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The Colchester Community Theatre is getting ready for next weekend's production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Jay Selavka, who plays Pharaoh, is shown here rehearsing one of the numbers from the musical.

## Colchester Community Theatre Preparing for 'Joseph'

by Adam Benson

Drop in at a rehearsal night for the Colchester Community Theatre's (CCT's) upcoming production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and you're just as likely to stumble over cast members hammering out homework assignments as you are a set.

But come Feb. 13, the 78 actors from around the region will offer up one of the organization's most lavish productions to date, all to usher CCT's decade of service to the community.

"The theater has just grown and grown in its following and support," CCT co-

founder and *Dreamcoat* director Wallis Johnson said. "These past 10 years have been a dream come true."

Combining a range of musical styles with one of the Bible's most popular parables, *Dreamcoat* is a dynamic production that includes frequent costume changes, nearly non-stop musical performances and a set that is mobile.

Johnson said organizers chose the popular Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice musical because it allowed them to attract a very large cast while showcasing some of the area's best local talent.

"We can include a lot of people in the cast to celebrate our anniversary and welcome all the new people that keep coming in," Johnson said. The youngest cast member is seven, and many performers also have children in the play or have been active in CCT's productions since the group's inception.

For 12-year-old Katie Conway, the time on stage gives her a chance to explore her character and escape the realities of life as a William J. Johnston Middle School seventh-grader.

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“You’re totally different on the stage than you are in real life,” she said. Katie is a CCT veteran, having performed in its staging of *The Wizard of Oz* in 2005 and taking part in several of the theatre’s summer workshops.

“The three show days, it’s the craziest feeling to be someone else and just act,” Katie said.

While this year marks the first time CCT has taken on *Dreamcoat*, the organization has tackled high-profile musicals before, including *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Sound of Music*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oliver!* and *Annie*.

Despite the success of its past shows, Johnson said organizers are dependent on community support for survival. Nearly all of its operating costs come out of revenue from ticket sales.

“The community of Colchester has been nothing but supportive of this organization,” Johnson said. “It’s wonderful.”

In addition to the nearly 80 people on stage, the show carries a crew of almost 30 people. Johnson said CCT is always looking for ways to let people get involved, either behind the scenes or in front of an audience.

CASTING was completed in mid-December, and the crew has been rehearsing nine hours a week since Jan. 1 to prepare for the Feb. 13 opening. That means between scenes, cast members are doing homework, making dinner arrangements or any other number of everyday duties that would otherwise interfere with their preparation for the show.

But, said 15-year-old Libby Quesada, the long nights pay off when the curtain rises.

“It’s so much fun,” Libby, a sophomore at RHAM High School in Hebron, said. “You meet a lot of similar people. I love the cast, and we’re doing a great job together.”

Libby has been involved with CCT productions since 2004, when she saw a newspaper ad for *Annie*. That year, she and her father tried out for the production together.

Johnson said for veteran CCT fans, *Dreamcoat* offers one of the company’s most fast-paced productions to date. But there’s also plenty for newcomers to enjoy, she promised. “They won’t believe this is community theatre when they see it,” she said.

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* runs Friday, Feb. 13, through Sunday, Feb. 15, at the Bacon Academy High School auditorium, 611 Norwich Ave.

The Friday and Saturday shows will be at 7 p.m., while the Sunday show will be at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors and children age 12 and under.

Tickets are available at Wild Geese Gift Shop, 191 Broadway St.; Tracy’s Tunes, 111 Lebanon Ave; Plotkin’s Jewelry, 119 S. Main St; Colchester Parks and Recreation Department in the Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave; or online at [www.colchesterct.gov/parks](http://www.colchesterct.gov/parks). Tickets are also available at the door on performance days, though audience members are encouraged to purchase tickets ahead of time.

From the Editor’s Desk

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I’m sure many of you have heard about the unfortunate incident with Judge Curtissa Cofield that occurred in nearby Glastonbury. For those of you who haven’t, here’s what happened”.

In October, Cofield – the presiding judge of Hartford Community Court – was arrested and charged with driving under the influence after allegedly striking a State Police cruiser that was parked in a construction zone on Route 2. Cofield was taken back to the Glastonbury Police Department for processing – and that’s where things got ugly.

Allegations surfaced shortly after her arrest that said that, while at GPD, Cofield – who is black – directed a string of racially-charged epithets at a State Trooper – who was also black. A video, taken at GPD during Cofield’s arrest, was released last week by the state Judicial Review Council, and it backed up those allegations – and then some.

The *Rivereast*’s sister paper, the *Glastonbury Citizen*, has been following this story ever since it happened last fall; not surprising, since the DUI not only occurred in Glastonbury, but Cofield is a Glastonbury resident as well. Last week the *Citizen* had a long story describing Cofield’s actions in the video. Simply put, she comes across incredibly poorly.

The video shows Cofield referring to State Police Sgt. Dwight Washington as a “Negro” on multiple occasions, even calling him “Negro Washington” and saying to him at one point, “It is hard to be a Negro in a white man’s world, isn’t it?” She also said she was “sick of being treated like a Negro from the hood” and told Washington she had “Negroitis.” At one point in the video, Cofield even uses the phrase “the head n—er in charge,” apparently referring to Washington.

The video also shows Cofield on the phone, apparently with her husband, talking to him about picking up her car. Washington asked her husband if he had AAA, and Cofield interjected, “We’re ghetto Negroes. We don’t have AAA.”

The video depicts other instances of inappropriate behavior – including Cofield telling Washington she is “humiliated by your f—ing attitude” and calling a female Glastonbury Police officer who was present “little girl” and “Barbie” – but it’s the racially-charged language that really stands out. It’s just unbelievable to hear her say the things she says in the video, particularly since she’s been a respected judge since

1991.

The Judicial Review Council has been investigating the matter, and has charged Cofield with multiple violations of the Judicial Code of Conduct, including using disparaging and demeaning language to law enforcement officers and trying to intimidate and influence a law enforcement officer with her position as judge. A public hearing on the matter will be held Monday, Feb. 9, in Hartford. The Judicial Review Council could suspend Cofield or even recommend her removal from the bench (although the council couldn’t remove her outright; if it recommended to remove her, the issue would then be taken up by the state Supreme Court).

I take no joy in saying this, but I hope the council recommends her removal.

I’m not saying this with a holier-than-thou, “Oh no, she got drunk!” attitude. Most of us have on occasion had more to drink than we should have, and perhaps have done things we shouldn’t have. While I am in no way condoning drunken driving (and Cofield really, really shouldn’t have been driving; tests showed her blood alcohol content to be .16 percent, double the legal limit), if this had been a simple DUI charge, I’d probably have been okay with a suspension.

It’s what Cofield said at GPD that makes things so much worse.

The embarrassing video of Cofield’s processing at the police station has now been broadcast all over TV and the Internet and written up in newspapers. Simply put, how can a criminal or an attorney – particularly in a case involving alcohol – take her seriously, after having seen her go on that drunken tirade? Simple answer: They can’t.

Like I said, I take no joy in this. As a reporter who covered Glastonbury for three years, I had a couple of occasions to speak with Cofield, and she was always a very pleasant person to deal with. In fact, before this incident, I’d heard nothing but positive things about her.

That’s what makes this whole thing so sad. If Cofield is removed from the bench – again, as she should be – her 17-year career as a judge will be remembered not for its accomplishments, but for an alcohol-fueled outburst.

It’s just terribly unfortunate. But in the end, Cofield has no one to blame but herself.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

## Andover Resident Charged in Fatal East Hartford Accident

by Sarah McCoy

An Andover resident was arrested last week on four charges, for his role in a fatal motor vehicle accident in East Hartford last summer.

Mark Williams, 50, of 14 Hickory Hill Dr., turned himself into police last Thursday, Jan. 29. He was charged with negligent homicide, evasion of responsibility in operation of a motor vehicle, reckless driving and failing to stop at a stop sign.

According to East Hartford police reports, an accident between a motorcycle and a tractor trailer occurred just after midnight on June 4, 2008, at the intersection of Roberts and Hillside streets. When police responded to the call, they found Brian Bertocki, 40, of East Hartford, lying in the road. He was pronounced dead on the scene due to head injuries sustained in the crash, police said.

Bertocki’s passenger on the motorcycle, Kathleen Bevilacqua, 35, sustained minor injuries as a result of the crash, police said.

Police said Bevilacqua told them a red tractor trailer had struck the motorcycle and continued traveling west on Roberts Road towards Interstate 84. Witnesses later came forth reporting that they saw a truck parked alongside the road with the driver checking the front of his vehicle, police said.

However, police said, the driver and the truck were both gone when officers arrived.

Police said they interviewed Williams on July 1, and he told them he was driving from East Hartford to Waterbury on the night of the crash. Williams told police he heard a loud bang when he made the turn onto Roberts Road and thought something was hung up between the truck and the trailer, police said. Seeing nothing when he looked out his rear-view mirror, Williams kept driving.

Williams pulled over in the area of Margarita’s Restaurant in East Hartford to use a flashlight to examine under the vehicle, police said. East Hartford police reports indicate that, at that point, Williams believed there

was a problem with the truck’s landing gear. He didn’t see anything under the truck or around him so Williams continued driving, police said.

Because of the impending court case, East Hartford Police spokesman Officer Hugo Benettieri couldn’t speak to the plausibility of this type of accident occurring without the driver realizing he hit a motorcycle. Benettieri did say Williams has been cooperative throughout the investigation.

East Hartford Police have been investigating the accident since last summer. According to Benettieri, through the work of Detective Daniel Caruso and Investigators Jason Smola and Don Olson, the investigation team was able to identify the tractor trailer involved in the accident.

Benettieri said further information later pointed to Williams as the driver.

Despite the fact that seven months had elapsed between the first time police interviewed Williams and his arrest, Benettieri said the investigation took an expected amount of time. “There cases are drawn out and complex,” he said. “We were waiting for toxicology reports and putting documents together. All that takes a significant amount of time.”

Toxicology reports did show a small amount of cocaine in Bertocki’s system at the time of his death. He also had a blood alcohol content of .08, right at the legal limit. Benettieri said it wasn’t clear if these substances had a factor in the accident.

Soon after Bertocki’s death, his friends and family launched a website looking for the driver of the tractor trailer. The site [www.justiceforbrian.com](http://www.justiceforbrian.com) offered a \$10,000 reward for any information leading to an arrest.

Benettieri said the reward played no factor in the arrest.

Williams was released on \$10,000 bond. He is scheduled to appear in Manchester Superior Court on Feb. 23.

## Hebron School Board Adopts \$11.83 Million Budget

by Sarah McCoy

The local Board of Education (BOE) this week adopted an \$11.83 million 2009-10 budget, a figure nearly identical to the spending plan Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz presented in December.

The proposal is an increase of \$342,486 or 2.98 percent, over the current year's budget.

Just before Christmas, Cruz presented her recommended budget with a heavy heart. At the time she recommended a 2.99 percent increase in spending. That budget included a reduction of five staff members.

Since that time, the budget has ebbed and flowed as more previously unknown items of the budget are becoming known. The biggest change in the budget came from a negotiated savings with the district's health insurance rates. Hebron was able to save just under \$96,000 by bringing the premium rate from a 12 percent increase down to 7 percent.

A further reduction in the budget came from the unemployment placeholder. While the district is expecting to lose some staff members, payments to unemployment can be encumbered in the current year's budget. Cruz said the schools are tightening their belt this year in order to plan for that \$26,000 expense.

Through these and some other reductions – such as replacing a retiring teacher with a lower-salaried teacher and trimming from the maintenance and supplies accounts – the board was able to cut \$173,194 from the budget Cruz presented in December.

So, armed with those savings from Cruz' proposal, Board of Education members felt it appropriate to reinstate the Challenge and Enrichment teacher that had initially been eliminated from the budget. "The board felt that we need to be offering a broad spectrum of education and that the Challenge and Enrichment program was an important component," Cruz said.

BOE chair Jane Dube reported that the feedback from residents had indicated a desire to see this position restored. "The Challenge and Enrichment program reaches a tremendous amount of students and, we felt, that it was an important part of the school curriculum that we needed to keep," she said.

Further additions to the budget included a .5 pre-kindergarten teacher and additional pre-kindergarten van. These additions were made to accommodate for students needed additional services that were not previously identified.

In the end, the school board wound up

adopting a budget that was \$663 less than the spending plan Cruz presented in December.

Cruz and the BOE opted to continue the full-day kindergarten initiative – although not expand it. The plan had been for the district to expand from two full-day classrooms to four in the 2009-10 school year. However, considering the economic climate, Cruz opted to hold the line. The decision to continue the full-day kindergarten program was unanimously supported, as was the decision not to expand it, Dube said.

Cruz said she felt maintaining the program was important.

"We haven't really given the pilot [program] a chance to prove itself," Cruz said of full-day kindergarten. "To eliminate the program not even a year after we began would be disrespectful to the hard work of the committee and people who've made full-day kindergarten possible in Hebron."

Cruz said school administrators would review data in June to assess the success level of full-day kindergarten, and the issue would be revisited then.

"The board is very interested to see where the full-day kindergarten cohort compares to their peers at the beginning of first grade," Dube said.

Thus far, the biggest budgetary concern voiced by the public is the reduction of four classroom teachers. Earlier this week, Cruz insisted that the cuts were not necessarily financially-driven but enrollment-driven. "The class sizes, as it stands now, are at the board maximum. They're not over it. We're comfortable at that number," Dube said. Average class sizes at the two schools range from 18-24.

According to Dube, the priority of the Board of Education was to continue the programs already in place. "We didn't want any huge steps back from the good work being done at both schools," she said.

Dube commended Cruz for presenting the board in December with what she thought was an already reasonable budget. "If you look back, at least since Ellie's been here, we've pretty much gone with her recommendations," Dube said. "She's thoughtful and her budgets are transparent. There's no waste in there."

The BOE budget is currently in the hands of the Board of Selectmen. Cruz will present the budget in a joint meeting of the boards of selectmen and finance in February or March. The entire budget will then be put to public hearing in April before the town-wide referendum on May 4.

## After Three Years, Hebron Town Manager Stepping Down

by Sarah McCoy

After three years at Hebron's top post, Town Manager Jared Clark announced last week that he will retire at the end of the calendar year.

Wanting to spend more time with his wife, Clark said the timing felt right.

Clark came to Hebron at the end of 2005 on an interim basis. He was confirmed as the town manager in March 2006. In that time he's worked with four different Board of Selectmen (BOS) chairs, and almost a dozen different selectmen.

Prior to coming to Hebron, Clark had served as town manager for three other New England towns. He holds his time in Hebron in the highest regard.

"It's a great community," he said. "The members of the town boards and commissions consistently make decisions on what's best for Hebron rather than deciding if they're in favor or against it based on who made the suggestion."

As he reflects back on his time as Hebron's town manager, there are a number of accomplishments that stick out to Clark. The town has gradually increased their competitiveness in terms of employee compensation, which has yielded a decrease in employee turnover. Also, in the fall of 2007 the BOS adopted a new set of personnel policies as well as an operational strategic plan. The strategic plan was a 3-year project set in place to provide direction for the municipal government.

Hebron resident Karen Strid worked closely with Clark when she served as BOS chair for two years, from November 2005-November 2007. She said Clark's legacy to the town will be his planning.

"We saw much better bottom-line [budget] increases because of good planning," Strid said. "He worked with both boards of education [the Hebron board and the RHAM board] to avoid surprises and think long-term."

Strid credited Clark with improving communication within the town and for maintaining a supportive attitude towards the Board of Selectmen.

Despite his impending retirement, Clark said he has no plans to slow down.

He is currently working with the Charter Revision Commission to update the town's governing document. Clark expects the revisions to be minor in nature, providing clarification in places where the current document is vague.

However, number one on Clark's list of priorities is "achieving a budget that the community can support for the next fiscal year."

Given the state economic climate, Clark is expecting a decrease in state funding, at a time where residents can ill afford to take on any additional tax burdens. While this year's budget is a paramount concern for Clark, he said he plans to leave the town with guidance for the future. "The way I see it is we're in the first year of a three-year recession," he said. "I'm trying to make budget and revenue recommen-



Town Manager Jared Clark has announced his retirement.

dations taking into consideration the next three years."

Clark described Hebron as a town that is careful with their resources – both financial and human – values its identity, supports students for advancement in education and provides high quality community services. He said he is happy to have been a part of the town's operation and for continuing its tradition of good service and stewardship for residents.

Clark gave the selectmen 11 months' notice of his departure to give them ample time to find a replacement. "The best people for the position are not necessarily looking for a job," he said. "It will take a special person to add to what is already a very positive situation."

Current BOS chair Jeff Watt said he is grateful for the advanced notice Clark provided. Watt wasn't willing to discuss what the BOS is looking for in the next town manager. He said the selectmen will meet Saturday, Feb. 7, at 8 a.m. in the Community Room of the Town Office Building to begin the process.

Watt said Saturday's workshop will be a time for the selectmen to discuss a possible selection committee and to set a timeline for the process. "The last two times Hebron has hired a town manager we were hiring, essentially, at the last minute," Watt said. "This time around we've been afforded extra time to make sure we have someone who is not only qualified but a good fit for Hebron."

As for what's in store for Clark, he said he and his wife will remain in their Hebron home for the near future. They eventually plan to relocate nearer to their daughter in Maine. The Clarks also have a son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren in Yokohama, Japan. With more free time on his hands, Clark said he hopes to travel out there more often.

## Winter Takes its Toll on Marlborough Budget

by Adam Benson

Hampered by a steady build-up of bad winter weather, Marlborough officials said Thursday morning they're expecting to end the year at least \$100,000 over budget in snow-related expenses.

And with just \$60,000 available in contingency and line-item surpluses, town leaders might be forced to increase the municipality's tax levy rate to present a balanced budget in fiscal year 2009-10, which begins July 1.

"These events have just crushed us," First Selectman Bill Black said. "The reality is we are going to be short."

Already, the town has spent more than \$300,000 on road crew payroll, \$120,000 on snow removal and nearly \$2,000 on storm-related expenses – all figures that either exceed or almost surpass allocated amounts.

Last month, Black said town leaders were expecting the snow budget to come in over projected rates, but predicting where the bottom line might settle can be difficult. And with the Board of Selectmen set to see the town's budget next Tuesday, Black said the best officials can do is estimate how much more they'll have to spend by April 1, when the winter road work stops.

In years past, the town has cut seasonal summer help and scaled back lawn care to help save money. Those options could again be in the mix this time around too, but Black said other cost-saving measures might have to be taken as well.

"I don't see this as a driver toward staff reduction, but it's going to impact our ability to balance our budget with a surplus," he said. "We have to close that gap."

## Chapman Road Fire Started in Kitchen

by Adam Benson

Investigators said this week a Jan. 15 fire that tore through a Chapman Road home and left one Marlborough resident hospitalized with multiple burns originated in the kitchen.

But Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said 62-year-old Kenneth Fagnoli's 105 Chapman Rd. residence was so badly damaged in the blaze its exact cause still remains a mystery.

"We know the area in the house where the fire started was the kitchen, but every appliance was so badly burned we don't know how it started," Asklar said.

He said officials will continue their investigation but was unsure when it would wrap up.

The fire broke out around 11:30 p.m. Jan.

15, and by the time rescuers arrived on scene the home was fully engulfed.

Asklar said Fagnoli managed to escape and call firefighters from a neighbor's home, though Fagnoli's dog perished in the blaze.

Fagnoli suffered first-, second- and third-degree burns to his face, arms and hands and was initially transported by ambulance to the Marlborough Medical Center before being airlifted to Bridgeport Hospital's burn center. He was initially listed in critical condition.

However, Bridgeport Hospital spokesman John Cappiello said Thursday his condition had been upgraded to fair.

## Dozens in Colchester Voice Concerns on Proposed Schools Budget

by Adam Benson

Last Saturday, Jan. 31, residents had their first chance to respond to the proposed 2009-10 Colchester schools budget – and respond they did.

Nearly 80 people turned out for a Saturday morning budget workshop, which dealt with a proposed spending plan that includes the first round of layoffs in 17 years and a dramatic reduction in the number of school-sponsored athletic programs.

Many of the parents at the workshop were focused on the possible demise of 13 sports teams and 11 teaching and support positions across the district.

Board of Education chair William Hettrick said it was the best-attended Saturday meeting he's ever seen, but he and other members say they understand the gravity of the situation.

"We heard from a large group of parents who were very passionate about what sports does for their kids," Hettrick said. "I envision a major discussion on what we're going to do with that, especially at the middle school."

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle is asking the board to sign off on a proposed \$35.4 million budget that she said reflects the economic challenges confronting not only her district but the state as well.

Although the 3.49 percent increase to the district's budget would come in below the state's average of 4.6 percent.

When Loiselle presented the budget to the school board last Tuesday, Jan. 27, she warned that \$1.4 million in state aid could be lost through potential changes to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula – and she had factored that loss into her spending plan proposal.

However, Gov. M. Jodi Rell presented her state budget Wednesday and, despite a projected \$922 million shortfall, the governor's spending proposal does not feature any ECS adjustments.

Loiselle could not be reached for comment by press time regarding Rell's budget proposal.

For parents like Kristi Rhodes, the prospect of losing middle school sports is a concerning one. Her son Austin began playing basketball at William J. Johnston Middle School (WJMS) this year, and could lose his next two years of eligibility should the district's budget become official in its current form.

Teams slated for elimination at Bacon Academy High School are indoor track, golf, freshman basketball and soccer. The plan also calls for the removal of soccer, basketball and track programs at WJMS.

"It's so powerful to remember what it means to these kids to try out for a team, practice and make it and then go play in a game to represent your town. There's so much tied to that other than these kids are just out there having fun," Rhodes said. "I just think it needs to be a mainstay."

Hettrick said the community's concern for

the future of the district's extracurricular programming is important enough that the board will push back the timeline to vote on the budget. The school board was initially to vote on the spending plan at its Feb. 10 meeting, but Hettrick said the meeting that night will instead be dedicated to discussing cuts in more detail.

"We're not going to be able to restore everything and move forward with the budget. Cuts will have to be made," he said. "You really have to battle to get something extra in that budget."

Still, district officials, school board members and Colchester residents are optimistic they'll come to a compromise by the time the budget is approved. "We want to continue to be engaged in the process," Loiselle said.

Should school officials clip the number of athletic teams under their control, the results could have unintended consequences on services offered through the town, said Colchester Youth Services Bureau Director Valerie Gaeto.

"A reduction in any afterschool program is going to impact the town side as far as youth services are concerned," she said. "Any time we take away potential programs that provide support for kids, we are putting them at risk for getting involved in activities we don't want them to get involved in."

Gaeto said the town's Open Youth Center is already functioning.

"Adding more kids to that number really would become unmanageable," she said. "Plus not all kids are going to turn to the youth services or other structured activities."

Just as much of a concern for some at Saturday's meeting is the possible loss of 3 1/2 paraprofessional positions from kindergarten and special education classrooms – especially with class sizes expected to increase at some grade levels.

"Having that second person in the room is a huge thing," Colchester Elementary School PTO president Jennifer Mocksfield said. She said her organization is looking for ways to distribute information about the role paraprofessionals play in a child's education.

While district and school board officials are warning residents that tough decisions are sure to be made as the budget process moves forward, all sides said they're confident a compromise will be forged.

"I want everyone to work together so we can come to the best solution," Rhodes said. "The parents are anxious to find a solution that works for everybody."

Hettrick said no matter what form the board's final budget might take, it will represent the most financially responsible strategy for the community.

"There's no way we're going to the community with increases like that and ask them to vote," he said. "We have a fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers and the residents of town."

## Cleanup Almost Finished After Portland Oil Spill

by Michael McCoy

The cleanup effort along Brownstone Avenue is almost finished, a week after at least 3,600 gallons of oil was spilled, much of it making its way to the Connecticut River.

According to the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Number 2 fuel oil (in other words, home heating fuel) leaked from a fuel line in an asphalt storage tank late in the afternoon on Thursday, Jan. 29. The incident occurred at Triram Connecticut, located at 171 Brownstone Ave. According to the DEP, the fuel "is used to power a system that warms the asphalt being stored in tanks."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the oil spill was "not a matter that's under the jurisdiction of the town." She said she heard about the incident from television news Friday morning and promptly got details from Portland Volunteer Fire Department Deputy Chief Jim Lynch, who was acting as chief last week with Bob Shea unavailable.

The DEP led the investigation, with help from the United States Coast Guard. U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 3rd Class Barbara Patton reported Monday that Connecticut Tank Removal, located in Bridgeport, had so far recovered 3,600 gallons of oil. She said 2,100 of those gallons were actually recovered from a secondary containment area, which exists in the case of such an accident. The remaining gallons were either in other locations on the site or on the river/shoreline. (Fortunately, none of that actually mixed with actual water, since the river is frozen over.)

In addition, Patton said 40 tons of contaminated snow and ice were removed from the incident site, and 252 tons of contaminated soil were removed.

When asked why the Coast Guard got involved, Patton responded, "The Coast Guard is obviously concerned with the environment and the impact the oil could have on the shoreline." Patton said she could not estimate how many "Coasties" were involved but she said, "It has been a very good-sized effort on our part," men-

tioning that a helicopter flew in from Cape Cod to survey the scene.

DEP public relations representative Dennis Schain said Connecticut Tank Removal worked through the weekend and into this week, cleaning up the mess. DEP and Coast Guard personnel have maintained a presence on the scene.

"We believe only a small amount made its way to the shore," Schain said.

However, Schain reminded taxpayers that the cleanup falls on the shoulders of Triram, and that public money will not be spent on the effort. Triram manager Dave Fletcher estimated that the cleanup would be finished by the end of the week. He predicted that the job will cost between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

Schain also said Triram responded to the incident immediately last Thursday, notifying public officials and retaining a cleanup company. Schain said the DEP was then promptly notified around 4:30 p.m. that afternoon.

As far as blame goes, Schain commented, the incident was "still under investigation." Though he wouldn't speculate as to whether any reprimands would be issued to Triram, he said, "We have that authority."

Schain said that there is some sort of contamination issue virtually every day across the state, and said this one was "not in the top tier, but it was significant."

There was good news, though. "We don't believe there was any undue impact on the environment or natural resources," Schain said.

Fletcher chalked the problem up to the fuel line being a "frozen elbow," which he said "broke in two." He furthermore explained that moisture somehow managed to get in the line.

Fletcher said the accident was "very unusual" and that it could not have been anticipated.

Fletcher added that the fuel line in question "will be taken off" and said there will be "no spots that can freeze again."

Triram has been located on Brownstone Avenue since the 1950s.

## After a Decade Off, East Hampton Literary Magazine Relaunches

by Michael McCoy

With the help of a decade's worth of technological improvements, East Hampton's own literary magazine is making a comeback.

In 1996, just after taking over as director of East Hampton Public Library, Sue Berescik launched *East Hampton Voices*. The periodical was "sporadically published" for two years or so, Berescik said; "ninety-nine percent of it was poetry," she said, while the rest was short essays.

The contributors to *Voices* included adults and students from town, as well as what Berescik called "East Hampton residents of yore." She said *Voices* took work from *East Hampton News*, a former newspaper in town.

With the help of editor Hugo DeSarro, Berescik published the magazine from her home and "paid for it out of my own pocket." The magazine was distributed for free at the library.

Berescik recalled, "At that time, desktop publishing was not as it is today," and, by the end of the 1990s, expenses made the publication impractical and interest had waned anyway (despite copies being free). "So we just dropped it," Berescik said. She said *Voices* lasted "six issues tops."

One of the reasons Berescik decided to relaunch the magazine was that "our profile in the community is different than it was 10 years ago." She said the library has made itself more visible in town over the last decade, adding, "We offer a lot of cultural programs in the community."

Berescik laughed as she related the other reason for the relaunch: "Hugo's been nagging me every six months for past 10 years." (Berescik

also noted that DeSarro recently had his work displayed at library. This work included clips from past issues of *East Hampton Voices*.)

The revamped magazine will be called 898, a reference to the year the town's library was established: 1898. The content of 898 will not differ from *Voices* – although, Berescik said, "This time we want to sustain it."

Berescik said DeSarro will once again edit the magazine, while she and library employee (and writer) Phil Carr will oversee publication and layout.

While the magazine offers an avenue for experienced writers to share their work with the community, Berescik said it's also "a good opportunity to give amateur writers an outlet."

So far, 898 has received a dozen submissions. "I'm shocked right off the bat," Berescik said, as the overwhelming majority of submissions have come from men. In the magazine's previous incarnation, Berescik said most work came from women and children. "It's just really quite lovely," she said of the male interest.

Berescik said the first issue of 898 is due to be released in April, coinciding with National Poetry Month. She predicted 898 would publish every six months, but that its frequency could become quarterly, should interest pick up. As was the case with *Voices*, 898 will be free and available at the library.

898 will publish poetry and short prose (be it fiction or nonfiction) of 600 words or less. Submissions may be made in person or by mail at the East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St. Berescik asks that writers limit their submissions to two pieces.

## East Hampton Police Make Arrests in Fall Burglaries

by Michael McCoy

East Hampton Police announced this week they have arrested two Portland residents in connection to a spree of daytime break-ins and thefts from homes that occurred last fall in East Hampton, Portland and Glastonbury.

The arrests also led to the recovery of 11 stolen guns and hundreds of stolen items, police said.

Nicholas Moore, 20, of 457 Glastonbury Tpke., Portland, was arrested Jan. 30 and charged with first-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny third-degree burglary and theft of a firearm, police said.

Sarah Gacioch, 25, of 325 Main St., Portland, was arrested Feb. 1 and charged with first-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny.

East Hampton Police Chief Matthew Reimondo said, "Everybody had a part in the investigation," but singled out Officer Michael Salafia.

"The officers really worked diligently," Reimondo said, adding that the department also worked with departments in Middletown, Glastonbury and Portland, as well as the State

Police.

The case not only involved an "enormous amount of paperwork," but, Reimondo said, "we spent a lot of time at pawn shops." Stolen items included power tools "a lot of jewelry" and "a large cache of weapons."

While this may put this particular rash of incidents to bed, Reimondo reported, "We've been having some burglaries of late again." However, so far, these do not measure up to those of the fall.

When asked if the fall break-ins may be linked to the flailing economy, Reimondo said he supposed so, but also mentioned that they were, in large part, drug related.

Police also said they hold arrest warrants for two other Portland residents in connection with last fall's break-ins. Police said Keith Bray, 22, of 1 John Place, Portland, and Christopher Blauvelt, 23, of 38 South Rd., Portland, will be apprehended and charged as soon as they are located.

As for Moore and Gacioch, they were each released on \$2,000 bonds and are scheduled for arraignment in Middlesex Superior Court on Feb. 10.

# Portland School Board Discusses Open Choice Participation

by Michael McCoy

Despite the hazardous road conditions Tuesday evening, the Board of Education's Operations Committee went ahead with its meeting to discuss the "Open Choice" program with officials from the state Department of Education (DOE).

Open Choice is a program that allows urban students in kindergarten through Grade 12 to attend school in suburban communities and vice versa. This program has been instituted in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven, but, in the case of Portland, only Hartford students would be involved.

The state DOE officials at Tuesday's meeting included Commissioner Mark McQuillan and Deputy Commissioner George Coleman. Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen said at the meeting she discussed the program in December with education consultant Regina Hopkins, who was also present Tuesday.

"From my point of view, the Open Choice Program has embarked on a new strategic direction," McQuillan said. That direction includes "a new agreement to bring about racial integration," he said, and added that the program is the DOE's "most powerful and cost-effective tool" to achieve integration.

"Everyone benefits from this type of integrated learning experience," McQuillan said, adding that the DOE currently has legislation

before the General Assembly "to [financially] help communities like Portland" should they chose to participate.

McQuillan said that during the 2009-10 school year, the DOE hopes to increase student enrollment in Open Choice to 1,500. Coleman added that that by the end of 2012, they hope to see 41 percent of all Hartford students in "non-segregated environments." To achieve that, Coleman said, "We're looking at all the capacity in the region."

Along this thought, the fact that Portland's student enrollment is far less than was projected when the town constructed the middle/high school complex was alluded to several times throughout the meeting.

The DOE officials eventually turned things over to Board of Education (BOE) members for questions. MaryAnne Rode led off, and asked how Portland could "integrate the students ... in a way that is meaningful."

Sandy Cruz-Serrano, director of the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), said "intervention specialists" would be available to help parents or students who are having trouble adapting to a new environment. Though the specialists would be available as issues arose, Cruz-Serrano said they would come to the school periodically whether problems came up or not.

BOE member Rosemary Murphy worried that "monies might not be there at some point" for the program and wanted a guarantee that the DOE would not eventually revoke its promise to financially help out the school system if Portland agreed to the program.

Currently, the state pays \$2,500 to a receiving district for every student that enrolls.

McQuillan said "there's never been a downturn in the [Open] Choice funding," responded McQuillan. He went on to note the Sheff vs. O'Neill verdict of 1996, which called for desegregation in urban schools. The state has "an obligation to make this work," he said.

However, McQuillan did not simply appeal to a sense of legal obligation. He also predicted that one day, the Portland School District would look back and say, "How could we not have done this?" He admitted, though, "There are going to be some moments when you gotta work" and "educate people who may not want to do this."

McQuillan said during the meeting, "We understand this is about cultural change as well as educational change."

Jackie Jacoby of CREC also pointed out that graduation rates as well as CAPT and CMT scores have been "very successful" since the program began.

Brownstone Intermediate School Principal Laurie Boske was also a fan of Open Choice. She saw the program in action when she when she worked at Cromwell Middle School, and said she saw it manifest itself at its purest during a concert one evening. That evening, many participating students from Hartford went to their cohorts' homes for dinner before the concert, and in some cases, slept over

McQuillan lamented the fact that the BOE had already submitted its budget to First Selectman Susan Bransfield, thus barring the school board from allotting for Open Choice. But that doesn't make it impossible for Portland to participate in the program if it so desired. Families who wish to be involved in Open Choice next year must apply by Feb. 17, and the state expects to select people for the program in April. The town does not vote on the 2009-10 budget until May, so theoretically, adjustments could be made to the spending plan to allow for Portland's involvement.

State DOE officials will return to Portland for a Board of Education public hearing Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 7 p.m. in the Portland High School auditorium, 95 High St. At that time, the public will be welcome to make comments and ask questions after the DOE presents an outline of the program.

# Study Recommends Nixing Town Boards, Commissions in East Hampton

by Michael McCoy

The results of a recent study say that East Hampton has too many boards for its own good.

Last fall, stemming from a recommendation by Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe, the Town Council voted to conduct a "functional assessment of boards and commissions." At a Town Council meeting last Tuesday night, Scott Ekman of Meridian, ID-based Ekman Consulting explained his findings. In the report, viewable at [www.easthamptonct.org](http://www.easthamptonct.org), Ekman wrote, "It is the hope that through this study, there can be brought upon a more effective, efficient means of providing service to the community."

At the meeting, Ekman said he spoke with members of all 32 of the town's boards, commissions, agencies, committees and task forces. He also spoke with municipal staff from five "benchmark" towns - Portland, Colchester, Avon, Coventry and Granby. The towns were chosen based on populations or budgetary similarities to East Hampton. On average, these towns have 17 boards, commissions, agencies, committees and task forces. Coventry has the most, with 21. However, to this fact, council member Sue Weintraub pointed out that every town has different needs, and specifically, "Not every town has Lake Pocotopaug, that is a need."

In his report, Ekman wrote that he found, "the political body has developed numerous committees and commissions over time, appointed volunteers and sent them out without a unified shared vision for the town, clear common guidance for how to conduct the work, what to do, and how to communicate amongst organizations."

Ekman said at the meeting there was room for improvement in training, communication, realizing a shared vision - and also in terms of trust. Ekman said that he found "some distrust in management organization" existed and that

O'Keefe "is overextended and not able to function in the most effective and efficient manner."

"Right now," Ekman said, "you've got disparate parts, which are costing you more, and achieving less than if they were working together." He also said that in some cases, these bodies have allowed their goals to evolve so that they're effectively, "working under their own charter," a phenomenon he said is not uncommon.

Ekman added that some volunteers may have occupied seats longer than is healthy for the given board. In other cases he felt volunteers "may be providing advice they're not qualified for."

Ekman was nothing short of direct when speaking about task forces: "I can't be any more clear than a task force has a specific charge, and when they meet that charge, they sunset."

Ekman's findings weren't all bad news, though. He said volunteers overwhelmingly told him that O'Keefe was "hitting the ground running" as town manager (he started last September) and showed tremendous faith in his "walking the talk."

As far as recommendations for the future go, Ekman divided them into two categories - "Operational" and "Organizational." The former included increasing communication and collaboration between committees and commission, as well as the public. It also included composing an orientation packet, so no volunteer can be unclear on their charge. He also suggests an improvement in the town's technology, though Ekman conceded, "It looks good, but it costs money."

Organizationally, Ekman recommended that the town merge the Economic Development Commission, Redevelopment Agency, Brownfields Steering Committee, and Design Review Board into one body.

He also recommended East Hampton disband its Ethics Commission. In his report, Ekman wrote, "Unanimous comments from interviews stated that the actions of this group were good, but they meet infrequently, and they have not met guidance in terms of informing [O'Keefe or the Town Council] on what they have accomplished." He also said the commission has a light workload and noted that complaints filed have been directed to state level agencies. In lieu of the Ethics Commission, Ekman wrote, complaints could be brought to O'Keefe or the Town Council "and they will solicit the appropriate staff to manage resolution."

But, during public comments, resident Kyle Dostaler - who was on Town Council when the Ethics Commission was created - said that, if the Ethics Commission were disbanded, "the distrust and conspiracy theories in town will only increase in this town."

"I think there's been some frivolous cases brought before them," Town Council chair Melissa Engel said of the commission.

Ekman also said the town should "sunset" the Streetscape Steering Committee (SSC), which he felt was "morphing" its mission into traffic calming and pedestrian safety. (SSC was in charge of a beautification project on Route 66 that featured new sidewalks and, among other things, new park benches and lighting.)

O'Keefe said he felt that the SSC's execution of its \$50,000 grant was questionable and voiced his frustration "that we spent \$125,000 on a half-mile of sidewalk."

However, during public remarks, the chair of SSC, Liz Harris, said, "We were told to do much more design [work] than we could accomplish in Phase I." (Phase I is the only phase of the project that's been completed thus far; a

theoretical Phase II would include additional benches and lighting.)

Furthermore, Ekman suggested the town combine the Conservation Commission and Lake Pocotopaug Commission (LPC) into an Environmental Advisory Committee, and then disband the brand new Lake Task Force.

Town Council member Scott Minnick said that, by combining the Conservation Commission and LPC, "you are, in essence, diluting their efficiency," Minnick said.

The LPC was created in 2006. Before then, LPC member Tom Wells said, the Conservation Commission, which was formed in 1990, never addressed the lake, simply because, "They just didn't have time."

Minnick seemed opposed to eliminating any of the groups Ekman suggested, saying, "These commissions exist for the betterment of the community."

However, council member Christopher Goff addressed Minnick's concerns by saying, "You're making it sound like a personal decision."

Council member Tom Cordeiro did not comment as to whether he felt certain boards should be cut, but did seem to feel that there was a problem between the boards and commissions that needed to be addressed.

Ekman said another study would be looking at the makeup of town staff. Council members seemed to think this would be a good idea, but they gave no indication as to when they might take this matter up.

If every recommended board and commission change was made, the town would be left with 25 groups - which is still four more than Coventry.

The Town Council is scheduled to take action on this during its Feb. 24 meeting.

## East Hampton Police News

1/16 — Preston Roane, 22, of 9 Colchester Ave., was arrested for traveling fast, operating without a license, misuse of plates, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating without insurance, East Hampton Police said. Then on Jan. 23, Roane was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Colchester, Ave., 170 feet east of Main Street, police said. Roane was arrested for operating without registration, operating without insurance and failure to drive right, police said.

1/20 — A 15-year-old male juvenile was referred to Juvenile Court for second-degree breach of peace and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

1/21 — A 17-year-old female juvenile was issued a ticket for traveling too fast, police said.

1/22 — Marshall Allen, 20, of 38 Mallard

Cove, was arrested pursuant to two warrants each for violation of probation, police said.

1/23 — Michael Cannata, 29, of 218 Main St., Portland, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for disorderly conduct and violation of a protective order, police said.

1/24 — Roger Bernardo, 22, of 581 3rd Ave., West Haven, was arrested for failure to drive right, operating under suspension and operating without minimum insurance, police said.

1/26 — Nathaniel Brown, 57, of 258 Woodbury Cir., Middletown, and Linda A. Pent, 23, of 19 Little City Rd., Higganum, were issued tickets for traveling too fast, police said.

1/29 — Joshua M. Benson, 32, of 211 East High St., was arrested for violation of a protective order, police said.

## Portland Police News

1/24 — A 16-year-old female was arrested and charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, Portland Police said.

1/26 — Kristina Fresk, 46, of 4 Spring St., was charged with DUI, passing on right and illegal possession of narcotics, police said.

1/27 — Kyle Stolz, 36, of 19 Waverly Ave., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

1/30 — Karyann Suprono, 40, of 122 Colchester Ave., East Hampton, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.

# Obituaries

## Hebron

### Leslee Anne Morabito

Leslee Anne Morabito, 61, formerly of Hebron, departed this earth Tuesday, Jan. 13, after a courageous battle with breast cancer, surrounded by her husband of 40 years, Edward Morabito, their son, Seth of Santa Clara CA, and her beloved pets. The eldest of three daughters, she was born on July 30, 1947 to Joseph "Smoky Joe" and Elizabeth (Brooks) Dent of Amston and formerly of Hartford.



She married Ed at the age of 21 and in 1973 gave birth to their only child, Seth, while living in San Francisco. Leslee spent much of her life working with non-profit organizations and charitable causes. In the 1980s, she volunteered for Make Today Count, an organization dedicated to helping terminally ill patients, and worked for the International Association for Near-Death Studies on the campus of the University of Connecticut.

Later, she worked as administrative assistant at Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford and was administrative assistant for Kriebel Associates in Hartford. In 2003, Leslee and Ed fell in love with Trinidad, California, and made it their home. Leslee worked for the Northcoast Preparatory and Performing Arts Academy in Arcata, CA and delighted in seeing the enthusiasm of the staff and students.

Besides her husband and son, Leslee leaves her parents; her sister, Tory MacDonald and her husband, Michael "Tank" and their son, Kyle Joseph, all of Hebron; her stepchildren, Ed Morabito, Jr. and wife Karen of Arizona and daughter, Donna Kevorkian of Manchester; and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her sister, Carol (Dent) Dreselly on June 29, 2004.

The memorial liturgy will be celebrated 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 16, at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron, followed immediately by a repast and celebration of Leslee's life in the Parish Hall. Burial in St. Peter's Cemetery, Hebron, will be private and at the convenience of the family.

Leslee felt passionately about Hospice of Humboldt, 2010 Myrtle Avenue, Eureka, CA 95501, 707-445-8443, [www.hospiceofhumboldt.org](http://www.hospiceofhumboldt.org), and the Humboldt Community Breast Health Program, 987 8th Street, Arcata, CA 95521, 707-825-8345, [www.hcbhp.org](http://www.hcbhp.org). She wanted to thank both organizations for their care and support in her last days, especially Hospice of Humboldt, and requested that in lieu of flowers, memorial donations be made in her honor directly to them.

"Leslee walked quietly on this earth but had a huge impact on everyone she came in contact with. Her kind, gentle ways inspired many and helped make this world a better place. She will be deeply missed by all those she touched, taught, and loved throughout her lifetime."

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Paul J. Sciremammano

Paul J. Sciremammano, 78, of Williamantic and formerly of Colchester, beloved husband of Doris, passed away unexpectedly Friday morning, Jan. 30, at the Veterans Hospital in West Haven. Born June 29, 1930, in New York City, he was a son of the late Giovanni and Salvatrice (DiLorenzo) Sciremammano.



In January of 1955, he was drafted in the Army and proudly served during the Korean War. Mr. Sciremammano worked as a laborer/foreman with the Laborers' Union Local 547 for many years before his retirement. During that time, he was also the supervising foreman for the Millstone project. He also helped with his son's construction company and was tavern owner of the former Red Lantern in Colchester. In his spare time, Paul was an avid bird dog trainer and fisherman and was a member of the Fin, Fur and Feather Sportsman's Club in Chaplin. He also was an active volunteer of the Colchester Farmers Club. Above all, his greatest joy was found in his family.

In addition to his loving wife of 14 years, he is survived by two children, John and wife, Jan Sciremammano and Teresa (Sciremammano) Ortiz, all of Colchester; three stepchildren, Theodore Reinholtz of Colchester, Chris and wife, Melissa Angel of Bedford, NH, and Maureen and husband, Stephen Hood of Nashua, NH; 16 grandchildren, Kara, John, Sierra, Savanna, Syris, Jessy, Sonja, Sareen, Sage, Ben, Nick, Billy, Jr., Lori, Cory, Greg and Cris; a brother, Salvatore; nieces and nephews, Teresa (also his goddaughter), Tony, John, Dominic, Kevin, Marie and Michael; Doris' sisters, Charlene and Ada Marie; Robert; two close friends, Jakub Micengendler and Bert Zenowitz; and numerous extended family and friends.

He was predeceased by his former wife, Mary (Russo) Sciremammano; two stepchildren, Fran LaChappelle and William Reinholtz; three grandchildren, Maria, Tanner and Gary; a sister, Frances; a brother, John; a niece, Sally Ann; a nephew, Kenny; and a brother-in-law, Robert.

Friends called Wednesday, Feb. 4, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. The funeral gathered the morning of Thursday, Feb. 5, at the funeral home before a chapel service. Committal with full military honors will followed in the New Lebanon Cemetery.

Donations in his memory may be made to the American Heart Association., P.O. Box 3049, Syracuse, NY 13320.

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

## Colchester

### Catherine (Godvin) Piechta

Catherine (Godvin) Piechta, 77, of Davidson Road, Colchester, widow of the late John E. Piechta, passed away Saturday morning, Jan. 31, at the Marlborough Health Care Center. Born June 11, 1931 in Hartford, she was a daughter of the late John and Anna (Ferguson) Godvin.

In 1951, she and John were married in Laconia, NH and shared 51 wonderful years of marriage before he predeceased her on Dec. 4, 2002. Mrs. Piechta received her associate's degree from the former Mohegan College and went on to work for the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles for 30 years before her retirement as Supervising Accountant.

Cathy was instrumental in the establishment of the CT A&R Union and had served as secretary. She was also a member of the AARP in Colchester.

She is survived by three children, Leon of Livingston, NJ, Joseph Piechta of Colchester and Margaret and husband, Andrew Heyl of Colchester; five grandchildren, Brandon, Leighanne, Anthony, Amanda and Courtney; two great grandchildren, Kayla and Aydan; three sisters, Mary Rose Starr of West Hartford, Joan and husband, George Melnick of Eastford and Janet Starr of Southington; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends may call today, Friday, Feb. 6, from 5-8 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 6, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, with Fr. Michael Giannitelli, officiating. Interment will follow in the New St. Andrew Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to National Kidney Foundation of CT, 2139 Silas Deane Hwy., Rocky Hill 06067

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

## Colchester

### Winifred E. von Roemer

Winifred E. von Roemer, 95, of West Road, Colchester, beloved wife of Henry von Roemer, passed away Sunday, Feb. 1, at the Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. Born July 26, 1913 at home in Colchester, she was a daughter of the late Henry Hoxie and Ida Gertrude (Mead) Brown.

She was a 1932 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester and went on to be a librarian for the Cragin Memorial Library and later for the Colchester school system, including Bacon Academy, for many years before her retirement. At the age of 64, she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from ECSU.

Mrs. von Roemer was a faithful member of the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in New London, where she taught Sunday School for 30 years. The Daughters of the American Revolution was one of her favorite associations and she remained an active member well into her 90s. Over the years, she was an avid duckpin bowler until quite recently.

In addition to her loving husband of 68 years, she is survived by three children, Margaret Battaglioli and her husband Victor of Marlborough, Arthur von Roemer and his wife Yvonne of Glen Allen, VA and Maggie McKenzie of East Hartford; four grandchildren, Edward von Roemer of Alexandria, VA, Amy (von Roemer) Spearing and her husband Brady of Sandy Hook, VA, V. Joseph Battaglioli, Jr. and his wife Theresa of Westford, MA, and Peter J. Battaglioli and his fiancée Penelope Gerald of Longs, SC; five great-grandchildren, Brandon, Bailey and Bennett Spearing and Victoria and Caitlin Battaglioli; two sisters, Ida W. Brown of Colchester and Alice Moran of Waterford; and numerous extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by four brothers, Lawrence, Allen, Gilbert and Arthur Brown.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Feb. 4, directly at the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, 31 Cedar Grove Ave., New London. Graveside services followed in the Brown/von Roemer family plot in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester. There were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Weiss Hospice Unit, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Hebron

### Rita Pelletier

Rita (Lebrun) Pelletier, 78, of Hebron, formerly of Manchester, beloved wife of Carmel Pelletier, passed away Friday, Jan. 30, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. She was born Nov. 23, 1930, in New Brunswick, Canada, daughter of the late Joseph and Anne (Soucy) Lebrun and had resided in Hebron since 1962. Mrs. Pelletier was a communicant of St. Maurice Church in Bolton. She enjoyed sewing and spending time with her family but her greatest joy was her grandchildren whom she loved dearly.

Besides her husband she is survived by her children, Jocelyn Sibley and her husband Alvah of Shutesbury, MA, and their children, James Thibeault, Kenneth Thibeault, Alvah Sibley Jr., Tina Sibley and Rachael Sibley; her son, Allen Joseph Pelletier of Hebron and his children, Allen Pelletier Jr., Melissa Pelletier and Devin Pelletier; and her daughter, Irene Munson and her husband Steven of Bolton and their son Lee Munson and her great-granddaughter Valerie. Other survivors include her brother, Gil Lebrun of Greenfield, MA; her sister, Gertrude Emond of Canada and numerous nieces and nephews.

Besides her parents Mrs. Pelletier was predeceased by a sister, Lucille Lebrun and three brothers, Fernand, Yvon and Gerald Lebrun.

Funeral services were Tuesday, Feb. 3, at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester, with a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated that day at St. Maurice Church, 32 Hebron Rd., Bolton. Burial followed in St. James Cemetery, Manchester. Calling hours were Monday, Feb. 2, at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society 538 Preston Ave. PO Box 1004 Meriden, Ct 06450. For directions to the funeral home or to sign the online guestbook, visit [www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com).

## East Hampton

### Josephine Patricia Sullivan

Josephine Patricia (McCarthy) Sullivan died Friday, Jan. 23, in Peabody, MA. She was formerly of East Hampton, Brighton, MA, and Boynton Beach, FL. She was the beloved wife of the late Sylvester J. Sullivan.

Josephine was also the devoted mother of Brian J. Sullivan of Fernandina Beach, FL, Joanne Sullivan Millette of Ridgefield, Eileen Sullivan Taylor of East Hampton and Meg Sullivan Meagher of Nahant, MA. She was also loving grandmother of Chatham and Conor Sullivan, Maura and Andrew Millette, Timothy and Kelsey Taylor, Stephen and Colleen Meagher, and great-grandmother of Sophia Sullivan.

She was sister of the late John McCarthy and Mary Tripp.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Monday, Jan. 26, at St. Columbkille Church in Brighton, MA, with internment at Westview Cemetery in Lexington, MA.

Donations may be made in Josephine's memory to the Center for Pediatric IBD, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, 282 Washington St. Hartford, CT 06106.

## Portland

### Allen J. Mantel

Allen J. Mantel, 76, of Portland passed away Thursday, Jan. 29. Born in Middletown on June 9, 1932, son of the late Margaret and Francis Mantel and Navy veteran, he lived most of his life in Portland on Jobs Pond.

Al is survived by four children, Ellen Mantel of Southington; Robyn Mantel of Vineyard Haven, MA; Alison Kent of Northwood, NH; Jonathan Mantel and his wife Krissy of Cromwell; grandchildren, Thomas and Jackson Mantel of Cromwell; Jessye and Kristopher Wojtusik of NH; sister, Dorothy Linguadoca, of Leesburg, FL and brother, Francis 'Sparky' Mantel and his wife Jeanine 'Bunny' of Oldsmar, FL; several nieces and nephews and two dear neighbors, Johann and Hans.

A special memorial will be held when spring arrives on the 'pond'. Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of the donor's choice.