

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

Volume 35, Number 37

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

December 10, 2010



Children gathered to sing "I Have A Little Dreidel" at a menorah-lighting celebration last Thursday, held on the Colchester town green. The event was organized by the Chabad Jewish Center in Glastonbury.

## Community Gathers to Celebrate Hanukkah

by Katy Nally

The candles told their annual story last Thursday night, as residents gathered under a giant menorah to watch as the second candle was illuminated in celebration of Hanukkah.

The lighting was organized by Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky, the executive director of Chabad Jewish Center in Glastonbury.

Colchester was one of five stops across the state to host the menorah lighting, which ended Wednesday.

In commemorating the second night of Hanukkah, Wolvovsky explained the second candle "teaches the lesson of growth."

"We should never be content with our achievements of yesterday," he told the crowd of about 20 gathered on the Colchester green.

Wolvovsky added this week that people should also never be content with their spirituality, and always strive to become closer to God. Lighting a second candle represents that effort.

"What we had yesterday is not enough for today," he said.

At last Thursday's ceremony, Wolvovsky received a resounding 'yes' from the crowd when he asked if they were happy during the first day of Hanukkah.

"Now you have to be happier!" Wolvovsky exclaimed.

Lighting the menorah every year honors the Hanukkah miracle that occurred in 165 BCE. After the Temple of Jerusalem was defiled, the Maccabees came back to discover a small jug of oil that was meant to fuel the menorah for only one day, but instead it burned for eight days, which was enough time to process more

olive oil. In Judaism, Wolvovsky explained, the number eight is associated with miracles.

In general, the holiday represents "a victory of light over darkness," Wolvovsky said this week.

"You're taking darkness and transforming it into light," he said.

Traditionally, he said, people gathered around the menorah to watch the candles flicker. But, he added, it was important to also "listen to the story" the candles were telling us.

"Every night has its own special message," he said.

In addition to the lighting, children serenaded residents with "I Have A Little Dreidel" and danced to other Hanukkah songs like "Oh Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah."

Colchester resident Ron Silberman came out to the celebration, despite the freezing temperatures, and said he planned to light the second candle on his own menorah after the event.

Silberman said he was not a member of Wolvovsky's Chabad Jewish Center, but was happy to join the others. Wolvovsky said about half the crowd was, like Silberman, not part of his center, but simply wanted to celebrate the holiday and enjoy the community atmosphere.

After downing some warm latkes and cider, Silberman said he appreciated the celebration being a public and townwide event, and added residents of any religious denomination would have enjoyed the menorah lighting. And in true fashion, the Colchester green was representing

See Hanukkah Page 2

## Hebron Teachers' Pay Frozen for 2011-12

by Lindsay Fetzner

After receiving pay raises of nearly 5 percent each year for close to a decade, a panel of arbitrators has decided to freeze Hebron teachers' pay for the 2011-12 school year.

The decision was reached Nov. 19 by a panel of three arbitrators. At a special meeting Wednesday evening, the Board of Selectmen voted 3-0 (Jeff Watt and Mark Stuart were absent) in support of the award.

On Oct. 30 and 31, an evidentiary hearing was held, where both the Hebron Board of Education and the Hebron Education Association (HEA) presented their arguments and evidence. The arbitrators said in their decision they shall give priority to "the public interest and financial capability of the town."

According to the decision, in the last nine school years, the teachers in Hebron have had raises equaling to more than 4.7 percent in each year. In the last two years, teachers received respective increases of 4.85 percent and 4.9

percent.

The Board of Education presented "a bleak picture" of the financial capability of the town, and presented an analysis of the national and state economy. The panel, according to the decision, found that both the state and national economic situations were relevant to the proceeding.

"We have struggled this past year," Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said Monday. "We're now trying to live a zero percent budget and we know the challenges that we have faced. Starting the school year with a deficit is not something we're used to."

In the decision, the HEA highlighted that Hebron is a "well managed town which practices conservative and prudent planning." In addition, the decision states that the town has a fund balance remaining at or above 10 percent, "a tribute to its conservative budgeting and sound management."

The decision states that, to the Board of Education, public interest equates to maintaining "a high quality education program within the resources available." On the other hand, the HEA argued that public interest is served by "retaining and attracting qualified public school teachers." The HEA continued that a quality public education cannot be achieved and maintained without the highly qualified and talented teachers, who provide the education services, the decision states.

The award decided upon late last month includes salaries and benefits for the teachers over the course of the next three years. Cruz said Monday that she felt the arbitration was a "double-edged sword."

"We value our teachers," Cruz said. "It's been challenging but I think truly it was an independent, truly objective purview." She later added, "It's about two parties with very reasonable, compelling arguments."

In 2011-12, there will be no general wage increases and no step advancement, which moves a teacher to a higher pay tier. The decision states that the question of wage increases in the first year of the contract was "very difficult and argued vigorously by both parties." The Board of Education's last best offer was "a hard salary freeze" and no step advancements, whereas the HEA's last best offer was a 1 percent general wage increase, and no step advancement, the decision states.

On Wednesday evening, Cruz told the Board of Selectmen that it was "absolutely clear" that the arbitration panel thought that even though Hebron is a well-run, fiscally sound community, the town is still financially impacted by the economic situation.

"Just because [Hebron] is well-managed, it shouldn't act against us," Cruz said.

Administrators postponed their negotiated

See Pay Frozen Page 2

### Pay Frozen cont. from Front Page

salary increases for 2010-11 for one year, the decision states, "based on extraordinary economic pressures" facing the school board. In addition, the superintendent's cash compensation was frozen from 2008-09 to 2009-10. During the 2010-11 school year, the decision states that non-certified staff is also taking multiple furlough days.

On Wednesday, co-president of the HEA, Althea Carr, provided a statement from the association in regards to the arbitration decision. Nancy Millerick is the other co-president.

The statement reads: "We are disappointed with the hard freeze in the first year of the contract. We are pleased that the arbitrators acknowledged that no additional salary meant no additional time and modest increases in health insurance. In the course of preparing the case, we realized that although the administrators gave back their base salary this year, they did receive a substantial benefit for deferred compensation."

To maintain the current level of services and cover other fixed costs, the decision states that the Board of Education estimated it would require a 3 percent increase. However, due to lower insurance costs, Cruz said Monday that this figure is actually closer to under 2 percent, due to a reduction in insurance costs. The superintendent was scheduled to present her budget proposal yesterday, Dec. 9, after press time.

"With diminishing resources, it becomes more challenging," Cruz said Monday. "We have a school system that has proven success, but there is a breaking point for everything."

Looking ahead in 2012-13, as part of the recently approved contract, teachers will receive a 0.25 percent general wage increase with one step advancement. For those teachers not at the final step, the step is a 2.57 percent increase. Overall, the total cost is 2.82 percent (2.57 percent plus the 0.25 percent general wage increase).

Board of Education Chairwoman Jane Dube said there are a lot of teachers at the top step — almost 30 percent, Cruz specified.

According to the decision, the school board proposed a 1.5 percent increase for 2012-13, with no step advancement. The HEA, on the other hand, proposed a 0.25 percent general wage increase with a step advancement.

The award of the HEA salary proposal, the decision states, is in the public interest in "attracting and maintaining a valuable and successful teacher complement." The decision states that the denial of a step increase was disfavored, as with each year that goes by without step movement, "those years of experience become further out of line with the salary schedule."

In 2013-14, teachers will see a 1 percent general wage increase with one step advancement. The step advancement for those teachers not at the final step equates to a 1.8 percent increase. The overall increase is 2.80 percent (1 percent plus the 1.8 percent).

According to the decision, the Board of Education's last best offer was a general wage

increase of 1 percent to all steps and degree tracks. In addition, the offer included a one step advancement for those teachers not on the maximum step. The last best offer of the HEA was an advancement of one step for any teacher not at the maximum step. In addition, each step on the 2013-14 salary schedule, including the maximum, would be increased by 1 percent.

According to the decision, the last best offers on the issue were equal, but because an award must be given, the panel awarded the offer to the school board.

Another change to the teachers' contract that will save approximately \$70,000 per year is to the prescription plan. The decision states the change would be minimal for the participants, but the impacts on the cost of the insurance would be "substantial."

Cruz said the teachers will not notice a change in service and the "very minimal impact" would be step therapy.

"We discussed and researched it thoroughly," Cruz said Monday. "It certainly was a worthwhile thing to put on the table."

Cruz told the Board of Selectmen Wednesday evening that there is "virtually no difference" between the two plans in terms of money or in terms of the ease of using the plan and that it was a "huge win" for the Board of Education.

According to the decision, the step therapy requires a doctor to try a generic brand before prescribing a more expensive drug for the same diagnosis. Cruz said if a patient does not want to do the step therapy and wants a name brand prescription, the doctor can do an override prescription.

Overall, Cruz said Monday, "The hard zero [increase] plus the [prescription plan] savings really will make a difference, I think, for the community."

The selectmen agreed.

"When I heard these negotiations were beginning to start up, I was very ready to take a hard stance knowing how hard and the levels of losses other individuals have taken," selectman Dan Larson said. "I was very proud of the work put in by our Board of Education, by our town staff and personally, I think this is as good as we could ever expect."

Selectman Brian O'Connell said he thought it was a "wonderful contract for all parties involved" given the current economic situation, and added that he thought it was a "win-win for the community and the teachers."

Gayle Mulligan drew attention to the hard year the Board of Education faced in passing its budget for this fiscal year, which took three tries. She commended the school board for responding and listening to the public this year by looking for more community input, and hosting several public events for feedback.

"Going through this process, you have done a fabulous job representing the town," Mulligan said. "It will be hard for the teachers but it is a very difficult time for everyone. We don't want to lose the teachers but we want to be financially responsible."



Children danced to "Oh Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah" at a townwide celebration in Colchester last Thursday.

### Hanukkah cont. from Front Page

Christmas as well, with the small gazebo, decorated with garland and wreaths, situated behind the menorah.

Wolvovsky agreed with Silberman, saying, "I think everyone should be celebrating."

"The menorah is a universal symbol of religious liberty," he added.

Overall, he considered it a successful celebration.

"Even though it got cold very quickly, it was

nice," he said.

Wolvovsky said organizing the second-annual event in Colchester was a way for people to "come out with no strings attached," and enjoy the holiday.

"It gives them a warm feeling around Hanukkah time," he said.

For more information about the Chabad Jewish Center and its events, visit [www.ChabadER.com](http://www.ChabadER.com) or call 860-659-2422.

## \$50,000 Possibly Headed AHM's Way

by Lindsay Fetzner

Gov. M. Jodi Rell announced last Thursday that AHM Youth and Family Services is expected to be the recipient of a \$50,000 state grant, pending approval today from the State Bond Commission.

The grant would be used to replace the old roof on a portion of the AHM building, located on Pendleton Drive in Hebron, and possibly install solar panels.

AHM Executive Director Joel Rosenberg said children, teens and adults in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough use the AHM building on a regular basis, resulting in regular wear and tear. And when it comes to any maintenance or improvement, Rosenberg said AHM is responsible for fronting the costs.

Several years ago, Rosenberg said, the AHM building was renovated; several offices were modified on the first floor (and became the counseling center), a new lobby was built and a performing arts hall was added, as well as a teen center and new parking area.

When these renovations were made in 2002-03, Rosenberg said AHM knew that there were several years left in the life of the original roof. In an effort to be conservative with the money that was available from a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and individual private gifts (no tax dollars were used),

Rosenberg said they decided to "get right down to the last day of the life of the roof," and pick up with the project in the future.

Now, Rosenberg said, "The roof is at the end of its life span." And, the youth bureau is now addressing the issue in an effort to be "proactive instead of reactive," he said.

The portion of the roof that would be replaced if the grant were approved is the old roof on top of the original office building, which Rosenberg described as the front section of the community center.

Furthermore, since the renovations in the early 2000s, Rosenberg said thousands of people have come through the building. Because the community uses the building so much, Rosenberg said, AHM has been looking for any types of cost-saving measures and has looked into different types of energy use, including solar panels. Rosenberg added that \$50,000 is a "tremendous amount of money," but the installation of solar panels could potentially be greater than the grant amount. He added that any funds that remain after the roof installation would be put toward energy-saving measures.

Rosenberg said if the grant is approved, a committee will come forward to evaluate several options for savings in energy.

"We are not absolutely sold on solar, but it

is one of the things we are definitely considering," Rosenberg said. "It could very well end up that solar is the top choice, but we want a committee to evaluate all of the different options."

Rosenberg said he feels fortunate and will be very thankful if the grant is approved today.

"I feel very fortunate and we are most appreciative if this does happen," he said. "If this doesn't happen, we go back to the drawing board."

Rosenberg also thanked state Senator Edith Prague for helping to bring the proposal forward.

Prague said it came to her attention that AHM was considering putting solar panels on its roof in an effort to "go green." Having the panels would save the youth bureau "a lot of money in energy," Prague said, and added that she believes that "going green" is the way of the future.

"The less oil that we consume, the better," she said. "It is not only less expensive, but good for the environment."

Prague added that the governor also thought this project was an important initiative for the youth bureau.

"I'm really very excited that the governor thought this was important enough to put on

the Bonding Commission agenda," Prague said. "I certainly appreciate her [possibly] granting AHM this money so that they can do this project."

Rell addressed the importance of bureaus across the state such as AHM and their impact on the community in regards to helping children, young people and parents.

"Youth service bureaus like AHM have long been a critical part of the social services network in Connecticut and I am pleased that the state is able to help upgrade the headquarters of this valued community institution," Rell said in a press release last week.

She continued, "With its mission of helping children, young people and parents to reach their maximum potential, AHM helps thousands of people every year. These clients come from all backgrounds and all walks of life. I know they value the services AHM provides and the hard work of its staff."

Looking ahead, Rosenberg said if the bureau is the recipient of the grant, it will be "very, very careful and conservative with how the funds are going to be used."

"We want to maximize every dollar that may be available," he said. "Chances like this don't come around very often."

# Academic Achievements Lead to Honors for Two Portland Schools

by Claire Michalewicz

Last week, two Portland schools learned they were being honored for their academic achievements. Portland High School has been ranked second in the state for improvements on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, while Brownstone Intermediate School has been nominated to apply to be a Blue Ribbon School.

PHS Principal Andrea Lavery said she received a letter last week from ConnCAN, a think tank which aims to improve the quality of education in Connecticut.

The group publishes a booklet called *The State of Public Education* every January. As a Top 10 School for Improvement, PHS will be featured in the January 2011 edition, Lavery said.

"We had a large jump between our 2009 and 2010 scores," Lavery said.

PHS students improved most dramatically in reading and writing, Lavery explained, which she said was the result of school-wide initiatives to get students reading more. In every single class, even physical education, teachers are giving writing assignments, she said.

In ninth- and 10th-grade English classes, students have free reading time every Friday, during which they can read whatever they want and discuss the books with the class, Lavery said. And for half an hour every month, she said, the entire school drops whatever they're doing

to read books.

The letter announcing Portland's ranking explains that ConnCAN rates schools based on five factors – performance gains, low-income student performance, African-American student performance, Hispanic student performance and overall school improvements.

"We're pretty excited," Lavery said. She said CAPT scores have been improving steadily for as long as she's been at PHS, since 2007. The score increase in the last year was especially dramatic, she said, improving 13 percent between 2009 and 2010.

In addition, she explained, the science department had revamped its curriculum, making students better prepared for the science portion of the CAPT.

For overall performance, Lavery said, PHS was ranked 31st of 164 high schools in the state.

"It's great news and it's a great achievement for PHS to receive this recognition," said Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen. The ranking of 31st put PHS in the top 19 percent of high schools, and most of the high schools that performed better than PHS, she said, were from wealthier districts that usually outperform Portland, she said.

Meanwhile, BIS Principal Laurie Boske announced her school has been nominated to apply to be recognized as a Blue Ribbon School.

Run by the federal Department of Education, the Blue Ribbon Schools program recognizes schools "that are either high-performing or have improved student achievement to high levels, especially among disadvantaged students," according to its website.

BIS is one of only four elementary schools in Connecticut that is being encouraged to apply, based on students' performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test. The school's application is due in February, Boske said, and Blue Ribbons will be awarded next September. Once a school has been nominated, receiving the award is "kind of a given."

"I wasn't even sure it was real," Boske said, explaining that the nomination had come as a surprise to her. "We are excited."

Boske presented the news about BIS to the Board of Education at its Tuesday meeting, where she also explained her plans for funding the DARE program at the school.

Recently, the Saint Clements Foundation, which funds the program, told the school that they were withdrawing some of their funding because of financial difficulties. Saint Clements will still host the DARE graduation and provide T-shirts, workbooks and food, but the school district will have to pick up the rest of the cost.

Boske explained that the DARE program

usually costs over \$5,000, but the three police officers who teach the program had offered to only charge the school for the hours they worked, rather than for the full four hours a day stipulated in their contract. Boske said she was consulting with the officers and teachers to schedule classes to best use the officers' time.

Taking into account the contributions from Saint Clements, she said, the total cost for the school system to cover would be about \$3,015. The Board of Education voted to take the funds left over from the BIS roof repair in October and use them to fund the program.

The school board also approved two out-of-state field trips for language classes at the middle school and high school. One trip, scheduled for February, will bring middle school French students to Quebec City, while the other will take middle and high school Spanish students to New York City in April to learn about Latino culture.

Also at the meeting, Doyen announced that she was donating \$2,200 from her salary towards afterschool programs in town. Doyen had announced earlier this year she would donate some of her salary back to the school system, to help with budget constraints.

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 4, at 7 p.m. in the high school library, 95 High St.

# McKinney Retiring as East Hampton Probate Judge

by Claire Michalewicz

When the redesigned probate court system opens in January, East Hampton residents will see a lot of changes – a new court and a new judge. Anne McKinney, East Hampton's judge of probate, is retiring from the post she's held for the past 16 years.

As part of a statewide restructuring of the probate court system, East Hampton's court is consolidating with the courts in Portland, Marlborough and East Haddam. The four courts will be located in Marlborough, with newly-elected judge Jennifer Berkenstock presiding.

McKinney, 58, decided not to run for judge in the new district because when the new districts were being created, she advocated to keep East Hampton's court on the east side of the river. McKinney, a Democrat who in most elections ran unopposed with Republican endorsement, said she didn't want anyone to think she had been trying to keep the court local for her own benefit.

"My thing was, I wanted to keep the courts usable by the people who use them," said McKinney, pointing out that most people who use the probate court are facing a crisis, like a death in the family, and she wanted services to be accessible and local.

Plus, McKinney said, since some of the neighboring towns had younger, newer judges, she wanted to give them a chance to run and serve.

McKinney first ran for judge in 1994, after former Governor Bill O'Neill and longtime East Hampton tax collector Marie Durkin encouraged her to. Before running, McKinney was managing properties and working with minority groups in Hartford, and had previously been an elementary school teacher.

"I felt it was time to give something back to the town of East Hampton," McKinney said.

In the four terms she served, McKinney said she has met some "wonderful" people, both her clients and the attorneys who work with them. In addition, she said, she had learned a lot.

"You have to be very compassionate to be in this job," McKinney said. She said being a judge wasn't always easy – some of the hardest cases she handled were making decisions to termi-

nate someone's parental rights, or to try to execute an estate without creating a rift between the surviving family members.

"It would be very sad sometimes," she said. "People grieve differently, and come into court looking at things differently."

The goal, she said, was always to "see that they walked out as a family entity."

McKinney said that while she's already moved her files into the Marlborough court, she still has a lot of work to do to make sure the court is ready for when Berkenstock is sworn in Jan. 5. She said she wants to make sure Berkenstock can focus on serving people, rather than on organizing the court.

McKinney said she has always been amazed by how many people have written back to her after meeting her in court, to thank her for her help. As her retirement draws closer, McKinney said she's received messages of support from people in East Hampton, including friends, town officials and people whose cases she handled in court.

"Those are the ones that really warm my heart," she said.

It's the people she met in her work, McKinney said, that she'll miss most when she leaves her job. Last month, McKinney's friends, clients and colleagues hosted a retirement party for her at Angelico's Lake House.

"The party was a way of recognizing her achievements," said Paul Puzzo, one of the organizers of the retirement party. That evening, he said, over 200 people stopped by to see McKinney, and probate court administrator Paul Knierim and state Senator Eileen Daily gave her awards to honor her work.

"You can't live in East Hampton and not know the McKinneys," he said. Puzzo said that while Anne's husband, Red, was the more visible of the pair (as he is an official town meeting moderator, and also emcees the Old Home Days Parade every July), Anne made a lasting impact on the community through her work as a judge.

"She created an office that was respectful to people's needs," Puzzo said. He explained that he came to know McKinney better when his



**Anne McKinney is retiring after 16 years as East Hampton's probate judge. The East Hampton court is merging with the Portland, East Haddam and Marlborough probate courts next month.**

own family was going through a crisis, and McKinney helped them.

"She's just a genuinely nice individual," Puzzo said. "I've never heard anyone say anything bad about Anne."

Knierim said McKinney is "really the epitome of a probate judge."

"All of us in the probate court system are certainly going to miss her," Knierim said. Over the years, McKinney went "above and beyond" her duties at the East Hampton court, and served on numerous committees and in the statewide probate assembly, he said. Knierim said McKinney has always been concerned about making the court as easy as possible for people to use.

"She's a person who's always willing to give her energy to the betterment of the system to help people," Knierim said.

Though she's leaving her job at the court, McKinney said, "I still have a lot to do." With more free time, she said she hopes to return to her business, and spend more time with her husband and their children and grandchildren.

"You move on to a new adventure," McKinney said. "We all have to do that."

McKinney said she was satisfied with the work she put in as a judge, and said she felt Berkenstock will be a capable replacement.

"I've tried to make sure it was a positive experience, and hopefully it will continue to be that way," she said.



Portland residents gathered last Friday for a tree-lighting ceremony and other holiday activities like caroling. Musicians from the Portland High School band, pictured left, came out to perform, despite the chilly temperatures, and kids also visited with Santa, right, who handed out candy canes.



## Portland Gets Ready for the Holidays

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland is ready for the holidays, after the town tree on the front lawn of Brownstone Intermediate School was lit in a festive ceremony last Friday evening, Dec. 3. Several dozen people, including many children, gathered on the school's lawn to sing along with Christmas carols, meet Santa and watch as the tree was lit up.

Members from the Portland High School band, under the direction of teacher Kristin Novak, played a variety of Christmas songs, both traditional and modern, starting out with "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," and switching to "Jolly Old St. Nick" as Santa arrived in a Portland fire truck.

After distributing candy canes and posing for photos, Santa briefly addressed the crowd to wish them a merry Christmas.

"It was great to see everybody in town, but I have to get back to the North Pole and feed the reindeer," he said. He did, however, promise to be back in Portland on Christmas Eve. Santa then climbed into the waiting fire truck, to be chauffeured back to the North Pole.

Seven-year-old Grace Darby got a candy cane from Santa, and explained that while she hadn't had a chance to speak with him at the event, she was hoping for an American Girl doll for Christmas.

Emma Flaum, 6, was less specific in her request — all she wants from Santa, she said, is "whatever he wants to give me."

Many of those in the attendance said it was an annual tradition for them.

Grace's father Chris said the family usually came to either the tree-lighting ceremony or the holiday parade. Chris said he liked seeing so many people from the community gathering for an event like this.

"We live in the neighborhood," said Kim Maruschock, who brought her two daughters, Annabelle and Cassidy, to see the festivities. The ceremony and the attendance, Maruschock said, were better than in previous years.

Parks and Recreation Director Sean Dwyer said this was the first year the annual ceremony was held on a Friday rather than a Sunday, and he thought the change was a good one. Atten-

dance this year was higher than usual, which he said was probably because people were more likely to come to an event like this after work on a Friday.

Dwyer set out boxes to collect donations of toys and food for local families during the holiday season. "We try to do that for all our events, especially the ones we don't charge for," he said.

Flute player Hayley Schmidt explained that the musicians who played mostly came from the school's chapter of Tri-M, a music honor society. Their performance, she said, was a success, helped by the temperature not being too cold.

After Santa left, Senior Center Assistant Director Carol Revicki selected one audience member to flick the switch that turned on the white lights on the tree. Bridget Reddington, 10, was selected in the drawing, and stood next to Dwyer as he led the audience in counting down from 10.

When Bridget flipped the switch, the lights on the tree came on, and the audience applauded and cheered.

"It was really fun," said Bridget, a student at BIS, who said this was her first year coming to the tree lighting.

"I've come since I was a kid," said Nancy King, who brought her 3-year-old son Danny, who said he enjoyed getting a candy cane from Santa. King said that she was glad the temperature was in the 30s, and not as cold as it had been in previous years.

Afterward, the Parks and Recreation Commission offered free hot chocolate and cookies in the school cafeteria, and gave attendees the chance to work on a variety of holiday crafts, including coloring, beading bracelets, and making paper chains for hanging on Christmas trees.

"I think it went well," Dwyer said. He thanked the many people who made the event possible, including the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Portland Volunteer Fire Department, Novak and her musicians for providing the evening's entertainment, and the volunteers who helped with the lights and sound system.

## Andover Selectmen Get Look at Website

by Lindsay Fetzner

After a presentation unveiling a new town website, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved an "under construction launch" of the site at a special meeting Monday evening.

"We are appreciative of all of the work the Website Committee has done," said First Selectman Bob Burbank. "It looks very good."

In May of this year, the selectmen appointed a Website Committee, charged with constructing a new website for the town. Eight people, along with four alternates, were appointed to the committee.

Website Committee Chairwoman Debra Toupen presented the website to the selectmen, along with committee member Jay Kamins, who Toupen said provided the majority of the design work. The site features the backdrop of the picturesque Andover Lake surrounded by trees, along with rotating pictures of residents and scenery, a stark contrast to the former town website. Depending on when one visits the site, a rumbling brook, a child sitting with Santa Claus or a young athlete with a painted face may be viewed.

Toupen told the selectmen Monday evening that the committee is approximately 90 percent complete with updating all of the committee and board information available to the public on the site.

"Specifically, what we've tried to do here is give information to people that is going to be the most popular," Kamins told the board.

On the bottom of the homepage, Kamins pointed out "Town Resources" and "Town Hall Online," which he said could be changed seasonally. "Town Resources" includes information on the Andover Lake and beach, the public library as well as some history of the town.

Under "Town Hall Online," residents can find the hours of the building, staff members and the option to pay taxes online. Taxes, Kamins said, are one example of a link that could be changed seasonally.

Two other components to the website that Kamins highlighted were information on the schools in the district, including RHAM, on the left-hand side and an "Andover Spotlight" on the opposite side. Kamins said the spotlight could be used to advertise big events in town that would interest residents. Currently, there is a picture of participants from the Annual Literacy Walk, which took place back in April.

Kamins, along with Toupen, also went through the multitude of tabs at the top of the website including "About Andover," "Services and Government," "Calendar" and "News," among others, and what information it provides to the public.

For example, under the "About Andover" tab, visitors can find an introduction by town historian Scott Yeomans as well as other historical information regarding the town.

"He has done an incredible timeline history of Andover," Kamins said of Yeomans. "And we've included that here."

Under the "News" section, visitors will find the option to access meeting minutes, something that essentially led to the shutting down of the former town website.

At a March meeting of the Board of Selectmen, where forming a Website Committee was discussed, Burbank confirmed the town had an official website in the past. A committee that was established in August 2003 ran the site for the town. Nearly one year later, in May 2004, the website went public.

However, when the state legislature passed a law, effective Oct. 1, 2008, regarding meeting minutes, the town ran into difficulties. The legislation required that meeting minutes be posted on a municipal website within a week after the meeting was held.

Due to the large number of volunteers in town, Burbank said it was impractical for the website to continue. Most of the volunteers, he said at the time, go to work everyday and mail their minutes in. And, if they were required to post those to the Internet, Burbank said his fear was that many of the volunteers would simply stop volunteering.

As a result, the former town website, [andoverct.org](http://andoverct.org), became unofficial by a vote of the selectmen. The committee was also disbanded as well.

"Meeting minutes were a problem for the old site," Kamins pointed out. "We are trying to put together a simple system where the members of each committee would upload drafts or minutes to the website."

However, Kamins added that it must be clear who has permission to upload the minutes and who has immediate access to them. Kamins said if the chair of the committee/board was authorized to upload them, "that would streamline things." But, before the website is officially launched, Kamins said this would issue would be worked out.

Kamins also added that the committee is still trying to figure out what the exact URL for the website will be. Currently, the old town website can still be viewed at [andoverct.org](http://andoverct.org), whereas the new website is located at [andoverct.info](http://andoverct.info).

"The intention is that the old website comes down entirely and [the new site] replaces it,"

Kamins said, for a "complete replacement" of the former website.

Currently, the new website is on a "staging server" and is not live, Kamins said.

Selectmen praised Toupen and Kamins for their work on the site. Selectwoman Linda Knowlton said the site was "very, very user-friendly." Selectman David Ziff agreed, and added that the site was "really friendly to get into."

Ziff also made a few suggestions for the website, including the addition of police news and announcements of road construction. He too thought that the committee should consider adding a page that lists the local churches in town, as well as those in the surrounding communities. Toupen said it would be a great tool for people who move into the area and want to know where the closest church of their particular denomination was located.

"We are talking about a lot of different ways to engage the community," Kamins said. "That is critical because [the website] needs to reflect the people here."

Kamins later added, "What we've tried above all else is to make a foundation upon which we can build on."

In an effort to consider issues such as posting minutes, Burbank said the Website Committee and the Board of Selectmen should have a joint meeting in the future. Burbank suggested going through the website "piece by piece," giving the BOS an opportunity to provide further feedback and suggestions on the site.

The next meeting of the BOS is slated for Wednesday, Jan. 5, at 7 p.m. in the Town Office Building, 17 School Rd.



Two teams, the Rock 'n Robots and the Biomedical Brainiacs, made up of Jack Jackter Intermediate School students, won awards at the 12 annual FIRST Lego League robotics regional competition on Nov. 20. Above from left are fourth graders Hunter Simone and John Trusz, members of the Rock 'n Robots, and at right are fifth-graders Zach Simone and Cooper Rhodes working on their robot.



## Colchester JJIS Students Off to Lego Championships

by Katy Nally

Mr. Roboto is saying much more than “domo arigato” to two groups of Jack Jackter Intermediate School students, who won awards at the FIRST Lego League (FLL) robotics regional competition on Nov. 20.

The Rock 'n Robots, comprising of six fourth-graders, and the Biomedical Brainiacs, made up of nine fifth-graders, will now advance to the state finals, the 12th annual Connecticut First Lego League Competition, which will begin this Sunday, Dec. 12, at 8 a.m., at Central Connecticut State University.

Both were rookie teams coached by Colchester resident Mark Simone, whose two boys, Hunter and Zach, participated.

After competing against 22 other middle school teams from across the state, the Biomedical Brainiacs received the Robot Design Award. The Rock 'n Robots were chosen at random to attend the state finals, but also won the Against All Odds Award after experiencing technical difficulties during their skit performance, Mark said.

Event coordinator Mike Gentry explained the random drawing was designed “so that rookies have a chance to go to the state tournament.”

This year’s theme was biomedical engineering, and teams were asked to create robots that

could “repair injuries, overcome genetic predispositions, and maximize the body’s potential,” according to the FLL website.

For example, robots were tasked with picking up a Lego “pacemaker” and dropping it into a “chest.” Students also programmed their robots to push a lever with a specific amount of force to dispense the correct “pills,” Mike said. If the robots pushed too hard, the wrong pills would drop out. The missions had to be completed within two-and-a-half minutes, Mark said.

The projects were judged on their research, innovative solutions, teamwork and creative presentation.

Teams were also asked to create an educational skit. The Rock 'n Robots focused on carpal tunnel syndrome, where Hunter acted as an aging guitar player feeling some strain on his hands and fingers.

“The fourth-graders’ greatness came with the creativity in their presentation,” Mark said.

The Biomedical Brainiacs opted for a skit about hearing loss.

Both the Colchester teams went up against stiff competition, Mike said, as many participants were veteran robot-builders.

“It’s a tournament with experienced teams

and experienced coaches,” Mike said this week. “So for Mark’s [fifth-grade] team to win that award was quite a feather in their hat.”

Mike explained there were five major awards given at the November competition: robot performance, robot design, teamwork, project presentation and an overall champion award.

“They really did a nice job on the engineering and programming aspects,” Mark added.

Zach said his favorite aspect of the competition was programming the robot to complete different missions like grabbing, pushing and pulling Lego pieces. The fifth-graders programmed their robot to be able to accomplish every task presented, although the two-and-a-half minute time span was not long enough for their robot to carry out each mission.

Zach said he and his team planned to implement a different strategy this weekend, and only focus on the missions their robot was able to carry out perfectly.

The two Colchester teams were organized by parents and formed in September, which, Mike said, was somewhat of a late start. Still, several JJIS students showed an interest in competing against their peers, and soon Mark had 15 kids – enough for two teams.

Mark, who said he doesn’t have a professional background in robotics or engineering, said he approached the position with a “sports-coaching mentality.”

“I spent a lot of time on YouTube trying to figure it out,” he said.

Besides learning the ins and outs of robots, Mike said student participants practice “real problem solving, working together as a team and being nice to each other.”

Zach said teamwork was critical for him and his fellow Brainiacs.

“Sometimes we disagreed with each other, and we had to rethink things,” he said. “Teamwork was the key in this competition.”

Looking ahead, both Zach and Hunter said they were excited for tomorrow’s competition, and also planned to compete again next year, no matter the outcome.

“It was definitely exciting,” Zach said about the regional event.

Doors open for competing teams this Saturday at 8 a.m., and an opening ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. The event is in the Kaiser Gym at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. For more information about the competition, visit [firstlegoleague.org](http://firstlegoleague.org).

## Colchester Selectwoman Questions Police Commission Setup

by Katy Nally

The Police Commission was again a topic for selectmen at their meeting last Thursday, Dec. 2.

However, other items were also discussed. Director of Facilities Greg Plunkett brought up a new Parks and Recreation Department position and First Selectman Gregg Schuster closed out the meeting with a recap of his first year as the head of Colchester.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle began the meeting by introducing an addition to the agenda, which opened discussion about how selectman Stan Soby had acted as a non-voting chair of the Police Commission at its meeting last month.

Coyle raised several questions. The first asked that the town receive a legal opinion as to whether or not a selectman can act as ex-officio chair of the Police Commission, based on the town’s charter, ordinances and state statutes. Secondly, she asked if the Board of Selectmen had to vote to appoint a selectman as an ex-officio member of the committee.

Soby is currently the selectman liaison to the Police Commission, and facilitated the commission’s meeting last month, after former chairman Glenn Morron was not re-appointed by selectmen. There are also two new commission members, but a chair has not been decided.

Coyle noted there is a difference between a liaison and an ex-officio member.

“Some of this may just hinge on terminology,” Soby pointed out.

Lastly, Coyle asked what happened to Morron’s responsibilities as liaison to the Department of Public Safety and State Police.

Schuster fielded the last question, saying the town’s contract with the State Police and Department of Public Safety provides the chief executive officer (first selectman) “reasonable access” to the chain of command.

“You’re not given any particular powers at all,” he said.

However, because the first two questions required legal opinions, and Schuster said he hadn’t had enough time to formulate an opinion on the matter, the board postponed further discussion. Schuster said he would like to digest Coyle’s questions, to be able to have a “reasonable and intelligent” discussion on the matter at the next selectmen meeting.

Schuster promised however, to “immediately send it to town counsel,” to receive a timeframe and cost estimate.

Coyle said “doing the right thing” should outweigh the legal costs.

“I think it’s imperative to get these questions answered,” she said.

\*\*\*

After hearing from Plunkett, the board unanimously voted to create the full-time recreation specialist position, at 37 and a half hours per week.

A part-time position, at 30 hours, is already part of the Parks and Rec. Department’s program fund, but funding for the extra seven and

a half hours will come from the former Parks and Rec. director’s salary.

According to his memo, Plunkett said the “recreation side” of Parks and Rec. “has been short-staffed.” He went on to say a self-sustaining program fund, which provides activities and staff salaries through fees, is not possible with the present staff.

“We will continue to raise fees for programs as much as we can, knowing there is a point of diminishing returns,” Plunkett wrote to Schuster. “There appears to be interest and support from the community but there is only so much the present staff can do. To offer additional programming requires more staff.”

Plunkett said an ad-hoc committee, made up of two members from each of the boards of selectmen, education and finance, would look into creating a town-wide services department to merge senior, youth and social services. The committee would present a recommendation in late winter, so the recreation specialist position would expire on June 30 of next year.

Schuster explained the services department would provide “a single point of entry” for residents.

\*\*\*

Lastly, Schuster gave his “state of the town” address, to recap his first year as first selectman.

“I am happy to report the state of the town is good,” Schuster read from his statement.

He touched on the difficulties in creating this

year’s budget with little Grand List growth and an unforeseen drop in revenue. However, he noted the town budget is less than it was five years ago. Still the \$47.62 million budget voters passed on May 11 included a 6 percent tax increase. The total spending package showed a 2.98 percent increase over the 2009-10 adopted budget.

He also noted upcoming projects like the sewer and water expansion and the renovation of the streetscape on Lebanon Avenue.

Schuster reported the town’s relationship with its six unions “remains good,” and added he was poised to finalize a contract with the new library union.

He closed out by saying there are still “challenges we face,” including a “massive budget deficit” at the state level and infrastructure projects that haven’t been “appropriately funded for some time.”

Still, he said, “I am confident Colchester is up to the task. As we have demonstrated so many times before, our community will make smart and thoughtful decisions about our future and we will continue to have the support of the outstanding staff members and volunteers that have helped make Colchester the great town it is today.”

\*\*\*

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, Dec. 16, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

# Fitness Center Celebrates One-Year Anniversary in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

Abrego says he has a different approach to fitness. His business, 1on1getfit, bills itself as "The Only Elite Fitness Studio in Town." 1on1getfit, which recently celebrated its first year of business, offers people individualized training, to specifically target what clients' bodies need, he said.

"I want to find out what your body wants to do," Abrego said.

Many people who want to get in shape, Abrego said, focus on losing weight, rather than looking at the amount of muscle and fat in their body. To help them with this, Abrego analyzes each new client's body type, and has them complete a survey about the foods they like. Abrego then uses the Apex Fitness system to create a list of meal suggestions, to help them lose weight and build muscle.

Clients visit 1on1getfit for four one-hour sessions a week, two working with Abrego and two working out on their own. The workout routine has six steps, with each step lasting four weeks. He monitors clients' progress along the way, so they can see how their bodies are changing, he said.

Abrego said he doesn't beat people up to get them in shape, but aims to educate them about diet and exercise so they're able to use that knowledge for the rest of their lives.

"If everybody was like that, we'd be out of business," he joked.

Abrego opened his gym in November 2009. Before that, he worked as a professional bodybuilder for several years. He had been working as a trainer at a gym in Hamden when he met a bodybuilder, and asked him to help him with training. Bodybuilding, he said, taught him even more about exercise and nutrition.

Abrego, who lives in town with his wife, said he now has about 20 clients. Some of them had worked with him before he opened the studio, he said, and others have started after driving by his business on Main Street, or from hearing about him from a friend or family member.

His clients have been telling Abrego that he's been building up a reputation throughout East

Hampton. Just this week, he said, one client told him his nickname in town was "Mr. Fitness."

To honor his clients' successes, and to motivate others, Abrego has a "Wall of Fame" in his studio, with photos and personal stories from clients who have worked out with him. Eventually, his goal is to have the entire wall covered, he said.

Abrego said he likes to surprise his clients, and keep them interested in what they're doing by giving them a different exercise routine every time they come in.

"You never know what kind of training you're gonna do with me," he said.

Pam Carullo, one of Abrego's clients, said she loves working with him. Carullo said she's been coming to 1on1getfit for nearly a year, and has noticed a huge difference in her fitness and self-confidence.

Carullo has worked with four other personal trainers, she said, and said Abrego is the most experienced and helpful.

"He's wonderful," Carullo said. "I have only good things to say about him."

Angela Thomas, another client, said she's referred colleagues and family members to Abrego, and she said they've been as pleased with their results as she is. She said Abrego knows what each client's needs are, and knows how to motivate them.

Thomas said she feels at ease at 1on1getfit, which initially surprised her.

"I personally thought I'd never feel comfortable working out with a guy and in a place with all these windows," Thomas said.

Dana Flanagan, who's been working out with Abrego for over a year, said working with Abrego has gotten her in better physical shape than anything else she's tried.

"He's very energetic, he's a great motivator, he's a very positive person," Flanagan said. Abrego's workouts, she said, involved exercises she couldn't have developed on her own. And what she especially likes about the studio is that Abrego is able to tailor the workouts for both men and women, at different fitness levels,



**Eddie Abrego recently celebrated the one-year anniversary of his business, 1on1getfit, a fitness center located at 95 Main St., in the Village Center.**

Flanagan added.

Abrego mostly runs 1on1getfit by himself, and he said that while it can be time-consuming, he loves it. It's important for him to have just as much energy at 8 p.m., when the studio closes, that he has at 7:30 in the morning when his first client comes in, he said.

Abrego said his favorite part of working in the fitness business is seeing his clients become happier and healthier as they get in better shape.

"People don't come in here happy," he said. "I wish they did, but they don't." But after eating better and exercising, he said, "People get their life back, and they feel so much better."

Abrego said sessions with him cost \$50, though he offers packages and discounts that are a better value.

1on1getfit is located at 95 Main St. in the Village Center. It can be reached at 860-798-3314, or at [www.1on1getfit.net](http://www.1on1getfit.net).

## Unoccupied Home in Colchester Catches Fire

by Katy Nally

An attached shed on a turn-of-the-century home on Mill Street caught fire Sunday, Dec. 5, Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department First Assistant Chief Don Lee said this week.

Lee said the home had been unoccupied since October, and no one was there at the time of the blaze, which occurred around 4:15 p.m.

When firefighters arrived at the structure fire, Lee said the 12-by-16 foot shed, which was part of the first floor of the two-story house, was "well-involved in fire" and it had begun to threaten the main back wall of the house.

Lee described the residence as an "old mill home" that had balloon framing, so if the fire had caught the main wall, the entire structure could have gone up in flames, he said. He ex-

plained the old-style construction provides no fire stops all the way from the basement to the attic.

After about 35 minutes, CHVFD personnel, as well as firefighters from Hebron, Bozrah, Salem and Gardner Lake, had put out the fire, and the scene was cleared after about three hours.

"The guys did a heck of a job," Lee said. One firefighter was treated for a minor hand injury, Lee said.

While CHVFD was on the scene, Marlborough personnel manned the Colchester quarters, Lee said.

The cause and the origin of Sunday's fire remain under investigation by the Colchester and state fire marshals and the State Police.

Lee said he did not want to speculate as to potential causes. He added that a structure fire in Colchester was "unusual."

## Hebron Car Crash Sends One to Hospital

by Lindsay Fetzner

A two-car accident last Wednesday near the intersection of routes 85 and 94 sent one Hebron resident to the hospital, State Police said.

At approximately 1:26 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 1, John Rivoso, 19, of Hebron, was traveling southbound on Route 85, approaching the intersection with Route 94. State Police said Rivoso failed to "properly stop" at the intersection of routes 85 and 94, and proceeded out into the path of Kathleen Taylor, 22, of Hebron, who was traveling eastbound on Route 85. Taylor

struck Rivoso in the intersection, State Police said.

Rivoso was listed as having a "possible head injury" and was transported by Hebron ambulance to Hartford Hospital. As of this past Wednesday, Dec. 8, Hartford Hospital staff said Rivoso was not listed as a patient. According to State Police, Taylor was not injured in the accident.

The 2001 CLK-Class Mercedes Rivoso was driving had damage on the entire left side, State Police said, and Taylor's 2002 Honda Accord had front-end damage.

## East Hampton Police News

11/24: Kevin Gayeski, 23, of 26 Mohawk Trail, was arrested for following too close, speeding, DUI and evading responsibility by leaving the scene of a motor vehicle accident, East Hampton Police said.

11/27: Terry Scott Doughty, 52, of Markham Meadows, was arrested for failure to drive right, DUI, possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and drinking while driving, police said.

11/27: Robert B. Roy, 51, of 20 Spice Hill Dr., was arrested for DUI, failure to drive right and failure to carry motor vehicle insurance, police said.

11/29: Michael J. Bartolotta, 33, of 83

Midwood Farm Rd., was arrested for criminal mischief, breach of peace and operating a motor vehicle under suspension, police said.

11/30: Three 17-year-olds, two from East Hampton and one from Portland, were issued summons for third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, police said.

11/30: A 17-year-old from East Hampton was arrested for third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

12/1: Michael F. Bernard, 24, of 29 North Main St., was arrested for sixth-degree larceny, police said.

## Colchester Police News

12/1: Anthony Brennan, 59, of 3 Carolina Dr., Oakdale, was charged with criminal violation of a protective order, State Police said.

12/3: Alysia Langworthy, 23, of 43 Chestnut Dr., was charged with possession of heroin, State Police said.

12/3: On Dec. 2 between 7 and 10:30 a.m. a residence on Reservoir Road was broken into, State Police said. An Xbox 360 and several games were taken. Anyone with more information is asked to contact Trooper Rashaad Carter at Troop K, 860-537-7500.

12/3: Alan Crabbe, 44, of 30 Mountford St.,

Hartford, was charged with third-degree burglary, first-degree larceny and first-degree criminal mischief, Colchester Police said.

12/4: Danielle Marholin, 21, of 321 Sterling Rd., Sterling, was charged with DUI, State Police said.

12/5: Nolan Mikhail, 20, of 4 Algonquin Trl., Moodus, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, disorderly conduct and interfering with police, State Police said.

12/6: Trisha Grimshaw, 43, of 49 Tuckie Rd., Windham, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

## Hebron Police News

12/2: At approximately 2:45 a.m., Country Farms on Route 85 was burglarized and about 40 cartons of cigarettes were stolen. The case is under investigation and anyone with more information is asked to contact Troop K at 860-537-7500.

## Portland Police News

12/5: A 17-year-old male was arrested for speeding, Portland Police said.

## Marlborough Police News

12/2: Fred Hightower Jr., 46, of 231 Ellington Rd., East Hartford was charged with DWI, State Police said.

12/6: Robert Francks, 50, of 86 Jones Hollow Rd., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and DUI, State Police said.

# Obituaries

## East Hampton

### Marilyn Gertrude Smith

Marilyn Gertrude Smith, 83, of East Hampton, widow of the late Gordon W. Smith, died Sunday, Dec. 5 at Apple Rehab in Colchester. Born Oct. 4, 1927 in Malden, MA, she was the daughter of the late Lincoln and Gertrude (McGredy) Pelley.

Marilyn was a devoted mother and grandmother who was especially fond of her horse and dogs. She enjoyed going to Diamond Pizza in East Hampton every day for lunch until her husband passed away in 2004. Marilyn was a resident of East Hampton since 1952.

She is survived by her sons, Gary R. Smith of Middle Haddam, Brett D. Smith of East Hampton and Eric B. Smith of Colchester; daughters, Melanie E. Poirier of East Hampton and Irene Reardon of New York; and many loving grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her two sons, Brian and Craig, and her brother, Ronald Pelley.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to Apple Rehab of Colchester and Masonicare Hospice for the loving care they provided during Marilyn's illness.

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

Burial will also be private in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Recreation Department at Apple Rehab of Colchester, 36 Broadway, Colchester, CT 06415.

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.

## Colchester

### George Monk

George C. Monk, 94, of Middletown, and formerly of Colchester, widower of the late Sylvia (Goldberg) Monk, passed away Wednesday, Nov. 24, at Hartford Hospital.

Born March 30, 1916 in Providence, RI, he was a son of the late Ernest and Ena (Hoag) Monk.

On Aug. 13, 1936, he and Sylvia were married in New York City and shared 63 years of marriage before she predeceased him on Jan. 23, 2000.

Mr. Monk served proudly with the U.S. Navy during World War II and went on to work as a district manager for NY Bell Telephone for 33 years before his retirement.

In his spare time, he was an avid reader and will be remembered for his kind, gentle and unique spirit.

He is survived by two children, Ena Monk of East Haddam and Stephen Monk of Seattle, WA; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his wife, he was predeceased by two grandchildren and his four siblings.

Services with burial in the Shailorville-Tylerville Cemetery, Haddam, will be private.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

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

## Salem

### Paula Metz

Born in Boston, MA on February 27, 1945, Paula Metz passed away on Thursday, Dec. 2, after a long illness.

Paula was raised in Old Saybrook where she later worked as a salon owner and beautician for 45 years, over which time she touched many heads and hearts and leaves many, many close friends. Paula was an avid sports fan and enjoyed playing golf and was a true fan of the Red Sox, Dolphins and NASCAR.

She so loved her family and is survived by her loving husband, Ray of Salem; two sisters, Pauline Greeney of Deep River and Geraldine Cathcart of Beverly, MA; a brother, David Dowd of New York City; three stepchildren, Cynthia Harger and her husband Dave of Middletown, Karen Smith and her husband Brian and a son Ray, all of Chester, SC; five beautiful grandchildren, Kassandra, D.J., Victoria, Sarina and London "Brooke," along with two godchildren, Dana and Lindsay Newcomb of Westbrook.

Funeral arrangements will be private per her request.

Donations can be made in her name to the Valley Shore YMCA Cancer Survivor program, 201 Spencer Plains Rd., Westbrook, CT, or the Valley Shore Animal Welfare League, P.O. Box 1134 Westbrook, CT 06498.

## Portland

### Robert Edward Forsberg

Robert Edward Forsberg, 79, of Portland, husband of Julie (Kundolf) Forsberg for 56 years, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 1, at Hartford Hospital after a brief illness. Born in Middletown on March 28, 1931, he was the son of the late Edward A. and Abbie Deming (Hubbard) Forsberg.

Bob grew up in Portland, attending local schools and also attended Bryant College in Rhode Island. He served in the U.S. Army deploying to Korea from 1952 to 1954. After returning from Korea, he and Julie married that year and went on to raise four sons. Bob worked as a Leaver's Lace Designer at Wilcox Lace in Middletown and worked at Pratt & Whitney in North Haven for 36 years. In 1981, Bob and Julie relocated from East Haven to Portland and resided there since.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his sons, Robert L. Forsberg and his wife, Robin Christensen, Edward W. Forsberg, Richard K. Forsberg and his wife, Betty Maars, and Marty G. Forsberg; the delight of his life, his granddaughter, Ashlie Rose Forsberg; his sister-in-law, Betsey Garcia; his niece, Anna Huie and a great-niece, Taylor Huie.

Funeral services were held Monday, Dec. 6 at the Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown with the Rev. Stefanie Bennett officiating. Interment followed in Pine Grove Cemetery in Middletown.

Friends called on Sunday, Dec. 5 at the funeral home.

Messages of condolence can be sent to the family at [www.doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://www.doolittlefuneralservice.com).

## Marlborough

### Lois Dunham

Lois E. Dunham, 87, of Marlborough, formerly of Manchester, passed into eternal rest on Monday, Dec. 6 at Marlborough Health Care Center, with her daughter by her side. She was born in Hartford Nov. 21, 1923.

She attended Mt. St. Joseph Academy in Hartford and had retired from Manchester Memorial Hospital after 39 years of service, 32 years as purchasing agent. Lois was on the Board of Directors of Northfield Green Condominium Association, and was a long time treasurer of AARP in Rockville.

She is survived by her daughter, Linda Wiley and her husband Allen of Hebron.

She was predeceased by a very special companion, Fred Eberhardt.

Lois especially enjoyed her three years as a resident of Marlborough Health Care Center, where she participated in every social activity available. Her family would like to thank everyone at the health care center for their love and concern for Lois.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, Friday, Dec. 10, at 11 a.m. at St. Maurice Church, 32 Hebron Rd., Bolton. Burial at Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery will be at the convenience of the family.

Family and friends called at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester, on Thursday, Dec. 9.

Memorial donations may be made to ECHN Community Health Care Foundation, 71 Haynes St., Manchester CT 06040-4131.

## Hebron

### Helene Laliberte

Helene T. Laliberte, 54, of Hebron, passed away peacefully after a long struggle with leukemia on Sunday, Dec. 5, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. She was surrounded by her loved ones. She was born in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada, on Aug. 31, 1956 to late Omer and Diana (Laprise) Laliberte.

She moved to Enfield in 1962, at the age of 6. As an adult Helene loved gardening, being in nature, hunting trips to Canada, and especially dancing and being with family. She was a very nurturing woman and loved taking care of children.

Helene leaves behind her beloved companion, Beatrice Landry; her son, Justin Campbell of Andover; and her daughter, Tawnya and husband Brian Zahaba of New Britain; her extended family, (Beatrice's children) Gary, Nathalie, Maggie and Shaun Landry; and their children, Cody, Brooke, Christopher and her dearest Alexia, all of Hebron. She is also survived by brothers and sisters, Pierre (Anne) Laliberte, Francoise Baker, Michel (Judy) Laliberte, Renee Laliberte, John (Donna) Laliberte, Jeanne (Joseph) Lucia; two brothers-in-law, Andre Levesque and Doug Preston; the father of her children, Gary Campbell; as well as several amazing nephews, nieces, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Beside her parents, she was predeceased by her brother, Maurice Laliberte; and sisters, Nicole Levesque and Ginette Preston. Aside from the large Laliberte family (and relatives), she leaves behind several relatives of the Landry family.

The family would like to extend their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the staff of St. Francis Hospital for their care, support, love and compassion. Relatives and friends are invited to attend a Celebration of Helene's Life, Saturday, Dec. 11 from noon-4 p.m., at Paul A. Shaker/Farmingdale Funeral Home, 764 Farmington Ave., New Britain, CT.

Directions to funeral home: take exit 37 (Fienemann Road) off I-84 east or west, go right off the exit, one mile down on the right.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in Helene's name to Saint Francis Foundation, 95 Woodland St., Hartford, CT. 06105-1299, or visit [www.saintfrancisicare.com/foundation](http://www.saintfrancisicare.com/foundation).

## Marlborough

### Claire Paris

Claire Paris, 85, of Marlborough, widow of the late Emilio "Midge" Paris, passed away Monday morning, Dec. 6, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester, with her loving family at her side. Born Dec. 8, 1924, she was a daughter of the late Alfred and Aurelia Legault. Mrs. Paris was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother, a communicant of St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough and was active with the Marlborough Seniors.

She leaves three daughters, Linda Bartolucci of Niantic, Carolyn Massaro and her partner Michael Jenack of Westbrook and Betty Paris Maguire and her husband Larry of Marlborough; two sons, Robert Paris of Marlborough and Frank Paris and his wife Debbie of Colchester; two grandchildren, Kyle Paris and Spencer Paris-Beattie; two brothers and their wives, William and Carol Legault and John and Fern Legault, all of Manchester; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her loving husband of 51 years, she was predeceased by three siblings, Mary Jarvis, Dorothy Blais and Joseph Legault.

Friends called Wednesday, Dec. 8, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral assembled Thursday, Dec. 9, at the funeral home, before the celebration of the funeral liturgy at 10:30 a.m. at St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough. Interment followed in the Marlborough Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Dr., Marlborough, CT 06447.

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

## Andover

### Gilbert Aubin

Gilbert Aubin, 98, of Andover, died Tuesday, Dec. 7 at Manchester Manor. Born in Woonsocket, RI on July 8, 1912, he was the son of the late Wilfred and Parmelie (Levesque) Aubin.

He spent several years in the Civilian Conservation Corps and was a Sergeant in the Army Air Corp during World War II, enlisting at the age of 30 and affectionately called "Grampa" by his crew members. He worked at Pratt & Whitney until his retirement.

Gil loved gardening, planting many of the trees and bushes at Hop River Homes where he lived, making many friends who became part of his extended family.

His wife Evelyn (Gordon) Aubin predeceased him in 1975.

He is survived by his son, Gil Aubin, Jr. and wife Elaine; his step-children, Pat Reardon and Bob, and Mike Hutchinson and JoAnn; grandchildren, Jon Aubin and Nina, and Katie Morrissey and Sean; and great-grand children, Zeke Violette and Benji Morrissey. He is also survived by sisters, Vivian and George Gudauskas, Jeanette Pardi and Winnie Sablock.

He was predeceased by brothers, Walter, Wilfred and Henry; and sisters, Irene LaRiviere and Timese St. Germain.

A special thank you to the staff at Masonicare and Manchester Manor for their wonderful care in helping make Gil's final days so special.

Gil has requested no ceremonies to mourn his passing, but rather that we keep one special memory of our times with him.

Memorial donations may be made to the Norton Children's Fund, Andover Town Office, 17 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232.



# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Ah, the Christmas season. Basically the only time of year when you hear Carpenters songs on the radio.

As I've written here in the past, I am a Carpenters fan. Outside of Christmastime (the Carpenters put out an album chock full of yuletide classics in the late '70s, and selections from it get heavy airplay this time of year), you never can catch the Carpenters on the radio – likely because their songs are a little too slow even for stations like Lite 100.5.

But the slowness of the songs is part of their appeal. Many of their songs have this slow, haunting quality to them – accentuated by Karen Carpenter's silky voice. And many of the songs have this sadness about them that just make them even more memorable – classics like "Goodbye to Love" and "Superstar." The Carpenters did a take on "Ticket to Ride," making into a slow-moving ballad, and I think it's actually better than the Beatles' version.

Adding to the sadness of the songs is the story of Karen Carpenter herself, and it's really impossible to listen to a Carpenters CD without thinking of that tragic tale.

Spotting what she considered to be an unflattering picture of herself in the summer of 1974 sent Carpenter into a downward spiral, and she developed anorexia nervosa. By 1982, the 5-foot, 4 and a half-inch Carpenter was down to just 80 pounds. She and her family realized something needed to be done, so she underwent therapy for nine months, only to show no improvement whatsoever. Finally, she was checked into a hospital and was basically force-fed for seven weeks. Her weight during that period climbed from 80 pounds to 110.

But that may have been too late. Living as underweight as she had for such a long period of time had put a strain on her body, and in early 1983, she died of a heart attack at the age of just 32. (Carpenter's brother and musical partner Richard told *People* magazine in late 1983 that he believed his sister putting on 30 pounds in such a short period of time also may have triggered the heart attack. Too much, too soon, he felt.)

While Carpenter's death was indeed a tragedy, it didn't appear to be in vain. She was the first celebrity to deal with anorexia nervosa, a very real disease that unfortunately is still with us today. In many ways, she gave

a "face" to the disease that hadn't been there before, and helped raise awareness of it.

Now, the Carpenters' Christmas songs are nice and all, but I prefer their other, non-seasonal works. If you've never heard them outside of December, you might want to trek down to your local record store and pick one up. Most shops have at least a few Carpenters CDs to choose from.

\* \* \*

This is the time of year when the annual list of the most popular baby names comes out, and I always enjoy taking a look at it. The girls' Top 10 is decidedly old-school, with the Number One name being Sophia, followed in order by Isabella, Olivia, Emma, Chloe, Ava, Lily, Madison, Addison and Abigail. While the list falls apart a bit towards the end (Madison is still the name of a city to me, not the name of a person, and Addison should be a last name, not a first), and I'm not entirely convinced the spotting of Isabella is unrelated to the *Twilight* movies, it's still a nice list.

The boys' Top 10 is less old-fashioned. Aiden still continues to hang on as Number One, followed in order by Jacob (again another *Twilight* reference, perhaps?), Jackson, Ethan, Jayden, Noah, Logan, Caden, Lucas and Liam. (Where's my name, you're wondering? According to [babycenter.com](http://babycenter.com), which compiled the list, Michael is all the way down at Number 18; boo.)

Now, lest you think I'm cynical for thinking the current popularity of the *Twilight* saga might have something to do with the popularity of certain names, that kind of thing is done all the time. According to the *New York Post*, while the names have yet to crack the Top 100, Quinn and Finn, two characters from the hit show *Glee*, and Betty, from *Mad Men*, are the fastest-rising names in terms of popularity.

Also rising up the ranks? Sarah Palin's three daughters – Bristol, Willow and Piper. (Fortunately, however, there seems to be a limit to how far fans of Palin are willing to follow her. Her sons are bizarrely named Track and Trig, and those are not increasing in popularity.)

\* \* \*

See you next week.