

RIVEREAST

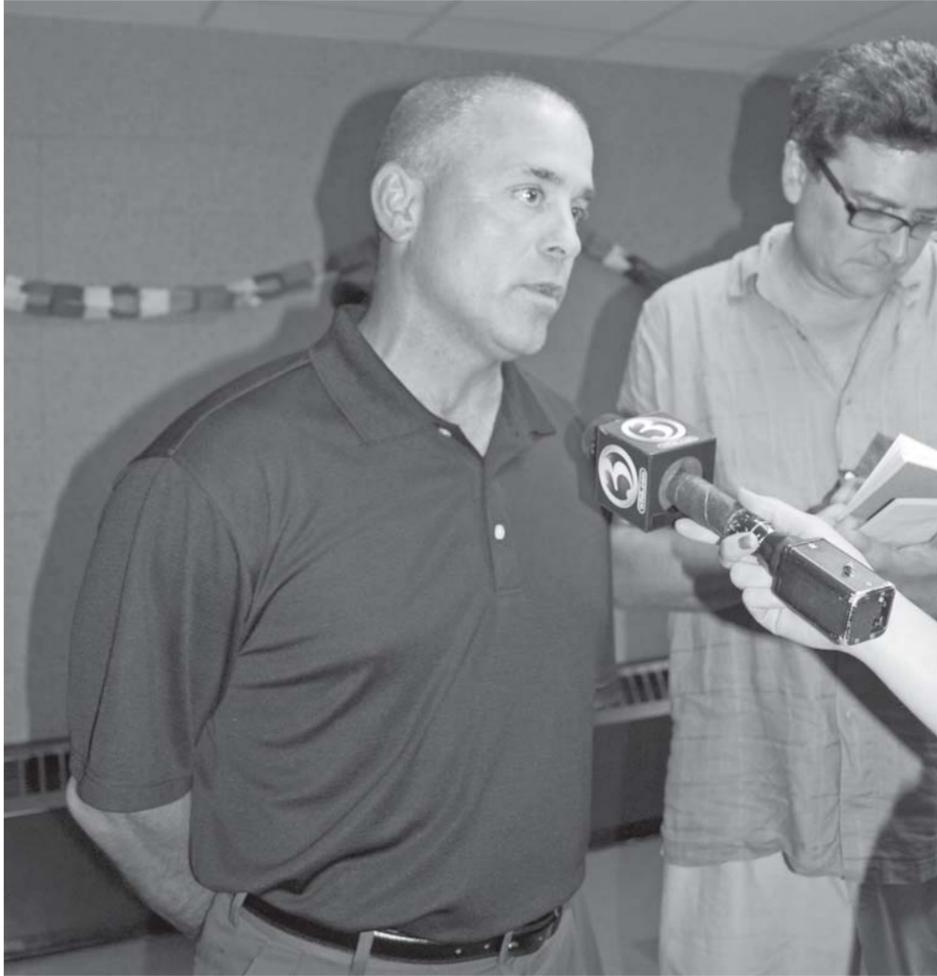
News Bulletin

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Another chapter unfolded Tuesday in the story that has garnered statewide attention, as the East Hampton Town Council voted to eliminate the position of police chief. Matt Reimondo has held this position for the past 12 years, although he has been on paid leave since June. Pictured behind Reimondo is *Hartford Courant* reporter Erik Hesselberg.

Council Eliminates Police Chief Position

by Claire Michalewicz

The position East Hampton Police Chief Matt Reimondo held for 12 years, until his controversial layoff in June, now no longer exists, as the Town Council voted Tuesday to remove all mentions of the position from the town's ordinances.

The council voted 5-1 to change Ordinance 109, which outlines the structure of the police department, with only Sue Weintraub opposed. (Council member Bill Devine was absent.) The revised ordinance leaves administrative oversight of the department in the hands of the town manager, as the old ordinance did, but shifts all the chief's responsibilities to a lieutenant.

But many in town are already trying to overturn the council's decision. Immediately after the vote, many of the 400 residents crowded into the auditorium for the meeting swarmed outside to sign a petition calling for a special town meeting, at which residents could vote on the ordinance.

Before they voted, the council spent close to an hour listening to comments from nearly 30 residents about the decision they were about to make. The overwhelming majority of them spoke against abolishing Reimondo's position.

"I'm standing in front of you tonight to ask that each one of you put your moral compass to use," Jill Perruccio said. Perruccio said she had voted for all seven council members, because she thought she could trust incumbents. But now, she said, that trust had been shaken.

"Your decision will be overturned by the people," said Barbara Suprono. "Do you really want to be the first Town Council in the history

of East Hampton to be vetoed?"

Suprono added that since budgeted positions were being cut, she and other taxpayers should receive a tax refund for the services they had paid for but were not receiving.

"There has been an outcry from the public that has never been seen before," said Laurie Wasilewski. "You're failing to do the right thing."

"It's pretty clear what you're doing – just calling the chief by a different name," she continued. Wasilewski also urged Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel and Vice Chairman John Tuttle to recuse themselves from the vote, since they were both being personally sued by Reimondo.

Some residents said they were not comfortable with the revised ordinance, which has gone through revisions by three different attorneys.

"If you don't know what you're saying, it might be best to keep your mouths shut," said Rick Walker. Scott Bristol echoed his concerns, explaining that the wording of the ordinance effectively left the lieutenant's job description undefined, which he said could create problems in the future.

The council did have some support in the audience, with scattered applause throughout the auditorium after two residents spoke in favor of the council.

"I support the council 1,000 percent in their efforts to downsize the local government for

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Festival Offers 57 Ways to Celebrate Colchester

by Katy Nally

A sunny day with temperatures reaching the mid-80s was the perfect backdrop for the sixth annual 57 Fest.

Colchester residents came out in droves last Saturday, Sept. 25, to enjoy food from local restaurants, entertainment organized by the Parks and Recreation Department, and most of all, fireworks.

Just before the fireworks went off, there were between 3,000-4,000 people at the recreation complex, Recreation Supervisor Anita Pizzutiello estimated.

"People are *still* talking about how great the fireworks were," she said Monday. "The town is still buzzing about it."

This year's show began at 8 p.m., lasted about 25 minutes and had a new producer, Zambelli Fireworks, Pizzutiello said.

Although tickets aren't sold for the 57 Fest, because the entire event is free, Pizzutiello said organizers could guess the number of attendees by how many bus trips were made to drop people off at the complex. And on Saturday, "there were many, many busloads," she said.

Part of the reason this year's 57 Fest raked in several thousand participants was because

of the superb September weather.

"We couldn't have asked for a better day or better participation," Pizzutiello said.

Last year there were an estimated 2,000 people at 57 Fest, which had sprinkling rain and grey skies.

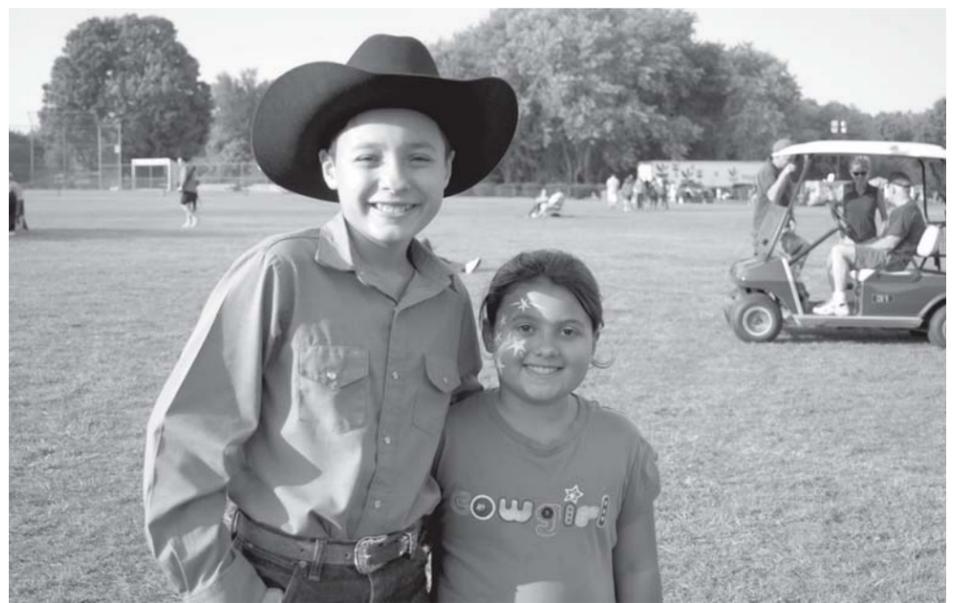
But on Saturday, weather.com listed the high temperature in Colchester at 86 degrees, accompanied with sunny skies. It was the warmest day in Colchester in over two weeks, according to the site.

And throughout the day, Colchester residents, as well as others who stopped by, participated in a variety of activities and enjoyed different shows, which all kicked off at 4 p.m.

Alyssa Rubbo, 7, stopped by the face painting tent and came out looking like a cast member from *Cats*, with a pink face, white cheeks and black whiskers. Katelyn Lamprey, 8, opted for "rainbow stars" across one side of her face. Along with face painting, children also created spin art and other crafts.

Three sisters, Brianne, Rhiannon and Shannon Goulet, paid a visit to Traumaroo and his two crash test dummies, who greeted visitors

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Frankie Lamprey, 11, and his sister Katelyn, 8, enjoyed Saturday's sixth annual 57 Fest in Colchester. Frankie sang "Folsom Prison Blues" as part of the Colchester's Got Talent portion of the festival.

Police Chief cont. from Front Page

fiscal relief," said Thomas McLean.

As the regular meeting began, the council briefly discussed the ordinance before voting. Tuttle pointed out that while the town might not be saving money this year, the savings associated with cutting the chief's position would add up in coming years.

"There's no question that we had a summer of discontent," council member Thom Cordeiro said. "What began as a snowball has rolled into a pretty big pile."

Council member Barbara Moore thanked the employees of Town Hall for handling the ongoing controversy throughout the summer. "Their summer has been worse than ours," Moore said.

Only Weintraub, who has opposed former Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe and the council's actions since Reimondo was laid off on June 22, spoke against the change. Weintraub has repeatedly said O'Keefe's actions were retaliatory, and designed to protect him from the harassment complaints against him that Reimondo passed on to the town attorney.

"What is the council majority protecting? What are you afraid of that will be discovered and uncovered?" Weintraub asked. According to his contract, she said, O'Keefe was not entitled to a severance package if he resigned.

"This is a payoff to protect Jeff O'Keefe," she continued. "The position of police chief should not be eliminated. This town needs a strong, steady, nonpartisan leader to protect this town with unprejudiced enforcement. We should reinstate Chief Reimondo and review all departments to cut costs."

"I will not support the revision of Ordinance 109," Weintraub concluded. "I will not support this corrupt regime."

Cordeiro defended O'Keefe's \$170,100 severance package, explaining that by allowing O'Keefe to resign, "we effectively removed him from the situation so we could have clarity."

Cordeiro said he was confident the council was making the right decision. "This is not about Matt Reimondo. This is about the police chief position and how we cannot afford not moving forward in the town of East Hampton."

But most of the residents at the meeting disagreed with the council's vote.

"This is absolutely ridiculous what this Town Council is doing here," said resident Dave Purple as he signed the petition. "They're not listening to us at all." Purple said that if the town was facing a budget shortfall, they should bring the issue up for discussion during the budget process, so residents and other town officials and employees could offer more input.

"I'm signing because I'm really just sick of this whole mess," said Sandra Barber.

"The petition drive is the vehicle for ordinary citizens to have some degree of control and influence over the events that are unravel-

ing in our town," Bill Marshall, one of the petition organizers, said.

According to section 4.2 of the town's charter, residents can petition for a special town meeting to overrule the Council's decision. If 10 percent of the residents eligible to vote in a town meeting sign the petition and file it with the town clerk within 20 days of the day the vote is noticed in a local newspaper, the Council will schedule a special town meeting within 20 days after the petition is filed.

The council's decision can be overruled if a majority of the residents who attend the meeting vote in favor of doing so. Bill Marshall said 10 percent of the voting public was about 1,200 people – a number that includes registered voters, as well as other property owners that don't live in town. Town Clerk Sandra Wieleba confirmed that she had calculated that the petitioners needed 1,161 signatures to call a town meeting.

Scott Minnick, another organizer, pointed out that Take Back Our Town had already gathered over 40 volunteers who would collect signatures. If each of them got 30 people to sign, he said, they would have enough to call the special meeting.

Petition organizer Mary Ann Dostaler said Take Back Our Town was setting up petition drives throughout October, and posting dates and locations for signing the petition on their website, www.takebackourtown.org. Since the legal notice about the change was printed in today's *RiverEast*, Dostaler said the group had until Thursday, Oct. 21, to collect the needed signatures.

Minnick stressed that residents needed to get involved in the efforts to overturn the ordinance, beyond just signing the petition.

"This is just step one to get the council to take it to a town meeting," Scott Minnick said. "We need you to show up and vote."

Reimondo said he was not surprised by the council's actions, but called the show of support for him "spectacular."

"I think people really want the police department intact, the way it was," he said.

"I'm focusing on the battles we have in front of us," Reimondo said, referring to his ongoing lawsuit against the town, O'Keefe, Engel, Tuttle and Acting Lieutenant Michael Green. Reimondo said the official removal of his position would not change anything in the legal process.

Reimondo and O'Keefe had both been in court the previous day, as O'Keefe began his deposition in the lawsuit.

Reimondo's attorney, Leon Rosenblatt, said Judge Robert Holzberg had granted the defense attorneys' request that O'Keefe's deposition be kept from the public for at least a week, but said it should be available soon.

"It will be public someday," Rosenblatt said. He and Reimondo would not comment further.



After the council vote, scores of residents lined up to sign a petition calling for a special town meeting, at which residents could vote on the ordinance.

During the deposition, O'Keefe was accompanied by two attorneys, Sheldon Myers, who is representing the town of East Hampton, and David Monastersky, representing O'Keefe, as well as Engel, Tuttle and Green.

O'Keefe was scheduled to start his deposition at 1 p.m. Monday, and exited the room around 4:45, accompanied by Myers. Neither O'Keefe nor Myers would respond to questions as they made a quick exit from the building and into a nearby parking garage.

Rosenblatt said O'Keefe's deposition was not finished Monday, and he would be meeting with Myers and Monastersky to work out a schedule for continuing it.

Monastersky and Myers filed a motion to dismiss the case last Friday, Sept. 24, arguing that Reimondo had not yet exhausted all his options to get his job back. The week before, Rosenblatt filed for a temporary injunction to reinstate Reimondo to his job until the case can be resolved.

On Monday, Holzberg declined to rule on either of those motions. No further court dates have been scheduled yet.

In addition to the ongoing lawsuit, Reimondo will also have a hearing about his layoff on Monday, Oct. 4 – a continuation of the hearing that began in July but was abruptly adjourned by the town's attorney, Mark Sommaruga.

After voting on the ordinance at Tuesday's meeting, the council also addressed several other matters. They voted to offer the contract for a new energy management and temperature control system at the library to CT Tempera-

ture Controls, for \$57,950, to be funded by grant money. The council members also voted to change a Homeland Security Grant Application they had passed in August, to remove O'Keefe's name and replace it with that of Interim Town Manager Bob Drewry.

Also at the meeting, Drewry provided an update on the Town Hall Annex, which the town is expected to vacate at the end of October. Drewry said the town was applying to extend the lease for another six months, but has not yet heard a response from Connecticut Light & Power, which owns the building. As of yet, the town has not been able to relocate any of the offices currently housed in the building.

One of the sites being considered for the offices housed in the annex is the Goff House. Drewry said he was consulting with the state Department of Economic and Community Development, to see whether the town could legally buy the building. Otherwise, he said, they could look into a lease agreement with the Goff House Board of Directors.

The town is also moving forward with several construction projects, Drewry said. The town is currently taking bids from contractors for the proposed renovations to the senior center, and is also collecting proposals from architects for the new Memorial School roof. Finally, he said, the town is studying drainage in Sears Park to plan for the proposed amphitheater to commemorate the late Governor Bill O'Neill, a longtime East Hampton resident.

The next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 12, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

Festival cont. from Front Page

outside the William W. Backus Hospital Wellness Tent.

The tent was featured to stress the importance of healthy living and to promote living active lifestyles. As part of the wellness tent, health screenings including blood pressure, bone density and body mass calculations, were offered.

In keeping with the healthy theme, the Colchester's Farmers' Market also had booths at 57 Fest, to provide event participants with fresh and local fruits, vegetable and cheeses.

Other booths were dotted throughout the recreation complex. Two friends, Brandon Guifarro, 10, and Aaron Young, 10, stopped by the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department table to try on firefighters' jackets and gear. Brandon said although the getup made Saturday's heat a bit warmer, he would still consider becoming a firefighter.

Past the fire department's table was the rock climbing wall and inflatable jousting ring.

In addition to activities, 57 Fest goers were continuously entertained by concerts on the Liberty Bank Stage and shows on the ball field.

Frankie Lamprey demonstrated his smooth vocals as part of the Colchester's Got Talent concert. He wore a blue button-down shirt and jeans, topped off with a brown cowboy hat, emanating his idol, Johnny Cash. Frankie wowed the crowd with his version of "Folsom Prison Blues."

"He blew us away, he really did," Shannon Tamosaitis, Parks and Rec. program coordinator, and camp director said. "It was like you were actually listening to Johnny Cash. He sang perfectly."

After the talent show, Tamosaitis headed several "minute to win it" games like face the cookie, bucket head and a hula hoop bubble contest. After that, 10 Twister mats took over the stage, for a family contest of "the game that ties you up in knots!"

Colchester's Community Wildlife Habitat Initiative, its participants and organizers, also received recognition on the Liberty Bank Stage. Earlier this year, Colchester became the first town in Connecticut to become a certified community wildlife habitat.

Nearing the end of 57 Fest, the Blues Patrol took the stage as part of the night's featured concert.

Over at the ball field, troupes from Alyson's School of Dance, Bacon Academy's Dance Team and Doreen's Dance Center showed their moves, as did seniors from the Colchester Senior Center, who performed line dancing.

All the activities, celebrations and performances would not have taken place, had Colchester not been named one of the best places to live in the US. In 2005, CNN/Money Magazine ranked Colchester as the 57th best place to live nationwide. Since then, the Parks and Rec. Department has utilized this title as a jumping off point for an annual family festival.

"It was a wonderful event," First Selectman Gregg Schuster said, adding this year's 57 Fest "was made possible by all the volunteers, organizations and sponsors that worked so hard to make it happen along with our Parks and Recreation Department."

"I really enjoyed the event and am looking forward to the seventh annual 57 Fest!"

Colchester CMT, CAPT Scores Show Students Improving

by Katy Nally

Director of Curriculum Barbara Gilbert had good news for the Board of Education (BOE) when she presented the district's standardized test scores last month.

Gilbert presented Colchester's Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) scores at the board's Sept. 14 meeting, and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) scores at its Sept. 28 meeting. The CMTs are given each year to students in grades three through eight, while the CAPTs are given to those in 10th grade.

For the CMTs, Gilbert said she was able to examine scores from the same group of 193 students from 2006 to 2010. When looking at their math scores, Gilbert said, over time, fewer students scored in the lowest CMT level, and more scored in the highest level. (There are five score levels for the CMTs, below basic, basic, proficient, goal and advanced.)

Gilbert presented a graph that showed 4.7 percent of the group scored below basic in math in 2006 as third-graders, and in 2010, only 0.5 percent of students, as seventh-graders, scored at the same level.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, in 2006, only 25 percent of the group hit advanced in math, and in 2010, 45 percent of the group reached advanced.

Gilbert said she was pleased with these results because "we're getting more kids going to advanced."

Like the progress made in math, Gilbert said the reading scores from this year's CMTs, yielded similar results.

"We're seeing kids growing in their [Degrees of Reading Power] over time, which is what they should be doing," she said, referencing a section of the reading portion of the test. "We're excited about that."

As third-graders in 2006, 13 percent of a group of students scored below basic in reading. In 2010, only 4.2 percent of that same group, as seventh-graders, scored below basic in reading.

Similarly, in 2006, only 15 percent of those students scored advanced, while, in 2010, as seventh-graders, 52 percent of them achieved the mark.

In writing, there was a jump in the number of students who reached advanced, but not much of a change for the percentage of students who left the below basic level.

In 2006, 25 percent of students scored advanced on writing as third-graders, and in 2010, 35 percent of them reached advanced, as seventh-graders.

There was no significant drop in the number of students who received a below basic mark. From 2006-10, the number hovered around 5 percent of students.

In addition to looking at progress made over a five-year period, Gilbert said Colchester students are also measured against their District Reference Group (DRG), which groups school districts based on residents' socio-economic status. Towns in Colchester's DRG include East Hampton, Cromwell, Ledyard, Stonington, Waterford and East Lyme, among others.

"We're part of a DRG that's pretty rigorous," Gilbert explained. "If we even come close to, or exceed our DRG, we're excited about that."

Math was the strongest subject for Colchester's students who took the CMTs, when compared to the DRG.

"In math, in general, we're either at, or above the DRG, in every instance," Gilbert said.

Grades four and six showed the greatest gains over the DRG in math. In 2010, 80 percent of fourth-graders achieved goal or better, while 76 percent of fourth-graders in the DRG reached the same mark. In grade six, 82 percent of students achieved goal or better in math, while 78 percent of students in the DRG met goal or better.

Scores were similar in reading. In grades five through eight, a larger percentage of Colchester students reached goal or better than the percentage of students in the DRG who achieved the same score.

In grade three, 65 percent of Colchester students reached goal or better, and for the DRG, that number was 66 percent. In grade four, 63 percent of Colchester students scored goal or better, but 70 percent of students in the DRG reached the same mark.

In reading, Gilbert said, "we're creeping up, but we're not quite there yet."

There were three instances in writing when the percentage of Colchester students who scored goal or better was higher than the percentage of students in the DRG, who reached the same level. This occurred in grades five, six and eight.

The greatest gap between the DRG and Colchester for writing came in fourth grade. In 2010, 68 percent of fourth-graders scored goal or better in writing, while 73 percent of fourth-graders in the DRG reached the same level.

Lastly, Gilbert reviewed Colchester's Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP), which was established as part of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Scores from subgroups – students in special education and on the free/reduced-lunch plan – are measured by AYP. The 2010 targets were to have 82 percent of students reaching proficient or better in math and 79 percent reaching proficient in reading. These targets will move up about two percentage points for the 2011 test.

At Jack Jackter Intermediate School, in 2010, 61.6 percent of special education students met proficient or better in reading, which did not meet AYP. For free/reduced lunch students, 68.1 percent met proficient or better in reading, which also did not meet AYP standards.

Gilbert said this was the second year the intermediate school did not meet AYP, although the special education students had made great strides, when compared to last year. To help meet the AYP target, she said, there will be more professional development days for teachers and more tutoring for students.

Although the goal wasn't met, Gilbert said

she thought the AYP target was still viable.

"It's worth it in the sense that we need to get all kids to where they need to be," she said. "We hope, we want and we need all the kids to get there."

Special education students at William J. Johnston Middle School also did not make AYP. Instead of reaching the 79 percent target, 75.9 percent of special education students met proficient or better in reading in 2010.

All students at the middle and intermediate schools met the AYP target for math in 2010.

Unlike the middle and intermediate schools, Bacon Academy met AYP in both math and reading on the CAPTs. However, special education students, and those on free/reduced lunch, are not separated out and measured by AYP, because these populations in grade 10 are too small.

The AYP target for math at Bacon is to have 80 percent of students scoring proficient or better, and 81 percent at proficient or better in reading. Bacon students far exceeded these goals; 95.6 percent reached proficient in reading and 94.5 percent reached it in math.

Because only 10th-graders take the CAPT, cohorts of the same students cannot be measured. Instead, Colchester's scores are measured against the DRG.

Bacon students beat the DRG in math, and met it in science, Gilbert said.

"We've maintained this consistent high in science, and we're well above the DRG in math," she said.

However, the percentage of students who met goal in science in 2010 went down slightly, 0.9 percent, when compared to 2009.

"Our science program was always strong, but we're trying to figure out why we've dropped a little bit," Gilbert said.

Although Bacon students missed the DRG in writing and reading, they actually fared slightly better than the 2009 scores.

Overall, Gilbert said, "We're really pleased with the CAPTs."

Andover Cemetery Discrepancy Disturbs Local Family

by Lindsay Fetzner

For nearly 50 years, the Covell family has had a plot with multiple gravesites in the Townsend Cemetery. But, when Barbara Covell's husband Willis passed away in mid-September, they were startled to find there was a discrepancy in their plot. As a result, the family is speaking out to caution other plot owners in the Andover cemetery to check their gravesites.

"It's a beautiful cemetery and it's well taken care of," Barbara said. "It's just the idea that people should check their plots."

According to a copy of Andover Cemetery Association records provided by the Covell family, the family's plot number 99 includes six different gravesites. Each site has a specific family member assigned to gravesites one through six.

Originally, gravesite one was allocated to Barbara's husband, Willis, who passed away Sept. 15. Gravesite two was assigned to Barbara; gravesite three to Barbara and Willis' son, William, who previously passed away; gravesite four was assigned to Judith Covell; gravesite five has no assigned name; and gravesite six is assigned to George Tedford.

However, according to the records provided by the family, which were dated Sept. 16, the gravesite allocations had changed. William was now in gravesite two, instead of three, Judith in three, instead of four, Willis in four, instead of one, and Barbara in five, instead of two. Gravesite one, instead of five, is now left unassigned.

Essentially, the Covell family discovered that Willis could not be buried in the family plot next to his father as the family had planned originally, which was revealed while at the funeral parlor. The family members said they were told there was a "discrepancy in the plot" and that the original numbers of some family member's gravesites had been changed, Barbara said.

Additionally, William was found to be buried in Barbara's gravesite, gravesite number

two, as opposed to the site next to hers, in gravesite three.

"No explanation could be given how such an event occurred 12 years ago," Barbara wrote in her letter to the editor published in last week's *Rivereast*. (William passed away in 1998.)

Family members agree that if any changes had been made to the plot, the entire family should have been the first to know, instead of finding out unexpectedly, when the family was mourning the loss of Willis.

"The main thing is no one was ever notified," said Barbara's son Larry. And, as a result, Larry said, "My mother wants to let other people know to check their plots."

People who own plots, especially some of the older plots, Larry said, should "make sure what they have is what they think they have."

In last week's letter to the editor, Barbara noted that the cemetery is run by the private cemetery association, called The Andover Cemetery Association, and not the town of Andover.

First Selectman Bob Burbank confirmed this fact on Monday, and said the Townsend Cemetery is "the most active" of the cemeteries in town. In addition to Townsend, there is also a cemetery adjacent to the First Congregational Church. However, Burbank said there is limited space at this cemetery.

Additionally, in her letter, Barbara said the cemetery records are "in the private home of one of the organization's members. Information is entered in pencil, erased and rewritten if changes are made." Barbara wrote that changes are not always current, and that the records "are the only records available."

Family members agreed this week that the records should be maintained, and be stored in a safer place, such as the Town Office Building, as opposed to a private residence.

In her letter, Barbara urged families and plot owners to do several things to safeguard against what she and her family went through.

First, Barbara said, "Please verify your plots and gravesites. Ask for a copy of your cem-



The Covell family recently discovered there was a "discrepancy" in their cemetery plot at Townsend Cemetery, pictured above. The family is now urging plot and gravesite owners to check their records.

etry record."

Second, Barbara urged those with plots or gravesites to visit the cemetery "and have the gravesites marked for you."

And, lastly, she urged people to "Get involved and join The Andover Cemetery Association."

Due to the fact that Willis was cremated, family members said he is placed in the originally planned plot, gravesite number one, and that Barbara can be buried with him.

"If he was not cremated, there would have been a problem," Larry said.

Andover Cemetery Association member Jean

Gasper would not comment on the situation, and other members contacted did not return calls this week.

Association member Richard Adams said, "I'm surprised...I'm surprised that this has happened." Adams said he is not very active in the association, and has not been to a meeting in a couple of months, but said the members of the committee are "superior people."

When asked if the town has ever considered taking over the property, Burbank said this week, "The town has really no interest in getting into that type of business."

Four Arrested in East Hampton After Allegedly Stealing \$60,000

by Katy Nally

East Hampton Police arrested four people last month who allegedly stole \$60,000 worth of property from a home on Childs Road in 2009.

Included in the stolen items were \$40,000 worth of gold coins, which were sold immediately, East Hampton Police Sergeant Garritt Kelly said.

The four arrested were: Michael Rascati, 22, of 47 Prospect St., Portland; Ryan Czywczynski, 27, of 251 Middle Tpke, Storrs; Eddy Cartagena, 27, of 990 Wheeler Rd., Milford; and Sara Y. Thibodeau, 24, of 230 Cherry Hill Rd., Middlefield.

Thibodeau was arrested on Sept. 10, Czyw-



Eddy Cartagena

czynski on Sept. 15, Cartagena a day later on Sept. 16, and Rascati was arrested on Sept. 22.

All four were charged with first-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny, third-degree burglary and third-degree criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said.

Kelly said the burglary – which he said was “definitely” fueled by perpetrators’ alleged heroin addictions – occurred in late November 2009. He said the homeowners were away during the incident and a neighbor was watching the house.

After the neighbor reported the burglary, Kelly said police began investigating and found



Ryan Czywczynski

Thibodeau was related to the victims. He said Thibodeau knew that the house was unoccupied at the time of the incident.

During the burglary, the alleged thieves found a safe containing the gold coins – “a junkie-burglar’s dream,” Kelly said.

“They really got pretty lucky on that one,” he added.

Power tools and other items were also stolen.

Although the gold coins were sold immediately for cash and were not recovered, Kelly said police were able to find some of the other valuables, including the tools.

Kelly explained the four are being arrested



Michael Rascati

almost a year after the crime because the investigation “took some time, primarily because the victims were out of state” when the incident occurred.

Thibodeau has the highest non-surety bond of the four arrested, at \$50,000, and is due to appear in Middletown Superior Court on Oct. 18; Czywczynski’s bond is listed as \$20,000 and appeared in the same court on Sept. 29; Rascati’s bond is also listed as \$20,000 and appeared in Middletown Superior Court a day later on Sept. 30; and Cartagena’s bond is listed as \$10,000 and also appeared in court on Sept. 30.



Sara Y. Thibodeau
EAST HAMPTON, CT

Oil Tank Leaks Into East Hampton Stream

by Claire Michalewicz

Oil leaked into a stream near Watrous Street on Tuesday morning, after an oil tank was moved from behind a vacant factory.

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) spokesman Dwayne Gardner said the leak happened at 17 Watrous St., when oil from a 275-gallon tank leaked into a stream. The stream flows south, away from Lake Pocotopaug.

The cause of the leak was still under investigation, Gardner said. He said a DEP crew was working to clean the area on Tuesday.

On Tuesday afternoon, a man who said he owned Phoenix Redevelopment, LLC, which owns the building, said the property was vacant. The man would not give his name, but said he was using the empty factory for stor-

age, and was trying to sell it.

The building used to be home to J.C. Products, which produced wire baskets and display racks.

“I don’t think anybody was here,” the owner said. “The place was empty.”

He said the oil tank had been stolen from behind his building, and it leaked when it was moved. He said he didn’t know why there was oil in the tank, since it had been empty for years.

He said a DEP crew had been working at the site during the day and the spill had been cleaned up.

Police Sergeant Garritt Kelly said police were still investigating who removed the oil tank, and why. Kelly confirmed that the spill had been cleaned up Tuesday.

East Hampton Women Charged with Lottery Ticket Scam

by Katy Nally

Two Colchester women, who were both employees of the Rite Aid in East Hampton, were arrested last month after allegedly fraudulently cashing lottery tickets, East Hampton Police said.

On Sept. 16, Rhiannon Cheli, 22, of 80 Stoneridge Rd., Colchester, was arrested for first-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny; and on Sept. 17 Michelle E. Inferrera, 20, of 26 Deborah Ln., Colchester, was also arrested for first-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny, police said.

East Hampton Police Sergeant Garritt Kelly said the two women had “identified a system in which they could deduct fraudulent lottery payouts.”



Rhiannon Cheli

For about two years, Cheli and Inferrera were allegedly cashing tickets that ranged from \$20 to \$500, Kelly said. In total, Kelly said the women ended up with “tens of thousands of dollars.”

The store caught on to the scam when an audit was done and showed the amount of lottery payouts did not match up with the amount taken in from tickets sold, Kelly said.

The manager of the Rite Aid said Wednesday the women are no longer employed at the store.

Cheli’s bond was listed as \$50,000 and is scheduled to appear in Middletown Superior Court Oct. 20; Inferrera was released on a promise to appear and will appear in the same court Oct. 14.



Michelle Inferrera

Three Teens Due in Court After Fleeing Colchester Police

by Katy Nally

Three teens who were arrested in August after allegedly fleeing from State Police are due back in court this month.

Patrick Spranzo of 45 Standish Dr., Logan Trama of 27 Debi Circle and Colton Tine of 282 Lakeside Dr., Lebanon, were each charged Aug. 26 with breach of peace, interfering with an officer and second-degree criminal trespass, State Police said.

The three 18-year-olds were arrested after state troopers responded to a possible burglary at a residence near the intersection of Route 149 and River Road, State Police said.

On Aug. 26, state police came out to the Colchester residence and, “upon arrival a foot

pursuit ensued,” according to the police report.

Troopers, a K-9 and its handler located the three men who were in a “wooden landscape,” State Police said. Upon further investigation, State Police discovered the teens were attempting to climb a water tower in the area.

Spranzo and Tine were arrested at 1:30 a.m. Aug. 26, and Trama was arrested at 2:30 a.m. the same day.

The accused were each released on \$2,500 bonds. Spranzo’s and Tine’s next court date is listed as today, Friday, Oct. 1, and Trama’s is listed as Thursday, Oct. 14, on the judicial website.

Colchester Shed Catches Fire After Lightning Strike

by Katy Nally

A 10-by-10 shed burst into flames last Tuesday, Sept. 22, at 10:22 p.m., after lightning struck it, the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department said.

The small shed was fully engulfed when firefighters arrived at 172 Thornridge Dr.

Fire Marshal Reed Gustafson said the structure was destroyed and “burned to the ground,” but there was only minimal damage to the home. The vinyl siding on one side of the garage melted, Gustafson said. The shed was about 25 feet from the garage.

He said the homeowners have since turned the matter over to their insurance company.

A neighbor called the fire department after witnessing the incident, Gustafson said. The homeowners were home at the time, Gustafson said, but were unaware of the fire because of the placement of the shed.

Gustafson said this was the first fire caused by lightning since the summer began; in past years, lightning fires have been more common. Last year, a few fires began after a lightning strike, he said.

RHAM Sister Act Shines on Soccer Team

by Lindsay Fetzner

Fans and friends are seeing triple this year on the RHAM High School girls' varsity soccer teams. Three Hersh sisters, Julia, Lydia and Katrina, are all members of the team, which is a first for the Hebron siblings.

"All three of us have never been on a team before," said 17-year-old Julia, the oldest of the trio.

The siblings are definitely not strangers to the sports world. Julia, Lydia and Katrina have all played soccer for several years, and is a sport they all grew up playing.

Katrina, 14, the youngest of the siblings, said she began playing in kindergarten. Julia began in third-grade, and 16-year-old Lydia, in sixth-grade.

In addition to soccer, the girls also played basketball, softball and were avid gymnasts for about 10 years growing up. In fact, gymnastics was the one sport that the three girls all started at the same time – Katrina was 1, Lydia, 3, and Julia, 5.

"They're all really different from each other," said Head Coach Jen Stahl, who just entered her sixth year as head coach. "But, you can tell they are related."

Each sibling agreed it is excited having the two other sisters beside them this season, and said they are a source of support for each other. On the field, Julia is an outside midfielder, Lydia, outside defense, and Katrina is a forward. And, ironically, all three girls play on the left side.

"We support each other when we're on the field," Julia said.

And, as the oldest sister, Julia said she often "gets more nervous when one of my sisters goes down," which, she said, "is an older sister thing."

Stahl agreed with Julia, and said the bond between the three sisters is evident on the field. "They all kind of look out for each other,"

Stahl said. "They work together well, which is cool."

Out of the 19 varsity girls' soccer players, Katrina is the only freshman on the team.

"Katrina is the only freshman that made it," Julia said. "It is quite the accomplishment for her."

The girls joked that they have become quite famous in the hallways of RHAM High School. (In fact, during the interview Tuesday afternoon at the high school, one fellow student remarked that all three sisters were together.)

At one soccer game this year, Julia said kids from the high school came to cheer them on with the word RHAM painted in blue on their stomachs, and on their backs, the initials 'KLJ.'

And, throughout practices, games and family time at home, the girls definitely see a lot of each other.

"It's weird," Julia said. "We're always with each other all the time."

Growing up, Julia said, Lydia and Katrina were "extremely close," and the three went through their fair share of sibling rivalry through the years.

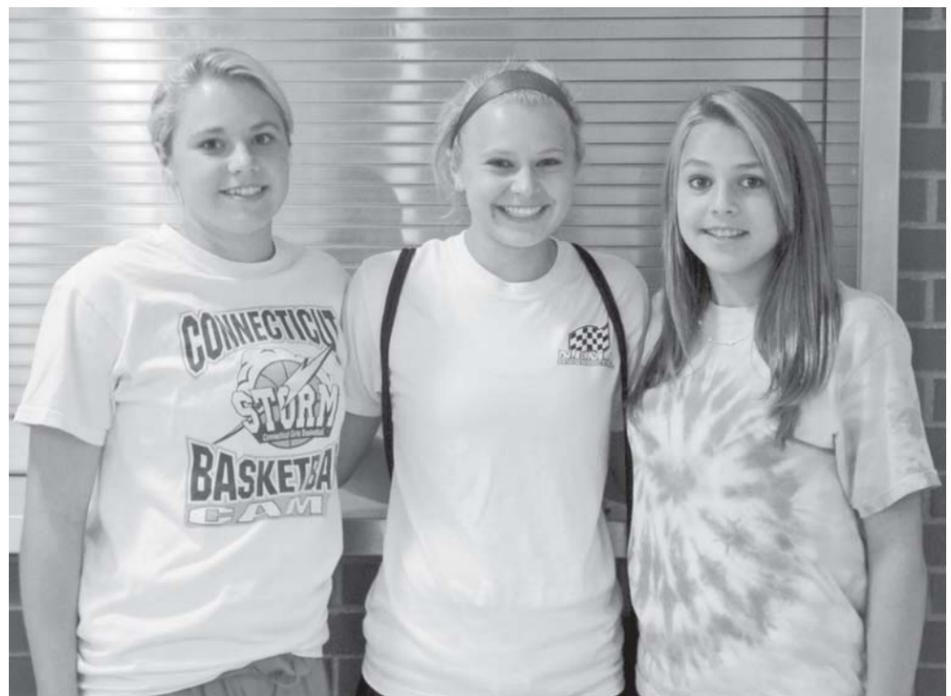
But, Lydia said, "We are better now." And, Katrina added, "We have gotten more mature and older."

"As a trio, they're doing very well this year," said Assistant Coach Kim Hills. "They are balancing both sibling- and teammate-hood."

So far this season, the team has only lost one game, which was against Tolland last Friday, Sept. 24. As of Thursday, the team was 5-1.

"The team, athletically in their soccer skills, is exceptional," Hills said. "Their soccer talent is amazing and we have high hopes for the season."

Last year, the girls' varsity team was undefeated until the semi-finals in the state championship, where they fell to Avon, with a score of 2-1. But, they were still named the CCC East Champions. This year, Stahl said the team is



Hebron siblings Julia, Lydia and Katrina Hersh, pictured from left, are all on this year's RHAM High School girls' varsity soccer team. This year marks the first time all three siblings have been on one team.

looking to repeat that.

Stahl, along with Hills, both played soccer at the high school as well. In fact, when Stahl was a student at RHAM, the girls' soccer team won the state championship.

The loss to Tolland, Julia said, was a "sad loss." But, looking ahead, she said, "our attitude now is we can't lose. The biggest goal is to win states this year."

And if the team were to win, Lydia said, "It would be a huge accomplishment," not only for both the team and also for Stahl.

The girls are confident the team will continue to make strides this season, as much of the team has returned from last season.

"We have everybody back," Julia said. "We are just as good if not better," Lydia added.

Today, Oct. 1, the girls will play Bloomfield at 3:45 p.m. at the RHAM High School Athletic Complex.

The full soccer schedule and more information on the team is available at sites.google.com/site/rhamgirlssoccer.

Marlborough Well Running Dry Raises Questions, Concerns

by Katy Nally

In the 45 years that Lindalee Favry has lived on School Drive, her 16-foot dug well has never gone dry, she said. But just as this summer ended, Favry's faucets began pouring air.

On Sept. 1, Favry first noticed air coming from the faucets and poor water pressure. The next day, she and her husband ordered a water tanker truck and dumped 6,000 gallons of water into the dry well, hoping to recoup it. But just two days later the well was depleted once again.

"All of a sudden it was like somebody pulled the plug and there was no water," Favry said.

In total, Favry has purchased about 32,000 gallons of water, first to pour into her dug well, then to use it directly from the tanker truck. She later drilled another well that had to reach 365 feet before it hit water. Also, she hired a tree-trimming service to cut 35 feet off a pine tree that obstructed the well drill.

Since her well first dried up early last month, Favry estimated she spent close to \$10,000 fixing and filling the dug well, then drilling and connecting the new one.

With all the changes to her property, Favry said, "It looks like I got bombed." She referred to the month-long ordeal as "my tale of woe."

Favry said she consulted several experts, from a well digger to a professor of geology at the University of Connecticut, but opinions as to why her well went dry differed.

Several theories as to why the well water disappeared were proposed, one of which placed the blame on the sewer line that was installed on School Drive in 2009. Favry hooked up to the sewers this past March.

Thad King, director of the Chatham Health District, said the sewers could have potentially "cut off someone's directional flow of water" into the well. But he said this was probably not the cause in Favry's case.

First Selectman Bill Black agreed with King in a letter he wrote to Favry on Sept. 9, addressing her concerns.

Black said the "draining of ground water" was "not likely" caused by the sewer line on School Drive because the pipes were installed

three feet above the water line and there has not been a problem since the installation a year ago.

King said Favry's dug well running dry was more likely caused by three factors: the dry weather, the season and perhaps Favry's small rental unit, which also utilizes the well.

"I'm not surprised a dug well went dry right now," King said. "A dug well in this day and age," he added, "has probably surpassed its usefulness."

Black echoed King's ideas. "Shallow wells are more likely to have problems this time of year," Black wrote. "There is no denying we are, and have been, in an extreme drought condition."

Governor M. Jodi Rell issued a press release Wednesday, Aug. 18, urging residents and businesses to "limit their water usage" because the "state's fire danger remains high."

"Ground water and stream flow levels are falling at the lower end of the historic, normal range..." Rell said. "These water conservation measures should also be heeded by people with private wells as well – no water supply is inexhaustible."

Gary Robbins, professor of geology at the University of Connecticut, acknowledged the fact that Connecticut has been in a "severe drought," but he noted "the sewers could definitely have had an impact."

"If they're going to put a sewer line close to a house, it could act as a drain," he said.

To lay a sewer line, a trench is dug, Robbins explained, which could have "drained the water out of the shallow zone where [Favry] had her well." Also, when Favry hooked up to the sewers in March, Robbins said her backfill zone could have diminished as a result.

But, he added, because Favry had a dug well, the fact that it went dry was probably due to the combination of hooking up to the sewer line and the severe drought. Robbins said this year's drought was one of the worst he's seen in the past decade, in terms of ground and surface water.

Like King, Robbins said homeowners should "get away from dug wells."



A dug well at a residence on School Drive ran dry in early September, but there are different opinions as to the cause. Pictured is a water tanker hooked up to the dug well, right, and the new drilled well, left.

Another facet to King's opinion suggested Favry's tenant as a possible cause for the well running dry during the drought.

"Renters don't necessarily have the same interest as you for water conservation," he noted.

But Favry said her tenant, who moved into the backyard apartment June 1, is "extremely conservative" when it comes to water.

"I would say, she would have really not much impact on the water," Favry said.

Because this is her first well problem since she moved into her School Drive home almost 50 years ago, Favry said it's hard for her to believe the cause of her well running dry is solely the drought.

Favry said she had lived "through many extremely dry periods and never lost water. It always appeared that I had too much water." She also noted that now she has fewer drains on the

water supply, as her three daughters have moved out and she no longer keeps horses.

Favry said she's also hesitant to discount sewers as the cause of her dry well, considering the track record of the Marlborough Water Pollution Control Authority, which oversees the sewer project.

"Because of all the misinformation I've received from the MWPCA, I can't accept the fact that it's just a drought," she said.

Since the sewer project began, Favry said, WPCA members have incorrectly quoted cost estimates for Favry and other residents affected by Phase I of the town's sewer project.

But, Favry said if "an expert" proves the sewers did not affect her dug well, she would be satisfied.

She stressed, "I don't blame the town, I just don't know what happened to my water."

Open Valve Leads to Portland Water Main Breaks

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland Public Works crews had a busy day last Wednesday, Sept. 22, when four water mains broke in half an hour.

Director of Public Works Richard Kelsey said the breaks happened around 1 p.m., when a valve on High Street got stuck in an open position, letting air into the pipes. The rising air pressure in the pipes set off a chain reaction, causing them to break "like dominoes," Kelsey said.

The ruptures happened on High Street, Russell Avenue, Pickering Street and Prout Street, Kelsey said. He said Monday that the breaks had been fixed, but workers were still working to clear some of the air from the pipes.

Crews worked until about 10 p.m. last Wednesday to get the breaks repaired, Kelsey said.

All four broken pipes were made of asbestos cement, which Kelsey said were installed in the 1950s and 1960s. Most of Portland's

water pipes are stronger cast iron or ductile iron, which are less prone to breaking than asbestos cement pipes, Kelsey said.

The High Street water main is currently under construction, with the opening and closing of valves putting strain on the pipes in the water system, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said.

"We are investing a lot of money in our water system," Bransfield said. The High Street water main is being replaced between Route 66 and the tanks next to the high school and middle school building, at a cost of \$816,000, she said. In addition, Bransfield added, the tanks would be refurbished soon, at an additional cost of \$1,025,000.

Residents voted to approve both projects at a referendum in 2008. Since then, Bransfield said, the town's water division had been working diligently on the projects.

Portland Selectmen Consider Leasing Cell Tower Space

by Claire Michalewicz

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) is considering offering space on the town-owned communications tower behind the high school to Clearwire Communications.

The selectmen discussed the terms of the lease at a short special meeting Wednesday evening.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield explained that under the terms of the lease, Clearwire would pay \$2,500 a month to the town of Portland, with a 4 percent increase every year. The five-year lease is renewable up to

five times, Bransfield said, for a maximum of 30 years.

Bransfield said T-Mobile is also leasing space on the tower, which is primarily used by the town's emergency services. T-Mobile currently pays the town \$2,340 a month to use the space, and this tab also increases 4 percent every year.

Residents will be able to vote on the lease at a town meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 7, at 5 p.m., at Portland Library.

Police Investigating Daytime East Hampton Robberies

by Claire Michalewicz

East Hampton Police are investigating a string of residential break-ins in town, after three occurred in the space of an hour Monday morning.

Police Sergeant Garritt Kelly said the break-ins happened between 10 and 11 a.m., on Hog Hill Road, Champion Hill Road and Wopowog Road. He said it was still unclear whether the burglaries were related or coincidental.

"We're gonna have to solve them and answer that question," Kelly said.

A homeowner interrupted one of the burglaries, and the suspect or suspects fled west on Route 66, Kelly said. Kelly said the resident was in the shower, and heard someone in the house. She didn't find anyone in the home, but a neighbor spotted an unfamiliar car leaving the area.

Kelly said the neighbor identified the car as a tan or light brown Ford Crown Victoria or Mercury Grand Marquis, dating from the early 2000s.

In two of the burglaries, jewelry and flat-screen televisions were stolen, but in the interrupted burglary, the suspect or suspects only took a checkbook and a few other personal items, Kelly said.

East Hampton has been hit hard with burglaries in recent weeks – Kelly said there have been eight residential break-ins since Sept. 6. Suspects have been breaking into homes during the daytime hours to steal jewelry and electronics to sell for drug money, he said.

Anyone with information about the burglaries is encouraged to call East Hampton police at 860-267-9544.

Gas Can Set on Fire at New House in Marlborough

by Katy Nally

A gas can was set on fire at a home on Pettengill Road, Thursday, Sept. 23, at about 5:30 p.m., State Police said.

The red gas can was inside the garage of a single-family home that is currently being built and under construction, Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department Chief Joe Asklar said.

After a neighbor saw the fire and went over to investigate, he was able to remove the can

from the garage with a shovel and put out the fire, Asklar said. The home and property was not damaged, State Police said.

The fire, Asklar said, was "started by human hands," but it wasn't classified as arson. Instead, in the police report, the incident was listed as "an attempt at arson."

The case remains under investigation by Troop K in Colchester.

East Hampton Men Charged with Burglarizing Portland Boats

by Claire Michalewicz

Two East Hampton men have been arrested in connection with a series of burglaries at two Portland marinas, Portland Police said.

Ross Bartlett, 19, and his cousin Hunter Clark, 20, both of 56 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, were arrested last Thursday evening, Sept. 23, after stealing items from boats at Riverside Marina, Lt. Ron Milardo said.

Police suspect Clark, Bartlett and other suspects were involved in a string of burglaries at Yankee Boat Yard, and the investigation is continuing, Milardo said.

Milardo said the thieves targeted electric cables that connected boats to power supplies on the dock, as well as compressors and power tools. He said the suspects were taking the wires to sell them for their copper content, because the value of copper is high.

Milardo said police had been investigating the burglaries for weeks, and had several strong leads, including partial license plates. On Thursday, Officer Daniel Knapp was patrolling the area around the marinas on Riverview Street when he saw one of the cars suspected in the burglaries, Milardo said. Knapp called Sgt. Jim Kelly and Officer David Bond to the area, Kelly said. Knapp entered Riverside Marina on foot, and waited as he saw two men leave the marina, Kelly

said.

Knapp called Kelly and Bond, who saw the suspects enter the vehicle and arrested them, Kelly said. Kelly said that while the pair was arrested leaving Riverside Marina, all the previous thefts had happened at Yankee Boat Yard.

Along with stolen cords and tools, Clark and Bartlett also had cable cutters, which they had used to steal the items, Milardo said. Knapp and Bond obtained written confessions from the two, Kelly said.

Bartlett and Clark were both charged with sixth-degree larceny and criminal trespass, Milardo said, adding: "There are many charges to come."

Milardo said police officers suspect that several other suspects were involved, and are working to prepare warrants for the other burglaries. Bartlett and Clark will probably face further charges after the investigation is complete, Milardo said.

Portland has been hit hard with burglaries in recent weeks, Kelly said, both at the marinas and in homes. Kelly said it wasn't clear whether Clark and Bartlett were connected to the other burglaries in town, but said police were working to investigate the other crimes.

"We're hopeful we'll get some arrests on those ones," Kelly said.

Underage Drinking Party at Portland Fairgrounds

by Claire Michalewicz

Police broke up a late-night party at the Portland Fairgrounds last weekend, issuing 17 citations for trespassing and underage drinking.

Sgt. Jim Kelly said police received a call about a fight at the fairgrounds around 1 a.m. Saturday. Kelly said the young man who made the call had left the scene after getting in a fight with someone else at the party, and called to report the fight.

When police arrived, Kelly said, they didn't find a fight, but they did find between 15 and 20 people having a party on state property at the rear of the fairgrounds. Kelly said police ended up issuing 17 citations to the partygoers – some for simple trespass, some for posses-

sion of alcohol by a minor, and some for both.

Kelly said the people who were issued citations ranged in age from 17 to 23.

Even the young man who made the phone call was detained by police, Kelly said.

"He learned his lesson," Kelly said. "He was one of the ones who ended up being issued a citation."

If any of them are caught again, Kelly said, police may take them into custody, to deter them from partying there.

"It's a common place for them to hang out," Kelly said of the fairgrounds, explaining that police have caught people trespassing and drinking there many times before.

Portland Man Dies in Motorcycle Crash

by Claire Michalewicz

A local man was killed in a motorcycle crash Sunday evening after he veered off Cox Road.

Brett Olson, 24, of 37 Strongs Ave., Portland, was traveling west on the western part of the road shortly before 6 p.m. Sept. 26 when he slid off the right shoulder, Portland Police Lieutenant Ron Milardo said.

Milardo said Olson appeared to have avoided a telephone pole beside the road, but struck a metal guy-wire supporting the pole. The impact threw Olson from his motorcycle and he became pinned underneath it, Milardo

said. He did not appear to be wearing a helmet, Milardo said, and sustained serious injuries.

The Portland Volunteer Fire Department and Hunter's Ambulance responded to the scene, Milardo said. Olson was transported by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital, but succumbed to his injuries, he said.

Milardo said the investigation is ongoing, and police plan to reconstruct the crash to try to determine how it happened.

Olson's obituary appears this week on page 12.

Finance Board Kills Marlborough Sewer Referendum Proposal

by Katy Nally

In a vote of 4-2 the Board of Finance (BOF) rejected a proposal for a sewer referendum question to appear on the November ballot. If approved by voters, the question would have authorized \$2.9 million to begin Phase II of the sewer project.

The BOF voted on the proposal after holding a public hearing Wednesday, Sept. 29, where residents could voice their opinions about the referendum and project.

"I can't in good conscience vote for this at this time," BOF Vice Chairwoman Evelyn Godbout said after the hearing. She said the proposal wasn't "fiscally responsible" and citizens were largely opposed to the project.

Along with Godbout, BOF Chair Cathi Gaudinski, BOF member Cliff Denniss and BOF alternate Pasquale Amodeo voted against the proposal. BOF members Beth Petroni and Dick Shea were for it. (Amodeo filled in for BOF member Daniel McMahan.)

Petroni said she was in favor of the proposal because voters, and not the BOF, should have had the opportunity to vote on the project. If it were passed, the referendum proposal would have moved to a town meeting where residents would have voted on it. If approved there, it would have gone to a referendum.

Selectman Joe La Bella agreed with Petroni. "It's extremely disappointing that four members of the Board of Finance kept residents from having the opportunity to vote on this, when so many other boards and commissions have endorsed it," La Bella said after the hearing.

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the Planning Commission unanimously approved the

referendum proposal; the Economic Development Commission passed it with a vote of 2-1; and the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) approved it 3-1.

However, at Wednesday's hearing, mostly every resident who spoke was against the proposal in some way.

Several residents said Phase II should only finish sewers around Lake Terramuggus, and not bring a pipe across Jones Hollow Road to the Marlborough Commons.

When the WPCA first approved the proposal, Phase II only included sewerage around the lake, on Lake Road, Coleman Lane and Old Cider Mill Lane, as well as North Main Street.

However, when reviewed by the BOS, changes to the proposal were made, to include bringing a sewer line across Jones Hollow Road, up to the Marlborough Commons, to give the property owner the chance to hookup. A pump station at the driveway entrance of the commons was also included. The WPCA later approved this change with a vote of 3-1. WPCA member Bill Lardi was the dissenting vote.

Resident Ken Hjulstrom said he was "pleased" when the BOS included the Marlborough Commons in the proposal.

"Hopefully now something will finally be done over there," he said.

However, at Wednesday's hearing, Lardi reiterated his opposition to bringing the sewer line to the commons, as a way to trigger business development on the parcel.

"If it's such a hot property, somebody would have done something with it by now," Lardi said.

Several residents agreed with Lardi, wondering why, since there are empty storefronts in the town's center right now, the town wants to create new buildings to initiate business development.

However, selectwoman Riva Clark said after the hearing, usually businesses prefer to move into new structures, as opposed to existing ones. And, any time a parcel is developed, its value increases.

Besides business development, other residents took issue with the debt projection figures passed out for the hearing. Some noted the debt figures, which project decreasing estimates over the next 10 years, did not include other proposed phases of the sewer project.

"I would rather not vote on one item, without looking at the entirety of our debt," Godbout said.

Gaudinski had a similar opinion. "At this time, I do not have a complete picture of what our debt will look like," she said. Going ahead with the sewers this year, she added, would probably mean another year of town and education budgets at zero-percent increases.

After the hearing, La Bella said these estimates are "almost impossible" to make, outside of the budget season.

Another point residents made was the uncertainty surrounding the state's funds for municipal projects. If it had been approved, Phase II would be funded through the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Clean Water Fund. Twenty-five percent would come from a grant, and the rest would come

from a loan, with a 2-percent interest rate, to be paid back over 20 years.

However, Town Planner Peter Hughes explained, the referendum would not secure these funds; it would merely allow selectmen to issue bonds for the project.

The town would solicit funds from the DEP in January, and the DEP would put together the list of projects it would fund in the spring. Sewer projects along Connecticut's shoreline would take priority because of their proximity to Long Island Sound, Hughes said.

Essentially, "if you pass the referendum, there's no guarantee the money is going to come," Hughes said.

Some residents said now was certainly not the time to ask the state for funding. Stacey Francoline said state offices currently cannot purchase office supplies, and "you want to ask them for 2.9 million dollars?"

Gaudinski said the proposal for Phase II "came two years too soon." By fiscal year 2014-15, she added, the town's debt would be down further than it is now, and provide a better platform for the project.

The WPCA will now have to decide what the next steps will be – whether to try for a referendum again or not – Hughes said after the hearing. Because of this year's gubernatorial elections, Hughes said the town would have likely received its 15 percent voter turnout needed for a referendum.

He said the town planned to close the loan on Phase I Thursday.

Insurance Broker Updates Marlborough Education Board

by Katy Nally

At their Thursday, Sept. 23, meeting, education board members were briefed on the school district's health insurance policies and also discussed strategies for utilizing Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) data.

Broker Michael Noddin, who represents the six schools in Marlborough, Andover and Hebron, spoke with the Board of Education (BOE) about Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield's recent rate adjustments that affected the school systems' employees.

Recently, Anthem's health savings account incurred a rate increase of about 24 percent, Noddin said.

Retired teacher Deborah Bourbeau spoke to the BOE during the public comment section of last Thursday's meeting about how the rate increase has personally affected her and her husband.

Bourbeau presented a sheet that showed her monthly premium increased by about 26 percent from when she first retired two years ago. Her deductible also has gone from \$1,500 to \$3,000, increasing her yearly payment (includ-

ing her premium) by about \$3,728, when compared with her first year of retirement.

She urged the BOE to consider the impact of these rate adjustments in future talks with Anthem.

"I beg you, keep 100 percent of your people in mind," she said.

Noddin explained Anthem calculated the rate adjustment after examining the overall data, and not just the 50-75 people in the six aforementioned schools that have a health savings account. However, he added the increase was "unfortunate."

"No one wants to send out a rate increase like that," he said adding, "I'm sympathetic to it."

Noddin said the increase could have been put off, but inevitably, it would "catch up with you at some point in time."

He said the 24 percent increase was also negotiated down from "a little over 34 percent." Even with the adjustment, Noddin said Anthem's health savings account was "still a viable contract."

"It's what I'd have if I was in that situation," he said.

Noddin said this year, as usual, several insurance companies submitted bids for the six schools. Besides Anthem, Oxford and ConnectiCare presented bids, but Anthem submitted the best plan, Noddin said.

When BOE member John O'Toole asked Noddin about potential future rate adjustments, Noddin said Anthem representatives "seem to have reined [the rate] in, at, or equal to, the [national] trend."

That trend is about a 13-14 percent increase, as opposed to the 24 percent hike seen at the six schools. Noddin warned there could also be a 3-5 percent "bump" to the trend, as the initial phases of the national health care plan take effect.

The rate for the six schools will also be dependent on their "claims picture," he said.

After Noddin spoke, board members heard from Principal Scott Nierendorf and Assistant Principal Dena DeJulius about how teachers can use CMT data and scores to cater to individual

students. The data would ultimately become a basis for the school's Scientific Research-Based Instruction (SRBI).

DeJulius explained a CMT math score can be broken down into 25 strands, showing what types of math skills the student may lack or has mastered.

A change for this school year, Nierendorf said, will be making CMT data more personalized. By breaking down CMT scores to look at individual students, Nierendorf said teachers would be able to target inconsistencies and push the bar.

He said it was a goal to see "growth across all five levels of the CMTs," and not just in "goal." (There are five score levels for the CMTs: below basic, basic, proficient, goal and advanced.)

Nierendorf said a session for parents will be held Tuesday, Oct. 26, to further explain SRBI and how it helps individual students.

The next BOE meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 27, at 7 p.m., in the elementary school's media center.

Hebron and Marlborough Sign on With New Energy Provider

by Lindsay Fetzner

The towns of Hebron and Marlborough have entered into an agreement with an energy provider that could save both residents and businesses money on their electricity bills.

A total of five Connecticut towns have entered into the program, called Direct Choice, which is a marketing agreement between the participating towns and the energy provider Direct Energy.

Direct Energy sets the fixed-rate for electricity for a specific time period.

"It's a good opportunity for people to save money," said Marlborough selectman Joe La Bella. "We are hopeful that people will take advantage of it."

Hebron Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said with Direct Choice, "there are lots of positives." And, Therrien said, she thinks residents and business owners will take advantage of the program.

"I know in other towns, there has been a good response," she said.

Therrien, a resident of Wethersfield, said since her town signed on to the program, she has personally become involved and seen savings in her electricity bill each month.

In addition to Hebron and Marlborough, Coventry, Hampton and Windham are also part of the buyers' group. La Bella said he is pleased that Marlborough's neighboring town of Hebron is at the forefront of the program.

Residents and small businesses in any of the five towns are eligible to participate in the pro-

gram. Residents who are 65 and older, and own their own residence, are eligible for a senior citizen discount. Those who qualify are enrolled on an individual basis. There are no enrollment or early termination fees, Direct Energy Partnership Sales Manager Richard Suchant said.

Customers could save up to 15.9 percent in standard rates, and senior citizens, could see about a 18.6 percent savings, according to Suchant.

However, Suchant said that in January, Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) will be adjusting its prices, and he estimated the savings will probably be about 6 percent. (Price adjustments are not posted yet.) Combining this year and a couple months next year, Suchant said, savings will probably average out to be about 12 percent.

The fixed rate for those who enroll in the Direct Choice program is 9.29 cents per kilowatt-hour for a nine-month period. It will run from October 2010 through June 2011. However, the billing cycle will run November 2010 through July 2011. As for the senior citizens, the discounted price for those who qualify is 8.99 cents per kilowatt-hour, according to a press release put out by Direct Energy.

Hebron selectwoman Gayle Mulligan said she accompanied Therrien to the senior center last week, and the program was a topic that was discussed.

"They're pretty excited about it," Mulligan said, adding that the group also had a lot of

questions for the pair, many surrounding billing cycles.

Although Mulligan said they did not have answers to all of the seniors' questions, informational presentations were scheduled to occur yesterday at the senior center, for both residents and business owners in Hebron, where questions could be answered. There was also a past presentation in Marlborough at the senior center regarding the program as well, La Bella said.

Suchant estimated that for each community, the company is holding about two events to "get the word out."

"It's just kind of getting off the ground," Mulligan said. "The big push is starting now."

Residents and business owners were expected to receive a letter during early September, providing an overview and further information on the program. La Bella said residents in Marlborough who are currently signed up with the utility company should have received a brochure in the mail, and Mulligan said, residents in Hebron were also expected to get the mailer.

Monthly electric bills will continue to be sent from local utility companies, the press release states, and residents will only need to send one payment. The payment will cover both utility charges as well as the charges from Direct Energy. And, the local utility company, according to the press release, will still provide emergency and/or maintenance service to residents.

Direct Energy has been selling electricity to

residential customers in the state since 2007. In 2009, the release states that the company saved its customers about \$5.9 million in energy generation costs in both CL&P and United Illuminating service territories.

If residents are currently under a contract with another energy supply company, but wish to enroll with Direct Energy, they are urged to review their contracts to see if there is an early cancellation fee to switch from one company to another.

Residents in Hebron and Marlborough, as well as the other communities, can enroll in one of two ways. They can call 1-866-803-4618 to reach the customer service department, which is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. and on Saturday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. To get the senior citizen rate, qualifying residents must call Direct Energy.

The second option is for residents to visit the Direct Energy website, www.directenergy.com, and enroll by using the respective promotional codes, Hebron and Marlborough. Even though each town has a different code, the pricing is all the same, Suchant said. With each town having their own promotional code, Suchant said down the road, the company will be able to provide each town with the enrollment figures.

For more information about the Direct Energy's Direct Choice program, log onto to the website or call the customer service department number listed above.

Hebron Town Boards Talk Budget Issues

by Lindsay Fetzner

Budget challenges on both the local and state level took center stage at a joint meeting of the boards of selectmen, finance, local and regional education Wednesday evening.

State Representative Pam Sawyer and state Senator Edith Prague also attended, and discussed the budget crisis facing Connecticut currently, as well as in the next fiscal year.

"We absolutely must work together toward the goal of fixing our problems," Prague said.

Board members looked to both Sawyer and Prague for comments on issues facing Hebron in the next fiscal year that bleed also into the larger communities. One of the many topics was the magnet schools, and their tuition.

Board of Selectmen (BOS) member Dan Larson drew attention to the magnet schools. He said Hebron's school district "is doing a great job" - noting that Hebron Elementary School was recently was honored with a blue ribbon - yet the town must pay tuition for the magnet schools.

"It doesn't seem fair," Larson said.

If the state builds the school, Board of Finance (BOF) member Mal Leichter said, the state should "pay for it all the way," as opposed to transferring costs to the local taxpayers.

Donna Ferree, also a BOF member, agreed.

"It's a high level of education that we offer in Hebron," she said. "We should not have to pay to send our kids to magnet schools. ... It shouldn't be spread out to the taxpayers"

Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said the impact of the magnet school tuition is "pretty significant," and noted that the district doesn't find out until August of the number of students who have chosen to attend the magnet schools.

This year alone, Cruz said the tuition accounts for twice the amount of money that was

budgeted for - \$13,000 was budgeted, but tuition swelled to over \$30,000.

"If we could know sooner when students are being accepted," Cruz said, the funds could appropriately be budgeted for.

"It puts a lot of stress on local communities," Cruz said.

Sawyer also gave a short presentation on Connecticut's budget, and the deficit the state is faced with.

The reality, Sawyer said in the presentation, is "massive future deficits" over the next two years. In fiscal year 2011, which began July 1, 2010, there is a \$45 million deficit only two months into the fiscal year. Next July, when fiscal year 2012 starts, there will be a \$3.26 billion deficit, and for fiscal year 2013, a \$3.16 billion deficit.

The state also is no longer "an attractive place for business," Sawyer said. The state has the highest inheritance tax, the ninth highest property tax burden and the seventh highest minimum wage, she stated in her presentation.

"I don't think Connecticut can be taxed anymore," Sawyer said

Sawyer suggested to the boards that they prepare more than one budget for the next fiscal year, since there are several unknowns with the election coming up.

In addition to a budget that continues current services, another should be created, which Sawyer referred to as a "tight, hardship budget."

"There's so many variables from the stock market, to the new governor, to the new legislature, to the new commissioners in agencies," she said.

The town, as a whole, has several budget impacts for the 2011-12 fiscal year on both the revenue and the expenditure sides. On the lat-

ter, there is more than \$400,000 in added expenses.

On the revenue side, interest rates on investments are staying low and because a lot of back taxes have been collected already, there is a lower amount of interest being collected.

But, on the expenditure side, 11 factors contributed to a total of \$416,423. A 3.25 percent salary increase for union members and a 2 percent raise for non-union members accounts for \$67,167. There is a 7 percent increase in health insurance, roughly \$30,500, a 5 percent increase in capital costs, about \$44,820, and a 9 percent increase in utilities, at about \$14,786.

Other expenditures include a 5 percent increase in paving roads, at \$14,355, leasing of new computers at \$30,000 and a 5 percent increase in heating and diesel costs, at a total of \$7,970.

On the education side, both Cruz and RHAM Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski offered the boards insight into their concerns with the education budgets.

Siminski said high school enrollment will still continue to increase. In 2011, the last "small class" will graduate, he said, and due to the enrollment increases, there is a need for additional furniture to accommodate the students. (Enrollment is estimated at approximately 1,180 students this year; Siminski said exact numbers would be available early next week). And, with so many students, Siminski said every classroom is being used every period of the day.

"There aren't any empty classrooms during the day," he said.

Parents too, Siminski said, are asking for additional sports and reinstating freshman athletics.

"We have a lot of pressure coming our way to deal with it," he said.

On the elementary school side, Cruz said there is between a 10 and 15 percent increase in health insurance. Although there is declining enrollment at the elementary schools, Cruz said next year's sixth-grade class is about 190 students, which is a "big, big group of kids."

Forty-four students moved into town this year, Cruz said, while 33 moved out. Over about a five-year period, enrollment will decline though, which Cruz said will help with space utilization.

Cruz drew attention to the Education Jobs Fund Program, which provides assistance to states to either create or save jobs for the 2010-11 school year. Hebron was recently awarded \$220,043. Out of that figure, hours were increased for two custodians and a nearly \$19,000 budget shortfall was covered. The rest of the funds, approximately \$176,000, will be put aside in planning for the 2011-12 budget.

Looking ahead, Cruz said the local Board of Education (BOE) is "really encouraging people to come and interact with us." Board chair Jane Dube said the board is hosting three roundtable discussions and is hoping the "community will come forward and let us know what programs and things they value in the schools."

Like the BOS, the school board wants to examine its core services and "look at what's important."

"We really encourage people to come and interact with us," Cruz said.

The BOE roundtable discussions will take place on Wednesday, Oct. 13, from 7-9 p.m. at Hebron Elementary School. The second will take place on Wednesday, Oct. 27, from 7-9 p.m. at Gilead Hill School. The last discussion will be on Saturday, Oct. 16, from 9 a.m.-noon at Douglas Library.

Obituaries

Portland

John Elmstedt Sr.

Retired Sergeant Major John David Elmstedt Sr. 77, of Portland, widower of MaryAnne passed away Sunday, Sept. 19. He was born Sept. 1, 1933, in Bristol.

John and MaryAnne were soulmates and were married for 54 years before she passed away in February 2008. He was the youngest son of Gus and Selma Elmstedt. He also had three brothers and a sister, Russell, known as Hunk, Faith, Charlie and Eric. He served in the Air Force in North Africa during the Korean War and then had over 30 years of service with the Connecticut Army National Guard. He was also part of the military Honor guards for over 15 years. He was in charge of the Motor pool at the Hartford Armory for the last 15 years of his service. He retired from the CTARNG as an E9.

He is survived by a daughter and her husband, Ruth and Fritz Leue, a daughter and her husband, Susan and Peter Haberli, and a son John D. Elmstedt Jr. He also leaves his four grandchildren, Ricky Leue and his wife Allison, David Leue, Seth Haberli and Tia Haberli. He also leaves behind many nieces and nephews living throughout the country, who they loved to visit.

He loved hunting, fishing and spending time outdoors and spent the last 36 summers at Nelson's Campground in East Hampton with his late wife. There they ran the Bingo games, played in the setback tournaments and enjoyed the company of their many friends at the campground.

The wake was at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, on Monday, Sept. 27, and a short service followed. He was then buried in the Veterans' Cemetery in Middletown, with his wife and a reception will follow at Trinity Church in Portland. For directions, or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net.

Portland

Sara Jane Sutcliffe

Sara Jane Sutcliffe, 73, of Martinsburg, WV, formerly of Portland, widow of Jack Sutcliffe, passed away peacefully Thursday, Sept. 16, at Vermont Respite House in Williston, VT.

She was born in Reading, PA, on Oct. 4, 1936, the daughter of Edward and Elizabeth McInroy. She received a BA degree in education from West Chester State University in PA. On Aug. 20, 1960, she married Jack E. Sutcliffe and soon moved to Portland, where she taught for many years at Gildersleeve School. She and Jack retired to Martinsburg, WV, in 1996. Sara was an avid gardener, reader, member of Travel Club, volunteered at PEO and CCAP.

She is survived by her daughters, Carol Macy and husband John of Shelburne, VT, and Beth Basham of Ellicott City, MD; four grandchildren, Erin and Lauren Macy and Madison and Sam Basham; her brothers, Edward and Robert McInroy; and her sister, Miriam Medaris.

A memorial service will be held at Trinity United Methodist Church in Martinsburg, WV, at 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 13.

Those wishing to honor her memory may make a donation to CCAP at 336 South Queen St. Martinsburg, WV 25401.

Portland Police News

9/22: A 16-year-old male was arrested for criminal attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

9/23: Hunter Clark, 20, of 56 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, was charged with third-degree criminal trespass and criminal attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny, police said.

9/23: Ross Bartlett, 19, of 56 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, was charged with third-degree criminal trespass and criminal attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny, police said.

9/25: Tammy Moreau, 40, of 144 Funston Ave., Torrington, was charged with second-degree harassment, police said.

9/26: A 17-year-old female was arrested for breach of peace and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

Hebron Police News

9/23: Police from Troop K were sent to the area of Reidy Hill Road and found a duffel gym-style bag by the road edge, State Police said. Inside the bag were several pieces of men's clothing and other personal items, but no identification was found. To claim the bag, call Troop K at 860-537-7500 and ask for Trooper First Class Joseph Marsh or the evidence officer.

9/23: A residence on Jones Street was burglarized and entry was made through the front window, State Police said. Jewelry was stolen from the master bedroom. The case is under investigation.

Amston

Bruce John Smith

Bruce John Smith, 55, of Amston, husband and best friend of Deborah (Dunnett) Smith, passed away peacefully early Sept. 26 at Middlesex Hospital. Born June 15, 1955 in Middletown, he was the son of the late Arthur L. and Anna (Gemeasky) Smith.

Bruce grew up in Marlborough and attended RHAM High School. He worked as a welder for many years and was most recently employed by the town of Hebron.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his stepson, David Dunnett and his wife Kathy of Lebanon; his grandson, Billy; a sister, Linda Orange and her husband Dennis of Colchester; two brothers, Brian Smith and his wife Linda of Marlborough, George Smith and his wife Phyllis of Windham, ME; three nephews, two nieces, and two grandnieces. Bruce also leaves two special aunts, cousins and many dear and close friends including his dog Max.

Bruce joined the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department in 1974, and held the ranks of lieutenant and captain and moved to status of social member in 1987 when he moved to Columbia.

He was a member of the Sons of the American Legion Post 197 and a member of the Marlborough Moose Lodge 1631.

He enjoyed woodworking, fishing, gardening, and his many trips to Maine.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Sept. 30, at 7 p.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be private. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home on Thursday.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 237, Marlborough, CT 06447 or to the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 911, Hebron, CT 06248.

To leave online condolences visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Brett Herbert Olson

Brett Herbert Olson, 24-year-old son and brother of Bruce, Laura, and Ilene Olson, all of Portland, passed away Sunday, Sept. 26, due to a tragic motorcycle accident.

He was born Jan. 8, 1986, in Hartford, and was a Portland resident his entire life and had graduated from Portland High School Class of 2004. He was employed with Mark DeFrancesco Masonary for the past seven years. He was an avid lover of people, cars and motorcycles. He was a jack of all trades, just like his father, always working on a project of some kind.

In addition to his immediate family, he is survived by his many aunts, uncles and cousins; John, Amy, Adam, and Seth Wilson of Waxhaw, NC; Pete, Kathy, and Matthew Wilson of Glastonbury; Dave Rae, Ben, and Abbie Wilson of Enfield; Tom, Chris, Katie and Kevin Wilson of Portland; Curt and Miranda Wilson of Portland. He was predeceased by his grandparents Vincent and Doris (Brainard) Olson and Herbert and Rosemary (Sanborn) Wilson, and his cousin Jennifer Wilson of Glastonbury.

Friends and family called at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Thursday, Sept. 30. Funeral services will be held today, Oct. 1, at 11 a.m. in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home with Rev. James Reemts, pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, officiating. Interment will follow in Center Cemetery in Portland.

Anyone who wishes to attend, is invited by the family to a gathering immediately following the burial for food and drinks at the Portland Fireman Picnic Grounds in Portland.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Dr., Wallingford, CT 06492 or to the American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

For directions, or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net.

East Hampton

Agnes S. Edwards

Agnes S. Edwards, 83, widow of the late Frank Edwards, died Tuesday, Sept. 28, at Middlesex Hospital after a brief illness. Born April 24, 1927, in Aberdeen, Scotland, she was the daughter of the late William and Mary (Noble) Smith.

Agnes had lived in East Hampton since 1947 and was a member of the First Congregational Church of East Hampton. She was a former member of the East Hampton PTA, a former member of the East Hampton Bowling League, and a former Sunday School Teacher. Agnes was an avid reader and loved to do crossword puzzles. She loved to meet people and would often be seen striking up a conversation with someone she just met.

Agnes is survived by her son, John Edwards Sr. and his wife Debbie of Florida; two daughters, Audrey Hernandez of Glastonbury and Cheryl Randino and her husband Keith of Tolland; six grandchildren, Jeremy, John, Chris, Adam, Kyle, Kevin; and a great-grandson, Chase.

She was predeceased by her brothers, Alexander Smith and John Smith.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Oct. 2, at 10 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial will follow in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery in East Hampton. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home today, Oct. 1, from 6-8 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Weiss Hospice Unit, c/o of the Development Office, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 or to the charity of the donor's choice.

To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton Police News

9/9: A 16-year-old juvenile of East Hampton was issued a summons for possession of drug paraphernalia, East Hampton Police said.

9/14: Neil A. Bishop, 65, of 108 Middletown Ave., was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and failure to display the front marker plate, police said.

9/15: Steven Schramm, 52, of 11 Emerson Rd., and Shashikala Chodake, 35, of 32 Eastham Bridge Rd., were involved in a two-vehicle accident on West High Street, police. Schramm was issued a ticket for following too close, police added.

9/17: Michael F. Bernard, 25, of 29 North Main St., was arrested for second-degree harassment, possession of narcotics and possession of a controlled substance, police said.

9/17: Derrick D. Smith, 38, of 6J East Baltic St., Norwich, was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

9/18: Sebastian P. Walsh, 19, of 719 Squaw Rock Rd., Moosup, was arrested for DUI, police said.

9/18: Jason A. Alward, 38, of 6 Meeks Point, was issued a ticket for speeding, operating a motor vehicle under suspension and without an operator's license, police said.

9/18: Penny J. Flemming, 53, of 98 Comstock Trail, was issued a summons and

complaint ticket for DUI, operating while under suspension and failure to drive right, police said.

9/18: David W. Guerette, 52, of 154 Main St., was issued a summons and complaint ticket for DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

9/20: James Brennan, 36, of 20 Barbara Ave., was arrested for fifth-degree larceny and, in a separate incident, possession of marijuana, police said.

9/20: Michael F. Bernard, 25, of 29 North Main St., was arrested for third-degree criminal trespass, police said.

9/20: Todd Bower, 21, of 230 Old West High St., was arrested for fifth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fifth-degree larceny, police said.

9/21: Felicia C. Fox, 20, of 1 Clark Hill Rd., was arrested for fifth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fifth-degree larceny, police said.

9/22: Richard F. Gray Jr., 50, of 275 Vernon St., Middletown, was arrested for offering to make home improvements without a current certificate of registration, police said.

9/23: Daniel H. Cook, 46, of 22 North Main St., was arrested for failure to appear, police said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

I get a kick out of those “America’s Dumbest Criminals” types of stories. There’s just something funny about seeing people who are up to no good becoming victims of their own stupidity.

So I got a pretty good laugh last week when I read about one of those “America’s Dumbest Criminals”-types of stories, this one occurring in Middletown.

According to the *Hartford Courant*, last Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 23, a woman who lived on E. Ridge Road was pulling into her driveway when she heard her toilet flush. She realized there was an intruder in her home, pulled back out of the driveway, but stayed nearby and watched the house as she called police.

The woman saw one man leave the house, hide briefly in the bushes and then take off on foot, Middletown Police said. The woman tracked the man in her car and gave police updates. Police eventually caught the guy, Said Oruczadeh of Middletown. Oruczadeh reportedly had \$9,905 worth of jewelry with him. Derek Mandeville, was allegedly the accomplice, was also arrested.

Now, while the story does raise a few questions – chiefly, how small is this woman’s house or how noisy is her plumbing if she could hear the toilet flush upon pulling into the driveway? – but it also teaches a very important lesson to all would-be burglars: If you’re robbing a house, and you realize you need to take a leak, just hold it.

* * *

A new survey released this week presented some sobering statistic about Americans and religion. Turns out there’s an awful lot of people in this country who couldn’t tell you the basics of their own faith.

I’m a Catholic, so perhaps I’m a little biased here, but to me the most shocking thing about the survey was that 45 percent of Roman Catholics who participated in the survey did not know that, according to church teaching, the bread and wine used in Holy Communion is not just a symbol of the body and blood of Christ; it becomes his body and blood. Note the question wasn’t how many *believed* it – I’ll grant you it can be a heavy concept – but it was how many Roman Catholics *know* it. That’s an awful lot of people who don’t really get what’s going on up at the altar each week.

A friend of mine and fellow Catholic who was equally shocked by the news said, and he’s probably right about this, that every one of those survey respondents who didn’t know about transubstantiation could tell you the church’s position on gay marriage, abortion

and contraception. Which isn’t to say those are unimportant matters, but the fact that there are so many Catholics out there clueless about one of the most important matters of their own faith is a problem that really should be addressed.

* * *

My favorite living ex-President – Bill Clinton – was in Connecticut last week to campaign for Dick Blumenthal (who could really use it; the latest Quinnipiac University poll shows he only leads Linda McMahon by 3 percentage points – and the poll has a 3 percent margin of error). Or, as the newspapers put it, to “stump” for Blumenthal. So that got me thinking; why do we call a person delivering a speech campaigning for a politician “stumping” for them? How did that use of the word come about?

Fear not, dear readers. I quickly found the answer. And it’s actually a pretty simple one. According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the usage of the word – which is an American usage, by the way – dates back to the 1820 phrase “stump speech.” That phrase, in turn, is derived from the custom of rural orators using a large tree stump as a natural perch. The custom dates back to 1775, and it makes sense. If you’re speaking in front of a large group of people and don’t have a stage or the means to build one, standing on a big fat stump is probably the next best thing.

* * *

Well, the Mets’ season draws to a close on Sunday. Which means either Monday or Tuesday, personnel moves will probably start getting made. It’s assumed at this point manager Jerry Manuel will get fired, and general manager Omar Minaya may go too.

Then there are the player moves; it’s speculated the Mets will look to trade underrated center fielder Carlos Beltran, who has knee issues and is also due \$18 million next season, the final year of his contract, and you also have to figure the team will look to unload Francisco Rodriguez, who, as I wrote about in August, was arrested after he beat up his girlfriend’s father at the ballpark (he also suffered a season-ending injury in the melee). Rodriguez, while not the pitcher he was with the Angels, still puts up good numbers, and I’d imagine there would be teams out there interested in scooping him up. Hey, looks like maybe the Red Sox could use a closer, huh? (I kid, I kid. Sorry, Papelbon fans.)

* * *

See you next week.