baldwin, attended to give an overview of their plan.

In a document she handed out, Baldwin stated her primary goal is to "raise understanding and awareness of the facts of the proposed Water Supply System with voters of East Hampton so that they can cast an informed vote on the referendum."

This effort involves an "intense media blitz," which will include a half-page ad running in the *Rivereast News Bulletin* for 4-5 straight weeks. The firm is also planning a direct mailing to every town resident; the firm estimates this mailing would reach around 5,000 homes. Baldwin also voiced their plan to hang posters, prominently displaying them in various town businesses.

Other dealings with the media will include working with the *Rivereast News Bulletin* and *Hartford Courant* to publish relevant stories, Baldwin said. The PR firm also plans to "write and place letters to the editor on behalf of key individuals" in the *Rivereast* and conduct "meetings with key individuals to prepare them for interviews with the media."

The group is also seeking to hold at least two informational public meetings to further explore the intricacies of the plan with interested taxpayers. The dates for these meetings are undecided, but Baldwin expressed interest in conducting one traditional session, and one that would be a sort of walk-through, where residents could come and go at will, look over documents and images, and ask any questions.

"This is really the first step in passing the referendum," Baldwin said. "We've got a lot of work in front of us, and we're prepared to do that."

Getting behind the firm's vision, Derek

Johnson, who acted as Town Council chair for the evening, said, "Given our time constraints, I think it's a well-thought-out plan."

Also featured at Tuesday's Town Council meeting was a presentation from Connected to Connecticut, an economic developing consulting firm from Hartford. The current year's budget earmarked \$30,000 to the East Hampton Economic Development Commission (EDC) in order to retain such services, and EDC Chairman Mary Ann Dostaler reported said this company was selected based on its interview with EDC members and its submitted proposal.

Connected to Connecticut has worked with communities such as Cromwell, Lebanon, South Windsor, Voluntown, and most recently, Portland. President Craig Stevenson and Senior Economic Developer Chris Edge were present at Tuesday's meeting and outlined their goals.

"We don't like to think of ourselves as consultants," Stevenson said. "We like to think of ourselves as service providers." He added that, instead of telling the EDC what to do, the firm seeks to help implement the ideas of the commission.

Stevenson said development issues can sometimes get divisive, but, he said, "My goal is to keep this apolitical."

Stevenson said each town has its own niche. "The reasons that businesses may want to locate here are going to be different from those who want to set up in Portland or Cromwell," he said.

While praising the concept of hiring a consulting firm, Johnson seemed concerned the firm would bring in big business simply to grow the tax base. "I would like to think the goal is to bring in businesses that reflect the character of the town, regardless of the impact," he said. "Otherwise, it's like the tail wagging the dog."

Stevenson said that while his firm would certainly seek to build up the grand list, "we're not going to do that at the expense of your vision or the character of the town. We work for you."

Stevenson continued, "We're certainly not here to bring in a business the town doesn't want. There's plenty of policy makers out there; I don't need to be one."

The Town Council later voted 5-0 to approve the EDC's hiring of the firm. "This will be a great benefit to the town," council member Kyle Dostaler said. Fellow council member Scott Minnick agreed, saying, "I think the town needs something like this; it has for a while." He added that the move was "money well spent."

Petition to Impeach Bush Has Hebron Parties at Odds

by Sarah McCoy

Local Republicans say the Democratic Town Committee's recent passage of a resolution to impeach President George W. Bush is nothing more than a publicity stunt made two months before the local elections.

Last month Democratic Town Committee (DTC) member Gil Salk sat down to write the resolution, which charges Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney with 12 "crimes." These range, Salk wrote, from, "lying to the American people," to "causing the commitment of war crimes by allowing the torture of prisoners."

"Any one of these crimes are sufficient to warrant these proceedings," Salk said. "Twelve crimes demonstrates his ineptitude to lead our country."

Document in hand, Salk attended the DTC meeting on Aug. 21 and asked his fellow party members to pass the resolution. After what DTC Chairman Bill Rudis called "lively discussion," the motion passed, with only two negative votes out of more than 20 voting members present.

"We're now asking our congressional and senatorial delegation, both in the state and nationally, to consider the nature of these tenants and take whatever action they deem meaningful," Rudis said.

As of press time no state or federal officials have taken any action on the resolution, but the Democratic State Central Committee will deliberate a similar resolution at their meeting Wednesday, Sept. 26, at 7:30 p.m. at its headquarters, 179 Allyn St., Suite 301, Hartford.

Hebron Republican Town Committee Chairman David Schoolcraft, a member of the

Board of Selectmen, laughed when questioned about the resolution.

"It really doesn't make a lot of sense for a town committee to do something like this unless they're desperate for attention and seeking publicity," he said. Schoolcraft also criticize the DTC for its "apparent waste of time" and questioned whether the party's decision had been motivated by the upcoming town elections.

Visibly annoyed by those accusations, Salk vehemently denied any connection between the resolution and forthcoming elections.

"I don't know how anyone could assume this to be a publicity stunt unless they're not looking at the record of the current administration," he said. "They must not be paying attention to the real world."

Schoolcraft contended that there has been no movement for impeachment on the national level and criticized the Hebron Democrats for misusing the institution.

"If you have complaints with the President, don't vote for him," he said. "It's why we have elections."

There is only a little over a year left in Bush's term, but Salk isn't giving up hope. "People are starting to pay attention to the talk on impeachment," he said. "It's not longer a dirty word."

Additionally, many scholars believe that while the U.S. Constitution does not explicitly say so, it does allow for post-term impeachments that would prohibit an individual from holding another federal office.

"If enough people start pushing their elected officials it can happen," Salk said.

Giles Takes Colchester Primary in Landslide

by Jim Salemi

Town Republicans decisively elected party nominee for First Selectman Diana Giles over challenger Gregory Morgan at the Republican primary this Tuesday, Sept. 11.

Giles beat Morgan by a vote of 402-215, nearly a two-to-one margin.

"I've been talking about the same issues—fiscal responsibility and economic development... Those have been my issues and those will be my issues in November," Giles said after she was declared the winner Tuesday.

Giles said the primary, forced by Morgan after he petitioned to appear on the ballot, was "great for the Republican Party." Morgan lost the party's nomination at the Republican Town Committee (RTC) caucus in July.

The caucus race "has been energetic and invigorating," she said, and said she would do her best to carry that energy over to the next leg of her campaign.

Giles will challenge Democratic nominee for First Selectman Linda Hodge in the November general election. Hodge was unchallenged during the Democratic caucus, where she was nominated by her party.

"Up until now, we've been concentrating on the primary," Giles said. "Now, we'll be concentrating on the general election. We've been in the press, so I think we got our message out and I think we have a head start. ... The Republican Party has not gotten any attention for 15 years. This year, it's been all about the Republican Party."

Giles attributed some of that attention her party received over recent months to her opponent. "I congratulate Mr. Morgan and his supporters for their hard work and the excitement they brought to the Republican Party and the town," she said.

While Giles and Morgan agreed that affordability and economic development in Colchester are paramount concerns, Giles did not share Morgan's idea of downsizing local government.

"I would have to wait until I got in and see how things worked before making categorical statements," she said. "The question for the next administration is working for our needs, and is it what we can afford."

Approximately 32.5 percent of registered Republicans turned out to the polls to cast votes in the primary. Elections officials said a steady, heavy rain likely kept voters from venturing out or making the stop Tuesday.

Morgan, who expressed disappointment over being defeated, also expressed disappointment over the low turnout at the polls.

"I don't know if it was the weather or apathy, but by mid-afternoon we realized turnout being so low couldn't be to our favor, so we pulled back and started making phone calls," Morgan said. "You wouldn't believe the excuses we heard." Morgan said these excuses ranged from voters claiming they had to take their children to a football game to being too ill to come out to vote.

"But, the people made their choice," Morgan said. "It's their town, it's their budget and it's their money."

Morgan also dismissed the idea of serving the town in another capacity.

"As I said before, my interest in running for First Selectman was based on people coming to me and asking me to run, to fix the spending problems, deal with the budget and save some money," he said. "But obviously that is not going to happen. The two candidates we have now are essentially business-as-usual candidates."

In a statement issued Wednesday to the *Rivereast*, Morgan said, "The Republican voters of Colchester have spoken, and I respect their decision. ... In just a couple of months, we were able to put together an effective campaign and make a difference in the way a lot of people think. I consider that a great success and urge those that have become involved in the process to stay involved. Your efforts, your voice, and your vote matter and can change the direction of Colchester."

Morgan added in his statement that he wants "to sincerely thank my campaign committee and volunteer staff who worked tirelessly throughout this contest. Without their support, I would never have made it this far."

Morgan continued by stating that he "is still asked by people if I will run as a 3rd-party candidate and as I have said before, the answer is

no. I am a Republican and a proud one. As for my future, I plan to take some time to think about that but no matter what I decide, I hope to stay in touch with the voters as they have taught me a great deal about this town and what it needs."

Voters who turned out to the polls Tuesday were directed to one of three electronic voting machines, depending on which district they resided in.

On the first machine, which recorded votes cast by voters living in District 1, Giles received 195 votes to Morgan's 78 votes. District 1 is comprised of the areas of the town borough, New London Road, McDonald Road, Old Hartford Road and their side streets. In the general election, voters living in the first district will vote at town hall.

On the second machine, where residents of District 2 voted, Giles garnered 121 votes and Morgan 91. District 2 is made up of the greater Westchester area, including Middletown Road (Route 16) and the side-roads. The polling place for the general election will be the Westchester firehouse.

On the third machine, where registered Republicans living in the third district voted, Giles received 69 votes and Morgan 42. District 3 includes Norwich Avenue, Elm Street, Lebanon Avenue, Windham Avenue and their side-roads.

East Hampton Lions Scrap Proposed Debate

by Michael McCoy

It's not common for Democrats, Republicans and Chatham Party members to all agree on something. But this time they've made an exception.

Members of the three parties running for town council in November were all invited to participate in debates scheduled for next Wednesday, Sept. 19, and Wednesday, Oct. 24. The debates were being organized by the Village Lions.

However, expressing qualms with the protocol outlined in the invitations, all three parties opted not to debate.

In a letter to the editor in last week's *Rivereast*, Chatham Party Town Committee Chair Patience Anderson wrote a letter to the editor, "The very real potential exists for one party to dominate the proceedings as question cards are directed at only two candidates when three parties are being represented."

Anderson was referring to the nature of question submission. As outlined in the invitation, each person attending the debate would be given one card. On the front they would be directed to write one question, while the back would contain the names of the two candidates the attendant wishes to answer the question. The moderator, Village Lions President Tom O'Brien, then would ask the questions at random.

Chatham Party candidate Kyle Dostaler worried, "We could be sitting up there and never be asked a question." Republican candidate

Melissa Engel simply said the scenario "lends itself to getting creamed up there."

Candidates also objected to the charging of admission, which was to be \$20 for the front four rows, and \$5 for other seats.

"What is the purpose of packing the front rows with people with the means to pay a premium? Doing so is intrinsically undemocratic and favors the well-to-do," Anderson wrote in her letter.

Engel agreed with Anderson, saying, "I just don't think fundraising belongs in the arena of political speaking. You don't charge people to listen to candidates speak."

Also in agreement was Democratic Town Committee Chair Barbara Moore. "The immediate problem was the fact that it was being viewed as a fundraiser," she said. Instead, she said, "It should be a public forum."

When the Democratic candidates told Moore they didn't like the debate's parameters, Moore contacted Engel, and the two wrote a joint letter to the Lions, declining the invitation. The letter also addressed the concern over charging admission, saying, "It is exclusionary in its fee system and hierarchical in its proposal to let those who want (or are able to) spend more money sit closer."

The letter also stated that the length of the debates as well as the rules were "exhaustive." Engel even joked, "A national debate is not this complicated."

As for the admission fee, Dostaler said, "I also have a concern for the Village Lions themselves. From my understanding, this could jeopardize their 501C3 status."

He said this could happen should it be found that the organization had shown favor to any of the three parties. "I would hate to see the Village Lions lose that" status, he said.

Anderson also took issue with the 10-minute closing speeches. Each party would have been given the chance to pick anyone of their choosing, candidate or otherwise, to give a 10-minute closing address.

"This is a candidate's speech," Anderson wrote. "Candidates should be expected to be well versed and articulate enough to speak for themselves."

The Chatham Party also objected to the candidates' being arranged alphabetically onstage. "It should be the candidates standing together," declared Dostaler.

Moore, Dostaler, and Engel were all asked if their parties would welcome a debate should a protocol closer to that established by the League of Women Voters be employed. All said they would.

"Absolutely we would!" Dostaler said. "The residents certainly need to know where the various parties stand. Debate's a good thing."

The Village Lions assembled Tuesday to decide what to do after the unanimous decline of invitations. According to President Tom

O'Brien, the Sept. 19 debate has been cancelled. However, the organization plans to go ahead with the Oct. 24 debate. The Lions are inviting all three parties to a meeting on Sept. 23, to try to come to a consensus on terms of the debate.

But, O'Brien promised, "We're going to go forward with this debate whether they want to or not."

However, the Lions have made one concession: they've agreed to waive the proposed admission fee.

"It will be conducted as a service project instead of a fundraiser," O'Brien said, but added, "I don't know of any political debate that there isn't admission to attend."

O'Brien also defended the proposed placement of the candidates, saying, "It's a debate to find out what the candidates' viewpoints are. It's not supposed to be a political thing." As far as the alphabetical seating goes, O'Brien guessed, "That probably isn't going to change."

Reflecting on all the issues that the candidates have taken with the proposed format, O'Brien said, "This just shows the parties are out of touch with the actual citizens."

O'Brien has only been in town for a few years, which, he explained, is why the Lions suggested that he serve as moderator.

"I don't know any of these people," O'Brien said of the candidates. The Village Lions "felt I would be the most impartial of anyone in the club."

Third Annual Portland Festival Takes Place Saturday

by Michael McCoy

The third annual Brownstone Festival will take place tomorrow, Saturday, Sept. 15, and the chair of the event promises it will be “bigger and better than ever.”

The event is put on by members of the Brownstone Quorum, and will occur rain or shine. Activities kick off with a pancake breakfast at 8 a.m. and run all day, ending with a picnic down by the riverfront.

The pancake breakfast will be held in the Mary Louise Rice Room of the Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., and is organized by the center as well as Portland’s Ecumenical Youth Group. Prices are \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$3 for kids 12 and under. The meal will last for two hours, and then the hotcakes will give way to stuffed baked potatoes, which will be on sale for \$3 until noon.

The senior center will also host the Mason Lodge No. 51’s CT Chip/Child ID Program, which is free to all. The program offers fingerprinting as well as other identification media to help aid families in case of kidnapping or other emergencies. This service will be available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Downstairs at the center will be the Portland Arts Association Gallery, one of many firsts for the festival. On display various works by local artists, which will also be on sale.

At 10 a.m., the Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., will kick off its Student Palette Art Show in the Mary Flood Room. Entitled “Scenes of Portland,” the show will display works by students from grades 5-12. The gallery will be judged and will remain on display after the festival.

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Crafters’ and Farmers’ Market will be located on the town green parking lot. The lot will also feature wares from other local businesses and organizations. For sale will be frozen treats from 80 Licks, cookbooks from the Portland Historical Society, and personalized children’s books from New Growth Publications. The Cellar Savers will also sell fresh popcorn as well as cold sodas and water.

Also, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Cellar Savers will offer free shuttle service up and down Main Street on an antique fire engine. The shuttle will depart from the police department every half hour. Riders are encouraged to also stop at the various sites along the way, which include the Cellar Savers Museum, open from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

“They love their equipment, and they love doing it,” Jeanne Dilworth, who, for the third straight year is chairwoman of the Brownstone Festival.

Also, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Clean Energy Task Force will display several hybrid cars in the police department parking lot.

A big component of the festival is Family Day, which actually predates the festival by

more than five years. Family Day, which is organized by Youth Services under the direction of Mary Pont, will last from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the town green. The area will have something for everyone. Kids will be able to enjoy a number of inflatable bounces, as well as games overseen by the Youth Action Council, a group of teenaged volunteers.

Family Day will also include a couple of special guests, including the “Crime Dog.” No, not former baseball slugger Fred McGriff. Instead, it’s the trenchcoat-clad hound, McGruff, who will be on hand teaching kids safety tips. Also, the Portland Junior Women’s Club and the Portland Library will bring Curious George to town.

Family Day will also feature a number of stands from local organizations, including Families United, the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council, the MOMS Club of Portland, and the Sojourn Bears. Dr. John Mormile will once again distribute bike helmets – although the Bike Rode-E-O will not happen at this year’s festival.

Howard Schachter of Edward Jones Investments will sell hot dogs and chips. Also, since municipal elections are less than two months away, the Registrar of Voters will host a booth encouraging voter signup. The town’s new voting machine will also be on display, with periodic demonstrations.

One of the fire truck shuttle stops will be the historic Trinity Church. From 10 a.m.-3 p.m., the church will have self-guided tours. From 10 a.m.-2 p.m., the church will also host a flower show, which has been organized by the combined Portland Garden Clubs. The clubs will also conduct flower arrangement classes for students.

Another stop is the Methodist Church. From 9 a.m.-3 p.m., people may view the church’s historic Johnson Tracker pipe organ. An organist will perform.

The shuttle will also stop at the Callander Museum of Portland History. This year, the American Legion and Veterans’ Commission have worked with the museum to set up a display documenting Portland’s participation in America’s war efforts.

Fire Company No. 1, another fire truck shuttle stop, will host a “meet and greet,” where festivalgoers can meet some of the volunteer firefighters. There will also be safety information and handouts for children. For adults, on display will be a “File-for-Life” program, which counsels people on how to organize their valuables in case of emergency.

The firefighters will also conduct an accident recreation in front of the Brownstone Intermediate School, demonstrating a rescue from a wrecked vehicle. There will also be a “smoke house,” a simulator showing people how to react in case they find themselves in such a building.



Jeff Kelsey will once again offer hayride shuttle service at the Brownstone Festival. Here he is trucking people around at last year’s festival.

Another section of the festival takes place at the riverfront and quarry areas. Once again, father-daughter team Jeff and Mackenzie Kelsey will offer hayride shuttle service from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. The ride runs from Brownstone Intermediate School along Middlesex Avenue to the north quarry. The shuttle will also bring attendees back to the school.

At the quarry, the Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park’s Frank Hayes will show people the facilities. Regular activities will be offered, such as canoeing and kayaking. For this day, Portland residents will be admitted at half-price. Children will be able to fashion a penholder from a brownstone core.

The final chunk of the festival runs from 3-6 p.m. at the riverfront. At 3:30 p.m., the Brownstone Quorum will host a free town picnic, which will include hamburgers, hot dogs, coleslaw, chips, homemade brownies, and soda and water. For those uninterested in brownies, 80 Licks will offer for sale ice cream, gelato, and sorbet.

The meal will be complemented by music, courtesy of Dave Kuzminski’s Connecticut Valley School of Music students and staff. Genres include country, blues and jazz.

There will also be hiking trails available. Sue Fiedler and John LeShane of the Brownstone Quorum will lead guided hikes at 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., although festivalgoers can also go on the hikes by themselves. LeShane will also represent the Meshomasic Hiking Club, offering information including membership details and a

hike calendar.

The Brownstone Quorum will also host an Arch Pavilion display. Dilworth said she expects ground to be broken on the project by Oct. 1, but the quorum is still looking to secure the remaining funds for landscaping costs. So, the quorum will hold a penny collection “so everybody can feel that they made a contribution,” Dilworth said.

Those who have not been to the Riverfront Park since last year’s festival may be in for a surprise as, Dilworth said, “the quorum has been working for the last four months to clear an area large enough to have a real party on it.” The process included leveling, clearing brush, and laying down woodchips, which were donated by the town. Dilworth singled out Steve Klick, who offered his time and equipment to the effort.

Brownstone Quorum, Stor-U-Self, and the Economic Development Commission paid for signs around town promoting the event. Festival programs, which include a map, will be available at various spots about the festival. They are also available at Town Hall and the library. More information may also be found at the festival website, located at portlandct.org.

Parking will be available at Trinity and Methodist Churches, the Historical Society, and the Riverfront and Discovery Parks.

“I hope everybody comes out and enjoys the whole day,” said First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield. “There’s something for everyone and all ages.”

Firefighters from Across the Pond Pay Visit in Colchester

by Jim Salemi

Firefighters from Colchester, England, got a chance last week to see how their American counterparts work, as the Colchester Hayward Fire Department played host to six members of the Essex County, U.K., Fire Department.

The swap was part of a cultural exchange program between the two departments. Colchester, England, is in the jurisdiction of Essex County.

Some of the visitors took a few minutes last Saturday, Sept. 8, to talk to reporters before embarking on a trip to Mattituck, Long Island, for that town’s 100th anniversary parade.

“I love a parade,” said British firefighter Ronnie Patterson. “We don’t have many parades in England. Here, they treat a fireman properly, like proper heroes, where we’re treated like a second-rate garrison. Something’s been lost.”

The visitors said they thoroughly enjoyed their time in the states so far, and the “hospitality” shown by their hosts and others they have met.

The guests were treated to barbecues, shopping trips and dining out up until Saturday. The weekend and the early part of this week was spent in New York, including a trip to the World Trade Center site, before they went back to England.

Lead Firefighter Paul Gray said the people in his country were touched by the lives lost in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the twin towers. He said the fire department in Colchester, U.K.,

raised “a few thousand pounds” from the British people to send to the widows of firefighters here.

“We also observed a moment of silence,” Gray said.

Emergency services in the town’s sister city across the pond are not all together different from services here.

“Our jobs are the same—protecting life and property,” Patterson said.

Gray said his department is made up of both paid and volunteer personnel, similar to departments here. Obstacles when it comes to getting adequate funding is also apparently universal.

Gray explained that funding for the country’s emergency services comes from the National government, and is distributed to the County Council, which in turn distributes it to county and local departments. Gray said politics is often a factor when it comes to funding.

The town of Colchester, England is considerably larger than Colchester, CT; it has a population of about 140,000 people.

Patterson said there is a college university and a military installation within his department’s jurisdiction, which makes for “some interesting Friday nights.”

The two departments started the cultural exchange program back in 2004 as part of the Colchester-Hayward Fire Department’s 150th anniversary.



Firefighters from Colchester, England, recently paid a visit to Colchester, Connecticut. Pictured, from left, are British firefighters Ronnie Patterson, Dean Francis, Paul Gray, Karen Nicoll, Ian Parkes and Kelly Moroney.

“Every year, year-and-a-half we go over,” said Deputy Chief Billy Standish.

President of the Colchester Hayward Department Dave Martin visited Colchester, England,

last August. As a guest there, he kept watch at the English firehouse for 24 hours and visited London and other towns in the country.

Budget Hearing Set for Next Week in Colchester

by Jim Salemi

The setting has been changed, but the objective of next week's town meeting remains the same: taxpayers will decide whether or not to send the finance board's \$44 million proposed budget to referendum.

The meeting, occurring Monday, Sept. 17, was supposed to take place at Town Hall. But officials decided to move the meeting to Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave., in order to accommodate a number of seniors and other residents expected to attend the meeting, following an indication by a Colchester Commons resident that a large crowd would be in attendance.

The town meeting will be held at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave., next Monday, Sept. 17, at 7 p.m. The next budget referendum is slated for Tuesday, Sept. 25, at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

An informational hearing about the budget was held last Thursday, Sept. 6. "I think you were frugal with the budget, but the fact is we're in a tax revolt," resident Dan Pothier told town leaders at the hearing.

While the amount of spending in the town's presented budget drew little criticism over the course of the budget process, a number of residents were hit hard by their tax bills after the town underwent revaluation last year, with some residents seeing their tax bills double.

Pothier urged the Board of Finance to phase in the new mill rate to help alleviate the burden of paying the bills all at once. Pothier said he wrote to state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal to ask for his assistance on behalf of the two senior communities in town, Westchester Village and Colchester Commons.

According to Pothier, Blumenthal said towns have the option of applying the old assessment for up to four years, as long as the rate is adjusted before the next revaluation in another five years.

"You have to be more friendly to retired people," he said. "We're asking that you freeze assessments for residents 55 years old and older in our communities. ... We don't have any chil-

dren. We are a good asset. We're willing to pay our fair share, but you have to be fair."

Resident James Spillane, who described himself as an "empty-nester," also objected to the rate of taxation he is experiencing.

"I've lived here for five years and my assessment is sky-high," Spillane said. "My taxes have doubled in five years, and I'm dipping into my life savings. ... This will force a lot of us out of town. Yes, oil is up, electricity is up, but so is everyone's. I can't go to my boss and say 'my expenses have increased. I need more money.' I have to live within my means."

But Spillane also questioned the fairness of Pothier's proposal.

"You can't limit [tax freezes] to town units," he said. "It must be town-wide."

Finance Board Chairman Bruce Hayn told Pothier that taxes could be collected at the old rate, but it would not change assessments and "it does not change the town or school needs."

First Selectman Stan Soby told Pothier that a tax relief task force has been appointed recently and will look into state and other programs to help residents who were hit particularly hard by revaluation.

Not all residents were opposed to the budget.

Sarah Smith Levine, who works for Regional School District 8 (RHAM) in Hebron, said she didn't want to live in a strip mall or a town with heavy industry.

"If you don't want to live in a town like that, someone has to pay," she said. "It's been disturbing that not enough people are standing up for the budget."

After the last round of cuts by the education board and the Board of Selectmen, the total spending was reduced from \$47.2 million to \$46.94 million.

Residents have rejected three proposed 2007-08 budgets so far. Following the defeat of the last budget of \$47.2 million, which represented a 3.1 percent increase over current year spending, the Board of Finance decided to cut the mill rate to get to a zero-mill increase.

Man Arrested After Portland June Burglary

William Shane Landry, 31, who police say they have no certain address for, was arrested Sept. 4 and charged with second-degree burglary and third-degree larceny, Portland Police report.

The charges stem from a home break-in, police say. On June 25, police say, they responded to a residence on William Street to a report of a break-in. Police say the homeowner had arrived at the residence to find the interior garage door damaged and ajar. According to police, the home was secured, and it was determined a "large amount of jewelry and coin," totaling more than \$5,000, had been stolen from inside.

On July 17, police say, during a motor vehicle stop, they learned from the car's occupants Landry may have been involved. Police say they worked with the occupants and were able to recover "several pieces of jewelry" and other items identified by the home owner. Police say they recovered only \$800 worth of items, and that they learned many of the stolen items had been sold at area pawn shops.

Police say they then applied for a warrant for Landry and arrested him on the above charges. Landry was held on a \$150,000 bond, police report, and was due in Middletown Superior Court Sept. 5.

Woman Charged with Attacking Police in Marlborough

by Sarah McCoy

A Colchester woman was arrested after allegedly attacking two police officers alongside Route 2 in Marlborough just before 1 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 6, state police said.

Jolene Emmerson, 32, of 12 Boulder Rd., Colchester, was charged with four misdemeanors after state troopers offered to give her a ride home, as she was walking on the side of the highway at the time.

At the time Emmerson, who police said was visibly intoxicated, refused a ride home and exposed her breasts, police said. Police documents said Emmerson also grabbed the leg of state Trooper Anthony Gordon's leg and offered him oral sex. When he attempted to arrest her Emmerson ran into traffic, po-

lice said.

After being restrained she continued to be combative, even attempting to bite another officer as he assisted in securing her in Gordon's patrol vehicle, police said.

Upon arriving at the state police barracks Troop K in Colchester, Emmerson refused fingerprinting and was transferred to Lafayette Street lock-up in Hartford after failing to post \$25,000 bond, according to police.

Emmerson was charged with improper use of highways, assault of a public safety official, interfering with an officer, and resisting fingerprinting, police said. She was arraigned in Manchester Superior Court Sept. 6 and released on \$2,500 bail.

Marlborough Students Show Improvement on CMTs

by Sarah McCoy

Students and faculty at the Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School are starting the school year out on the right foot. The school system recently announced the 2007 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) results, which showed gains in virtually all areas.

"We are very, very pleased," Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo said of the high marks. "But no one in this building believes we're at the end point."

Each school year, every student in grades 3-8 in the state takes the CMT in March. The test measures aptitude and understanding in mathematics, reading, writing, and new this year, science. Scores are reported to the schools in July. This year Menzo presented the results to the Board of Education at their Aug. 30 meeting.

This past year the school, again, met its Adequate Yearly Progress goals as part of the No Child Left Behind Act and showed improvements nearly across the board. The current fourth-grade class placed 13 out of 152 school districts across the state in reading proficiency. Menzo credits this progress to a new approach to professional development.

"When I came to the school [in February 2005] there was a fine system in place," he said. "Teachers, parents and paraprofessionals were all committed to small class sizes and the early literacy program. But, what happens when the students get to third grade? We needed to focus on development and instruction for the later grades."

With that in mind the school devised a new formalized plan for reading. The plan, which began last August, identifies specific areas for

improvement and then provides ample assistance for teachers to begin tackling the district's historically weaker areas.

This year the school system identified strands 3 and 4, titled "Making Reader/Text Connections" and "Examining the Content," as the primary focuses for development. Teachers were then given extra time with reading consultant Marsha Creese to devise new strategies for improvement.

And the new approach produced results. In every instance but one, students showed significant improvement in the target areas, some as much as a 27 percent jump in mastery level.

"Internally we thought it was a great plan," said Menzo. "It is nice to have the data, now, to prove it."

Rather than reinvent the wheel, the staff at the elementary school is currently in the process of transferring this same approach to other subject matter. In August the upper level teachers identified the areas of focus for mathematics. Like with reading, teachers will be given extra time with each other and math consultant Patti Hahn in an effort to target these areas.

In January the school will begin offering after-school assistance in math, similar to the summer reading assistance program currently offered by the school.

"As happy as we are with the results, we appreciate that the CMT is a low standard," said Menzo. "It is not the high standard we want to strive for. Our goal is for 80-90 percent to achieve mastery level. We feel this is something realistic to aspire to. In fact, in some areas we are already doing that."

Portland Police News

9/4 — Patrick Scott, 19, of 36 Skinner St., East Hampton, was charged with two counts of sixth-degree larceny, police said.

9/4 — Kahreem J. Gumbs, 22, of 14 Brook Hill Dr., East Hampton, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

9/5 — Jennifer Binnington, 36, of 1150 Fairfield Ave., Bridgeport, was charged with fourth-degree larceny and identity theft, police said.

9/5 — William Shane Landry, 31, who police had no known address for, was charged with third-degree burglary and third-degree larceny, police said.

9/9 — Thomas H. McArthur, 25, of 47 Airline Ave., was charged with operating with a suspended license, unsafe lane change, and failure to use turn signal, police said.

East Hampton Police News

8/21 — Amelia Munro, 55, of 118 Main St., was issued a ticket for nuisance dog, failure to vaccinate and failure to license, East Hampton police say.

8/31 — A 17-year-old male juvenile was issued a ticket for traveling too fast for conditions, police report.

8/31 — Kegan Schunk, 17, of 23 Mountain Trail, was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Bear Swamp Road, two-tenths of a mile south of Rt. 66. Schunk was issued a ticket for traveling too fast for conditions, police say.

9/2 — Brian Irzarry, 20, of 25 Hill Top Rd., was issued a ticket for following too close, and unsafe movement from a stopped position, police report.

Obituaries

Colchester

William Howard Coons

William Howard Coons, 89, of Rook Road, Cromwell, formerly of Torrington and Colchester, died Saturday, Sept. 8, at Haven Health Care Center in Cromwell. He was the husband of the late Mary (Previti) Coons. Born Dec. 1, 1917 in Torrington, he was the son of the late Howard William and Grace (Cook) Coons. Inducted during February of 1941, he served his country with the United States Army during World War II. He participated in the Battle of Saipan where he was wounded in action during July of 1944.

Among his many decorations, he received the Combat Infantry Badge, the Asiatic Pacific Theater Service Ribbon, the Purple Heart, the American Defense Service Ribbon, the Good Conduct Medal and he was honorably discharged during March of 1945. He was employed by The Torrington Company as a machinist until his retirement in 1979. His greatest love was spending time with his family.

He is survived by one son, William Howard Coons, Jr. and daughter-in-law Rebecca of Cromwell, one daughter, Diane and son-in-law John O'Connor, Jr. of Torrington, two brothers, James Coons and Thomas Coons both of Florida, four grandchildren, Wendy Perreault and her husband Stephan, William Coons III and his wife Mary, John O'Connor III, Kelly Pergola and her husband Douglas, nine great grandchildren, John O'Connor IV, Mary O'Connor, Alyssa O'Connor, Stephan Perreault, Ryan Perreault, William Coons IV, Kelly Coons, Kevin Coons, John Pergola as well as several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by three brothers; Robert Coons, Howard Coons and George Coons.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Sept. 12, from The LaPorta-Cook Funeral Home, 82 Litchfield St., Torrington, to The Chapel at Hillside Cemetery with Pastor Steven Darr of the First Congregational Church officiating. Burial followed in Hillside Cemetery with full military honors. Calling hours were Tuesday, Sept. 11, at The LaPorta-Cook Funeral Home. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memorial and Honor Program, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105. Condolences may be sent to the Coons family by visiting www.laportacookfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Nancy Tarnowski

Nancy (DiPasquale) Tarnowski, 85, of Colchester went home Friday, Sept. 7, to be with the Lord and many of her treasured family members. Nancy was born in Astoria, NY, to Anthony and Maria (Ruffino) DiPasquale on June 25, 1922. She was the second eldest of 11 children. She grew up on a farm in Salem. Married Walter Tarnowski on June 23, 1945, at St. Rose's Church in Meriden. Together they had 53 wonderful years before Walter predeceased her in 1998. She was predeceased by three children, Thomas, Robert and Frankie.

Nancy worked for Electric Motive in Willimantic and Levine & Levine in Colchester before retiring. Once retired she really enjoyed baking and cooking and was well known for her delicious cream puffs, pierogies and cheesecake. She enjoyed bowling at the Duckpin Lanes in Willimantic for over 30 years. She loved baseball and the Yankees were the best in her eyes. She was a member of St. Andrew R.C Church in Colchester, Past President for the former Colchester Polish Women's Alliance, Past President and present Vice President with the Alder Boluck Post #6990 Ladies auxiliary of the VFW. She was also a former member of the St. Joseph Ladies auxiliary of St. Polish Society in Colchester.

She was a devoted mother and grandmother and is survived by two daughters, Nancy and husband Zachary of Colchester, Lucille and husband Gary Culhane of Parker, CO; sons Anthony and wife Kathy, Arthur and wife Beverly, and Joseph, all of Colchester; grandchildren, Tammy, Ken, Tony, Daniel, Alison, Steven, Kellyrose and Sara; great-grandchildren, Riley, Madison, Malia and Rowan. She is also survived by brothers, Frank, Vincent, Robert, and Thomas DiPasquale; sisters, Helen Hedberg, Antoinette Zitko and Carmela Kenney and numerous nieces and nephews. She was also predeceased by a brother Alex DiPasquale and sisters Katie Nenner and Rose Perta.

Funeral service was Monday, Sept. 10, from the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St., Colchester, followed by a 10 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial at the St. Andrew R. C Church, Colchester. Interment followed in the Sacred Heart Cemetery, Meriden. Calling hours were Sunday 4-8 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in her memory may be made to the VFW Ladies Auxiliary of the VFW Post 6990, Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415 or to the Middlesex Hospice of Middlesex Hospital, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Hebron

Conrad J. Gelinias

Conrad J. Gelinias, the true love of Lorraine (Auclair) Gelinias for over 50 years, peacefully joined the Lord in Heaven on Sunday, Sept. 9. He was born Jan. 6, 1926 in St. Seraphine, province of Quebec, Canada, a son of the late Achille and Alphonsine (Turcotte) Gelinias and resided in Canada until moving to Connecticut in 1962. He later resided in East Hartford for 24 years prior to moving to Hebron 11 years ago.

Conrad was a gentleman in the truest sense of the word. He loved cars and music, but nothing matched the love he had for his family. He was dedicated to them and shared in the fullness of their lives. He was a communicant of Church of the Holy Family where his gentle presence will be deeply missed. In addition to his beloved wife, Lorraine, Conrad is survived by his devoted daughters, Nicole Bernier and her husband, Edgar of Columbia, and Louise Sparveri and her husband, Ralph of Denver, NC. He is also survived by his granddaughters, Cherise Bernier, Karina Bernier, and Danielle Sparveri all whom adored their "Grampy."

Conrad's family received friends at Church of the Holy Family in Hebron on Thursday, Sept. 13, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated by Rev. Michael Smith. Burial will be held on Saturday, Sept. 15, in St. Jean, Canada. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Conrad's memory may be made to the Church of the Holy Family, P.O. Box 146, Hebron, CT, 06248. The D'ESOPO-East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter Street, East Hartford has been entrusted with the care of the funeral arrangements. For any online expressions of sympathy to the family visit desopo.com.

Hebron

Walter Edwin Jacobson Sr.

Walter Edwin Jacobson, Sr., 80, husband of Beverly (Bishop) Jacobson, formerly of Meriden, died Tuesday, Sept. 4. Born in Quincy, MA, the son of the late Walter L. and Catherine (Mills) Jacobson, he made his home in Meriden and retired to Old Lyme. Walter served in the U.S. Army during World War II, graduated from Wentworth Institute of Technology and received a Bachelor's Degree from Northeastern University. He was a brilliant mechanical engineer, inventor, and pioneer in load cell technology. During his career he was responsible for 17 design patents.

He was employed by Revere Corporation of America for 27 years after which he enjoyed operating his own load cell manufacturing company, Sens-All Incorporated in Southington, with his son. He was also a past president of Family Service Assoc of Meriden. He learned to play the harmonica proficiently at an early age that provided him a lifetime of enjoyment especially when he shared it with others.

Besides his wife of 56 years, he is survived by his three children, Walter E. Jacobson, Jr. and his wife Denise of West Hartford, Wendee Jacobson of New York, Bonnie Bates and her husband, Christopher of Hebron; two brother, James Jacobson and his wife, Judith of Plymouth, MA, George Jacobson and his wife, Elsie of Beverly, MA; two grandchildren, Ian and Catherine Bates; and many nieces and nephews. Walter will be buried in a family plot in Quincy, MA during a private ceremony. Donations in his memory may be made to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Pantry or Music Fund, 20 Catlin St., Meriden, CT 06450. Online expressions of sympathy may be made at molloyfuneralhome.com.

Salem

B. June Taylor

B. June Taylor, 73, of Norwich Road, Salem, passed away Monday, Sept. 10, at the Wm. W. Backus Hospital in Norwich. Born July 30, 1934 in Norwich, she was a daughter of the late John and Opal (Hills) Yaworski. In 1952, she married George Taylor and they shared 26 years of marriage before he predeceased her in 1978.

Mrs. Taylor had worked for John Myer Apparel in Norwich and later for Johnson Marine in East Haddam. She was a communicant of Our Lady of the Lakes Church in Oakdale, where she sang with the choir. June was also a former member of the Grange.

Survivors include three children, George, Jr. of Salem, Robert of Chesterfield and Richard of Salem; a sister, Juanita Chappell of Salem; eight grandchildren; five great grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends. In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by a sister, Betty Lee Laudone; and two brothers, Walter and Robert Yaworski.

Funeral services are private. There are no calling hours. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in St. Patrick Cemetery, Uncasville. Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.