

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam, Portland, Colchester and Salem

Volume 33, Number 29

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

October 3, 2008



World War II veteran Walter Orr of Colchester shares stories about the war at the Colchester Senior Center last week, while Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz looks on. Bysiewicz honored more than 50 WWII veterans from Colchester and Salem for their service to the country.

Colchester, Salem World War II Veterans Honored by State

by Kristina Histen

World War II veterans from Colchester and Salem were honored and called the “greatest generation” by Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz at an awards ceremony held last week.

This was the 63rd local Public Service Awards ceremony that Bysiewicz has held. It took place at Colchester Senior Center, and over 100 people were in attendance. In fact, the senior center was so packed, people started coming in with fold-out chairs. When there was no longer any more room to set them, community and family members tried to find a place to stand. And then, the eighth-grade class from Salem School showed up. The kids were forced to line up against the walls, while others squished themselves in an adjacent room.

Still, there was nothing but excitement and pride that lingered in the air.

Bysiewicz has held several public service awards ceremonies throughout the year to continue on with her program of

honoring the contributions and sacrifices of the WWII II veterans. Last Wednesday, Sept. 17, she honored more than 50 WWII veterans from Colchester and Salem in recognition of their heroism, commitment and service to the nation. The veterans ranged in age from their early-80s to their mid-90s.

Numerous elected officials, including Colchester First Selectman Linda Hodge, Salem First Selectman Robert Ross, State Senator Eileen Daily (D-33rd District) and State Representatives Linda Orange (D-48th District) and Ed Jutila (D-37th District) also attended the ceremony, and each spoke of their gratitude.

Hodge said the ceremony was important to honor the veterans as a community, as they have made the real difference in the country and each individual life. Ross said he was thrilled of the wide range of ages present, saying how great it was for the young people to be exposed to such

“distinguished citizens.”

“We benefited from a wonderful military from your generation,” he said. “You supported the uniform, did things in uniform and came together in uniform. It was a very different time.”

“We take for granted the freedom and liberty we have,” Jutila continued, and added that World War II veterans know “so well” that freedom doesn’t come easy, that it comes with a price.

“We [honor them] on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, but we really should be thanking them every day of the year,” he continued. “World War II will always stand out as a pivotal point in US history, and the world is certainly a better place.”

In Connecticut alone, “40 of our greatest generation” die every day and 1,500 in the country, Bysiewicz said. She said that time was of the essence. “It is important to say thank you before its too late,” she said,

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Front Page

“and fortunately so many veterans are still with us.”

She saluted the veterans as the “greatest generation” and summed them up with three phrases: “incredible resilience,” because despite seeing terrible things and sacrificing so much, they all came back after the war and continued to raise families and “made this country what it is today;” “modesty and humbleness,” because it took nearly 60 years to dedicate a WWII monument to veterans; and “continuing commitment to public service,” because many veterans continued to serve in the state government, churches, veteran organizations, etc., and

are committed to making it better.

After elected officials had spoken, veterans were encouraged to share their own stories where most conveyed the messages of serving with pride and jokingly noting that their specific military involvement, whether it be the navy, air force, army, etc., was better than the others.

Bysiewicz then presented veterans with an award in recognition of their service during WWII. “Even if you don’t think you’re heroes,” Bysiewicz said, “we do, and we thank you as the greatest generation.”

Marlborough Appealing Decision Regarding Former Assessor

by Kristina Histen

The town is appealing the state Department of Labor’s decision that the previous town assessor was terminated last November without just cause and therefore is able to return to work and get reimbursed for any lost wages and benefits, according to Department of Labor documents.

According to the documents, on Nov. 14, 2007, the town opted not to retain then-current assessor, Emily Chaponis, following the Board of Selectmen’s failure to reappoint her the night before. The town, based on the selectmen’s lack of action, terminated Chaponis, claiming it had the authority to do so, the documents said.

Following the town’s removal of Chaponis, the Council 4 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Connecticut’s largest AFL-CIO union filed a grievance, alleging that the town’s action was a violation of the collective bargaining agreement. The union felt Chaponis should be rehired into the position that she held when the town removed her.

According to the state documents, the union alleged that the town violated a collective bargaining agreement because it did not have just cause to discharge Chaponis after her reappointment to the assessor position failed for lack of a motion to reappoint. The union sought reinstatement, with back pay and benefits, retroactive to the point of termination.

But, according to the documents, the town denied the union’s claim. As part of the collective bargaining agreement, the town has two types of employees, regularly hired employees and political appointees. Political appointees are not subject to the same hiring process as regular employees and they serve for a specified term only, the documentation said.

Documentation said that Chaponis’ initial appointment ran from January 2002-November 2003. November 2003 was also when the term of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) that appointed her ended. But the incoming BOS that year accepted the appointments of the previous BOS, so all politically-appointed town officers and employees continued for another term, the documentation said.

The second term as assessor for Chaponis came to an end in November 2007. The newly-elected BOS had a meeting on Nov. 13, 2007 to, among other things, make political appointments, documentation said. At that meeting, First Selectman Bill Black asked for a motion to reappoint Chaponis as assessor but no motion was made, documentation said. So, due to the lack of a motion, Chaponis was not reappointed. The town said Black then met with her the following day and provided her with written notice of her discharge.

The documents reported that, according to the union, the memo Black handed to Chaponis was actually addressed to no one and stated, “Your appointment expired at the same time the term of office expired for the former Board of

Selectmen.” It declared that the “Board wished to move in another direction. Today is your last workday.” It described some terms of separation and ordered Chaponis to “depart Town Hall immediately.” Black’s signature appeared at the bottom along with the date and a handwritten note that it was “reviewed with assessor.”

The union then filed a grievance that alleged Chaponis was discharged without just cause, documentation said. On Nov. 19, 2007, Black wrote a memo to union presidents Chris Corsa and Dean Hunniford to notify them that the town had denied the grievance, claiming that the “just cause” provisions of the contract do not apply, documentation said.

A panel of the Department of Labor later reviewed both sides of the story. It said the town claimed it had the right to terminate Chaponis when the BOS took no action on her reappointment. It further claimed that state statute gave it the right not to reappoint the individual who is an appointed town officer and was therefore exempt from its collective bargaining agreement.

The panel, though, agreed with the union that Chaponis is a member of the bargaining unit and thereby clearly covered by the collective bargaining agreement. The panel therefore rejected the town’s claim that it had the right to terminate by state statute because Chaponis is not an “elected official” and the statute is silent as to the definition of a town official, documentation said. At the time of her appointment, there was no labor contract in effect. Subsequently, an agreement was negotiated by both the town and the union that included the assessor position.

Since the town agreed to the inclusion of the assessor position, it must abide by all the conditions it agreed to accept, the panel said in the documentation. Under the contract, it clearly notes that “just cause” must be enumerated specifically when there is the involuntary loss of employment. The panel believed there was no “just cause” reason cited as mandated by the collective bargaining agreement, the documents said.

Black actually testified before the panel that Chaponis was not discharged because of performance deficiencies or misconduct, the documents said.

Ultimately, the documents said, the panel concluded that the town did violate the collective bargaining agreement when it discharged Chaponis on Nov. 14, 2007, without just cause. Chaponis was to be reimbursed for any lost wages and benefits for the period she was terminated and is returned to work, less any outside earnings she may have received during the same period, the documentation said.

The arbitration was awarded on Aug. 6, and the town has since filed an appeal.

Both parties refused to comment based on pending litigation.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I was sent an e-mail last week with a link to a poll being conducted at the ABC News website. In the poll, you’re given a bunch of statements by both John McCain and Barack Obama. Just which of the candidates said those statements isn’t revealed. Instead, you click on the one you most agree with and, at the end of the poll, you’re told if your thinking is more like McCain’s or more like Obama’s.

After taking the poll, it was revealed my thinking was more in line with Obama. It wasn’t a clean sweep – indeed, I agreed with McCain’s statements more than I thought I would – but Obama had the clear edge. I wasn’t surprised Obama was chosen as my match, but I feel obliged to warn Barack that, while I am indeed an awesome force, me choosing him in a poll does not in any way guarantee a trip to the White House.

In January – long before the Presidential race came down to McCain and Obama – I took an online quiz, also featuring several questions, and at the end of the quiz I’d be told which of the candidates I agreed with the most. The questions were on a range of topics (economy, health care, gay rights, Iraq, etc.) and when all was said and done, the candidate I matched up with best was declared to be John Edwards. Hillary Clinton came in second in my poll results, followed by Obama. (The Republican candidate I matched up best with was actually determined to be Rudy Guiliani, despite his unfortunate affliction of being a Yankees fan.)

I had been seriously considering voting for Edwards in the primary anyway, and then after I saw how closely I matched up with him, I thought about it even more. But by the time Super Tuesday rolled around in February, Edwards was gone from the race. I voted for Hillary that day instead, and, as we all know, she ultimately dropped out of the race too. This by no means indicates that I don’t like Obama – in fact, right after I cast my ballot for Hillary in February I took an exit poll, and said that if Obama got the nomination instead of Hillary I’d have no problem whatsoever voting for him in November – I just found it interesting that the top two candidates I matched up with in that online poll in January have both been out of the race for months. So again, Barack, I must tell you: my support of you is not necessarily a good luck charm. (Just ask the New York Mets.)

* * *

By the time you read this column, the Vice Presidential debate between Sarah Palin and Joe Biden will have already taken place. I hope it was a good one. I admit, I’ve been looking forward to it, so much so that I don’t even really mind (for the most part) that NBC pre-empted *The Office* so that they could show it. And my anticipation of it only increased after seeing a clip of Palin’s now-infamous interview with Katie Couric. (One of the funniest comments I’ve heard about that interview, by the way, is that Palin “looked like a moose in headlights.”) And Palin’s evidently been anticipating it too: In a campaign appearance in Ohio the other day, she zinged Biden by saying, “I’m looking forward to meeting him. I’ve never met him. I’ve been hearing about his Senate speeches since I was in, like, the second grade.”

I was out of state on Saturday (I was down in New York, but more on that later) but apparently it rained buckets here. So much so that the Colchester 57 Fest was washed out. The festival has been rescheduled for next Friday, Oct. 10. According to the Colchester Parks and Recreation Department, the parade that had

been planned to precede the festival won’t be held. But the festival itself should still be enjoyable, and I hope it goes off as planned and doesn’t get rained out again. I’m a little tired of the rain.

The baseball postseason started this week, and the Mets were again no-shows, having failed to get the necessary number of wins to force even a one-game playoff with Milwaukee. As I alluded to above, I was down in New York for both Saturday’s and Sunday’s games. Saturday saw a tremendous pitching performance by Johan Santana – a complete game, three-hit shutout – but the Mets were alas unable to keep the good vibes going on Sunday. Still, I’m glad I went to Sunday’s game, as after it was finished there was a post-game ceremony to celebrate Shea Stadium and all the great Mets that have called it home over the past four decades. The ceremony included arguably the two most important players in the history of the franchise: Tom Seaver and Mike Piazza. And, when the celebration was over, Seaver went to the pitcher’s mound, while Piazza crouched behind home plate. Seaver then warmed up and threw a pitch to Piazza. It was a very fitting way to mark the final pitch thrown ever at Big Shea. The two men then walked side by side out of the ballpark and, as they walked, the lights at Shea slowly went out. It was beautiful. A fireworks display soon followed (with orange and blue fireworks, of course). It was a wonderful ceremony, and I’m glad I got to see it live.

* * *

As for those baseball playoffs, I’ve done what I usually do whenever the Mets don’t make the playoffs: I’ve chosen two surrogate teams (one from the National League and one from the American League), to follow and root for in place of the Amazin’s. In the National League, it’s the Dodgers. I’ve always had a certain fondness for that team. It’s never come close to my liking of the Mets of course, but for some reason, a reason I can’t quite put my finger on, I’ve never been able to root against them (except of course for when they’re playing the Mets).

My American League pick I can explain much more, well, rationally: the Tampa Bay Rays. In past seasons I had been pulling for Boston in the postseason, but with two World Series trophies in the past four years now, it’s time to give somebody else a shot. And why not Tampa Bay? As I’ve written before in this column, they’re just a great story. Before this season, they had never even finished with a .500 record, and lo and behold now they’ve won their division. And, unlike the ’97 Marlins, who went out and basically bought a championship through overpaying like they had never overpaid before, the Rays did it the old fashioned way: with players brought up through their system, complemented with a couple of smart free agent signings and trades. Their Opening Day payroll this year was a mere \$43.8 million, nearly \$100 million less than that of the Detroit Tigers, who finished in last place. (The highest payroll in the game was, by far, the Yankees, at \$209 million.)

Hopefully Tampa Bay can go all the way this year. They’ll have a tough road ahead of them – none of these playoff teams are anything to sneeze at – but maybe, just maybe, it’ll be a road that ends with a championship.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Residents Express Skate Park Frustrations

by Michael McCoy

It seemed everyone felt good about the unified effort to accommodate the town's skateboarders. Until last week's Town Council meeting.

Nearly 10 residents, all living on or around Bevin Boulevard, related accounts to the council last Tuesday, Sept. 21, concerning misconduct on the part of skatepark frequenters during the public remarks portion of their meeting. Council chair Melissa Engel said that prior to this, the council had not heard of a single complaint.

Comments were led off by Rosemarie Smith, who said those using the park are often loud, use profane language and leave much litter behind. Recounting times she has addressed the kids directly, she said, "They would basically tell me where to go." Furthermore, she remarked that the nearby picnic table was recently "carved up with profanity."

Smith said she understood the merit of such a park, but admitted, "I don't want it in my backyard," and added, "I gave up trying to take my granddaughter down to the playground. ... It attracts older kids, and it's unsupervised."

Charlotte Cirillo said the skatepark attracts up to 30 kids at once sometimes. She also complained about bad language and added that she has witnessed kids urinating there.

"I've even invited them in to use my bathroom," she added. She continued, "Everybody likes to think their kids behave when they're not watching. They don't."

Cirillo said she's heard kids use phrases like, "I'm gonna kick your ass" and has also heard them call each other motherf—ers. Furthermore, Cirillo said that kids on quads and dirt bikes have also used the ramps.

William Landry said he has called the police four times for incidents related to the park. One instance he shared included people at the park setting off firecrackers at 1:30 a.m. "There's a crew around here that don't give no respect to nobody," he said. While spontaneously leaving the meeting, he also added, "They shot my cat with a paintball."

Marla Miner reported that, in addition to the lack of supervision, she has witnessed fighting

swearing, smoking, urinating and making out. She also reported "defiant youth standing in the middle of the road."

James Sadlowski said, "It's become a big hangout," adding that kids sometimes shift to the area behind the historical society. While he said he would not come out and say the kids were drinking or smoking pot, he offered, "Apparently they can't do it at the schoolyard...go figure."

As for kids clogging up the roads, refusing to move, Sarah Brown commented that it makes "just trying to get home" a hassle oftentimes. "I've been told to go 'f' myself," she said, as well as being called an "a-hole."

"It's unbelievable," she said, and while admitting she was not a mother, she speculated, "If these were my kids...I'd be pummeling them."

In late May, about a year after the Skatepark Committee, facilitated by Kimberley Fontaine, started lobbying for a place for kids to skateboard, the council voted unanimously to provide a temporary spot. This was located on the basketball court at the Bevin property, on the north side of Center School. As of Labor Day, the temporary park was discontinued, as planned, because of school resuming. Those speaking at the meeting said, that while the misconduct certainly coincided with the May decision, it did not end when the park was discontinued.

While skateboards were singled out (Rosemarie Smith said she saw some carrying skateboards), the general consensus allowed that the misconduct does not exclusively stem from skateboarders.

Though she certainly did not seem to dismiss the complaints, Engel said last Wednesday that the previous night's council meeting "was the first I've ever heard these complaints. To me, what it indicates is that is not the proper place for a skatepark."

She then added, "In my mind, the only location that's viable is Sears Park."

"Sears Park represents a logical place for it," Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe said after the meeting, but added that an indoor spot would be

ideal.

Just three weeks ago, at the last Town Council meeting, the council commissioned O'Keefe to ask CLA, the town engineers, to begin preliminarily looking for a spot for a permanent skatepark, performing a "physical assessment." O'Keefe reported at last Tuesday's council meeting that "preliminary reports do not support a permanent skatepark at Center School."

Though Engel and O'Keefe both said the town is still exploring the prospect of a permanent skatepark, Engel said she did not see the town funding any significant portion of it.

Police Chief Matthew Reimondo said the police department has received about 20 calls related to such incidents at the temporary skatepark, adding that the bulk came in July and August and have slowed down since the start of school.

Reimondo added that all calls have been responded to, though no citations have been issued or arrests made. He also said that virtually all calls come in the evening.

"It's always been an area where kids hang out," Reimondo said, and figured that more kids go there now that it's a temporary park.

"We try to move them along," Reimondo said, but he admitted that, theoretically, arrests would have to be made at a certain point.

"It's one of the areas that we know there are issues, so officers keep an extra eye on it," remarked Reimondo.

Fontaine, though not present at the council meeting, spoke about the residents' comments last Thursday, Sept. 25. "I share their concerns about our youth," she said, but added, "It would have been beneficial for all...if they would have come forward at the time it happened."

Fontaine also said that she had a meeting on the skatepark with Acting Town Manager Bob Drewry, Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Plummer on July 30. Fontaine said at that time she was not made aware of any complaints. When told that Reimondo received 20 calls, most of them in July and August, Fontaine responded, "That surprises me."

"I think it's quite possible and plausible that

the majority of youth" involved in these incidents were not part of the skatepark committee, Fontaine said, and added, "It's unfortunate that it's being used for unintended purposes."

Fontaine also didn't shrug off the complaints, and said, "I absolutely sympathize with any homeowner who feels they've been exposed to anything that they don't want to be."

Noting the blood, sweat and tears that preceded this, Fontaine said, "The kids have worked really hard for this," later adding, "It's unfortunate all the way around." She later added, "I'm very saddened by the fact that these isolated incidents might jeopardize all the work...these kids have done."

Fontaine did not seem to feel adversarial toward the night's speakers. "I truly believe that the residents that expressed their concerns want the same things we want: a safe and inclusive community that provides recreational opportunities for its youth and adults," she said. "I don't feel that they think these kids are disposable. I think the questions they raise need to be addressed."

However, Fontaine suggested that the actions described last Tuesday night are no different than what happens regularly in any given town. Fontaine said that, while they may be lamentable, better for the actions described at last week's meeting to occur in the open, rather than in a secluded spot, such as the woods, where things could take a worse turn.

Fontaine seemed to take issue with the many concerns over lack of supervision, pointing out that those using the park for baseball, basketball, soccer are never supervised, nor are they expected to be.

"We still are separating in some ways by class...and I hope that changes," Fontaine said. She continued, "I would guess that a lot of what occurred would have been avoided if we just got to know our neighbors."

Fontaine said she has not yet had a chance to ask the kids who are part of the committee what they know about these allegations, but vowed that she "absolutely" would be doing so.

East Hampton Addresses Tainted Property

by Michael McCoy

Contaminants found at 13 Watrous St. have left the town with a larger burden than officials had anticipated.

In mid-September, test results revealed that the property, known for some time to contain contaminants, actually contains a discouraging amount of contaminants in its soil and groundwater. A press release from the town lists these as including "chlorinated solvents (typical of metal parts degreasers,) oils, heavy metals, and relatively low levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

According to a fact sheet issued by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, PCBs are the result of the mixing of chemicals, which, though no longer manufactured by the United States, are still found in the environment.

The document says that health effects linked PCB exposure include "acne-like skin conditions in adults and neurobehavioral and immunological changes in children," as well as "cancer in animals."

PCBs, according to the document, were once "used as coolants and lubricators in transformers, capacitors, and other electrical equipment" and that "fluorescent lighting fixtures and electrical devices...and old microscope and hydraulic oils" made before 1977 may contain PCBs.

Eventually these PCBs enter the air, water and soil as a result of spills, leaks or fires. Illegal or improper disposal of such products also causes the presence of PCBs in the environment. PCBs, according to the fact sheet, "do not readily break down in the environment and thus may remain there for long periods of time."

In 2003, the town applied for and received

an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant for \$175,000. That was used, in part, to compose a list of properties that would be good candidates for Brownfields cleanup, entitled, The Village Center Overview Report. (Watrous Street intersects with Main Street, and is around the corner from the village center.) At that time, 13 Watrous St., was identified as an appropriate site, and the town was subsequently awarded a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant for "a remedial investigation." The town had to provide a 20 percent match, which, in this case, was \$40,000.

"The problem we have right now is we don't know the full nature and extent of the contamination," Brownfields Steering Committee Chairman Dan Wolfram said, explaining that such contamination is measured in parts per million (PPM.) He reported that the most recent test yielded several hundred PPM.

The tests are being administered by Tighe & Bond, an engineering/environmental firm with offices in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Wolfram explained that the site is being referred to as the Former Summit Thread Powerhouse, which Wolfram called one of "several major manufacturers" in town. In 1943, the property was sold to Artistic Wire Products.

In 1990, Gezzi Motors, an auto repair outfit/used car dealer, purchased the property. Jim Gezzi, who was the owner of the now-defunct business, said of that time, "I couldn't get a mortgage because [the property] was polluted," and noted that the contamination predated his business. Gezzi blamed the bulk of the problem to Artistic Wire Products, saying, "They dealt with corrosive materials."

Gezzi said his company never had any underground storage, and all their waste oil and used parts cleaning fluid was disposed of monthly by Safety Clean Corporation, who was also on call on an as needed basis.

In 2002, the town foreclosed on the property, which Gezzi said was foolish, since it put liability on the part of the town. The town has rented the property out to several entities since Gezzi Motors left.

When asked if the fact that the site is these days referred to as the Former Summit Thread Powerhouse means that company is believed to be behind the pollution, Wolfram said this isn't necessarily the case. "You need to put a name on something," he said, later adding, "It's just a name that goes nice on an application." It should also be noted that no one has attributed any of the contamination to Gezzi Motors.

But, when commenting further on whether Summit Thread could be responsible, Wolfram said, "Could be...[the contamination] could be associated with a lot of stuff."

"It's a chemical, and there are no good chemicals, in my mind," Wolfram said, and added, "PCBs are everywhere. ... There's more of this out there than people understand." He also said that if the committee had never pursued this grant, the existence of these contaminants would never have been discovered.

Wolfram said more tests must be conducted before the origin of the contamination, as well as a price tag can be identified. However, in regard to the former, he said, "Frankly, it doesn't matter. We are looking at a problem that we need to fix."

Wolfram also said that "getting rid of the

building, I think, is a real priority for everyone." But, he said, there are structural issues that complicate the situation, and these issues do not fall within the purview of the Brownfields Steering Committee.

Wolfram is an environmental consultant for Woodard & Curran, though the firm has nothing to do with this situation. Though Wolfram is technically chairman of the committee, he said that he and Scott Bristol more or less serve as co-chairs. Kay Willson also serves on the committee, and Wolfram said he expects more committee members to be appointed in the near future.

As of Thursday, Wolfram expected to speak with the EPA later that day to begin establishing a work plan. He expects Tighe & Bond to conduct further tests before long, and that the results could take up to four weeks to come in.

Though no future plans have yet been formed for how 13 Watrous St. will be used once it is remediated, O'Keefe said, "It's part of the village center masterplan concept."

The town installed a perimeter fence earlier this week, which is meant to insure people do not wander onto the property. According to the press release, "The town places great importance upon the health and welfare of its citizens and will take measures to accomplish the environmental clean up in the most expeditious manner possible."

O'Keefe said in the release, "We are pleased with the work of the Brownfields Steering Committee and of the partnership that they have formed with the region's EPA offices to assist us in identifying and cleaning up these Brownfield areas."

New Portland Soccer Fields Under Discussion

by Michael McCoy

A complex consisting of three soccer fields could be on the horizon for Route 17.

In August, Glastonbury-based Oakwood Soccer Club applied to construct the complex, which would consist of 24.46 acres at 505 Glastonbury Turnpike. The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) opened a public hearing on the matter at its Sept. 18 meeting. The hearing was attended by representatives from Oakwood Soccer Club, as well as their attorney Rich Carella and civil engineer Pat Benjamin.

The site is located in an industrial zone, and Benjamin said the project would be constructed in three phases. The first one would be a turf field, while the second and third would be grass fields. Oakwood is proposing a gravel parking lot to accommodate about 180 cars. The site would also contain 57 shade trees.

The complex could also house a 12' by 12' storage shed, as well as two portable toilets. Though not part of the application, Benjamin said the developers planned to construct actual bathrooms within the next five years.

Oakwood is proposing that only one of the three fields would be lit. This field would operate seven days a week, from 8 a.m.-10 p.m., with the lights coming on at dusk. The other

two fields would be open seven days a week as well, from 8 a.m. to dusk.

During the Sept. 18 hearing, PZC member Peter Clark voiced some concern about the potential for turf fields to contain lead. Benjamin and Oakwood co-owner Dave Farrell said that this was an issue with older fields which often used old tire rubber. But, they said, only virgin rubber is used today.

The only members of the public who commented on the proposal were Tom Gardiner and Ben Srb. Both seemed quite enamored with the project, with Srb saying, "I think it's going to be a good site."

Gardiner said he has been involved with the club for over 12 years and has known the proprietors for about 25 years. "They're known nationally," he said. He added, "We're very excited about what this could mean for our kids in town," and noted that his own five children frequent the Glastonbury club. "It would benefit everybody involved," Gardiner predicted.

The PZC wound up continuing the meeting until Thursday, Oct. 2. A major reason for this is the concern over water issues.

The potential site is located just behind the town garage, which has been used as a parking lot for the last several Portland Agricultural

Fairs. A town well is located on the same property as the town garage. Director of Public Works Rick Kelsey said the town gets about one third of its drinking water from that well, which is about 250 feet away from the closest field, as outlined in the site plan.

Noting the potential use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides, Kelsey remarked, "Obviously, we're concerned."

However, Kelsey commented, "We're gonna let the experts address this." Currently, the town's water specialist, Cornell University professor Martin Petrovich, is reviewing the latest correspondence from the applicant's specialist, Aqua Solutions.

While Thursday's meeting occurred after press time, Town Planner Deanna Rhodes predicted this week that the PZC would not rule on the matter at its meeting. She figured that PZC members may not receive Petrovich's analysis by that time, and even if they did, they almost certainly would not have had ample time to review it.

Kelsey was to meet with both water specialists Wednesday and seemed optimistic about arriving at a solution that would suit both the town and Oakwood. When asked if he thought this was likely, he said, "I hope so, and I think

so."

According to Kelsey, the town tests the well in question on a regular basis, and will continue to do so. Should contaminants penetrate the well, he said, they would know right away. However, the problem is, once it has happened, it is already too late. "There's no easy fix at all once it's happened," Kelsey said.

One precaution Kelsey suggested was the installation of monitoring wells between the field and the town well. Also of note is that the gradient runs downward from the fields to the well.

"What everyone is trying to do here," Kelsey said, "is be proactive and protect our water supply."

According to the club's website, Farrell, Rick Derella and Tom Mulroy created Oakwood Soccer Club in 1980. They provide leagues and instruction for players of all ages. Currently Oakwood Sports Center operates out of Glastonbury

The PZC has until Oct. 23 to close the public hearing, assuming PZC members do not seek an extension. Once the hearing is closed, the commission members have 65 days to vote on the matter.

RHAM Middle School Student Hit By Car

by Sarah McCoy

A RHAM Middle School student from Marlborough was rushed to the hospital after being hit by another student last Friday morning, Sept. 26.

Brittney Clement, 12, was waiting for her school bus in her driveway at 111 Jerry Daniels Rd. when a Toyota Land Cruiser driven by Benjamin Reiner, 17, drove off the road, according to state police reports. Clement sustained serious injuries to the back and the neck, police said but was released from Hartford Hospital on Sunday.

Clement returned to school Tuesday morning.

Reiner, of 8 Gina Ln., was on his way to classes at RHAM High School when his vehicle traveled off the right side of the road, according to state police. State police reports

indicate that inclement weather may have been a factor in the accident.

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski called the event "a very unfortunate accident."

He said no plans were in place to adjust the locations where students are picked up by their bus. "The bus company tries to determine the safest place possible for students to be picked up," Siminski said. "Hopefully all of our students learn to be more cautious, especially in inclement weather."

Siminski also praised the counseling departments at both the high and middle schools for their role in easing student and parent concerns.

State Police Troop K in Colchester is continuing to investigate the incident and its exact cause.

Marlborough Police News

9/27- Stanley Rzonca, 56, of 689 Main. St., Manchester, was charged with first-degree criminal trespass, possession out of container and weapons in vehicle, State Police said.

9/27- Michael Laubenstein, 33, of 54 Roberts Rd., was charged with first-degree criminal trespass, drug paraphernalia, interfering with an officer and possession of controlled substance, State Police said.

Portland Police News

9/24 — David Cunningham, 45, of 255 Rock Landing Rd., Haddam Neck, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, Portland Police said.

Colchester Police News

9/25-Luke Shields, 24, 34 Oneco St., Norwich, turned himself in on the charge of second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

9/25-Debra Goodie, 54, of 15 O'Connell Rd. Ex., East Haddam, was charged with 12 counts of owning/harboring a dog to create a nuisance, State Police said.

9/27-Daniel Gay, 21, of 127 Perry St., Unionville, was charged with DUI, failure to maintain a lane and failure to carry license, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

9/20 — Sean H. Martland, 23, of 71 North Main St., was arrested for operating under suspension and making unnecessary noise, East Hampton Police said.

9/23 — Kenneth Krajewski, 37, of 145 Chestnut Hill Rd., was arrested pursuant to a warrant on charges of sixth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny, police said.

9/24 — Timothy Brodeur, 54, of 8639 E. Devonshire Rd., Inverness, FL, was issued a ticket for traveling too fast, police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Steven J. Vernik

Steven J. Vernik, 48, loving husband of Veronica (Loewenbaum) Vernik, died tragically in an automobile accident on Sept. 24 in East Hampton. Born March 16, 1960, he was the son of Julie (Russell) Vernik and the late Zenon Verbnik.

Steve was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was the owner and operator of Century Landscaping. He was a member of the East Hampton Lions Club.

Besides his wife Roni and his mother, Steve is survived by two brothers, Victor Vernik of Middletown and Bruce Vernik of Zepher Hills, FL, and many friends.

A memorial gathering was held Sunday, Sept. 28, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the VFW Fowler Dix Park Post #5095, North Maple Street, East Hampton, CT 06424 or the American Cancer Society, Franklin Commons, 106 Route 32, Franklin, CT 06254-1800.

To leave online condolences or for directions, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com

Andover

Norman W. Lindberg

Norman W. Lindberg (Norm), 72, of Andover, died Sept. 26. Norm was predeceased by his parents, Eric and Hildegard Lindberg of Cromwell, and a brother, Lennart Lindberg of Costa Mesa, CA.

Norm graduated from Middletown High School in 1954. He was best known as a clarinet player in the school band, and played 1st clarinet in his junior and senior years in the Connecticut All State Band at the Bushnell Memorial in Hartford. After high school he joined the Connecticut Air National Guard and served for eight years. He worked at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft (United Technologies) from 1957 until his retirement in 1992. He served most of his 35 years with the company as a Paymaster at all the branch plants in Connecticut, including Middletown, Southington and North Haven.

After retiring, Norm moved to Andover where he loved to fish, hike and hunt with his Labrador retrievers, Mocha and Kona. Kona was Norm's best friend, splashing in the river chasing fish, retrieving pheasants and taking daily walks through the woods. Norm was a member of the Glastonbury Sportsman's Association, and as an unofficial photographer, he compiled photo albums to document club activities. Norm also enjoyed fly fishing and was a member of the Salmon River Anglers Association.

Norm is survived by his two daughters, Anne Lindberg of Middletown and Karen Lindberg, her husband John Tarascio and sons Jack and Joey of Thousand Oaks, CA; a loving partner of 25 years, Nancy Richards of Andover; his aunt Ruth Anderson of Melbourne, FL; former wife Jacqueline Grieco of St. Petersburg Beach, FL; as well as cousins all over the United States.

A graveside service will be held at the New West Cemetery in Cromwell, CT for family members only. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the charity of your choice. The Carlson Funeral Home of New Britain is in charge of arrangements. Messages for the family can be left at www.carlsonfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Janis Elmars Strazdins

Janis Elmars Strazdins, 97, beloved husband of Milda (Olzols) Strazdins, of Colchester and Stamford, passed away Monday evening, Sept. 29, after an extended illness. Born Oct. 5, 1911, in Nitaure, Latvia, he was a son of the late Juris and Anna (Schmidt) Strazdins. Mr. Strazdins will be remembered fondly as a generous and helpful friend to everyone who knew him. He will be sadly missed and lovingly remembered.

In addition to his loving wife of 71 years, he is survived by two daughters and their husbands, Silvija and David Wheeler of Colchester and Beata & Nicholas Vukson of Vienna, VA; a brother, Edward Strazdins of New Hampshire; five grandchildren, Beth Knapp, Matthew Wheeler, Nicholas Vukson, Michael Vukson and Karen Pittman; six great-grandchildren; his brother, Edward Strazdins of New Hampshire; and numerous extended family and friends.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Nellie Cyr

Nellie (Whitney) Cyr, 99, of Hebron and formerly of Windsor, widow of the late Roland J. Cyr, passed away Tuesday morning, Sept. 30, at Cobalt Lodge in East Hampton. Born Dec. 11, 1908, in Salisbury, VT, she was a daughter of the late Edward J. and Ida May (Thomas) Whitney.

A 1934 graduate of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, she was a Registered Nurse there for many years and also worked in the private sector for many years. Following her retirement, he enjoyed spending her summers in Vermont where she loved to fish. Mrs. Cyr was a longtime member of the Salisbury (VT) Congregational Church.

She is survived by her sister, Martha (Whitney) Hooker of Hebron and her family; as well as numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was predeceased by nine brothers.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

John Kulynyck

John Kulynyck, 85, of Hebron, died Thursday, Sept. 25. He was born Nov. 9, 1922, in Columbia, the son of Michael and Mary (Haiti) Kulynyck and was an 80-year resident of Hebron, passing away in the family home.

He was a World War II Army veteran, serving as a combat engineer in the Philippines, and was honorably discharged. John had been employed as a rigger by Hallamore Transfer in Bloomfield until retiring in 1987. He was an active member of Post No. 95 American Legion in Hebron for 60 years, receiving an award for his dedication, holding nearly every office. John enjoyed honoring his deceased comrades by placing the American flag on all veterans' graves in Hebron/Gilead cemeteries for 55 years. He was also a member of VFW Post No. 8776 Hebron and a member and former chief of Hebron Volunteer Fire Dept. He had been a member of the Democratic Town Committee and the Zoning Board. John was a communicant of the Church of The Holy Family.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Annie (Carpenter) Kulynyck; his daughter, Norma (Kulynyck) Mara and her husband; three precious grandchildren, Timothy "TJ," John "JB" and Noelle Mara, and many nieces and nephews.

John was one of six children, four of which are now deceased.

John's family would like to extend a special thank you to VNA East for their care. His family received friends at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Rte. 195), Willimantic on Sunday, Sept. 28. His Funeral Mass was celebrated Monday, Sept. 29, at 10:30 a.m. at The Church of The Holy Family, Route 85, Hebron. Interment with military honors followed in New Hebron Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Hebron Volunteer Fire Dept. P.O. Box 911, Hebron, CT. 06248. For online memorial guestbook, visit www.potterfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Thomas J. Burns

Thomas J. Burns, 70, of Marlborough, beloved husband of Shari (Borenstein) Burns, died Friday, Sept. 26, at Hartford Hospital. Born May 9, 1938, in Rockville, son of the late Thomas N. and Dorothy (Orcutt) Burns, he had lived in Marlborough for the past eight years. Prior to his retirement he was a mechanical engineer for UTC. He was a graduate of Rockville High School and loved gardening.

Besides his wife he is survived by two sons and a daughter-in-law, Patrick and Brenda Burns of Bristol and Scott Burns of Kentucky; a daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Jeff Andrews of Oxford; a sister, Cheryl-Lyn Avery and her husband Lew of Beverly Hills, FL; five grandchildren, Courtney, Garrett, Meghan, Kevin Burns and Jesse Andrews; and his cat Munchkin.

Funeral services will be at the convenience of the family. Memorial donations may be made to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111. The Mulryan Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

Portland

Angelina Rizzo

Angelina Barbara Carta Rizzo, 94, formerly of Tuccitto Road, Portland, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, Sept. 25, at the Middlesex Health Care Center. Angie was born in Middletown on July 18, 1914, to the late Louis and Anna Carta. She attended Middletown schools, worked at various local jobs and retired from EIS Automotive at age 65.

Angie was predeceased by her husband Rosario Rizzo, Sr. and her brothers Mike and Frank Carta and sisters Jenny Carta, Lucy LaTerra and Rose Kandrach.

Angie is survived by her son Salvatore and daughter-in-law Patricia, son Rosario and daughter-in-law Patricia; her grandchildren Shannon Peterson and her husband Robert, all of Portland, Lori Rizzo and her fiancée Aryn Hawks of Newport, RI, and Sean A. Rizzo of Portland; and her great-grandsons Taylor and Aidan Peterson of Portland; and several nieces and nephews.

She belonged to the EIS Bowling League, enjoyed going to the casino with her family and playing bingo at the convalescent home. She will be missed by the many friends she made at the convalescent home, many of whom were recipients of the doilies that she crocheted and gave as gifts. The family would especially like to thank the staff at the Middlesex Health Care Center for their loving care of Angie.

Friends called at the D'Angelo Funeral Home Sunday, Sept. 28. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Monday, Sept. 29, at Saint Sebastian Church followed by burial at the family plot in Saint Sebastian Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to The Red Cross Transportation Fund, 97 Broad St., Middletown, CT.