



RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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Volunteers from the Colchester Rotary Club and Liberty Bank delivered boxes of Thanksgiving food Monday to about 150 area families in need, as part of the annual Turkey Day drive.

## Volunteers Deliver Thanksgiving Meals

by Katy Nally

Most *Rivereast* readers are just recovering from their turkey day food coma, and giving thanks that their pants fit again; but for some area residents, just eating a warm Thanksgiving dinner yesterday was reason enough to be thankful.

About 150 families that couldn't afford a traditional holiday dinner enjoyed a full meal, complete with a turkey and all the fixings, thanks to the Colchester Rotary Club and Liberty Bank.

On Monday the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Firehouse was bustling with volunteers who helped fill passing cars with turkeys, canned green beans, pies and other holiday eats.

Kristin Johnson from Liberty Bank and her son Brendon Jones helped Monday to fill delivery cars, because, Johnson said "it's a great cause."

Resident John Jones pulled his pickup truck into the firehouse Monday to fill his car up with more boxes and make another round of deliveries.

"It's just something I can do for the holidays," Jones said.

Drivers for the event delivered boxes to 145 families Monday, and dropped off a few more Tuesday. Rotary Club president Linda Hodge said she was able to make one delivery Tuesday morning to one "very excited" resident.

This year the drop-off rounds did not include the two affordable housing units in town, but still the number of houses that received food increased from last year's approximate 130. (Colchester Social Services still accommodated residents of the two affordable housing complexes.)

Hodge noted this increase was both "good and bad."

"It's good because we're able to do it," she said.

When the families opened the boxes of food this week, a small yellow sign greeted them with "A gift of Thanksgiving to you from the Colchester Rotary Club."

Each box contained a turkey or a chicken, stuffing, green beans, corn, cranberry sauce, an apple pie, dinner rolls, butter, apples, potatoes and a dozen eggs. After receiving input from residents, Social Services slightly changed the contents of each box from last year, Hodge explained. (For example, the rolls replaced a loaf of bread, and there was no chicken option.)

The event is an annual tradition that began more than 30 years ago for the Colchester Rotary Club, and Liberty Bank joined in seven years ago.

This year, Colchester Rotarians raised money and Liberty Bank matched \$1 for every \$4

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## Sachems Secure State Soccer Title

by Lindsay Fetzner

Last Saturday afternoon spelled victory for the RHAM varsity girls' soccer team, as they secured the state title and defeated Avon 2-1.

Scoring the two goals were senior Kristen Brett and sophomore Sydney Aldrich, with the latter named Most Valuable Player for her efforts in the game. Audra Ayotte, one of eight seniors on the team, had assists on both goals as well.

Kristen said she scored her goal roughly five minutes into the game.

"As a player, I like to have our team score early because it takes pressure off of defense and the team as a whole," Kristen said.

To be the one to put the goal away early, Kristen said, was something she was proud of, and was a move that gave the team confidence in the game.

"The first goal was awesome," Audra said. "It was off a free kick and all season long we have been practicing free kicks. We hadn't managed to do it the entire season so to do it in the final was amazing."

The first goal, Audra said, also settled down the team's nerves.

Kristen's goal was followed by a goal by

Avon, which tied the score. Audra said the goal made the team "a little frantic."

"When Avon scored the goal, I knew we had to keep everybody's head up," Kristen said. "And from this point on, we weren't going to take it anymore."

And it was Sydney's goal that put the team ahead over Avon with about 10 minutes to go in the game. The Sachems refused to let Avon score again for the remainder of the game, leading RHAM to victory.

"The girls were able to rise above the challenges by working together and employing all that we asked of them," Assistant Coach Kim Hills said. "It was truly a team effort and we are so proud of them."

This marks the first time that the RHAM soccer team has been in the girls' soccer state final since 1995. At that time, Head Coach Jen Stahl was a senior at RHAM High School and brought home the victory with her team, which was then part of Class M. This year, Stahl got a taste of victory from behind the lines as opposed to on the field.

"This experience is full circle for her," Hills said of this year's win, "and she and I are very

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The RHAM High School girls' soccer team was crowned the 2010 Class L state champions. The team defeated Avon last weekend, by a score of 2-1, in the state final game.



**Volunteers from the Colchester Rotary Club and Liberty Bank filled cars full of boxes of Thanksgiving food Monday.**

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deposited into the club's account, bringing a total of about \$6,653.

Hodge said the club's October wine auction raised most of the money, but she also noted the help of Rotary Club vice president Gretchen Marvin, who wore a turkey costume for about five weeks to solicit donations in front of local businesses. In total the club raised about \$5,400.

"It's a lot of work," Hodge said, "but it's for a really good cause. ... It was very worthwhile."

Once the money was raised and matched, Hodge said the Rotary Club purchased food from Noel's and Westchester markets.

Twenty-three Rotary clubs joined Liberty Bank to raise money for this year's event, which brought in about \$109,000 – \$89,000 raised by Rotarians and \$20,000 put up by the bank – Executive Director of Liberty Bank Foundation Sue Murphy said.

"We blew through our goal," Murphy added, which was \$100,000. "We're so excited."

East Hampton Rotary was a huge help in reaching the \$100,000 mark, because the club raised just about \$23,000.

"And it's not easy to raise money in this economy," Murphy noted.

As for Colchester, Murphy credited Marvin and her turkey costume for drumming up support and bringing in donations.

"Talk about going way beyond what anyone would expect," she said.

Throughout the seven years Liberty Bank has been involved, Murphy said a total of \$475,000 has been spent providing food for the holiday.

"There's something that really speaks to people, when you talk about someone not being able to afford a Thanksgiving dinner," she said. "This is a wonderful program."

#### Soccer Title cont. from Front Page

committed to the RHAM community and athletics."

Hills, an alumnus of RHAM soccer, said she missed playing with Stahl by one year, and remembered hearing coaches and players talk about "how remarkable she was."

Hills and Stahl agreed that bringing home the championship was the result of the players working hard and their dedication to the team over the years.

"It was neat because this group of girls has been together the past couple of years," Stahl said. "Seeing them work and mature this year was really kind of cool."

Hills added, "The soccer talent of our players has been improving tremendously over those years and is absolutely amazing now."

Going into the final game, Stahl said she knew the team was capable of bringing home the win.

"Seeing the way they had played in the first couple of tournament games, I knew we were going to give it everything we had and have no regrets," Stahl said.

And, that proved to be true, because Stahl said the team played their overall best on Saturday, in the tournament game.

Stahl added that she knew Avon was "very talented" and "was very dangerous on the attack." But, she said, having such a mature group that understood what they had to do in tight games gave her a lot of confidence.

Taking the field on Saturday, Stahl said, reminded her of last year's state semi-final game, which was also against Avon, and also played at Middletown High School.

Avon won that game, 2-1, so this year the Sachems had a chance for revenge. "They knew they had to come out ready to play the game," Stahl said.

The Sachems' first state tournament game this year was held Nov. 11 at home against Branford; RHAM won, 5-0. From there, the girls advanced to the state semi-final game and defeated Wilton 2-1 on Nov. 13. Three days later, on Nov. 16, the girls secured their spot in

the state final game with a 3-0 win over New Canaan. They then went on to succeed over Avon in the finals.

The final record for the team after the championship win was 18-1-1.

Commenting on the impressive record, Stahl said, "It's being prepared for every game and not having any let downs. I knew we had a pretty talented group."

The team's only loss this season was to Tolland on Sept. 24, by a score of 3-1. Team members agreed that the one loss was essentially a reality check, and resulted in the team focusing on their goals for the future.

"It made us realize we can't go into our games and think we are going to win," Audra said. "It was a reality check because we knew we could go to states, but we had to work harder."

Hills said the girls were able to reflect and see where the team "broke down" in that game and then, "figured out the best way to fix it."

Since that loss to Tolland, the girls allowed only four goals – against Farmington on Oct. 8, against Tolland on Oct. 19, against Wilton in the state semi-final game and against Avon last weekend.

Overall, Stahl said, "It was a fun season."

"It's been a two-year process where there were a lot of things that we struggled with last year that came together this year," she said. "They put in the time and effort the past couple of years for this."

And the girls agreed. Kristen said bringing home the title was "definitely" the perfect way to end the season.

Audra said the seniors, especially, wanted to finish their last game strong and winning was "such a big relief."

"We worked so hard for the entire season," Audra said. "To beat them and win a state title is more than I could ask for."

For more information on the season and for photos, visit the RHAM girls' soccer website at [sites.google.com/site/rhamgirlssoccer/](http://sites.google.com/site/rhamgirlssoccer/).

## Colchester Police Commission Loses Chairman

by Katy Nally

Police Commission Chairman Glenn Morron did not receive his reappointment at last Thursday's meeting of the Board of Selectmen, following a 2-2 vote that pit Republicans against Democrats. (Republican selectman Stan Soby was absent.)

Morron, whose term ended Nov. 15, and fellow Democrat selectwoman Rosemary Coyle claimed the Republicans' decision to vote against the reappointment was political. Morron said Republican First Selectman Gregg Schuster did not want to work with him because the two faced off last November in the race for first selectman.

Schuster "vehemently" disagreed with this statement, but said little else at Thursday's meeting.

He released a statement the next day. "While I am appreciative of Glenn Morron's attempt to contribute, I chose to vote against his reappointment to the Police Commission as I believe a change of leadership is needed," Schuster said in a press release.

He listed five reasons supporting his vote, including a lack of communication between him and the commission and having no strategic plan from the commission since a four-board meeting was held in July.

"There were several factors based on things that occurred in 2010 that led me to this decision," Schuster continued.

Republican selectman Greg Cordova agreed with Schuster.

"I'm not doing this politically," he said. "This commission has been a problem for a while."

Schuster also noted the resignation of three Colchester police officers and two Police Commission members, Tony Camilleri and John Jones, which occurred this year. Camilleri cited

"personal" reasons for his resignation, and Jones said the time commitment had become too great.

Schuster said another commission member, Don Philips, also did not seek reappointment after his term ended Nov. 1 this year, leaving the group with two members, Morron and Rob Parlee, which is not enough for a quorum. Parlee's term is set to end Nov. 1, 2012.

With the lack of commissioners, Morron said several items, including creating a sergeant position and appointing a certified police officer to the Colchester department, were left unfinished because there was no quorum.

However, selectmen also appointed two applicants to the commission last Thursday, who were interviewed at a special meeting on Oct. 26. Coyle moved to appoint Edward Fusco, who is registered as an unaffiliated voter, and Cordova moved to appoint Stanley Nolan, a Republican.

At their first meeting Monday night, the two new commissioners, along with Parlee and Soby, who was acting as chair, unanimously voted to hire certified police officer Kristin Dimauro to the Colchester Police Department and promote Officer Rob Suchecki to sergeant. Dimauro should begin field training within the next few weeks, Schuster said.

A new chairman was not selected at the Police Commission meeting and there was no discussion of former chairman Morron. Soby said the Police Commission would wait for a full board, and then appoint a new chairman.

At last Thursday's meeting, Morron disagreed with Schuster about the commission's lack of communication.

"I've extended olive branches to you three or four times; all you had to do was meet me

halfway," he said. "We do not see eye to eye on all things, Gregg, but that's good."

It seemed Philips, Coyle and other supporters of Morron's reappointment anticipated the 'no' vote, as a few of them spoke during public comment before the board made its decision.

"The men and women of the Colchester police department have come to respect and trust Mr. Morron for his sense of fairness, his experience and his ability to balance the needs of the police with the needs of the community," former Police Commissioner James Stavola read from a prepared statement.

Coyle expressed her disappointment with the board's decision, warning Colchester would become "East Hampton Two" – referencing the controversy that town became embroiled in earlier this year when the police chief was abruptly laid off – and criticized Schuster for not recognizing Morron as an "altruistic" volunteer.

"This is a sad day for Colchester when politics trumps what's in the best interest of the citizens of Colchester and our police force," Coyle said.

She highlighted seven issues the commission addressed during Morron's tenure, including hiring two new police officers, developing a sergeant's test, retaining the school resource officer, beginning a strategic plan and developing a staff budget.

Thursday's meeting was not the first time selectmen and police commissioners clashed. In March of last year, selectmen voted 3-2 (Republicans Soby and Cordova and Democrat First Selectwoman Linda Hodge for, and Democrats John Malsbenden and Coyle against) to remove Stavola after he allegedly issued a pub-

lic statement regarding the Board of Selectmen, without clearing it with Hodge.

After he was ousted, two other commissioners submitted their resignations shortly thereafter, one of whom was Jones, but he ultimately stayed on board. At the time, Hodge told the *RiverEast* Jones submitted a resignation because of internal issues within the Police Commission.

Two months later, the commission's eight-year chairman, William Otfinoski, resigned.

Cordova noted past problems at last Thursday's meeting.

"The leadership on that commission has never been sufficient," he said.

Selectmen agreed last Thursday more commission members would likely be appointed as soon as the last applicant is interviewed. Five people, including Nolan and Fusco, were interviewed last month, but the Board of Selectmen only appointed two last Thursday. The sixth applicant was not present at the Oct. 26 meeting to be interviewed.

There are two more vacancies left on the five-member Police Commission.

A formal ceremony commemorating Suchecki's promotion will be held Thursday, Dec. 2, at 1 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave. The public is invited to attend.

Suchecky has been part of the Colchester Police Department for 20 years and has worked as the school resource officer since 2009. He will be leaving his position at the schools as soon as his duties are transitioned to another officer, Schuster said.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

# Hebron School Board Reviews Options for MIRMA Payment

by Lindsay Fetzner

At their meeting last Thursday, Board of Education members discussed options for paying out roughly \$21,000 due to the town's former workman's compensation provider, Municipal Interlocal Risk Management Agency (MIRMA).

Results from three community round table discussions and a board survey were also announced at the meeting.

Director of Finance William Mazzara said that for approximately four to five years, the town had workers' compensation insurance through MIRMA. The company was established in 2002, and offered workers' compensation insurance to "member municipalities" at a time when the towns were having trouble finding "affordably priced" insurance, according to a press release from Governor M. Jodi Rell. There are approximately 65 municipalities across the state in MIRMA.

MIRMA, Mazzara said, was a low bidder when they first started out. Due to the low costs, the town decided to go with them for the form of insurance. Mazzara said it was sensed last year that the company was having "financial issues" and since that time, specifically on July 1 of this year, the town decided to go with another insurance carrier.

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said MIRMA has no "cash flow," which resulted in it having to take out a short-term loan for about \$10 million, which must be paid back.

She went on to say that MIRMA assessed each municipality and every school that was part of the "core group," which "came as a surprise to all of us."

Mazzara estimated that bills sent out to the various MIRMA towns totaled about \$9.5 million. Cruz said Hebron was assessed at about

\$172,000.

"The bottom line is all of the members have to start making a series of payments for the claims outstanding," he said, adding that some towns have paid the assessments, while others have yet to.

After meeting with Town Manager Bonnie Therrien to try to "figure out a fair way to split the cost," Cruz said the BOE is being assessed at \$72,000.

Cruz said the BOE has been assessed for two payments, and has to pay both last year's and this year's. In total, Cruz said about \$21,000 must be paid this year.

"This is obviously nothing we knew about when we planned the budget," Mazzara said. "We are faced with about \$21,000 we are going to have to pay."

The next three payments, Cruz said, will come over the next three-year period. Cruz said the first assessment is due in December, and added that assessments originally went out during the June to July timeframe.

Although this comes during a time that the board is operating on a zero percent budget, Cruz said, "The rationale could be that because the premiums were underbid to begin with, we might have paid this over time. But it still hurts when you have to pay this all at once."

During the meeting, it was suggested that the board ask for a supplemental appropriation from the town. After some discussion on the options the board has for paying MIRMA, the board voted to direct Cruz to contact the Board of Selectmen in writing for a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$21,000.

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Three roundtable discussions were held during October, where board members and school

administration heard from community members on what they value in the town's education system.

Cruz said approximately 35 people attended the October discussions and although the total number of attendees "might sound like a small number," she emphasized that they were "dedicated and passionate."

A handout of results from the forums was passed out at the meeting, with the results separated into the categories of values, concerns and priorities (listed in no particular order). Under the category of values, safety, quality of education, clear communication, transparency, sharing resources, maintaining current programs, music, Challenge and Enrichment (C&E) and small class sizes were among some of the responses.

Under concerns, some of the responses included transparency, unfunded mandates, the need for budget explanations to be more clear, eliminating Spanish, not expanding programs, increasing class sizes, apathy on the BOE budget and more dialogue between the BOE members, among several others.

And, finally, under priorities, some of the responses included the music programs, clear budget explanations, communication as key to understanding the budget, strengthening technology, supporting a wide variety of programs (C&E, art, music and special education support), small class sizes and looking at efficiency in operations.

The results of a budget survey, which concluded Nov. 5, were also shared. Participants were asked to prioritize a list of nine items from one to nine, with one being the highest/top priority. Choices included Spanish, maintaining

board recommended class sizes, technology, space limitations at Hebron Elementary School, playground replacement at Gilead Hill School (GHS), shorter bus routes, C&E, instructional music/band and maintenance.

There were a total of 280 responses, which Cruz said she thought was "a wonderful response."

"People were very responsive to this as a means of communication," Cruz said, adding that in addition to the online version on the district's website, paper copies were also distributed to various locations in town.

According to survey results, 56.4 percent of participants chose maintaining class sizes as their top priority, followed by 28.6 percent selecting technology as their second choice. And, 31.8 percent of participants ranked the playground replacement at GHS as their lowest priority. The other six choices varied across the board.

Cruz also mentioned that the BOE was awarded the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) Board of Distinction Award- Level II, for which a reception was held last Friday. Cruz said this is the "highest level of award that you can receive."

In addition to this recognition, the board also received four awards in the CABE 2010 Award of Excellence for Educational Communications contest. Hebron was recognized for the annual report of the superintendent, the 2009 Connecticut Mastery Test review, the convocation PowerPoint and for a guide to the budget process.

The next meeting of the BOE is slated for Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. at GHS.

# Earth Meets Body Offers Host of Eco-Friendly Items in Hebron

by Lindsay Fetzner

After a year of planning and design, Earth Meets Body opened its Main Street doors on Nov. 18, bringing with it naturally-inspired gifts and services.

"I've wanted to open something like this for a while," owner Mark Carofano said. And, after more than a year, that wish has come true, with Carofano's "soft opening" this month.

The items available for purchase, Carofano said, are naturally inspired and not synthetic. Carofano said he wanted the store to be eco-friendly and "keep the Earth green."

Earth Meets Body is broken down into one-third retail, one-third aromatherapy and the final portion, services for the public, which will begin after the new year.

Carofano said, "It's a feel-good type of store."

This is the first store that the Glastonbury resident has owned, and with his first endeavor came many challenges, he said.

"The expectations and challenges are high," he said. "However, it's exciting to do something you've always wanted to do."

Carofano's forte, he said, is to "inspire and educate other people."

So far, business has been steady, Carofano said. During the first week he opened, he said, "We were so busy," and saw a lot of walk-in traffic.

"It was great," he said. "Expectations were met and I was just so excited about the people who have been so supportive."

When Carofano was searching for a location to house his store, he said Hebron stuck out to him as a "cute, charming town." Although he said he looked at other surrounding towns, as well as other states, when a space in the Hebron town center became available, he said he knew "this is it" and that the location was "meant to be."

For the retail portion of the store, Carofano has a myriad of books, cards, diffusers and CDs, from which music is piped through the store's speakers. Books vary from self-help and spiritual to motivational.

What sets Carofano's business apart from

others, he said, is both the customer service and the quality of items for sale.

One highlight of the store is an aromatherapy custom-blending bar that can accommodate individual skin care needs, be it oily or dry skin. The bar offers lotions, creams, toner and hand soaps, as well as eye serums and creams. After a short consultation, customers can choose from various aromas and ingredients to suit their unique needs. Carofano said he starts with a base cream, which is all natural, and from there, various ingredients such as vitamin E, collagen and beta keratin can be added to the cream at the person's request.

"[Customers] can sit here and watch the blending and creation of something exclusively for them," he said.

The store also offers a line of Earth Meets Body 100 percent pure essential oils, including orange, peppermint, tea tree and lemon, to name a few.

"You are really getting high quality," he said of the pure and eco-friendly oils, which he identified as his favorite item for sale.

Carofano also sells a wide array of Vermont Soap Organics products, including hand soaps and bar soaps, each customized for a specific part of the body or condition. The line offers soaps for the face and feet, as well as for oily skin, acne and athlete's foot.

And, because Carofano said "we have to take care of everybody in town," he also carries Vermont Soap Organics pet shampoo.

Another unique item the store carries is a line of "iBean Inspired" beans. Customers choose from a variety of pots to plant the bean in, as well as various beans, inscribed with inspirational words and phrases, such as "courage," "love" and "good luck." Two beans are included in the package - one bean is planted in the pot of choice, while another is kept with the person, who makes a wish with the bean. When the iBean is planted, it slowly grows with the inscription on the plant, reminding and empowering the person to focus on their goals and desires.

Carofano carries several other gift items, like those mentioned above, that cater to a



**Earth Meets Body, located on Main Street, held its soft opening earlier this month and will have a grand opening in January. The store offers naturally-inspired gifts and services. Pictured above is store owner Mark Carofano.**

variety of age levels, interests and beliefs.

"I am trying to have people come in and find something to relax, calm and make them feel good about themselves," he said. "Hopefully there is something for everyone."

Be it the jewelry that Carofano has prominently displayed in the cases at the front of the store, bagged herbs or the crystals that the children have taken a liking to, Carofano said his store "really ... hits all ages."

Carofano said he is also planning to begin workshops at the beginning of the new year. Aromatherapy 101 will definitely be offered, he said, because there is a "lot of interest with that." Other topics for possible workshops include crystals, and what they do for the body as a whole, and Reiki, a non-

touch massage with energy.

"It will be exciting to do the workshops and educate people," Carofano said, who is excited for their arrival.

The grand opening of Earth Meets Body will be held on Friday, Jan. 7 at 10 a.m. Carofano said there will be prizes and raffles, and the event is free of charge.

Earth Meets Body is located at 32-2 Main St. It is open Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. and on Sunday from 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.earthmeetsbody.com](http://www.earthmeetsbody.com) or call 860-228-BODY (2639).

# Hebron School Staff Travels to DC for Blue Ribbon Honors

by Lindsay Fetzner

Hebron Elementary School (HES) staff traveled to the nation's capital last week, where they were honored for the school attaining Blue Ribbon status earlier this year.

In September, HES was named a Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), due to its students achieving at high levels. Last Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 15 and 16, Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz, Principal Kevin Hanlon, Director of Curriculum and Technology Vonda Tencza and HES math teacher Kristine Garofalo traveled to Washington, D.C., along with representatives from over 300 schools nationwide that were also honored as Blue Ribbon schools.

Garofalo was the one teacher representative chosen from HES to make the trip, which was through a nomination system.

The two-day event was held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, located approximately two miles from the White House, Hanlon said. Tencza said the two days were filled with "excitement, collaboration and connections" and described the trip as "magical." Cruz, too, said, "It was just amazing."

The celebration featured an opening ceremony on the first day and an awards ceremony on the second, complete with two keynote speakers. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Melody Barnes, the President's Domestic Policy Advisor and the Director of the Domestic Policy Council in the White House, both spoke.

"The speakers that represented the Blue Ribbon Organization spoke of our responsibility as winners to uphold our high achievement and continue to excel," Tencza said. "They challenged us to spread the spirit and to seek ways to invite and inspire other schools to achieve at high levels."

Hanlon added, "They really did a very nice job acknowledging the work of all the schools that were there. ... It was truly fantastic."

It wasn't just Cruz, Hanlon, Garofalo and Tencza that made the trip to D.C., but four furry friends as well – Ela the elephant, Giraffitti, a dog named Nick and Peace Tye-Dye Bear. According to Hanlon, every year several of the fourth-graders send "travel mates" to friends or

relatives traveling around the country. The mates travel alongside the vacationers, and eventually return back to HES at the end of the year.

When the fourth-grade students found out that Garofalo and the other school administrators were headed to Washington, D.C., they asked if the travel mates could accompany them.

The travel mates "came with us and they really went to everything we went to," Hanlon said, lightheartedly. "We thought it was a great way to share the experience with the students, and we had a blast traveling around with them."

Hanlon recalled the moment before he walked up on stage to receive the official Blue Ribbon award, and said he "literally did a little dance." Cruz recalled that Hanlon "jumped up and twirled around" in front of the hundreds and hundreds of people in the room.

"It was my favorite moment," she recalled. "We laughed so hard."

Cruz said as they took the stage, the four of them were "so pumped and filled with enthusiasm and joy."

And, in that moment, she said, "We felt like we were receiving positive feedback for all the good things that schools do."

Cruz said she felt that everyone in the room was experiencing that feeling as "there wasn't a person in the room that wasn't smiling and bursting with joy."

Hanlon agreed.

"It was an overwhelming feeling," he said. "Realizing how special the award is and being a representative for everybody in the community, that was overwhelming. We have so much pride in all we do."

Tencza said that as the former assistant principal of HES, the past three years have given her the opportunity to "put faces to each of the children and all of the staff who contributed to the award."

"Our team that represented Hebron at the ceremony may have cheered with only four voices, but our magnitude was incredible because of how many students and families we carried within us as we cheered," she said. "The actual award is symbolic of the hard work and perseverance that contributes to a successful school, and I look forward to seeing it proudly displayed in our school."



Representatives from HES were honored last week at a Blue Ribbon award ceremony in Washington, DC. Pictured from left are Kristine Garofalo, Ellie Cruz, Director of the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program Aba Kumi, Kevin Hanlon and Vonda Tencza.

Cruz said she wouldn't have traded the experience for anything.

"I am enormously grateful for the opportunity," she said.

On Wednesday, after Cruz, Hanlon, Tencza and Garofalo returned to Hebron, they brought to the school the Blue Ribbon plaque. Hanlon said he plans to hang the plaque in a prominent display near the front foyer. The school will receive a Blue Ribbon banner from the DOE, which Hanlon wants to display outside the school. He said he can also request a second banner, which he would hang in a large group space, such as the gym.

To celebrate the four returning back to the state, a celebration was held Wednesday after-

noon at HES and another on Friday night at RHAM High School. Hanlon said the first part of the event on Wednesday included students reflecting on why they thought HES was a Blue Ribbon school. Students read essays, poems and even performed raps.

From there, the ceremony switched to an adult perspective from physical education teacher Mike Corona on the topic of success. He explained the meaning of success and how it can differ from person to person.

The last leg of the celebration included sharing experiences from D.C., with a Powerpoint presentation featuring highlights of the trip.

Overall, Hanlon said, "We had a great celebration."

# Portland Residents Attend Hearing on Incentive Housing

by Claire Michalewicz

The Portland Planning and Zoning Commission outlined the Incentive Housing Zoning (IHZ) program to interested residents in a special presentation on Thursday, Nov. 18.

Planner Karen Cullen, from Concord Square Planning and Development in Boston, and the company president, Ted Carman, explained the program on Thursday. The two sites being considered are an office building at 595 Main St. (at the corner of Victoria Road) and Brownstone Intermediate School (BIS).

About 50 residents attended the meeting, and about 30 of them spoke, Planning and Land Use Administrator Deanna Rhodes said. Based on the input they received at the meeting, Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) members say residents near the Main Street property seem skeptical of the idea.

The IHZ program, run by the state Office of Policy and Management, creates mixed-use developments at a higher density than the town's zoning regulations would allow. Twenty percent of the units must be designated as "affordable," and the town receives a \$2,000 payment from OPM for each affordable unit in an IHZ that the town adopts, and another \$2,000 for every building permit issued for an affordable unit.

Portland received a grant to study sites throughout the town. Cullen conducted the study over the summer, deciding on a list of five sites, which was later narrowed to two.

Throughout the process, opinion on the PZC has been mixed. PZC member Bruce Tyler said he supports the IHZ project, since unless the town meets the state-mandated goal of 10 percent affordable housing, a developer can come in with a proposal that overrides many of the town's zoning regulations to bring in more affordable housing.

Tyler said most of those who spoke at the meeting lived in the area of Victoria and Rogers roads, around the 595 Main St. property. Residents' objections to the development, Tyler said, focused on the heavier traffic in the area that could come with the 16-unit building. Some said they worried that the development would make it more difficult to access nearby Gildersleeve School.

Others said they were concerned their property values would decrease, even though Carman said he had never seen that happen around other developments, Tyler said. According to the meeting minutes, other residents said since an IHZ wouldn't bring the percentage of affordable housing units in town to the state-

mandated 10 percent, the town should look for other ways to meet this goal.

PZC member Carl Fitzgibbons said overall, neighborhood residents were opposed to the idea. Part of the problem, he said, was that people were confusing affordable housing with low-income or subsidized housing.

Tyler pointed out that the income cut-off for affordable housing is 80 percent of the average income in the area, which for Portland would be about \$67,000 for a family of four. "We're not talking about real poverty here," Tyler said.

PZC member Mike Woronoff explained that he was opposed to the idea of IHZs, because he didn't want different areas to have different zoning regulations.

"Everyone should follow the same rules," Woronoff said. Instead of creating areas with different zoning, Woronoff said, the town should be accepting applications from developers on a case-by-case basis.

Woronoff said that even if he were in favor of the IHZ program, he would choose different properties, rather than taking away spaces that businesses could use. Converting the Main Street property to housing would take away valuable office space, he said.

"Portland's already lacking business property," said Ben Srb, who attended the meeting. Srb said he didn't like the idea of turning the properties into housing when they could be used for business. In addition, BIS is a functioning school, and converting that to housing would have repercussions for the school system. (The town's School Facilities Study Committee has recently begun meeting to analyze current use of space in the schools – including BIS – and to see if future expansion/renovation of the schools would be necessary.)

"We need to come up with a concept that works," Srb said.

"I think we have to try to keep an open mind and we'll go from there," Fitzgibbons said. Even though residents in that neighborhood seemed to not like the idea, an IHZ development could be more popular in another part of town, he said.

"You'll have to wait until the commission meets and we'll take it from there," Fitzgibbons said.

The next PZC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., though Rhodes said the PZC will probably not discuss the IHZ program again until January.

# Marlborough Preparing for Winter Gathering on the Green

by Katy Nally

A beacon of festive cheer will light up the town green this Saturday as part of Marlborough's first Winter Gathering on the Green.

The Marlborough Education Foundation, PTO and Marlborough Arts Center joined together to provide the community with the free celebration in anticipation of the upcoming holidays, which will culminate with the lighting of a 22-foot tree. Many local sponsors have also donated time, goods and services for the event.

"We're in tough times right now, economically, so if you can bring it back to the basics for people, they're very willing to be a part of it," PTO member Cheryl Egazarian said.

Food Bank of Marlborough Assistant Manager Wayne Smith will be on hand to accept non-perishable food donations, as well as warm winter clothing, from event participants. Monetary donations will also be accepted.

"The Food Bank depends on the holidays to be able to make it through the lean months when people don't think to donate," food bank volunteer Donna Ulloa said. "During the winter months like January and February it gets pretty desperate there sometimes."

Beginning at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, children and their parents can come to the Marlborough Arts Center, at 231 North Main St., to create a bird feeder from a pine cone to hang on the tree. Volunteers from the arts center will also be on hand to paint faces.

At 3:30, festivities will begin on the town green, located in front of Town Hall at 26 North Main St. Participants can enjoy horse-drawn carriage rides, story time with Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School teacher Linda Garrett, who will read *The Mitten* and *The Snowy Day*, and photo ops with the Gingerbread Man.

Throughout the event, hot cocoa, apple cider

and baked treats will be available for free. Also, children can make a "luminary craft," which will be a paper bag with cut-out shapes and contain an LED light, and create a card to send to soldiers overseas.

The tree lighting will close out the event at 5:30 p.m. and Girl Scouts will lead sing-alongs of holiday songs.

Egazarian said the idea for Marlborough's first winter gathering was brought up at the beginning of the school year, and the event materialized in about one month.

"Out of nowhere, we had about 30 different sponsors," she said.

A Marlborough family also donated the tree that will be lit tomorrow, and the Marlborough Arts Center created and donated the snowflake tree-topper.

Egazarian said the PTO and education foundation wanted to create a celebration that would be "appropriate and fun for everyone in the community."

And, she added, "We were just dying to do something on the green that would be community-wide."

"We're hoping that people will take the time to visit with each other," Egazarian said. "It's focused on being together and I think that's very attractive to people."

First Selectman Bill Black agreed.

"It will be wonderful to see the community coming together to enjoy our new town green," he said.

Ulloa, who is also a volunteer with Marlborough Arts Center, said the gathering was the center's chance to highlight the activities it provides for elementary-aged children. The event also allowed for "art on the green," which, Ulloa called her "mission."

Events on the green will begin at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow, and the Marlborough Arts Center will host crafts and face painting before the event, beginning at 1:30 p.m.



Children of PTO and Marlborough Education Foundation parents chased the Gingerbread Man last weekend and helped string a 22-foot pine tree with lights, to prepare for tomorrow's Winter Gathering on the Green.

For more information about the three organizations visit [marlborough.k12.ct.us](http://marlborough.k12.ct.us) for the PTO, [mefct.com](http://mefct.com) for the Marlborough Education Foundation and [marlborougharts.org](http://marlborougharts.org) for the

Marlborough Arts Center.

Information about the Food Bank of Marlborough is available at [foodbankofmarlborough.org](http://foodbankofmarlborough.org).

# East Hampton Korean War Vets Recognized for Service

by Claire Michalewicz

For many Korean War veterans, recognition for their service was a long time coming, but about 30 local men were honored Monday in a special ceremony at East Hampton High School.

"The amazing thing about our Korean veterans is not what they did during the war but what they did after," Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz said, who hosted the ceremony. She explained many veterans left a lasting impact on the state through their community involvement.

Bysiewicz said she started public service awards several years ago to honor World War II veterans, and after visiting most of Connecticut's towns to honor them, she started with the Korean War ceremonies this summer.

Everett Wright, a veteran of both WWII and the Korean War, led attendees in the pledge of allegiance. A trio of EHHS freshmen, Shayla Belanger, Jenna Cordeiro and Brynn Owen, sang the national anthem.

Following an invocation from Charles Walton, from VFW Post 5095, Bysiewicz turned the microphone over to Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel.

"I'm proud to have been asked to speak in this ceremony," Engel said, explaining that military service was a longstanding tradition in her family, dating back to her distant relative from many generations ago, Nathan Hale.

Engel explained her father and three uncles had served during the Korean War, and though she hadn't been there to worry about them, the war was significant to her for that reason.

"We are forever appreciative of the efforts of our veterans and continue to be fortunate we have so many survivors in our midst," Engel said.

"I'm proud to be American and I'm proud to live in East Hampton," she said as her address drew to a close.

Along with Engel, four Town Council members, Vice Chairman John Tuttle, Thom

Cordeiro, Chris Goff and Barbara Moore also attended the ceremony.

Bysiewicz spoke of how the Korean War and its veterans are often overlooked, since the war was seen as a police action that never officially started or ended. But in hindsight, she said, quoting from a speech from former President Bill Clinton, the war had been a victory, "by sending a clear message that America had not defeated fascism to see communism prevail."

Before presenting each veteran with a certificate to honor his service, Bysiewicz offered them the chance to share their stories.

Cliff Wise spoke of his time in the Navy, and how he was asked "What are you, nuts?" when he volunteered to be assigned to a destroyer. The worst part of his time in Korea, he said, was when his ship hit a floating mine. But later, he said, his ship managed to capture a North Korean boat.

"That was the good part of my time over there," Wise said.

"It's a cold place to be but I'll tell ya, we had a bunch of good fighters out there," another veteran, Manuel Mello, said.

For Mello, the most memorable part of his time in Korea was rescuing a fellow soldier from a minefield.

Mello's son joined him at the podium, explaining that recently, Mello reconnected with the man he saved, who went on to become a successful lawyer in South Dakota.

"It was kind of a full circle for my dad," he said. "I just wanted to tell you I'm proud of you, Dad."

Wayne Denman explained how he joined the Air Force in 1950, and ended up being sent to Germany for three years as part of the weather service. While his time there was "uneventful," Denman said he made some lifelong friends there, some of whom he still keeps in touch with.

"I'm glad we did it," he said. "We've all got our marbles and we're in pretty good shape."



Sebastian Tuccitto was one of the local Korean War veterans honored in a ceremony Monday at East Hampton High School. Pictured from left are Town Council members Barbara Moore and John Tuttle, Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz, Tuccitto, and Town Council members Melissa Engel, Thom Cordeiro and Chris Goff.

Bysiewicz also presented a certificate to the family of the late governor Bill O'Neill, who served in the Air Force during the Korean War. O'Neill's widow, Nikki, collected the certificate on her husband's behalf, explaining that the honor came as a surprise to her.

Army veteran Larry Emmons was also modest about receiving his award. "I didn't think I should even be up there," Emmons said, explaining that the war ended while he was going through Army training, and he was sent to Germany instead of to Korea.

Others were pleased with the acknowledge-

ment of their service.

"It's pretty nice to get a little recognition," said Joseph Newbauer, who served in the army and spent 18 months in Korea. "People kind of forget about us."

"I feel great," said Sebastian Tuccitto, as he, the other honorees and their families gathered in the cafeteria for coffee, juice and cookies. "I never thought any of this would happen."

Any Korean War veteran who was invited to the ceremony but was unable to attend can call the Town Manager's office at 860-267-4468 to arrange to pick up their certificate.

# East Hampton Officials Talk 2011-12 Budget Strategies

by Claire Michalewicz

East Hampton officials discussed budget strategies when the Town Council, Board of Finance and Board of Education met for a tri-board meeting last Thursday, Nov. 18.

Members of all three boards had an opportunity to share their concerns and expectations for the 2011-12 fiscal year budget.

“The big thing we’re gonna have to grapple with is the state revenues,” Director of Finance Jeff Jylkka said. He said the town manager would have to present the budget to the town by April 15. Jylkka said he doubted the state legislature would have a budget by then, so the town would have to rely on estimates while crafting its budget.

Board of Finance (BOF) Vice Chairman Tim Csere, who led the meeting, explained that the tri-board meeting didn’t typically occur until late January, much further into the planning process.

“I don’t think we’re gonna get any specific numbers down tonight,” Csere said. Instead, he explained, the boards could discuss budget-planning strategies, and any areas they might want to look at in next year’s budget.

“It’s a gloom-and-doom scenario and everyone’s up in the air about what’s going to happen,” said BOF member Tom O’Brien. But one good piece of news, O’Brien said, was that the state’s new budget director, Ben Barnes, is “sympathetic to municipalities.”

“The state can’t afford to get into any more debt,” BOF member Patience Anderson said. In recent years, Anderson said,

East Hampton had reduced its dependence on state aid, which she said could help the town weather the anticipated shortfall. But, Anderson said, she wanted to see the town cut its costs further.

BOF member Henry Thorpe, who called himself “the board’s pessimist,” agreed. Explaining he was concerned about a shortfall, Thorpe suggested meeting with town officials from Portland and Marlborough to discuss which town services they might consider regionalizing. Later, Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel suggested adding Hebron, East Haddam and Colchester to the discussion as well.

“I’ve never believed we should be so dependent on the state,” Engel said.

“There isn’t any interest in regionalizing any of the schools,” said Board of Education (BOE) member Don Coolican, who explained that he had previously tried to get the school board to start a preliminary discussion with the Portland BOE. If the two districts combined, he explained, neither town would have to build any more facilities.

Coolican said that while the joint East Hampton High School and Vinal Technical High School football team was an example of successful regionalization, he doubted a more extensive pooling of resources would be popular.

“I like the idea of regionalization, but I also agree with Mr. Coolican that it’s gonna take a long time,” Town Council member Sue

Weintraub said. She said the state would be facing a \$3.4 billion shortfall, which she did not want to see taxpayers have to take responsibility for. Weintraub suggested looking at administrative staff to see if there were any redundancies that could be eliminated, and continuing the discussion between the boards as the process continued.

“We do need to have a framework of what’s our goal,” Weintraub said.

BOE Chairman Mike Vasquez said he felt the budget process was largely a matter of what voters were willing to pay, since they were the ones who ultimately approved or rejected the budget.

Fellow BOE member Mark Laraia built on Vasquez’s comments, stressing the importance of keeping East Hampton voters informed about the budget process. “We have to be out there in front telling people what we’re doing and how we’re doing it,” Laraia said.

Town Council member Thom Cordeiro agreed, explaining that the boards would “let everybody know what’s going on as soon as possible.”

“We know it’s not gonna be good,” he said. “The following fiscal year looks just as difficult.”

“We’re all in this together and we’ll work on this together and make sure we get there,” Cordeiro said.

About 20 residents attended the meeting,

some of whom addressed the three boards about the budget.

Mary Ann Dostaler told the boards she appreciated that the meeting was happening earlier than usual this budget season, and said she hoped for greater transparency throughout the process. Dostaler asked the boards about the “elephant in the room” – former Town Manager Jeffery O’Keefe’s police department cuts in June.

“How much did the crisis relating to the firing of the chief cost the town?” Dostaler asked.

Gail Hamm, the town’s state representative, asked the boards to stop using O’Keefe’s \$1.1 million figure for the next fiscal year’s shortfall.

“I don’t know where O’Keefe got it,” Hamm said. “The general assembly will try to do better. [Governor-elect Dan] Malloy’s first budget is probably going to be closer to in terms of protecting cities and towns.”

Resident Laurie Wasilewski suggested deciding on the amount of the budget they would be willing to approve, to give the board of finance and town manager a target number to work towards.

The BOF has already started its budget discussions, bringing department heads to its meetings to talk about each department’s finances. So far, the BOF has reviewed the Department of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and the Senior Center.

# East Hampton Council Fills Vacancy, Immediately Changes Mind

by Claire Michalewicz

The Town Council voted Tuesday to fill the seat formerly held by Republican Bill Devine, but quickly rescinded its decision after legal and ethical concerns were raised.

The council initially voted 5-1, with only Sue Weintraub opposed, to appoint Chatham Carillo, a Democrat, to fill the vacancy left by Devine when he resigned from the council earlier this month.

After the vote, Weintraub and resident Kim Fontaine both raised concerns about whether Carillo is allowed to serve because of her job as a legislative aide to State Senator Eileen Daily.

Council member Chris Goff said he had a letter from the state’s assistant general counsel, which explained that there was no ethical problem with Carillo serving on the board.

However, after the council voted to appoint Carillo, Weintraub brought up the federal Hatch Act, saying that while it allowed Carillo to serve in an appointed position, she might be prohibited from running for office in the future.

Fontaine explained that the Hatch Act prohibited someone who works in an agency that handles grants and subsidies for the town to serve in an elected position. Since Carillo works for East Hampton’s state senator, Fontaine said, this rule would apply to her.

Along with Carillo and Chatham Party Chairman Kyle Dostaler, Fontaine was also considered to fill the seat. The three candidates nominated at the meeting were among seven residents who submitted letters of interest, council members explained. The other four were Richard Leone, Salvatore Nucifora, Scott Sanicki and Albert Vela, though none of them received a nomination. Dostaler reminded the council that if Carillo was unable to serve, there were still six other people interested in taking the seat.

Council member Thom Cordeiro said that while he thought Carillo would be a “fantastic” council member, he wanted to rescind her appointment until the council could investigate whether she can legally serve.

Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel initially suggested making Carillo’s appointment conditional rather than rescinding it, but quickly agreed with Cordeiro.

“We want it done correctly,” Engel said, before the six councilors voted unanimously to rescind Carillo’s appointment.

“I’m disappointed in the outcome this evening,” Cordeiro said after the meeting. He said he hoped the council could find a candidate who could also run again next year, rather than just serving out half of a term.

Engel said after the meeting that Carillo would be responsible for having her eligibility investigated and reporting to the town manager with her findings. At the next meeting, the council will know whether Carillo is “still a viable candidate,” Engel said.

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In the other major discussion of the evening, the council heard a proposal from property owner Wayne Rand’s lawyer, urging them to consider the Lakeview Court property at 42 East High St. for the Town Hall Annex relocation.

However, the council decided to continue with plans to move into a building owned by optometrist Jeffrey Palmer, at 240 Middletown Ave. After the last council meeting two weeks ago, Interim Town Manager Bob Drewry said he was going ahead with drawing up a lease with Palmer.

The council considered Rand’s property at its Nov. 9 meeting, before deciding on the Palmer building. But on Tuesday, Rand’s lawyer, Timothy Furey, explained that the town had

miscalculated the utility bills at the property. The town based its decision on the bills from the doctor who previously occupied the space, but Furey said this was inaccurate, since the doctor’s office had much more electric medical equipment. He said the actual cost of leasing the building would be lower than the council had initially thought.

“My major problem with this is we made a decision and now we have a lower offer,” Town Council Vice Chairman John Tuttle said. “It presents an ethical question.”

Other council members agreed.

“We’re done here,” Weintraub said, explaining that the town had already given its word to Palmer. “We need to move forward with this, please.”

“I have received a lease from Dr. Palmer,” Drewry said. With the Lakeview property, he said “we feel we did our due diligence in looking at costs.”

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At the beginning of the meeting, council members presented proclamations to Devine, in recognition of his years of service on the Town Council, and to Anne McKinney, who is retiring after 16 years as the town’s judge of probate.

McKinney thanked the community for their support over the years.

“I have found that the town of East Hampton is the most wonderful place,” she said. “The new judge [Jennifer Berkenstock] will also serve the town well.”

The council also revisited the town’s newly-created Arts and Cultural Commission, which was due to start meeting this month. At the last Town Council meeting, though, resident Scott Minnick raised concerns that the commission had been illegally created, since the ordinance

establishing the commission was never sent to a public hearing.

In response, Cordeiro had attorney Kenneth Antin review the ordinance, and the council voted to send it to a public hearing before the next Town Council meeting on Dec. 14.

In other business, the council voted unanimously to allow the Economic Development Commission to use the town’s logo in signs and advertising. The council also renewed a lease on state-owned property in the railroad right-of-way in the Village Center, next to 82 Main St, and behind the fire station on Barton Hill Road. The town has rented the property for 20 years, Drewry explained, for \$100 a year. The lease can be renewed twice, and this is the first renewal, Drewry said.

Drewry also presented a document from Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Plummer, in response to concerns expressed by resident Ted Barber at an earlier council meeting that passes to Sears Park the town had given to local campgrounds were being given away to people staying at the grounds. Plummer explained that she had consulted with town officials and campground owners, and determined that the passes were being sold, not given away, and that the town was not losing revenue.

The council also voted to approve an additional appropriation for special education costs, which was reimbursed by the state, and to transfer funds between several town accounts to close out the 2009-10 fiscal year’s budget. Both transactions are simple budget adjustments and have no fiscal impact on the town, Director of Finance Jeff Jylkka explained.

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The next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 14, at 6:30 p.m. in the high school library.

# East Hampton Administrators Explain Plans to Improve Schools

by Claire Michalewicz

Administrators from all four of the town's schools outlined the steps they're taking to improve the learning environments at a Board of Education (BOE) meeting Monday evening.

Scientific research-based intervention is in place at all the schools, identifying students who are struggling in math or reading and providing remedial instruction.

"This is a state mandate that has really been a good decision," Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden said of the program.

Another program in place at the schools is Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, which reinforces students' behaviors and rewards them. At Memorial School, teachers give students a ticket when they see them behaving positively, and every week a winner is chosen by a drawing, explained LuAnn Hardacker, the district's language arts coordinator.

Similarly, Center School has the Go for the Gold program, principal Donna Turchi said. Teachers hand out certificates to reward positive behavior, and when a student receives 30 certificates, they get a special prize, their photo on a bulletin board and a letter sent home to their family to commemorate their achievement.

Academically, Turchi said, the main priorities were improving student achievement on the

Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in reading, mathematics and writing.

At the middle school, Principal John Fidler explained, students who did not reach proficiency on the math or reading portions of the CMT are attending supplemental math classes. In addition, Hardacker is working with teachers on reading strategies for classes, Fidler said. Students' math skills are being assessed in the Daily Math Program, and teachers are working to improve CMT performance at all grade levels, Fidler said.

"We moved a lot of kids last year," Fidler said, explaining how middle school teachers helped improve students' scores last year.

East Hampton High School Principal Linda Berry ran through a list of goals at her school, explaining that staff was focusing on the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment and climate, with each teacher serving on a school improvement committee.

Berry explained that by 2012, the school aims to have written curriculum that met state and national standards for 75 percent of the school's classes, and to have 95 percent of teachers effectively using a program of nine teaching strategies. Another goal is to develop

teacher web pages, which Berry said should be launched by February.

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In the other presentation at the meeting, Virginia Seccombe spoke about the services that LEARN, a regional education service center serving southeastern Connecticut, offers. East Hampton is one of the 25 towns LEARN serves. LEARN runs several magnet schools which students can attend, and offers services for districts' day-to-day needs like food services, transportation and special education support.

"I just would like, when you're struggling with the problem, that someone would say 'I wonder if LEARN could help with this?'" Seccombe said.

Golden said LEARN is currently managing the finances for the learning center, a joint facility East Hampton runs with East Haddam, for students who have been expelled from regular schools.

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In other discussions at the meeting, BOE member Carol Lane explained that she had recently attended a seminar about teaching gifted and talented children at a minimal extra expense. The strategy involves identifying chil-

dren who are bright but who might be struggling in a regular classroom environment, and putting them together in one class at each grade level, Lane explained. Lower-performing students would be spread out through all the other classes at the grade level, Lane said.

The only expense from the program, she said, would be to train one teacher from each grade level to work with gifted children.

Golden and BOE members also addressed the upcoming budget process. Golden explained that Governor-elect Dan Malloy had recently said he wanted to hold towns harmless for the state's debt, which means towns won't be seeing a decrease in educational cost-sharing funding from the state.

"It's good to know that that's where the governor's coming from," Golden said.

Golden also announced that she had recently been elected to the Board of Directors of ASCD, an international organization of educators.

"I'm really humbled by this honor," Golden said. "It's really important to open up our eyes to the world of education."

The next BOE meeting is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m. at the high school library, 15 North Maple St.

## Police Find Missing Colchester Teen

by Katy Nally

Police returned a 15-year-old Colchester boy to his family early Tuesday morning after he was reported missing about 11 hours earlier, the Department of Public Safety said.

Tyler Vazquez went missing from his Pine Brook Road home at approximately 8:30 p.m. Monday after "a disagreement" with his family, State Police said.

K-9 units and several troopers worked with surrounding police agencies to find Tyler, who was believed to be en route to Berlin. Tyler was reportedly carrying an L.L. Bean backpack and a sleeping bag, State Police said.

He was found safe Tuesday. State Police Lieutenant J. Paul Vance said that, since the incident was a family matter, he did not want to disclose where Tyler had been found.

## Route 2 Accident in Colchester Sends Two to Hospital

by Katy Nally

Two people were transported to the hospital last week after their car spun out on Route 2 westbound just after exit 16, State Police said.

Around 10:51 p.m. last Tuesday, Nov. 16, Martha Casavant, 57, of Amston, was driving a 2005 Subaru Legacy, lost control of the vehicle and veered onto the right shoulder, State Police said. Casavant's car hit a rock ledge on the right side Route 2, then traveled across

both westbound lanes, and came to rest on the left shoulder.

Casavant was wearing her seat belt, but sustained broken ribs, State Police said. She was transported via Colchester to Hartford Hospital.

Her passenger, Joseph Cazzetta, 45, of Newington, was also reportedly wearing his seat belt, but bruised his right arm during the accident. He was transported via Colchester to Backus Hospital, State Police said.

## East Hampton Police News

11/12: Judith A. Johnson, 49, of 55B School St., Manchester, was arrested for failure to drive right, DUI and operating a motor vehicle while under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

11/14: A 16-year-old East Hampton juvenile was issued a summons for disorderly conduct, third-degree assault and second-degree threatening, police said.

11/14: Matthew Kastel, 18, of 500 Moodus Rd., was arrested for second-degree threatening, police said.

11/14: Clifford T. Wolters, 31, of 10

Wellswood Rd., Hebron, was arrested for representing himself falsely as a registered home improvement contractor, using or attempting to use a certificate which has expired, been suspended or revoked and making home improvements without a current certificate of registration, police said.

11/19: Larry Witherspoon a.k.a. Phillip Cordell Shell, 37, of 320 Farmington Ave., Hartford, was arrested for first-degree failure to appear, police said.

## Hebron Police News

11/16: On Saturday, Nov. 13, someone passed a counterfeit \$20 bill to pay for food/services at the Dunkin Donuts on Main Street, State Police said. Anyone with more information is asked to contact Trooper Mark Gendron at the Hebron Resident State Trooper's office at 860-228-3710.

11/16: Steven Ortiz, 34, of 261 East St., was charged with third-degree assault, disorderly conduct and second-degree criminal trespass, State Police said.

## RHAM Police News

11/19: A 17-year-old was arrested at RHAM High School for violation of probation, State Police said.

## Marlborough Police News

11/20: A residential burglary occurred on Johnson Road, State Police said. Anyone with more information is asked to contact Troop K at 860-537-7500.

## Portland Police News

11/12: Richard Trojanoski, 49, of 81 Young St., East Hampton, was charged with insufficient insurance, failure to wear a seatbelt and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, Portland Police said.

## Colchester Police News

11/16: Danny Spaulding, 28, of Hubbard Street, Middletown, and Kayla Cassidy, 18, of 165 Robbins Rd., Kensington, were caught stealing baby formula by store security personnel at the Stop & Shop on Linwood Avenue, Colchester Police said. Cassidy was charged with conspiracy to commit sixth-degree larceny and Spaulding was charged with sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

11/18: Larry Gaskill, 25, of 9 Cobble Way, Apt. 5, was charged with DUI, Colchester Police said.

11/19: Around 11:37 p.m., State Police responded to NAPA Auto Parts on Linwood Cemetery Road for an audible alarm. The store's glass front door had been smashed and around \$300 was stolen from three different registers. The case is under investigation, State Police said.

11/21: Christopher Venezia, 22, of 91 Dogwood Ln., South Windsor, was charged with DUI, reckless driving and failure to maintain lane, State Police said.

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

If you're one of the many that go out and do Black Friday shopping every year, then you've probably already been to the malls and braved the crowds by the time you read this.

I've never been a Black Friday shopper. It's not that I'm afraid of the crowds – as I wrote about last year, I actually enjoy the hustle and bustle of mall traffic the closer you get to Christmas, as scores of people are linked together by one common goal, to try to get a good present for someone they care about – it's just that I'd rather spend the morning after Thanksgiving doing something else, such as sleeping off my turkey hangover.

Of course, stores are making it easier these days to do your Black Friday shopping without ever having to go to bed Thursday night. Kohl's was due to open today at 3 a.m., while Macy's, J.C. Penney, Sears and Target were to open at 4. Toys 'R Us even opened at 10 p.m. Thanksgiving night, joining a handful of other retailers, like Kmart, Wal-Mart and Sears, who had Thanksgiving hours. There's something that doesn't quite seem right about doing gift shopping on Thanksgiving Day itself, but to each their own.

But no matter how you spent your Thanksgiving – or your day after Thanksgiving – I hope it was a good one.

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I covered Glastonbury for our sister paper, the *Glastonbury Citizen*, for three years. I spent a lot of time traveling all around the town, meeting various people. I became rather fond of that town; still am, in fact. But I'm also fond of my *Rivereast* towns, and frankly was rather appalled at the snootiness and arrogance one Glastonburian displayed last week at a public hearing held by the Glastonbury Town Council.

The Town Council was considering whether to build a park at the Grayledge Farm property near Diamond Lake Road. Several residents of the Diamond Lake attended the hearing to protest the possible park. One Marlborough Road resident said there was potential for "the riff-raff coming up from Marlborough."

Really? Riff-raff? Marlborough isn't exactly the dregs of society; according to [zipskinny.com](http://zipskinny.com), which posts various demographical information of towns across the country (it's actually a pretty interesting site), the median household income in Marlborough is \$80,265, with 32.2 percent of the town's population earning in the six figures. That's not bad at all, and actually a little bit higher than Glastonbury's median income of \$77,991 (although G-bury has a little bit greater percentage of people in the \$100,000-and-up bracket).

And it's a good deal higher than another of Glastonbury's border towns, my hometown of Manchester, which sports a median income of \$49,414. If Marlborough residents are considered "riff-raff," I'd hate to think what colorful descriptions might be used to describe Manchester residents.

Glastonbury sometimes has a reputation of being full of rich people, living high on the hog up in their giant McMansions, looking down at the rest of us, and it's unfortunate,

because, like I said, I covered the town for three years and I know it's not really true. But comments like the one above, basically making a pretty well-to-do town like Marlborough sound like something you'd scrape off your shoe, certainly doesn't help matters.

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The Mets hired a new manager this week, Terry Collins, who managed the Astros and then the Angels in separate stints in the 1990s, but hadn't managed in the majors since 1999. (He served as the Mets' minor league coordinator last season.) He never finished higher than second place with either of those teams, and in fact his time with the Angels ended badly, when a group of players – supposedly led by Connecticut's own Mo Vaughn – petitioned the front office to let him go.

As soon as his hiring was announced, many Mets fans were angry. They wanted to see Wally Backman as the new skipper. Backman led the Mets' Single-A team, the Brooklyn Cyclones, to the postseason last year, and is a beloved member of the 1986 Mets. He was interviewed for the position, but the word on the street (i.e., the word from various newspaper articles and blogs) is that the Mets' front office wanted somebody with experience managing in the big leagues, and Backman doesn't have that. (He had been hired to manage the Arizona Diamondbacks a few years ago, but the D-Backs let him go before he even started, after reports surfaced of various legal and financial troubles in his past.)

After the disastrous past two seasons the Mets have endured, I don't blame the front office for thinking now is not exactly the time to try out a newbie. Also, Collins has a reputation as a strict disciplinarian, and the speculation is the Mets clubhouse is in dire need of such a presence.

As much as I love the Mets, they're not really favored to make the postseason next year. Not only are they coming off two straight seasons in which they didn't even finish .500, they've got several roster issues to deal with and not a lot of money to spend on upgrades this winter. So they don't exactly need somebody with a bunch of World Series rings, at least not right now. What they need is somebody to shape things up, and get the ship righted again, and Collins may very well be that man. The Mets have a new front office, featuring guys with very impressive resumes, so I'm more than willing to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Hey, you gotta believe, right?

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In closing, there's some personnel news to relay. Starting with this week's issue, the *Rivereast's* Colchester and Marlborough reporter, Katy Nally, has been promoted to assistant editor. She'll still continue to cover her two towns just as she always has; she'll just also be assisting me more in the day-to-day running of the paper.

Congratulations, Katy; it's a promotion that's well-deserved.

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See you next week.

### Colchester

#### Alfred E. Bushey

Alfred E. Bushey, 86, of Colchester, formerly of Manchester, husband of the late Lillian (Johnson) Bushey and father of the late Craig Bushey, died Thursday, Nov. 18, at W.W. Backus Hospital in Norwich.

Alfred was born in Mt. Kisco, NY, May 3, 1924, son of Frederick and Della Bushey. He was raised in Colchester and had been a resident of Manchester for over 55 years. He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Kim and Susan Bushey of Hebron; eight grandchildren, Brian, Scott, Molly, Hannah, Katie, Erin, Jaelyn and Tyler Bushey; and a great-grandson, Colby Bushey.

A graveside service was held Wednesday, Nov. 24, in the East Cemetery (Harrison Street section) in Manchester. Visiting hours were Tuesday, Nov. 23, at the Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester.

Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

To sign the online guestbook or for directions to the funeral home, visit [www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com).

## Obituaries

### East Hampton

#### William Richards

William "Bill" J. Richards, 77, beloved husband of Ellen (Lund) Richards, died Sunday, Nov. 21 at his home. Born Feb. 28, 1933 in Baileyville, ME, he was the son of the late Alphonse and Alice (Lanigan) Richards.

Bill was an East Hampton resident since 1968 and was a U.S. Air Force Veteran of the Korean War. He was a charter member of the Marlborough American Legion and a life member of the Forty and Eight.

Besides his wife he is survived by a son, Alphonse Richards of East Hampton; two sisters, Frances Shain and Rosalie Williams, both of Maine; three grandchildren, Michelle, Lisa and William, and a great-granddaughter, Cassandra.

He was predeceased by a son, James Richards, and a sister, Louise Flood.

Funeral services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the East Hampton Food Bank, 20 East High St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com). The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of arrangements.

### Marlborough

#### Wayne Robertson Taylor

Wayne Robertson Taylor, 70, passed away at Malcolm-Randall Veterans Hospital in Gainesville, FL on Sept. 29, due to a long illness. He was born to the late Kenneth and Rhoda Taylor on Nov. 8, 1939, in Middletown.

Wayne grew up on Salmon River with his loving brothers and sisters. He was a 1958 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester and was a former resident of Marlborough. Wayne also served in the U.S. Navy.

Wayne is survived by his wife Patricia of 37 years. The two spent many years together in Florida. He is also survived by his sister, Barbara and Ronald Otis of Florida; brother, Robert Taylor; sisters, Janice Chadwich of East Hampton and Nancy Partridge of Colchester; sister-in-law, Diane Taylor of Colchester; son, Mark Taylor of Florida; daughter, Sheri Taylor of Middletown; two granddaughters, Alexandria Tupper and Alise Joyce Banning of East Hampton; plus many nieces and nephews.

Wayne will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

A burial will be at Waterhole Road Cemetery in Colchester, followed by a private family ceremony.

### Colchester

#### Frederick B. Clark

Frederick B. Clark III, 61, of Colchester, joined the angels in heaven on Saturday, Nov. 20. Born May 11, 1949 in Hartford, he was a son of Barbara (Warzecha) Clark of Colchester and the late Frederick B. Clark, Jr.

He was a 1967 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester. Over the years, Fred had worked for both Pratt & Whitney and Electric Boat. Mr. Clark was a 48-year life member of the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Co.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by two sons, Jason and Joshua Clark of Canton; three siblings, Steven of Norwich, Thomas and his wife, Beth of Westford, MA and Pam Maresca and her husband, Daniel of Bloomfield Hills, MI; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends may call from 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 28, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A vigil service will be observed at 2 p.m. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Co., 18-54 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

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

### Colchester

#### John Vechinsky

John Vechinsky, 98, husband of the late Jane Koshko Vechinsky of Colchester, passed away Sunday, Nov. 21, in Colchester. He was born Sept. 14, 1912, in Colchester, son of Michael and Mary Woynar Vechinsky.

He was employed for many years at Araon Dress of Colchester, where he was a top cutter. Later on he worked for the Pratt & Whitney Corporation as an assembler retiring in 1976. John was a lifelong member of the Colchester Fish and Game Club, a member of St. Mary's Ukrainian Church, an avid sports fan, especially the Yankees. He was an avid fly fisherman and hunter. John could also be found at the Fish and Game pond, fly fishing in the early morning and early evening hours.

Surviving, son John M. Vechinsky and daughter-in-law Joann of Colchester; his daughter Nancy V. Knotek and son-in-law John of East Hampton; his sister Sophie Graves of Colchester; four grandchildren, Christopher, Matthew, Jenny-Lynn and Holly; two great-grandchildren, Amaya and Stella; several nieces and nephews. Also, a special dear friend John Wadsworth of Vermont.

He was predeceased by three brothers, Joseph, Henry and Steven Vechinsky.

The family would like to thank the staff of Harrington Court for their wonderful care that was given to their father.

A service of Divine Liturgy was held Tuesday, Nov. 23, at St. Mary's Ukrainian Church on Linwood Avenue, Colchester. Burial will follow in Linwood Cemetery. There are no calling hours. Memorial donations may be made to St. Mary's Church in his memory.

Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home of Colchester is in care of arrangements.

### Marlborough

#### Vittorio Santo Cassarino

Vittorio "Victor" Santo Cassarino, 86, of Marlborough and East Hartford, peacefully passed away Monday, Nov. 22, at the Marlborough Health Care Center. Born in Hartford Jan. 23, 1924, a son of the late Santo and Lucia (nee Dimauro) Cassarino, he had resided in East Hartford for most of his life.



Victor was a graduate of Hartford Public High School, Class of 1942 and was a proud veteran of the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He was a camera technician when he served in the Army as a member of the Aerial Photographic Reconnaissance unit in England, France and Germany in 1943 through 1945.

Victor will be most remembered for his wry sense of humor, artwork, and photography. He won many awards in Connecticut galleries and museums for his art and photography. Victor was a former member of the Hartford Art League and many of his cartoons were published by the *Medical Economics* magazine and his editorial cartoons were published by *The Hartford Courant* newspaper. Prior to his retirement, Victor was employed for many years by Treasure Chest Printing Company in Windsor Locks.

Besides his parents, Victor was predeceased by his former wife, Catherine (Lanza) Cassarino; a sister, Marie Bishop of Enfield; and a brother, Sylvester "Sal" Cassarino of East Hartford.

Victor is survived by his son, Victor Cassarino and his wife, Leigh, and their sons, James and David, all of Hebron; a sister, Lucy Kamm of Manchester; several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, Nov. 24, at 1 p.m., at the D'Esopo-East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford. Burial with military honors followed at Veterans Memorial Field-Silver Lane Cemetery, East Hartford. There were no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to a favorite charity of the donor's choice.

For online expressions of sympathy to the family, visit [www.desopo.com](http://www.desopo.com).