

# RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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The group Connecticut Paranormal Encounters And Research (CPEAR) recently investigated reported ghosts at Nunu's Bistro. Pictured from left are Angel Ortiz, of CT Soul Seekers, and Ann Marie Mulcahy, Chuck Feltman and Mike Mafera, all of CSPEAR.

## Hunting Ghosts in Colchester

by Katy Nally

Diners in the Blue Room on the second floor of Nunu's Bistro are surrounded by intricate turn-of-the-century stenciling on the walls and ceiling. It's a cozy, creaky room with a narrow arched window that overlooks the century-old Hayward house.

It is also the room where people say they feel like they're being watched – the perfect setting for a ghost hunt.

The group Connecticut Paranormal Encounters And Research (CPEAR) investigated Nunu's in Colchester on Sept. 5 and again this past Monday. Owner of Nunu's, Ellen Carfi, said she and her staff have experienced strange activity since 1998, when she opened the upstairs for business. According to Carfi, customers have reported seeing a man seated in the restaurant's Blue Room – one of its three dining rooms – wearing clothes similar to a Civil War uniform. She also said the building that houses Nunu's was once Nathaniel Hayward's stables.

But Beth Tufo, a waitress at Nunu's, had another theory. "When the young lady who used to work with us passed, that's when things started happening," she said. She said the restaurant could possibly be haunted by Carfi's late friend, Janet Naples.

In 2005, on the one-year anniversary of Naples' death, Tufo and Carfi said they were out on the patio after the restaurant had closed, reminiscing about their friend, when they both heard a tremendous crash like a stack of glass dishes shattering. Tufo said they ran inside, but could not find any broken glass or anything out of place.

Since Naples' death, Tufo said she has heard her name called – even though she was alone. "I heard it clear as day," she said. "The hair on the back of my neck stood up." She said she doesn't like using the sink on the second floor because "I just feel like someone is watching me." This sink is across from the Blue Room.

When members of CPEAR began their investigation of Nunu's on Sept. 5, they set up eight infrared surveillance cameras and staked out the three dining rooms, the basement and the kitchen. Equipped with camcorders, digital cameras, tape recorders and electromagnetic field detectors, the eight ghost hunters set out to capture evidence of the paranormal.

During the first investigation of Nunu's, voices were both recorded and heard. In the main dining room downstairs, three voices were recorded on tape recorders, but not heard by investigators. The first was a deep voice that cautioned the visitors to, "Go away." The voice dragged out the word "away" and crackled like an old recording. The second voice howled, "Go away sonny." This voice also spoke slowly, using a strange inflection, almost like it was singing. The third voice answered the question "How many of you are there?" which had been posed by ghost hunter Jay Peed. The voice's response was barely audible, but "eight" was heard upon listening very closely.

In the Blue Room, one voice was recorded and heard by Carrie Kerns and Ann Marie Mulcahy. Out of nowhere a voice said "Boots." Mike Mafera, a lead investigator of CPEAR, said he spoke with Carfi, who mentioned Hay-

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## Arrests Made in East Hampton Burglaries

by Michael McCoy

Three men are behind bars after a string of alleged burglaries – including the taking of an East Hampton kitten.

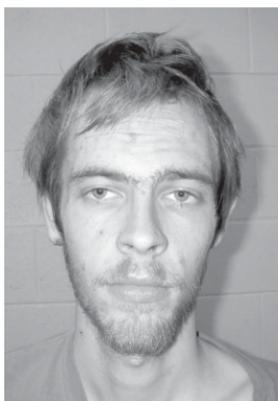
Clarence "Eric" Braun, 24, Joshua Markham, 19, and Marshall Allen, 21, all of East Haddam, have each been charged with criminal attempt to commit burglary, criminal attempt to commit larceny, conspiracy to commit burglary, and resisting arrest after an afternoon scheme last Friday, Sept. 11, went awry, according to East Hampton Police Sgt. Garritt Kelly.

Residents of a Wilkes Road address, located in the southeastern part of town, came home that afternoon to find three men on the property, Kelly said. The trio said they were from out of state and were looking for the CL&P building, Kelly said. So, the residents directed them to the Connecticut Yankee building. As the residents talked the matter over, once the trio had left, it sounded suspicious. They also found a window and garage door opened, Kelly said. So, at 2:20 p.m. they called the police.

Officer Kevin Wilcox was already nearby, and within minutes spotted a gray Chevy Lu-

mina, containing the suspects. "The people gave a good suspect description," Kelly said. The car also matched their description.

However, Allen, who was driving, fled from Wilcox, Kelly said. When they reached Powerhouse Road in East Haddam, the trio exited the car and tried to escape on foot. Wilcox managed to apprehend Braun and Markham after a short 150-yard foot chase that ended in the backyards of a residence. Allen eluded him, despite help from officers Jason Wishart and John Wilson, as well as the State Police's K-9 team, Kelly said.



Braun

Police located Allen the following day at his East Haddam residence, as a result of confessions from his cohorts, as well as the Lumina being registered in his name.

Braun and Markham were held on a \$250,000 bond and arraigned at Middletown Superior Court Sept. 14, Kelly said. Kelly called Braun "the catalyst behind it all," with his motive being "a serious heroin addiction."

Kelly expected Allen to be arrested within a week.

Also of interest is the recovery last week of the kitten Socks, who was stolen from the Rivard-Lentz home on Aug. 27. At the time, Socks was 12 weeks old. The kitten belonged to the four children of the house, and, according to the children's mother, Cheri Rivard-Lentz, had become part of the family, leaving the children devastated in the wake of her absence.

"He just couldn't resist the temptation of taking a cat," said Kelly, adding that Socks was certainly not the target of the burglary, but something Braun decided on at the spur of the moment.

Kelly said Braun gave Socks to a woman

who lives in East Hampton. When that person saw the posted fliers around town, they contacted Rivard-Lentz, who contacted the police. On Sept. 3, police retrieved Socks from the woman's home, Kelly said, and added the woman is under no suspicion of wrongdoing.

Kelly said Braun and Allen are also suspected in a rash of burglaries that dates back to mid-July. Braun will be charged in no less than four burglaries from East Hampton and Portland, while Allen will be charged in at least two. Kelly said they may also be linked to burglaries in East Haddam and Colchester as well.



Markham

## Ghosts cont. from Front Page

ward used to make boots. The Town of Colchester website confirms, "Hayward founded his new company in Colchester and from here rubber products, boots, and shoes were shipped all over the country."

During the second investigation, Mafera said a voice was recorded in the upstairs stairwell saying, "Follow me to Christianity," and another in the main dining room said "I'm Catholic." "I found that pretty interesting because Ellen said the place used to be used as a church," Mafera said.

Kerns, a lead investigator of CPEAR, said ghosts can communicate through tape recorders and video devices better than simply speaking to people because they can manipulate electric currents. She said many of their ghost-hunting tools track variations in electromagnetic fields, because ghosts are made up of energy. She said this is also the reason why many people are afraid of basements where a lot of energy is coursing through the walls and ceilings, which can feel like someone's presence.

Mafera and Kerns founded CPEAR in 2008. Both said they experienced paranormal activity throughout their lives, beginning as early as their childhoods. "I've experienced a lot of activity which is why I'm really into it," Kerns said. "I want to find better ways to communicate with them." Kerns said many members of her family reported seeing the same apparition of a man wearing a trench coat and hat in her old home. Even her son, Tyler, said he saw the same ghost

before Kerns had a chance to describe it to him.

Each CPEAR member had a reason, or two, as to why they joined the team. Mulcahy said she joined after CPEAR investigated her home in Glastonbury. She said she noticed suspicious activity since she first moved in to her 18th century home. She said, nonchalantly, she lives with a ghost named Jack, but she can't remember why her family calls him that. Even Mulcahy's daughter said there are two "angels," named Josephine and Anne-Marie who play in her room. She said her daughter has also seen the two girls on the playground at school. During her daughter's 6th birthday, Mulcahy said her family heard a keyboard playing upstairs, even though there was no one up there.

Since its inception, CPEAR has investigated paranormal activity throughout Connecticut. The group strives to "help people better understand what they are experiencing," according to CPEAR's website. Most of the members agreed the ghosts they've encountered were not malicious or harmful, but rather playful.

Perhaps the ghosts at Nunu's are like the many spirits who have interacted with the CPEAR team. In light of the evidence collected, maybe diners will feel less unwelcome in the Blue Room, knowing the presence is just the boots-making Hayward saying hello.

For more information about CPEAR visit [www.cpeargroup.com](http://www.cpeargroup.com) or call the group at 860-461-1297. Video evidence of past investigations is also available on the website.

## Man Charged with Robbing Bank in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

One man is behind bars after allegedly robbing the New Alliance Bank in the center of Hebron last week.

Alvin Robertson, 47, formerly of 7 Woodland St., Hartford, but currently homeless, was arrested last Friday evening, Sept. 11, police said. He is charged with third-degree robbery, second-degree larceny and breach of peace.

According to court documents, Robinson entered the New Alliance Bank earlier that day, at around 5:45 p.m., asking for directions to Gay City State Park. A manager at the bank gave him directions and Robinson left. He returned moments later asking a teller to write the directions down for him.

The teller, who was serving another customer at the time, asked Robinson to wait and then complied, court documents said.

Robinson then left, court documents said, only to return again 10 minutes later saying that he needed to take out money. According to court documents, Robinson went to the back counter and used a deposit slip to write the message, "This is a robbery, no dye packs, just the money."

He handed the slip to a teller who gave Robinson \$1,302 in cash, court documents said. He drove north on Route 316 in a silver

Volkswagen Jetta while bank employees called state police.

According to police reports, a trooper on patrol in the area spotted the suspected vehicle in Andover on Route 316. The trooper attempted to pull the driver over using sirens and flashing lights but Robinson ignored the signals. A second state police officer traveling on Route 316 southbound blocked the roadway forcing Robinson to come to a halt.

Upon investigating the car, state police found a gray sweatshirt, jogging pants and hat – the same attire the suspected bank robber had on – on the passenger seat, according to court documents. State police also reported finding directions to Gay City State Park on New Alliance Bank stationary and \$1,332 in cash along the roadway about 1/3 of a mile from where Robinson was stopped. The bills matched the currency that was reported stolen by bank employees, police said.

Robinson was arrested at the scene, police said.

At the time of his arrest, Robinson had been on parole for over a year for a previous charge of first degree robbery. He was arraigned on Monday, Sept. 14, and is currently being held on \$1 million bond.



Colchester held its fifth annual 57 Fest last Saturday, and despite the weather, around 2,000 showed up. Pictured, from left, Neil Malloy gets ready to go through the moon-bounce obstacle course; Ryan Fries waits for his dad, Kevin, to peel him off the Velcro wall; and Boomer, the golden retriever, patiently waits for his owner, Wendy Avery to share her ice cream cone.

## Thousands Enjoy Successful 57 Fest in Colchester

by Katy Nally

Not even the ominous grey skies and sprinkling rain deterred about 2,000 Colchester residents from coming out to celebrate their beloved community at Saturday's fifth annual 57 Fest.

"It's a celebration of the community and it's really put on by the community," said Parks and Recreation Director Jason Cohen.

Cohen said the highlight of this year's festival was the fireworks and the featured band, Blues Patrol, a Blues Brothers cover band. "Some people swore it was Dan Ackroyd and John Belushi up there," Cohen said. The Blues Patrol closed out the festival, but all day there were free activities and dance performances. For the kids there were obstacle courses to bound through, moon bounces to jump in and crafts to create. There was even a Velcro wall where kids suited up and hurled themselves at

the sticky surface, some completing flips and turns in midair. Chris Mears watched as her grandson, Ryan Fries of Colchester, stuck to the wall upside-down and was eventually peeled off by his dad. Mears came to the 57 Fest all the way from Liverpool, England.

"He's an action-man," Mears said, pointing to her grandson while he was stuck to the wall.

Rick Ringuette of Colchester watched his son and daughter, Joseph and Jordyn, conquer the rock wall. He said his kids were immediately drawn to the towering Tiki head and waited patiently in line for their chance to climb.

Ringuette said he liked how every activity at the 57 Fest was free. According to Cohen every activity and show is free because of sponsors like the Colchester Business Association (CBA). He said the Parks and Recreation De-

partment strives to keep things at zero cost to maintain the close-knit community feel. He said the event is free to get in, the activities are free and no businesses at the festival are allowed to fundraise or sell, except for the food vendors.

This year, the CBA set up the Wall of Honor – a wall covered in paper gazebos. The gazebos were purchased by Colchester residents and sold by CBA members who donated all proceeds to the Colchester Food Bank. Cohen said a gazebo was chosen because of the life-size gazebo in the town center. A total of \$2,300 was collected from the sales of about 1,000 paper gazebos, he said.

Back this year was the "Show Us Your 57" booth, run by the Parks and Recreation Department and the Senior Center. Anyone who stopped by was encouraged to talk about their

57, whether it was their 57 years of age, their 57 hats or their ability to do 57 jumping jacks. Once residents showed off their "57" they were entered into a drawing to win a \$57 gift certificate to the Parks and Recreation Department. One lucky winner was Theresa Dziatko. Cohen said she can redeem her winnings for any service provided by the department, including trips, courses and activities.

So what's the significance of 57? As every Colchester resident should know, five years ago, their town was voted the 57th best place to live by CNN's *Money Magazine*. Every year since, the Parks and Recreation Department has commemorated the town's recognition with the 57 Fest.

"We've had five great years so far, and we see no need to stop yet," Cohen said.



Despite soggy weather for part of the four-day event, the Hebron Harvest Fair last weekend was declared a success. At left, Noah Rodriguez, 5, Brianna Briggs, 15, and Tricia Roy, 17, all of Wilbraham, MA, laugh as they ride one of the rides on Sunday at the fair. At right, a dog leaps into the water during the Dock Dogs show on Saturday afternoon. Dogs were judged by how far they were able to leap.

## Despite Rain, Hebron Harvest Fair Declared Success

by Sarah McCoy

Despite rain on Friday and the first part of Saturday, the Lions Club has announced the Hebron Harvest Fair saw a slight increase in attendance over last year. This is thanks, in large part, to a nearly record setting Sunday draw.

"Some years we just don't get Mother Nature on our side but, I think, we still put on an excellent event," fair superintendent Steve Beauchene said earlier this week. "The feedback I've gotten has been very positive."

Some of the best feedback the Lions have received has been in regards to the newest fair addition. The Dock Dogs exhibition and competition brought a solid crowd as fairgoers crowded around the runway and pool eager to see canine after canine sail into the water.

Dogs of all breeds took their turn jumping into the water with their distance determining the champion.

Lizzy Felton of Poughkeepsie, NY, brought her yellow lab, Ralphie, to the fair. With a jump of 21'4" Ralphie finished in second place in the Master division. "It's fun," she said when asked why she and her dog compete. "We started last year. He likes being in the water and it's fun getting to see all the different kinds of dogs and meet new people."

Both Beauchene and 2010 Fair Superinten-

dent John Johnson Jr. confirmed that the Hebron Lions are in negotiations to bring the Dock Dogs back to next year's fair.

Beauchene reported that the motocross show, also new this year, was a "big hit." Though he's looking into ways that the demonstration could be tweaked for future fairs. "I'd like to see it maybe in a race format with jumps along the way," he said. "I think we found an event that people really like. Now it's a matter of finding the space and format that works for the fair."

This year's show was primarily a vertical exhibition where riders performed tricks in the air. Beauchene said he'd like the show to be a competition that would get viewers excited about racing.

Another popular event was the Chuck Wicks show on Sunday afternoon. Hordes of fairgoers packed the grass and bleachers around the stage to listen to the country singer and former contestant on *Dancing with the Stars*.

While final fair attendance numbers haven't been confirmed yet, Johnson did say that preliminary estimates show that Sunday's attendance was within 200 of being an all-time record for Sunday. "A lot of the people who didn't come Friday or Saturday morning [because of the weather] showed up on Sunday,"

he said.

Johnson went on to say that a strong showing at the Hebron Harvest Fair is around 150,000 attendees. Last year that number dipped to about 120,000, largely because of storms on Saturday that forced the Lions to close the entire fair at 6 p.m.

This year, Saturday looked to be another dreary day but, by the afternoon, the skies had cleared and people made their way to the fair. "It got better as the day went on," Beauchene said. "I heard from someone that attendance was up 770 percent over last year's Saturday. That's at least something."

Johnson reported that this year's attendance looks to be up about 4% over last year but the numbers won't be finalized until next week.

What has been finalized is the reactions from those who were in attendance at this year's fair.

Tim Dunphy of Farmington has been selling fried dough and ice cream at the Harvest Fair since 1990 said this is one fair he never misses. "The Lions are like family," he said. "They are always there to help and the people who come to the fair are just great."

For the Verizzi family of Lebanon, the fair is a family tradition. Lisa's first date with her now-husband, Steve, was at the Hebron Harvest Fair.

Years later the Verizzi's still make a point to go out to the fair. Now they bring their children as well.

Ryan Beattie grew up in Hebron and enjoyed showing her animals each year at the fair. She has since moved to North Stonington but returns to the fair with her young sons. "It's a good group of animals and a great group of people," she said. "It's my hometown so coming here reminds me of growing up."

The Lions were back out on the fairgrounds this week picking up the remnants of the fair. "It's quite a metamorphosis to see the grounds change," Beauchene said this week. "All the tents go up, the rides are installed and then, a few days later, it's all gone and the fairgrounds look just the same as they always have."

On Wednesday, the Lions Club met to begin planning for next year's fair. Several members will head out to Las Vegas, as they do every year, for a farm trade show. It's here that they develop a vision and confirm acts for the coming year's fair.

The money raised by the Harvest Fair is mainly dispersed at the club's annual Night of Giving held in May. Presently the Hebron Lions have donated over \$2 million to local and international charities.

## Portland Says Goodbye to Much-Loved Entrepreneur

by Michael McCoy

Friends and family this week remembered Mike Lastrina, the owner of Portland Restaurant, who passed away last month at age 45.

Michael Anthony Lastrina, the son of Joseph Lastrina Sr. and Beverly Oktavec, died of natural causes Aug. 28 at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

Lastrina was born in 1964, and came of age in Portland, graduating from Portland High School in 1982. It seems he was never idle, beginning with his first job at Al and Diane Donohue's gas station, and ending with his glowing reputation as proprietor of local hotspot Portland Restaurant.

He seemed to be many things to many people, all good: family man, symbol of the American work ethic, and savvy businessman. But, his glowing reputation at Portland Restaurant didn't stop with a friendly face behind the bar. He also used his business as a vehicle to help town causes, most notably his constant willingness to host "tip-a-cop," "tip-a-fireman" and "tip-a-veteran" events.

Bill Willinsky, a semi-regular at the restaurant, primarily knew Lastrina from his involvement with the Veteran Affairs Committee. In 2006 and 2007, Lastrina hosted two "tip-a-veteran" events to raise money for the Veterans Memorial that was unveiled in 2007. Of course, how such an event works is the veterans wait on tables for an evening, and all their tip money goes to the cause in question. Willinsky said Lastrina was only too happy to oblige, and remembers that after the first event, Lastrina gave Willinsky's committee a check that was actually double the tips the veterans had made. Lastrina had matched the tips, despite that not

being agreed upon beforehand. Willinsky said he did the same thing next time. He said he expects Lastrina did the same thing with similar events. "That's the way he was," figured Willinsky, calling him "a very generous guy."

"Mike was there when we needed money," Willinsky continued, adding that they had begun talking upon another tip-a-veteran in the near future.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield also commended Lastrina for his contribution to the Veterans Memorial, remarking, "We are very grateful for that." She added, "I would like to thank Michael and his family for everything they've contributed to the town."

Lastrina's cousin, Joe Bordonaro, noted two things that stuck out about Lastrina. The first was his love for his daughters, Mariah and Isabelle, which Bordonaro called "undying." He also recalled that Mariah played piano at her father's service, with her sister right by her side. "It was about as touching as something could be," he said.

The second was his work ethic, and Bordonaro said that as even as a kid, "It was very evident that he was going to be somebody in life." He added, "He loved to work."

But it seems Lastrina saved some love for those beyond his family as well. "The kid had so many friends," Bordonaro said, calling Lastrina "a very outgoing person" who "could talk to anybody." To this effect, he said it was only the second time that a wake had to be held in St. Mary's Church, since the Portland Memorial Funeral Home could not contain attendees.

Father John Ashe has been parish pastor of St. Mary's Church for over 20 years, which



Portland Restaurant was owned by Michael Lastrina who passed away last month at age 45.

Lastrina attended. Ashe knew Lastrina quite well. He said he frequented Portland Restaurant from time to time and, more often than not, Lastrina refused to charge him. "I felt like a freeloader," Ashe chuckled.

Ashe also performed Lastrina's funeral which, he said, "loads and loads of people" attended.

"He was an absolutely superior fellow," Ashe

said, counting Lastrina as "the definition of a good person." Ashe concluded, "He will be very, very sorely missed."

In addition to his daughters, Lastrina left behind two parents, two stepparents, four sisters, and two brothers.

Nothing has yet been reported on the future of the restaurant.

Lastrina's full obituary appears on page 10.

# Marlborough WPCA Discusses Sewer Regulations

by Katy Nally

Only about a dozen residents attended the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) meeting held last Thursday, Sept. 10, at Town Hall, where officials spent the majority of the meeting making fairly minor revisions to the 82 pages of sewer regulations.

The attendance marked a change from previous WPCA meetings, where residents filled the elementary school's cafeteria and the senior center.

Town Planner Peter Hughes said he had reviewed all the public comments and read all the letters presented at the last two WPCA public hearings and incorporated some changes into the regulations. Most of the changes were minute corrections made to the language of the regulations.

In section three, the WPCA now has 65 days, instead of 75, to act on a request for a wastewater discharge permit. Hughes said 65 days is consistent with other governmental agencies.

Hughes also suggested increasing the 180-day allowance in which residents must grind or fill their existing septic systems. He asked the WPCA members to consider excluding the months of January and February from the 180 days, because the ground would most likely be frozen. However, the WPCA voted against this idea. John Murray, chairman of the WPCA, said the two winter months should remain included on the off chance that this coming winter might be warmer than expected.

Murray and Hughes also discussed how residents would be fined if they refused to hookup to the sewer. "We gotta think about how we can collect our money and not wait for a lien process to take place," Murray said. According to Hughes, one way to penalize residents who don't pay on time would be to shut off their grinder pumps. He said each pump has an on-off switch, but if the pump is gravity-fed, it will

work regardless.

After an hour and a half of amending the regulations, public comments were heard. Hughes read aloud a letter from Stacey Francoline who asked why she wasn't allowed to contact the town attorney, Joseph Fasi of Murtha Cullina LLP. Francoline, an attorney herself, said she has represented several towns in the past and had never encountered such a rule. Fasi was the attorney who deemed two petitions invalid on Sept. 1. The petitions asked that a town meeting be held to discuss the regulations.

Pat Wilson of 30 Denler Dr. asked if the contractors could put the grinder pump on the other side of her house where there is an empty lot, instead of ripping out 15-year-old ivy plants where the pump is supposed to go. She said she planted the ivy after her husband died 15 years ago, to cover the lawn. "I'm a widow and I have a great difficulty taking care of the inside and the outside of the house," she said.

Steve Pisch, planning and developing coordinator for the town, said moving the grinder pump would cost about \$12,000 to \$13,000 extra, because it adds 60 feet to the sewer line at \$52 per linear foot. Although this only adds up to about \$3,000, Pisch said there were other costs involved such as rock extractions, creating a new service connection to the road and removing trees.

Instead, Murray said he would call up the contractors, F&J Inc., the following spring and ask them to plant new ivy, even though the work will be completed this fall. "We request as part of their contract to replace whatever was there, at least as good if not better," Pisch said.

There will be another WPCA meeting on Thursday, Sept. 24, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. According to the agenda, more public comments will be heard.

# Not All Happy in Marlborough With C&E Restoration

by Katy Nally

Parents of gifted children at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School fought with the Board of Education (BOE) this summer in an effort to save the Challenge and Enrichment (C&E) program, which was on the budget-cut chopping block.

And now, even though most of the program's components have remained intact, not everybody is happy.

Stephan Brown, a parent of a child in the program, said former schools superintendent Sal Menzo promised C&E was to be the "last out" when budget cuts were made and the "first in" if the school board found it was able to restore items to the budget.

"It was the last thing we wanted to cut from the budget," Maria Grove, chairperson of the BOE said. "We wanted to avoid it at all costs."

Ultimately, the board cut the program in June, in an effort to trim money from the 2009-10 school budget. In July, after the school board moved from a full-time superintendent to a part-time one, funds were freed up, and components of the C&E program were put back in to the school spending plan, Sklarz said.

However, while the components of C&E remain intact, it's not exactly the same as it was last year, said Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz. "All the good qualities have been maintained," he said. This year, students will not be pulled from the classroom to partake in C&E programs. Instead, there is a new schedule for every student with an "intervention" period. According to Sklarz, this period is a time for accelerated students to work with reading and math specialists, and for students who are falling behind to work with tutors. He said students in the middle will also get extra help.

The most notable change to C&E is the absence of Karen Brennan, who taught the program for the past 12 years. Brennan is now teaching fifth grade, Sklarz said. The special-

ists, who assumed Brennan's role, were already employed by the school, so there was no additional cost to compensate for their new roles. "In an economy like this, we ask people to do more," he said.

Sklarz said the changes to C&E are cost-efficient and it means students will not forgo instructional class time for enrichment programs.

He said many parents were upset when the BOE proposed to cut the program in June, as board members did not discuss how they could retain aspects of the program (in the end, a plan to reinstate the main components of C&E wasn't finalized until July). He said many parents were "unnerved" because they did not know what the program would look like in the end. "Change is difficult for parents to accept," he said.

But Brown said he was upset not because of the changes made to the program, but because of "the arrogance with which the BOE dismissed the wishes of the parents." According to BOE minutes, many parents asked that C&E remain part of the school's curriculum, despite budget cuts. At a special meeting of the BOE on June 9, more than 20 parents spoke in favor of C&E and asked the board not to cut the program, according to the minutes.

However, Grove and Sklarz both said parents and students will appreciate the new program in the long run. "I just know parents are going to say what a wonderful experience come June," Sklarz said. "I know because I have 40 years of experience."

For 14 years, Sklarz was the superintendent of 17 schools in West Hartford. Before that he was the deputy superintendent in Charlestown, SC. He began his part-time position in Marlborough on July 1. Sklarz said he is enjoying his new job because it's a much smaller district. "I wanted to end my career closer to the students," he said.

## Hartford Man Drowns in Marlborough Lake

by Katy Nally

Verlon Barnes, 56, of Bellevue Street in Hartford, drowned in Lake Terramuggus last Friday, Sept. 11, state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) officials said.

According to Dennis Schain, spokesman for the DEP, Barnes was fishing with a friend in a 10-foot aluminum rowboat. At 11:30 a.m., the friend came ashore because it was raining, and went to his car, while Barnes stayed in the boat, Marlborough Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said. The friend returned about an hour later and noticed Barnes' boat was empty. At that time, he called the police and a search and rescue mission began, Asklar said.

Members of the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department and the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department showed up to assist with the rescue. Asklar said Barnes' hat and jacket were found on shore, but his body was not recovered. He said a member of the fire department dove in without scuba gear to look for Barnes, but because of the "murkiness and the depth" he was not found.

After several hours of searching for Barnes, the situation went from a rescue to a recovery mission. It was handed over to the state police and the DEP's dive team at about 1:30 p.m., Lt. J. Paul Vance said. After seven hours of searching, divers found a body at 8:30 Friday night and it was sent to the medical examiner in Farmington, Vance said.

The body was identified Saturday as Barnes. Autopsy results showed the immedi-

ate cause of death was asphyxia and drowning, and the death was determined to be an accident, the state medical examiner's office said.

According to Mark Merritt, the rescue captain of the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, Barnes was found in an area of the lake that was about 25-feet deep, while the deepest part is about 50 feet.

Lake Terramuggus is a public lake with private town-owned parking, according to Marlborough Parks and Recreation Director Rick Audet. He said Marlborough residents must obtain a parking sticker to have parking access and the lots are patrolled by parks and recreation staff and a resident trooper. He said the trooper has the authority to ticket unregistered cars.

According to Asklar, Barnes was seen fishing on the lake a number of times by Marlborough residents, even though he is a Hartford resident. First Selectman Bill Black said there would be no way of knowing how many non-residents actually use the lake. "We have a number of visitors from out-of-town who utilize our public parks," he said Tuesday.

The last time someone drowned in Lake Terramuggus was July 30, 2006, Asklar said. Luis Lopez, 21, of East Hartford, was pulled from the lake and flown by Life Star to the nearest hospital where he was pronounced dead.

## Man Gets Three Years in Prison for Fatal 2007 Hebron Crash

by Sarah McCoy

A Southington man has been sentenced for his role in a 2007 motor vehicle accident on Route 66 that left an East Hampton man dead.

David Fasulo Jr., 21, was sentenced to three years in prison last Friday, Sept. 11, after he pleaded guilty to assault with a motor vehicle and misconduct with a motor vehicle.

According to an affidavit on file at Rockville Superior Court, Fasulo was driving home from Providence, RI around 7:30 a.m. Jan. 26, 2007, when his sports utility vehicle crossed the center line on Route 66 in Hebron and struck another SUV head on. The driver of that vehicle, Gary Daniels, 49, of East Hampton, was pronounced dead on the scene.

According to court documents, Fasulo told police he and his passenger, Arkadiusz Sendrowski, had been drinking in Providence earlier that night. Though Fasulo told police after the accident that he had not had a drink in several hours, court documents indicate his blood alcohol content at the time was .10, which is above the legal limit of .08.

Fasulo was initially not charged in the crash, but after the police investigation he was arrested on assault with a motor vehicle and misconduct with a motor vehicle charges, police said. (He was not charged with DUI as

police did not follow standard procedure of issuing two blood alcohol content tests at time of the accident, the affidavit said.) In August 2008, Fasulo was also arrested for selling marijuana. According to the affidavit, the arrest for selling marijuana came in the summer of 2008 when he sold less than four ounces of the narcotic in Southington to a confidential informant to the state police.

Fasulo pleaded guilty to the charge in August 2008, according to court documents.

Then, earlier this year, Fasulo was arrested again, charged with breach of peace and driving under the influence, police said. In July of this year, Fasulo was arrested again for driving the wrong way down a one-way street while intoxicated, police said.

Judge Terence A. Sullivan sentenced Fasulo for the 2007 crash to 10 years, suspended after three, followed by five years of probation. During the first year of his probation, Fasulo will be barred from operating a motor vehicle. He must also attend a panel for victims of drunk driving once a year for all five years, perform 100 hours of community service each year for the first three years of his probation and make a \$250 donation to Mothers Against Drunk Driving within two years of being released from prison.

# Hebron Elementary School Gets a New Principal

by Sarah McCoy

Starting Monday, students at Hebron Elementary School (HES) will see a new principal.

Kevin Hanlon, the former assistant principal at Irving Robbins Middle School in Farmington, was hired by the Board of Education (BOE) earlier this month as the new HES principal.

Hanlon will replace Joanne Collins, who resigned earlier this summer after taking over as principal of East Haddam Elementary School.

The Hebron school district began advertising for the vacancy in July and received 35 applications, Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said earlier this week. A search committee comprised of a BOE member, parents, school staff and members of the administration reviewed the applications and interviewed seven candidates.

The search committee recommended Hanlon for the position earlier this month. He was formally accepted by the Hebron BOE at their Sept. 10 meeting.

“What we were really looking for was characteristics of leadership,” Cruz said of the search committee. “Hebron El is a big building with 700 students and almost 100 staff members. We wanted someone whose skill set and characteristics matched our situation.”

In Hanlon the search committee and the BOE believe they’ve found that match.

“From his educational philosophy to his approach, we felt that Kevin was well suited to our needs,” Cruz said. “His references confirmed everything we saw – personal integrity, connections with parents and a joyful approach to working with children.”

Hanlon is originally from outside of Philadelphia. He completed his undergraduate studies at Pennsylvania State University in elementary education and taught fourth grade for four years in Pennsylvania before accepting a position teaching math and science at a small middle school in Vermont.

After two years of teaching at Whitingham School in Jacksonville, VT, Hanlon took on a new role as dean of students at the school. As he worked in this position, Hanlon went back to school, earning his Master’s of Education degree in educational leadership from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA.

In 2004 Hanlon and his family headed south to Connecticut. He took a position teaching sixth grade math at Pulaski Middle School in New Britain as he worked to complete a sixth year degree in educational leadership from the University of Connecticut. In February 2006 Hanlon was hired as the assistant principal at Pearson Middle School in Winchester. He stayed there just under two years until he was hired by the Farmington Public Schools.

Earlier this week Hanlon said he’s eager to begin working with an elementary school population again. “It’s the earliest learning opportunity,” he said. “The curiosity, love and interest these kids have for the world around them in wonderful. I hope to set that for the long road, hooking them to be lifelong learners.”



**Kevin Hanlon is the new principal of Hebron Elementary School**

Hanlon has been in district for several days since his hiring earlier this month but his first official day will be on Monday, Sept. 21.

In the coming weeks and months, Hanlon said he plans to work with interim principal Annie Sweeney and HES Assistant Principal Vonda Tencza to transition into his new role.

“It will be a lot of listening and learning as I come to understand how the school has functioned in the past,” Hanlon said.

Cruz said one of the most important aspects of Hanlon’s job in the near future will be developing relationships with colleagues, parents and teachers. “It’s important to develop those connections as we work towards achieving the goals and foundations we’ve set for the school district this year,” she said.

Sweeney will work in the district next week and then for a few days in the weeks after to help acclimate Hanlon to the new environment. Earlier this week, Cruz voiced her gratitude to have the former classroom teacher and principal at HES for the opening of the new school year. “She’s been a wonderful asset to the school community,” Cruz said.

Earlier this week Hanlon said Hebron is “exactly” the type of community that he hoped to find work in. “There’s something here that’s a rare commodity,” he said. “The positive feelings of the school district aren’t things you see everywhere. The school staff really believe in continuous improvement and achievement for all and that attitude is, obviously, highly regarded by the community.”

Hanlon has three elementary school aged children with his wife, Elizabeth. Their children, Grace, Adam and Nora are 5, 7 and 9, respectively.

## Colchester Police News

9/8: Ann Cautenback, 55, of 504 Hilliard St., Manchester, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane, State Police said.

9/9: Jason Stone, 38, of 228 Marvin Rd., was charged with DUI and driving to endanger, State Police said.

9/10: John Sciremammano, 50, of 220 Halls Hill Rd., was charged with DUI, failure to have tail lamps lit and drinking while operating a motor vehicle, State Police said.

9/11: Justin Durkee, 18, of 112 Amston Rd., was charged with interfering/resisting and possession of a dangerous weapon, State Police said.

9/11: Zachary Hast, 19, of 227 Dr. Foote Rd., was charged with possession of narcotics, possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

9/11: Ryan Jeremiah, 48, of 154 Suffolk Ct., Meriden, was charged with DUI, driving to endanger and failure to drive in proper lane, State Police said.

9/11: George Gargano, 43, of 171 Haywardville Road, was charged with being a fugitive from justice, State Police said.

9/12: A “youth offender” was charged with possession of less than four oz. of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of alcohol by a minor and having no plate light, State Police said.

9/12: A “youth offender” was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

9/12: Matthew Gillis, 18, of 280 Norwich Ave., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

# Two Charged in Car Theft in Portland

by Mike Thompson

Two Portland residents were arrested on multiple charges after police said they found stolen vehicles from Florida in their possession.

Lillian Distefano, 45, and Daniel Resto, 36, both of 10 Lake Rd., were each charged with two counts of first-degree larceny by possession, two counts of second-degree forgery, two counts of titled fraud and two counts of possession of vehicle with removed or altered vehicle identification number (VIN), Portland Police said this week.

Distefano turned herself in Sept. 12, police said, while Resto turned himself in Sept. 14.

The arrests capped an investigation that started in February, when, police said, they were contacted by the Connecticut State Police Auto Theft Task Force, along with a federal investigator, regarding a vehicle stolen from Florida that may be located in Portland.

Police said the information stemmed from an ongoing federal investigation into vehicles that were allegedly being stolen off of car dealership lots, primarily in Florida. According to Portland Police Officer David Bond, a group of individuals was stealing vehicles from dealer lots, sending them to “unknown locations” and having them “re-tagged,” or their VINs altered. Fraudulent titles would then be made, and then whoever acquired or purchased the vehicle would then register it with whichever state the stolen car wound up in.

Upon learning a residence in town – 10 Lake Rd., the address of the arrestees – might be in possession of one of the vehicles, Bond said,

police conducted surveillance of the home, were able to obtain a search-and-seizure warrant and, upon executing the warrant, located a 2007 Yukon Denali in the garage of the residence.

Bond said police then called in the Department of Motor Vehicles, who used equipment to determine the “true VIN” of the sport utility vehicle. It was determined the vehicle was stolen from a dealer lot in Tampa, FL, Bond said, and subsequently seized as evidence.

Bond said Distefano and Resto told police they had purchased the car from a private individual in Hartford. Upon interviewing the two further, Bond said, police learned they had also purchased a second vehicle from the same person. After learning that, Bond said, police obtained consent to search and found this second vehicle, a 2007 Ford F350 pickup, had also been reported stolen, also from a dealer lot in Florida.

After what Bond described as “quite a lengthy investigation,” Distefano and Resto were arrested.

While Bond said Distefano and Resto weren’t involved in the stealing of the cars, the acquisition of the vehicles was “a little less clear.” He added that the investigation was closed, and that there would be no arrests of the person that sold the two the cars in Hartford, due to a lack of “any clear-cut information” as to who that was.

Bond for Resto was set at \$50,000, Bond said, and he appeared in court Sept. 14. Bond for Distefano was set at \$1,000, Bond said, and she is due in court Sept. 22.

## East Hampton Police News

8/31 — Cassandra Ready, 38, of 27 Schafer Rd., Middletown, was arrested for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating without minimum insurance, East Hampton Police said.

9/6 — Kenneth Barber, 21, of 8 Midwood Farm Rd., was arrested for misuse of plates, operating without insurance, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating with inadequate fenders, police said.

9/3 — Justin Sweet, 23, of 40 Colchester Ave., was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

9/3 — Alvah Ballou, 18, of 4B Bellevue St., was involved in a one-car accident on Forest Street near Childs Road, police said. Ballou was issued a ticket for operating a motor vehicle without a license and traveling too fast for conditions, police added.

9/5 — James Downey, 69, of 32 Elm St., Hartford, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for operating an illegal motor vehicle recyclers business, police said.

9/5 — Nicholas Fischlem, 23, of 5B Barton Hill Rd., was arrested for disorderly conduct and violation of a protective order, police said.

9/5 — Jacob Dorflinger, 21, of 62 Abbey Rd., was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

9/5 — Heidi Marie Polak, 49, of 23 Main St., was arrested for operating a motor vehicle under suspension, police said.

9/5 — Jennifer Strickland, 36, of 101 Mountain Rd., was arrested for operating without insurance, operating an unregistered vehicle and failure to have head lamps, police said.

9/6 — Hunter White, 32, of 17 Coles Rd., Cromwell, was issued a ticket for passing in a

no-passing zone, police said.

9/6 — Andrew Rodimon, 21, of 1 Bashan Rd., East Haddam, was arrested for driving under the influence and failure to drive right, police said.

9/7 — Louis Santos, 42, of 34 East High St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for sale of narcotics (five bags of heroin).

9/8 — John Burger, 44, of 128 East High St., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a traffic signal, police said.

9/8 — Thomas Falvey, 26, of 70 Woodland Rd., Moodus, was issued a ticket for failure to obey a traffic signal, police said.

9/9 — Anthony Mastrocco, 49, of 19 Westwood Dr., Moodus, was issued a ticket for illegal passing, police said.

9/9 — Ernest Crane, 65, of 82 Main St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for failure to appear, police said.

9/9 — Alison Graham, 26, of 3 West Dr., was issued a ticket for operating a vehicle while using a cell phone, police said.

9/10 — Arthur Latronica, 59, of 48 Old West High St., was arrested for disorderly conduct and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

## Marlborough Police News

9/9: Tabatha Black, 19, of 106 West Rd., Colchester, was charged with possession of narcotics and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

9/13: Paul Bernard, 26, of 314 Bull Hill, Milton, MA, was charged with possession of a controlled substance, State Police said.

## Portland Police News

9/4 — Dean Randazzo, 35, of 17 Waverly Ave., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, Portland Police said.

9/14 — Melissa Fasciani, 29, of 608 Main St., was charged with illegal possession of narcotics and sixth-degree larceny, police said.

## Hebron Police News

9/11: Raymond Laroche, 42, of 18 Soaker Rd., Chesterfield, MA, was charged with DUI, State Police said.



Despite not the best of weather conditions last Saturday, the Brownstone Festival was deemed a success. At left, 4-year-old Alena Rose Annunziata enjoys her picnic lunch while watching Julie Schubert (right.) During her set, Schubert said her husband talked her into taking up the guitar two-and-a-half years ago when he “found it on [her] bucket list next to tap dancing.”

## Portland Brownstone Fest Survives Weather

by Michael McCoy

The fifth annual Brownstone Family Day & Festival was a success once again, not allowing itself to be bullied by weather's whose bark was worse than its bite.

The first half of the extravaganza was Family Day, put together by Youth Services primarily situated on the town green. The latter half was the Brownstone Festival, put on by the Brownstone Quorum, and taking place between the quarries and the Connecticut River.

“As you can see, things have changed significantly since last year,” chirped Dave Kuzminski from the riverfront park, as he introduced the first musical act of the afternoon. (The students of CT Valley School of Music, which he and his wife run, provided the day's music once again.)

Music included Suzanne Dickerson on the violin and viola. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. “You name it; she plays it,” said Kuzminski, adding oboe, cello, piano, and clarinet to her capabilities. Julie Schubert displayed her quirky folk repertoire, including the song “Chemistry” (which Schubert said was “about having some”) and a ditty/ode to the electric blanket.

It was a busy weekend for Kuzminski. The night before the festival, he performed at the Hebron Harvest Festival, and the day after, he returned to Hebron, working the sound for the Chuck Wicks concert. The Connecticut Valley School of Music and Dance, now celebrating its 25th anniversary under the Kuzminski's, teaches nearly 300 students.

However, in his opening remarks, Kuzminski was referring to the acres of land cleared out by the Brownstone Quorum. Kuzminski said he hoped to see the park become “a piece of

Portland's fabric over the years.”

Jack Dillon and Bill Barrows showed a collection of local artifacts acts and photographs. Barrows, who runs Thomas Barrows & Sons (which was started by his father, Tom) displayed memorabilia like a an April 1936 issue of *The Middletown Press* showing a picture of the Middletown-Portland Bridge in the wake of that, and a Portland Board of Selectmen meetings gavel dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Even more pertinent was a poster advertising an 1867 meeting of the Quarry Men, a brownstone workers union.

Barrows' family line in Portland dates back to around 1800. This includes his great-grandfather Edwin Dunham, who in 1854 patented a drill used in brownstone excavation.

Other booths were manned by local artists and artisans, Don Bascom (Portland Agricultural Fair) and Gene Sullivan, (Middletown Power Squadron).

Sullivan was trying to enlist people into a boater safety course, which interest permitting, could start as early as next month. Owning a boat is not prerequisite for participation, as Sullivan anecdotally said, “Columbus never had a boat when he started out.” The Middletown Power Squadron dates back to 1932.

The Portland Pumpkin Growers had a booth, displaying photographs, information and, yes, pumpkins. Members Mark Luckhardt and Carol Rovicki manned the booth. Every first Saturday in October the group meets find out who managed to birth the largest pumpkin. Last year's winner was Jon Sundell, whose behemoth came in at (brace yourself) 997 pounds.

“We have a good time,” said Luckhardt, corroborated by their sign: “Size matters.”

The Meshomasic Hiking Club was there once again. Since 1998, the group, among fostering a community of hikers, has raised \$30,000, which has helped nature conservancies and land trusts purchase about 1,000 acres of the Meshomasic Forest. Of this, \$6,000 has come from the nine-year-old Cans for Lands program. The program is fairly simple. The club collects cans and bottles of all sorts, cashes them in, and donates the money. John “Can Man” LeShane oversees this, and weekly takes caches the bounty in a places like Tri-Town, Gardener's Market and Stop & Shop. He specifically credited Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park (even more specifically Frank Hayes) and Quarry Ridge Golf Course for their can donations, calling the latter “a bonanza.”

But the riverfront activity was primarily just the second half of the day. The day opened (after the 8 a.m. senior center breakfast) with Family Day, a decade-plus old tradition in town.

“It was fabulous,” Mary Pont said of the event. Pont is the director of Youth Services, which puts together Family Day.

Running from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Pont said the day was bookended by rain, but unaffected by it. The proof of that was the people, which Pont said were just as many as last year's attendance.

The day included games, inflatables, attractions, crafters and organizations of all sorts. One initiative was the launching of “Don't Sit on Your Asset,” which began as a survey that records people needs, as well as what they have to offer. This will be compiled into a database, allowing town officials to contact potential volunteers who can services to corresponding people. Pont called the process “asset mapping.”

Representatives will continued to be on hand over the next week at the school district's open houses, which began this Wednesday.

Though Guidas's Supercow was unable to attend, due to the wet premises, Portland Library's Mother Goose was onhand. Pont said they've already secured Supercow for next year, as well as the Moo Mobile.

Pont said the day becomes more streamlined each year, as they get another year of experience under their belt. Furthermore, the event is not a town fundraiser, but simply a service to the community. Pont usually simply hopes to break even. This is why so much of Family Day is free. “To have it any other way,” she figured, “would take away from what Family Day is all about.”

“It was cold, it was windy, it was wet,” Brownstone Festival chair Jeanne Dilworth said. But, she said, “The parking lot was overflowing all afternoon,” she said.

In fact, she said, attendance was such that the free picnic, scheduled to start at 3 p.m., started closer to 2 p.m., because there were so many people there, ready to eat. “I don't know where the people came from,” she said.

She even said one man, trying to attend the festival, failed to find a free spot in the lot. So, he drove back to Brownstone Intermediate School and caught one of Jeff Kelsey's hayrides.

Though Dilworth could not pin down attendance, she said around 300 hamburgers and 300 hot dogs were served at the picnic.

Dilworth called the park, now billed as the Portland Quarrylands, “a place where the community can gather.”

## Marlborough Selectmen Agree to Draft Ordinance for Disabled Vet

by Katy Nally

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) voted Tuesday to draft an ordinance that would allow a Marlborough Vietnam veteran and his wife to become property tax exempt.

The ordinance would adopt Connecticut General Statute section 12-81(21)(c), which allows veterans, who have “received assistance for special housing under Title 38 of US Code,” to be exempt from property taxes.

The decision comes four months after Robin Hodge and her husband Wilfred first approached the board with the matter in May. However, Hodge said she was not happy with the selectmen's decision Tuesday. “I walked out of there feeling like nothing happened,” Hodge said. Many residents asked why an immediate resolution (a motion made by the board) was not used to instate Title 38 instead of having the town attorney draft an ordinance that would eventually have to be voted on by the BOS.

First Selectman Bill Black said a resolution would not be the proper procedure to adopt Title

38. He also said a resolution would bypass the budgetary process, but an ordinance would not. Black said the ordinance would demonstrate how tax relief is provided for seniors, the disabled and veterans, as opposed to a resolution that would only apply to Hodge. “If we legislate, we have to legislate for everyone,” selectman Joseph La Bella said.

According to Pasquale Amodeo, the Hodges' attorney, the state statute does not require towns to pass an ordinance. “The city of Hartford adopted Title 38 without passing an ordinance,” he said after the meeting of the board. Amodeo asked why the board was stalling with an ordinance that would require lawyer fees. He said the Hodges' property tax is only about \$4,400, while lawyer fees for this process, according to Amodeo, can run up to \$6,000. “Why are they going through all this monkey business?” he asked.

Black said the next step is to ask the town

attorney to draft the ordinance. Then it goes to a public hearing where residents can voice opinions, and a final decision is made by the selectmen. Black said residents can also petition for the ordinance to appear on a town referendum.

Hodge said what really upset her was the lack of timeframe attached to the ordinance. She said she notified the board about Title 38 this summer in hopes of passing it by Oct. 1, so she would be tax exempt by 2010. Hodge said she was tired of fighting with the board and it was unfair her husband has not yet received what he is entitled to. “I just wonder if all the other 19 vets in the state had to go through what I've had to go through,” she said.

Like the last BOS meeting on Sept. 1, many veterans from Marlborough and neighboring towns came to show their support for the Hodges. At Tuesday's meeting, State Representative Pamela Sawyer showed up to advocate

veterans' rights. She said she spoke with Black about how Title 38 can be considered “feel-good legislation,” which the state writes, but towns pay for. She vowed to return to the Capitol and propose legislation that would fund the 19 veterans (20 with Hodge) in Connecticut who are property tax exempt through Title 38. “I have absolutely no problem asking the state to reimburse the town for that money,” she said. “They are our veterans, not just Marlborough's veterans.”

Sawyer is the representative of the 55th district, which includes Andover, Bolton, Hebron and Marlborough. She has personal ties to veteran affairs because her husband is a Vietnam veteran and she was an originating member of the Veteran Affairs Committee. She said she was asked by a number of Marlborough residents to attend Tuesday's meeting.

# Obituaries

## Portland

### Michael Anthony Lastrina

Michael Anthony Lastrina, beloved son of Joseph James Lastrina Sr. and Beverly Ann Dombroski Oktavec, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, at Yale New Haven Hospital on Aug. 28. He was born April 19, 1964 in Middletown. He grew up in Portland and graduated from Portland High School in 1982.

Michael began working at a very young age which very quickly enhanced his desire to become an entrepreneur. His quest for success began when he started working at a local gas station owned and operated by Al Donohue and his wife, Diane, who became close friends and a mentor to Michael. During this time, Michael became well-known and was adored by many people in the local community. He was a dedicated youngster at the gas station and also worked side by side with his father and two brothers at Jet Home Improvement.

Michael's work ethic was a huge part of who he was. His personable skills enabled him to become extremely successful in the restaurant business as he helped establish Tuscany and Baci Grill Restaurants. He eventually purchased the Portland Restaurant, where he became iconic in the community. The restaurant became his passion and during this time, as owner of Portland Restaurant, he was instrumental in many charities and fundraising efforts. Michael shared all he had to help his family, friends and the patrons at his restaurant.

Michael is survived by the two most precious people in his life, his daughters, Mariah Rose and Isabelle Catherine, both of Middletown. He was such a wonderful, caring, dedicated father and there are no words to express the love he had for them.

He is also survived by his mother, Beverly Oktavec and her husband James of Higganum; his father, Joseph Lastrina and his wife Maureen of Meriden; his sisters, Lin Marie Oakliff of Portland, Annette Aitken of Higganum, Lori Branciforte and her husband Robert Branciforte Jr. of Portland, and Nicole Lastrina of Meriden; his brothers, Angelo Lastrina and his wife Eileen of Portland, and Joseph Lastrina Jr. of Middletown; his step-sister, Kim Marie Oktavec of Glastonbury; his step-brother, James Oktavec Jr. and his wife Jennifer of Middlefield, and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brother-in-law, Scott Oakliff, and his nephew and godson, Brendon Lastrina.

Michael's family would like to give a special thank you to the dedicated medical staff at Yale New Haven Hospital.

His family received relatives and friends in the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Av., Thursday, Sept. 17. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, Friday, Sept. 18, at 11 a.m. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests gifts in his memory to be sent to the Mariah and Isabelle Lastrina fund in care of Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, CT 06480.

For directions, or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit [www.portlandmemorialfh.net](http://www.portlandmemorialfh.net).

## East Hampton

### Eugene Joseph Miller

Eugene Joseph Miller, 55, of Cobalt and formerly of Meriden, passed away suddenly on Monday, Sept. 14, at home. Born March 17, 1954, in Meriden, he was the son of Helen (Skotnicki) Miller of Cobalt and formerly of Meriden and the late William Harvey Miller.

A proud Navy veteran and patriotic man, he served during the Vietnam War, receiving the Good Conduct, National Defense Service and Vietnam Service (1st Bronze Star) Medals. Gene was a life member of VFW. Mr. Miller was a batch plant manager for Cytec in Wallingford for nearly 25 years. In his spare time, he enjoyed boating and was an avid fisherman and hunter.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his daughter, Gina Lineberry of Cape Coral, FL; two grandsons, Zakkary and Ryan; his sister and brother-in-law, Mary and George Vumback of Cheshire; and numerous loving extended family members and friends.

In addition to his father, he was predeceased by two brothers, William and Stefan.

Friends called Thursday, Sept. 17, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. The funeral assembled starting at 9:30 a.m. today, Friday, Sept. 18, at the funeral home, followed by the celebration of the funeral liturgy at 11 a.m. at St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., East Hampton, with Fr. Charles R. LeBlanc, officiating. Committal with full military honors will follow in St. Stanislaus Cemetery, Meriden.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Veteran's Memorial Committee, P.O. Box 64, East Hampton 06424.

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

## Hebron

### Claudette Parent

Claudette (Michaud) Parent, 82, of Glastonbury, formerly of Hebron and West Hartford, devoted wife of 55 years to the late Clifford L. Parent Sr., passed away Sunday, Sept. 13, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. She was born March 17, 1927 in Presque Isle, ME, daughter of the late Benoit and Azelia (Cote) Michaud. Claudette was a graduate of Hartford High School.

She is the loving and devoted mother of her two sons and six grandchildren, Clifford L. Parent Jr. and his wife Donna of Canterbury and their children, Michelle Flickinger and her husband, Brian and Christa and Allison Parent; Jaime Parent and his wife Tracy of Wilmette, Illinois and their children, Brendan, Bryan and Christea Parent. She will be missed by her many nieces and nephews including, her nephew Steven Connelly of Portland, with whom she shared a special bond with.

Besides her husband and parents, Claudette was predeceased by two brothers, Ben and Olean Michaud and her sister, Fern Connelly.

Funeral services will be Saturday, Sept. 19, at 9:15 a.m., at Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m., at St. Dunstan Church, 1334 Manchester Rd., Glastonbury. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family in East Cemetery, Manchester. Calling hours will be today, Friday, Sept. 18, from 5-8 p.m., at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Visiting Nurse & Health Services Inc. (North Central Hospice), 8 Keynote Dr., Vernon, CT 06066, or the Autism Society of America, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 300, Bethesda, MD 20814-3067.

## Portland

### Jeanne M. Devlin

Jeanne M. Devlin, formerly of Portland, died in Dover, NH, Tuesday, Aug. 25. Jeanne was born in Milton, MA, March 4, 1927. She was the daughter of Aaron and Helen Yeaton.

She was predeceased by her husband of 59 years, Earle W. Devlin, as well as her brother Frederick Yeaton.

Jeanne was employed by the Portland school system for over 30 years, first as a teacher, then a guidance counselor and, after receiving her second master's degree, became a school psychologist. She retired in 1988, after which she traveled extensively with her husband Earle. She continued to be an active member of the Congregational Church of Portland and served as a volunteer at the local library and various agencies.

Jeanne leaves two sons, Bradford E. Devlin, and his wife Bettie, Scott Devlin and his wife Debra, and one daughter, Dr. Beth Devlin and her husband Dr. George Savastio. She leaves two grandchildren, Bradford Devlin Jr. and Kelly Robbins and two step-grandchildren, Lauren and Matthew Savastio. Jeanne is also survived by a sister-in-law, Joan Yeaton and her children and grandchildren. She also greatly enjoyed a close circle of friends for many years referred to as the "Friday night group." Jeanne was a gracious and caring woman who will be missed by many.

There will be a memorial service Saturday, Sept. 19, at 11 a.m., at the Congregational Church, 554 Main St., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Salvation Army, 855 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT 06105.

## Salem

### Edward W. Osipowicz

Edward W. Osipowicz, 86, known in business as Ed Ossey, of Salem, died Tuesday, Sept. 8, in Colchester.

Born Oct. 30, 1922, in New Britain, son of the late Alexander and Rozalie (Sefczyk) Osipowicz, he was married to Rita B. (Charest) Osipowicz and had two children: Barbara R. Ramm, formerly of New Britain and Salem and now of Rockledge, FL, and Atty. Edward W. Osipowicz Jr. formerly of New Britain and Salem and now of Satellite Beach, FL, together with two grandsons: Jason R. (Andria Synnett) Ramm of Salem and Wesley T. (Lucinda Jackson) Ramm of Amston; four great-grandchildren: Hayden Ramm of Amston and Alexia, Marissa and Cadence Ramm of Salem, and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his sisters Anne (Jarret) Polewaczkyk, Rose (Gosselin) Cmuchowski and his brothers William, Stanley and John.

A superb athlete, restaurateur (Esquire Bar & Grill) and business owner (Ossey's Package Store), he lived in Connecticut all of his life, primarily as an automobile salesman, and ended his business career as a special deputy sheriff for Hartford County, authorized for courthouse security and prisoner transportation. He was a life member of the New Britain BPO Elks.

There will be no calling hours as private burial arrangements are being made by the family, and a memorial service will be held at a later date.

## From the Editor's Desk

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

When editing the Portland Senior Center news for the paper, I saw that next Friday, Sept. 25, a Senior Speeddating event is going to be held. It reminded me of my own speeddating adventure from a few years ago – which was all in the name of journalism.

For those of you who don't know, before becoming editor of the *Rivereast*, I worked for our sister paper, *The Glastonbury Citizen*. In addition to being one of the reporters covering the town, I also assembled the "Out and About" section, which was like a community calendar of upcoming events. One day in the summer of 2005, I had a notice e-mailed to me about an upcoming event in Glastonbury that was being put on by the organization 8 Minute Dating.

As the name suggests, the organization is a speeddating group. Intrigued, and always looking for an interesting story to tell, I decided to sign up and go to the function "undercover," as an eight-minute dater. I thought it would make for a rather fun story.

I thought about that story when the Portland Senior Center notice came in this week, and figured I might share it with the *Rivereast* readers. So, from the archives, here's my story about my speeddating experience, as it appeared in the July 28, 2005, edition of the *Citizen*:

## Adventures in Speeddating

by Mike Thompson

I'm the one who puts together the *Out and About* listings for the paper each week, so I got an early heads-up on a speeddating event held last Tuesday, July 19, at Main & Hopewell.

My job was to list it in the paper, but the thought of actually going to the event intrigued me. I understood the concept: you have a certain number of minutes to impress a date, and then move on to another one.

But I wondered what the experience was actually like. Charlotte had an unpleasant run-in with speeddating on *Sex and the City* – was that an accurate depiction, or yet another example of TV lying to me?

So, after some prodding by co-workers, I agreed to exploit my singleness for the sake of *The Citizen*, and go undercover at speeddating. How's that for journalistic dedication? After I decided to go to the event, I discovered that, while folks of any age could go, the function was geared towards singles aged 32 to 47. I am only 26, but I wasn't going to let that trivial fact get in the way of a story.

As the event, which was officially called 8-Minute Dating, drew closer, I began to worry about being surrounded by single women in their 30s and 40s. Would they be desperate housewives, minus the housewives? On the night of the event, I drove up to the Main & Hopewell, gritted my teeth, and found out. And what I discovered were nice women, and, overall, a very pleasant evening.

At the restaurant, I was given a nametag with a number, and something resembling a scorecard. Organizer Hilory Wagner told me that, for each of my eight-minute dates, I should write down the number of the woman I sat with. When the event was over, I could go home, log on to the 8-Minute Dating website, and punch in the number of any woman I wanted to see again. If that woman had also punched in my number, then I'd get her contact information. If she hadn't, I'd get nothing. That way, if you strike out, you can do it in the comfort of your own home, and nobody knows about it except your computer. Not bad.

Most of us arrived a few minutes early and stood around like kids at a middle school dance. The guys kept to themselves, and so did the women. All that was missing was an appearance by C&C Music Factory. But then

Wagner called us together and commenced the 8 Minute Dating festivities.

Our little scorecards included lists of possible conversation topics, one of them "what work do you do?" I wanted to get a good feel for the event, and I didn't think I could do that if my "dates" knew I was a reporter looking for a story. I told each of my nine dates I worked for *The Citizen*, but in the layout section, and my task was helping to assemble the paper. They seemed impressed.

The women I dated had a variety of jobs; two of the nine were employed as recruiters. Not Army recruiters, more like headhunters. Two had relocated to Connecticut from California.

A mid-30s blonde named "Jennie," (the stories you're reading are true; the names of my dates have been changed to protect the single) got the conversational ball rolling by asking about my interests. I'm a baseball fan, I said, and I like the Mets. "The New Jersey Mets?" she said. "No," I answered, "the New York Mets." To which she replied, "The *New York* Mets? How many teams does New York have?"

Another mid-30s blonde, whom I'll call "Tiffani," learned the last movie I saw was *Bewitched*, and that I saw it mostly because I enjoyed the TV show growing up, but also because I'm a big fan of Nicole Kidman. From there we moved to Nicole's ex Tom Cruise, recapping his infamous "You're being glib" interview with Matt Lauer, and agreeing about what a nutcase the guy's become. It was an enjoyable conversation, and I was willing to overlook her being a Yankees fan.

It seemed clear I was the youngest person present, but only one of the women mentioned my age. Maybe I just look older. (That's a fairly scary thought.) My fifth date of the evening, a young looking brunette named "Shannen," asked me where I grew up. When I said Manchester, she asked me if I went to East Catholic. I found that a rather odd question, considering there a few high schools in Manchester to choose from, but she was on the money – I am an East grad.

Shannen asked when I graduated, and I truthfully told her I was a member of the Class of 1997, knowing that it would expose me as being only in my mid-20s. (For some reason, while I had no problem lying about my job, I felt the need to be honest about the year I graduated high school.) She told me she was an East Catholic Eagle from the Class of '91. Then she said, "Wait a minute? How old are you?" "Twenty-six," I sheepishly answered. "You do know this event is designed for people between 32 and 47, right?" Shannen asked.

I was caught. Do I blow my cover, knowing that I'm only halfway through my dates for the evening? I told Shannen that I knew I fell below the target age, but that I've always been attracted to older women. She seemed to believe me, and then proceeded to tell me that just because the women are older doesn't necessarily mean they're more mature.

Most of my dates said they had never been to a speeddating event before, and were attending it more out of curiosity than an intense desire to find a man. They were fun to talk with, and in most cases the eight minutes flew by. Not only did I have a good time, so did Wagner, who after the event said she considered the evening a success.

"I wouldn't be so bold as to say that there were many matches made in heaven," Wagner said, "but at the very least, it's an entertaining evening out, good conversation, with other single folks. At best, it's an opportunity to meet someone who might change your life!"

Now, I don't think I met anyone who'll change my life, but it was still a nice, memorable evening. It's not very often you date nine women who are between 10 and 15 years older than you. Not on a Tuesday night, anyway.