

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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The afternoon preschool class at Andover Elementary School packed Trooper Kevin Reed's cruiser last Thursday. The toy drive, which accumulated 525 toys, was part of "Operation Team Spirit," a statewide effort organized by State Police.

Andover Kids Stuff Cruiser with Toys

by Lindsay Fetzner

The holiday spirit of giving was in the air last Thursday, Dec. 16, as students from Andover Elementary School literally stuffed the cruiser of Resident State Trooper Kevin Reed.

Shortly after school started, the morning preschool class and children in kindergarten through sixth grade lined up outside to donate the toys they brought in. And later that day, the afternoon preschool class was given the opportunity to do the same.

Approximately 525 toys were collected, Reed said, which is 100 more than last year.

"We did very, very well," Reed said after the afternoon event concluded.

The collection was part of "Operation Team Spirit," an annual, statewide toy drive put on by the State Police.

Reed said last year's collection of over 400 toys was one of the largest contributions in the program, and this year proved no different.

"Andover is always a large contributor," Reed said last Thursday, noting that Andover is also one of the smallest communities that Troop K covers. "They've always been good...very generous."

Andover Elementary School Principal David Griffin agreed.

"It's that way in Andover with all of these things," Griffin said.

Whether it was Hurricane Katrina or the Haiti earthquake, Griffin said, the community "always steps forward" to donate to those in need.

"They are so giving and generous," he said of the town. "They always are – the community, the parents, the students."

Griffin said the "Stuff the Cruiser" event has

See Cruiser Page 2

Last Issue for 2010

This is the last *Rivereast* for 2010. The offices are closed next week, Dec. 27-31, and there will be no Dec. 31 issue.

The *Rivereast* will open again at 8:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 3. Our first issue of 2011 will be dated Jan. 7.

Happy holidays from all of us at the *Rivereast*.

Everybody's Waiting for the Man with the Bag

You better not pout, and you better not cry.

In a mere matter of hours, Santa Claus will be making his annual visits to all the homes in *Rivereast* land. What will he have with him in his bag of goodies? Well, we think we have an idea. See, every December, Marlborough Girl Scout Troop 65220 collects letters to Santa, written by area boys and girls. Troop leaders then ship the letters up north, so the jolly old fat man can take a look at them.

But, before they send the letters, one of the leaders always stops by the *Rivereast* office to let us take a look at them. It's always interesting to see what kids want (and to see that certain wish-list items never die, like Barbie dolls and Lego blocks and even *Super Mario Bros.* video games), and to see the little notes they write for Kris Kringle.

So here is a selection of those letters, as they were written and submitted to Troop 65220. And don't worry, kids, after we got done looking at them, we sent the letters back on their merry way to the North Pole. One of our well-placed sources up there then called us to confirm the notes did indeed make safe passage, so Santa could fill his bag accordingly.

Enjoy the letters, and Merry Christmas from all of us at the *Rivereast*.

Dear Santa

I have been good. Do you have stockings? Wud you like cukeas? I'm getting you a prenit. How are you? How are the render?

All I want for Christmas is to have a bike that is a bike that has a seat for my doll. And a American girl doll with clothes and a bed and earrings. Barbie house too.

Your friend,
Hannah

Dear Santa Cluse

I wonder when Crismas is here, and I would like a puppy, a DSi, a American girl doll that looks just like me, a new dress.

How are you? Do you want cookies or brownies with your milk this year?

From Natasha

To Santa Claus,

I am 4 years old. I have been a good girl this year. I would love to get for Christmas the Jasmine and Aladen Barbie Dolls. Princess Belle I have but she is lonely and wants the Beast. I would also like the Rapunzel Barbie doll with a tower. I would like some bad guys too like Jafar and Malificent.

Thank you,
Charlize

Dear Santa –

Hi! I t's Reese writing to you again this year. I hope you are not too busy. I can come help you if you want. I have been very good this year. I help my Mom and Dad and my new sister a lot. I would like some pink Mega Blocks and a train set please.

I love you Santa!

Thank you, Reese

Dear Santa,

My name is JJ and I have been a good boy this year. I've been cleaning up my toys and helping my mom, dad and sisters. I have also been sharing my toys. I hope that I can get some new toys this year. If possible, could I please have Spy Gear, Spy Video Trakr, a Mario DS game, and maybe a new Leapster cartridge. Thank you. I hope to see you soon.

Love,
JJ

Dear Santa, I have ben good.

I help my bruther, and I eat all my diner. I woud lik a new Leapster game and a Wii game.

From,
Logan

See Santa Letters Page 2



Holiday Shopping Guide Inside

Santa Letters cont. from Front Page

Hi Santa, Mary Christmas!

How are you. I'm fine. I just wanted to start my wish list for Christmas.

So heres a couple things I want...a eleteireut toy train, a pair of gray mitten in the shape of mice, a big car with a remote control to steer it around, legos that are the airplane kind with lego people, a barby that looks like Taloyr Swift, a swater, a ring, silly band, and an American Girl doll that looks like me. Thanks so much Santa! I also want to know if your reindeers can talk? Well, just write me back and let me know. Ok? Thanks! Also, here's a picture of my family.

Love, Charlotte

Dear Santa,

Hi there. How are you? I hope you are doing well.

How do you wrap all of the presents? What do the elves do? Do they help? How come you live in a cold place? Why do you give out the presents at this time of year? I don't know the year really good yet.

I made you a picture with stamps.

Do you know about the Easter bunny?

Thank you for the presents you gave me last year. They were awesome! That was very nice of you.

This year I would like Legos that have motors or Legos with space themes.

Trio set – any kind but Batman cave is cool

A telescope

Anything fun you can think of.

Love, Ethan

Dear Santa and Mrs. Claus,

I really want a Desert Tortoise and all the things a person needs to care for a tortoise, but my parents say that Santa doesn't bring live animals. Maybe you can bring me all the supplies and I can buy my own tortoise.

I would also like Perfect Petzzz bulldog that artifically breaths when you put in batteries. A pee-pee mat is also required and the carrier and the bed and the brush. I will also need the spiked collar for my Perfect Petzzz bulldog.

As always, I look forward to your visit on Christmas Eve, and you can look forward to cookies for you and carrots for the reindeer. I will also leave a glass of milk out for you!

I hope you have a safe journey on Christmas Eve and a Happy New Year.

Love, Janine

p.s. oh, and as many pillow pets as you can bring me.

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas! I love this time of year. It's getting so close, I can't believe it! This year for Christmas, can I please have the following:

Fujifilm waterproof digital camera (green)

Texting

Webcam for a laptop

Super Mario Bros (Wii) Prima official game guide (paperback)

P.S. These are in order!

P.S.S. Please give extra amounts of gifts for the poor kids because I know they need it more than I do.

Love, Shaela

Dear Santa,

You are amazing. I love how you can do so much in only one night. A few weeks before Christmas, I was sick. I had to eat popcicles all day. You don't have to get me everything on my list. I love you.

Love, Kyra

THE LIST: 1. Hamster (or guinea pig); 2. roller blades; 3. wood cut outs to paint. (You do not have to get everything on this list)

Dear Santa,

My name is Samuel. I have been a good boy this year! I helped mommy wrap presents and put them under the tree! I want five gifts for Christmas this year. They are:

1. Sneakers with wheels on the bottom.
 2. Skateboard
 3. Lady Bug Pillowpet
 4. Village for my Zhu Zhu Pet
 5. A new Zhu Zhu Pet
- I love your reindeer!

Love, Sam

P.S. I hope your elves are working hard!

Dear Santa,

I hope I have been good enough this year to receive these things from you. Here are the things I would like.

1. An I-pod touch 3rd generation
2. A Vera Bradley lunchbox, pencil case, and mints
3. Yoga pants (lots!!!)
4. Treats and toys for Crosby
5. Can you bring Mrs. Claus with you so I can get my girl scout badges on my vest.
6. My own laptop
7. My email
8. Peace
9. Please deliver some things to the wounded soldiers in Afghanistan.

Love, Reagan

Dear Santa,

Merry Christmas. I hope you are warm. I have a couple things that I would like for Christmas like zooables, sweatpants, soccer cleats, new bedsheets, wii party party, a lot of new books like PERCY JACKSON, squeakables, stuffed animals with big eyes, this is hard because you already gave me a lot. Oh yeah a DSI thank you. You will have peanut butter cookies in a couple of days.

Love you.

Love, Meagan

P.S. we will have something for the reindeers too oh yeah don't forget my doggies.

Dear Santa,

How was your summer? I have been doing good deeds.

I hope I see you on Christmas Eve.

I would like a Spark Scooter.

Cole



On Thursday, Dec. 16 the morning pre-school class and students in grades kindergarten through sixth filled a “walk-in box car” with toys, as part of “Operation Team Spirit.”

Cruiser cont. from Front Page

been going on for each of the seven years he has been principal of the school, and estimated it has been going on at the school for at least 10 years total, if not more.

He also added that this year's collection of over 500 toys is “phenomenal, especially in this economic time.” Currently, there are roughly 340 students that attend the elementary school, which indicates just how generous the community is, Griffin said.

That generosity has grown so much over the years, Griffin said, that in addition to stuffing Reed's cruiser, kids now also use a “walk-in box car” during the morning collection hours, in an effort to hold all of the donations. The box car was stuffed with a myriad of board games, Barbie dolls, Hot Wheels cars, and the ever-popular Mr. Potato Head, among many, many other toys.

Overall, Griffin said, “It is a fun experience.”

He added that the students enjoy sharing the toys they have brought in with the other students on the day of the event.

When asked if the students get excited for the yearly event, Griffin said, “Absolutely. It's all in the spirit of giving.”

In addition to the students, Griffin said school staff and many community members take part in the toy drive as well.

“Most of the people [in town] are aware of this on an annual basis,” Griffin said. “They come by and drop things off at the school ahead of time.”

The unwrapped toys collected at the elementary school were taken to State Police Troop K headquarters in Colchester. Andover was one of four sites for toy drives in the Troop K area. Between all four drives, “a few thousand” toys were collected, according to Trooper Joy Owens, who has been in charge of the toy drive at Troop K since 2005.

The toys collected will be distributed to six towns in the Troop K area: Andover, Hebron, Bolton, Salem, Bozrah and Franklin, per requests from the towns' social service agencies.

The agencies help in identifying families to donate the toys to, who would not otherwise receive a toy during the holiday season. Reed said in addition to toys, monetary donations are also received, which are turned into gift cards.

Reed said social service groups would also collect toys for families in the area as well.

“It's really pretty big,” Reed said of the state-wide event.

And, Reed stressed, the State Police get “quite the haul” from Andover to donate to the families in need.

Hebron Selectmen Review Insurance Payment Options

by Lindsay Fetzner

The Board of Selectmen discussed options for paying just over \$45,000 due to the town's previous workers' compensation insurance provider at their meeting last Thursday, Dec. 18.

The town and Board of Education had been under contract with Municipal Interlocal Risk Management Agency (MIRMA) for workers' compensation insurance over roughly a five-year period. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said. In 2008-09, Therrien said, the town re-bid their insurance and decided to again go with MIRMA.

Since that time, however, Therrien said it was discovered that there is not enough collateral to keep the company up and running for the member towns. As a result, Therrien said the town received notification that it would have to pay a supplemental appropriation to the company. Each town, she said, has a different appropriation depending on their time and experience with the company. Therrien added that the MIRMA board suggested that the member towns be able to pay over a six-year time frame.

The total appropriation for both the town and Board of Education is \$172,151, to be paid over six years. The school board's share that must be paid for the first two years is \$20,658, according to Finance Director Lisa Hancock. The town's current invoice is \$24,388, Hancock said, for a total of \$45,046 between the two groups due to MIRMA. The town has already made one payment of \$19,510 to MIRMA, Therrien said, out of the \$28,692 that was set aside shortly after she came on board in April of this year.

Due to the zero percent increase to the budget that the Board of Education received this

fiscal year, the board voted at its Nov. 18 meeting to ask the selectmen for a supplemental appropriation for the nearly \$21,000 that is due to MIMRA.

Last Thursday, the Board of Selectmen addressed the issue, and voted to allocate the money for MIRMA, pending approval from the Board of Finance (selectman Jeff Watt abstained from the vote). Out of the \$45,046, the selectmen voted to utilize the encumbrance of \$9,181 from last fiscal year set aside for MIRMA, and \$11,632 from the workers' compensation 2010-11 budget, due to the premium coming in lower than the budgeted amount. The remaining \$24,233 would be paid in the form of a supplemental appropriation.

Therrien said doing the supplemental appropriation shows "the magnitude of the situation to the public."

Hancock said the Board of Finance unanimously approved providing funding to pay for the invoices due to MIRMA in the amount of \$45,046. The board approved a \$24,233 supplemental appropriation Monday evening, along with the re-use of the \$11,632 from the workers' compensation account and the encumbrance of \$9,181 from last fiscal year, Hancock said.

Additionally, the board recommended that the selectmen take any possible legal action to recover funds through any entity or organization that received payment for consulting or other service for the MIRMA program. Hancock said this is in an effort to recover any damages, if at all possible.

The board also considered entering into a technology contract with the town of Manches-

ter for overseeing technology needs such as installation, help desk questions, network administration and server issues.

Therrien said currently the town budgets \$12,000 per year through June 30 for costs associated with technology support. Due to the fact that the town pays by the hour for support, Therrien said the town is never sure exactly how much will be spent each year. With the Manchester contract, Therrien said there would be a fixed cost, which could help in budgeting.

The draft agreement with Manchester states that, on average, tech support would be available to the town for a total of five hours per week. Specific services would include, but not be limited to, the installation of new hardware and software, general help desk service for network and computer issues, general network administration, general server administration and maintenance, as well as assistance with general technology management, according to the contract.

The cost of the services, according to the draft agreement, is \$16,296, to be paid in 12 monthly installments of \$1,358. If the contract had been approved, it would have commenced Jan 1, 2011, and terminated Dec. 31, 2011.

Manchester IT Director Jack McCoy was in attendance at the meeting and recommended that the town "do something quickly" due to the recent problems with computer failure in the Town Office Building. McCoy said originally, they were a "little frightened with the 'mishmosh' of old computers that were failing a lot," but after further consideration, decided that an agreement between the two entities could work.

Therrien added that the town IT Committee was "very enthusiastic" about joining forces with Manchester.

Watt also was in favor of the idea.

"I think the opportunity to work with Manchester and their technology piece and their expertise is something we've always looked for," Watt said.

However, the selectmen decided to hold off on any decision with the contract, and to further investigate how much money has been spent so far this year in technology support to compare to the figures listed in the contract. The topic will be addressed at the selectmen's next meeting on Jan. 6.

In other news, the selectmen also appointed numerous residents to various boards and commissions. Seven residents were appointed as members of the Public Building Commission including: Ron Winter, Richard Steiner, George Gotawala, Brian Whalen, Michael Feeney, Wayne Warwick and Bart Nicolo. Anne Fitzpatrick was appointed as an alternate.

John Hibbard resigned from the Open Space Land Acquisition Committee effective Jan. 1, and the selectmen appointed John Mullaney to fill the vacancy. Jason LaChapelle and Gail Fisher were appointed to the Economic Development Commission as alternates. And finally, Ed Meincke was appointed to the Commission on Aging.

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 6, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building.

Giving Project Provides for Marlborough Families

by Katy Nally

'Tis the season for giving, especially at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School.

For this Christmas season, the school community grew by 12 families who were "adopted" and given food for a festive meal, presents and enough wrapping paper to make their holidays sparkle.

Students, parents and staff played Santa this month, and fulfilled wish lists provided by the families by donating mostly money and food, and then staff members went out and purchased specific toys or clothing. This week, the newly-adopted members of Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School stopped by and picked up their gifts and food.

Fourth grade teacher Tina D'Auteuil explained office staff find Marlborough families who might need some extra help this holiday season, and ask them to provide a wish list with desired presents and dinner fixings.

As a sure sign of the times, D'Auteuil pointed out most items that made the wish lists were the "basic essentials," like hats, coats, mittens and pajamas. But, kids also asked for art supplies, games and sporting equipment, D'Auteuil said. Each family was also given a \$100 gift card to Stop & Shop.

"People are quite reasonable in general," Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School Secretary Shirley Chapman said. "Mostly it's things they want for their children."

"Most of the time we're able to get everything on the wish lists," D'Auteuil said. "That's the best part."

Each year Chapman and D'Auteuil assist with the project, which has grown over the years.

Last year, the elementary school provided gifts and food to eight families, and usually, Chapman said, it "changes with the needs of the community."

"We have more families this year, understandably so with our economy," D'Auteuil said.

"I'm sorry so many people need our help, but I'm happy to be able to provide it," Chapman added.

But despite the increase in need, the Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School community was still able to step up to the plate and help out their neighbors.

"Everyone responding – it's heartwarming," Chapman said.

D'Auteuil said at first 10 families registered for the program, and then two were added at the last minute, but faculty members made sure those last two wish lists were taken care of.

"How can you turn them away?" D'Auteuil asked. "That's where the staff steps up."

Students and parents were sent letters regarding the first 10 families and asked if they could provide certain items or money. Each grade level then "adopted" a particular family, or two, but all identities were kept confidential.

"The amount of support we get from families is tremendous," D'Auteuil said.

Before the 12 adopted families stopped by the school this week, an entire classroom was filled with food donations and laundry baskets



Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School staff, students and parents helped out 12 Marlborough families this year by fulfilling their holiday wish lists. Above are staff members who helped coordinate the annual Season of Giving project.

full of gifts and toys.

"The Marlborough community always responds so well," D'Auteuil continued. "They never cease to amaze me at how much they can give."

But the best part of the giving project for Chapman is actually watching as the families receive their presents every year.

"I love it," she said. "The joy, the happiness and the appreciation is so wonderful to see."

Marlborough Exchange Program Expands Horizons

by Katy Nally

The relationship between two schools, separated by a hemisphere, will make great strides this school year when one Marlborough teacher will fly to Montevideo, Uruguay as part of an exchange program.

Spanish teacher Kristen Vrabie will travel to Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary's sister school in Uruguay, Escuela 192 Joaquin Torres Garcia, next April.

As part of the exchange, Vrabie will conduct workshops in English and Spanish about technology, the American educational system and the importance of teaching a foreign language. She will also visit an English, a physical education and a sixth-grade class throughout her 10-day stay.

The program is funded through a \$5,000 grant, which Vrabie received several weeks ago from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs.

Last February, Laura Battaglia, principal of Joaquin Torres Garcia, traveled to Marlborough and visited with Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School students for about two weeks. She was welcomed with a school-wide ceremony that featured songs, poems and gifts.

In return, Battaglia gave the Marlborough school an edition of her school's newspaper *Pinceladas*, which means brushstrokes.

This week, Vrabie e-mailed the Uruguayan school a new edition of *Pinceladas* that included one English page filled with artwork and poems from Marlborough third-, fourth- and fifth-graders. The Connecticut students were also given copies of the latest *Pinceladas* edition, which was mostly in Spanish.

Vrabie herself made an appearance in the Diciembre edition, standing outside a snow-covered Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School.

Under her photo, a Spanish caption reads, "Two languages English - Spanish, put into practice, expanding horizons."

For now, the children in Uruguay are on sum-

mer vacation, but once they return in March, Vrabie said she hoped to create an April edition of *Pinceladas* that Marlborough students would contribute to.

"We plan on having more participation from students here," Vrabie explained.

The next *Pinceladas* might include "different media" like puzzles and crosswords created by the Marlborough students, she said.

Since Battaglia's visit, the Connecticut students have kept in contact with children in Uruguay through Skype. However, part of the \$5,000 grant will provide technology for the students in Battaglia's school, such as DVDs, a camcorder, a projection screen and laptops, and ultimately bolster the relationship between the two elementary schools.

And Marlborough students might get the chance to talk with Vrabie while she visits Uruguay.

"Seeing me there with them, that would be neat," Vrabie said.

Depending on the season, Uruguay is either one or three hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, but the children at Joaquin Torres Garcia attend school from 1-5 p.m., Vrabie said, so catching both schools in session could be difficult.

In addition to technology and plane fare, Vrabie's grant allows her to visit historical sites in Montevideo, museums and other schools. Because the grant is partly cost-shared, Vrabie said she would cover some of these excursions.

During her stay, Vrabie said she hoped to learn more about the local culture, by becoming completely immersed, and then bring "back my experience for the kids here, so they would have a better understanding."

The exchange, Vrabie added, provides "more motivation for the kids to learn another language."

"If you're able to communicate effectively, you can make more friendships," she said. "It makes the world smaller."

2 ESCUELA N° 192 "JOAQUIN TORRES GARCIA"

Moonshadow

As my mom lights the third of three jack-o-lanterns, I feel a burst of excitement, just like the tiny flames in the big pumpkins. They know they light, light the emptiness of the hollow pumpkins. I realized how I can brighten this cold October night, like the flame can.

So that's what I did. I needed to brighten the darkness surrounding me. I zipped onto the driveway. The moonlight created a flat silhouette of me on the ground. I raised my left arm and kicked my left leg. So did the silhouette. I pointed right with both hands and jumped up and down. So did the silhouette. My family followed me. The silhouette did the same. The silhouette was a reflection! A reflection of me.

All of a sudden, I started singing. "I'm being followed by a moonshadow. Moonshadow, moonshadow!" My family joined in. "Leaping and hopping on a moonshadow. Moonshadow, moonshadow!" Our moonshadows followed us inside our house, laughing and dancing along.

Alex Dursin

Autumn

Acorns falling on my head,
Leaves swaying down to the ground,
Having lots of warm apple cider,
Picking out the perfect pumpkin,
Putting out pretty decorations,
Choosing what kind of costume to wear,
Bobbing for apples,
Yummy apple pie,
Sally and crispy pumpkin seeds,
Eating candy till our stomachs hurt,
And knocking at doors saying,
TRICK OR TREAT!

By Taylor Baran
5th grade Mrs. Rose's class

Pumpkins

All you can think is...
MORE! MORE! MORE!

Pumpkin seeds,
Small flat and oval
Baked in the oven,
They are still warm

Pumpkins in the field,
From little to big
Every one is unique,
I can't wait for next fall

Pumpkins becoming jack-o-lanterns,
Bright scary faces
Nose, eyes, teeth,
And a mouth to use for tasting

Pumpkins becoming pies,
Eating them by the slice

By Jessica Brophy
Mrs. Rose
Grade 5

Compartiendo una experiencia ... El intercambio educativo.

Kristen Vrabie.
Profesora de Español.
Connecticut, EEUU

Marlborough Elementary School
Joaquin Torres Garcia.
Dos idiomas Inglés - Español puestos
en práctica desde el uso, ampliando el horizonte.

En contacto, los alumnos de las dos escuelas, comparten trabajos y se comunican con el desafío de aprender una lengua extranjera y conocer sobre otras culturas. La comunicación en el encuentro acerca hemisferios opuestos, con climas diferentes, con costumbres distintas pero con sueños y deseos de saber que nos unen.

Andover Welcomes New Social Services Director

by Lindsay Fetzner

At a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen last Wednesday, Dec. 15, Kara Sakelarakis was appointed as the newest director of social services.

Sakelarakis replaces Dawn Quint, who resigned early this month.

"I figured what better chance to work in government than start with my own community," Sakelarakis said this week. "I grew up in Andover. I love the small town feel and the people here."

A long-time resident of Andover, Sakelarakis, 22, said she looks forward to using her background in public administration in the new role. As part of the job, Sakelarakis will help residents under the age of 50 with crises such as emergency food, help with fuel, utilities, medical assistance and/or other needs, and direct residents to places such as the food bank or fuel bank to meet their specific needs.

Sakelarakis holds a bachelor's degree in public administration with a minor in leadership from Evangel University, a private Christian



Kara Sakelarakis

university located in Springfield, MO. Sakelarakis graduated in June of 2009.

In 2009, while Sakelarakis was an undergrad, she earned the Jean Martin Award for Exemplary Service to the Social Science Department. She was also part of the Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in Social Sciences.

She went on to earn her master's in organizational communication and leadership this past August from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY as well.

"When I had the opportunity to apply, I decided to jump on that," Sakelarakis said. "My background is in public administration, so I know that my degree has prepared me for that kind of role."

First Selectman Bob Burbank agreed. "Her resume and some of the classes that she took were geared for social services," he said.

Selectwoman Elaine Buchardt said the process of hiring the new director moved fairly quickly due to the time of the year; Sakelarakis said she applied for the position only a couple of weeks ago. During the winter months, Buchardt said it was important to have someone on board to work on projects such as the food bank.

Although there were other applicants for the

position, Buchardt said Sakelarakis was a "good fit" and came "highly recommended" by the town Municipal Agent, Cathy Palazzi.

"I think she will do a great job, her qualifications are fantastic," Palazzi said. "I can't say enough good things about her."

"She had been doing a lot of social work activities," Buchardt agreed, adding that her resume "supported the job well." "It was a very good fit."

Burbank added that Sakelarakis, one of three who applied for the job, seemed "very energetic" and "is someone who is a hard worker."

"Her family has lived in town for a very long time and her father was on the Board of Ed," Burbank added. "They are pretty well known and they have a track record of public service."

Sakelarakis is also employed as an administrative assistant at the Calvary Church in South Windsor and works with elderly adults and individuals with special needs there.

According to Palazzi, for about two months Sakelarakis and Palazzi have been working collectively with local seniors, and so far, Sakelarakis has "proven herself" with them.

"She's kind and she's caring," Palazzi added. "That's the kind of person you really need in a social service job."

Since October, Sakelarakis has also worked

at the East Hartford Middle School as an after-school program tutor.

In the fall of 2009, Sakelarakis volunteered as a tutor in the Hartford Public Schools. Her other past employment positions include working at the Marlborough Elementary Childcare Association and Companions & Homemakers in Glastonbury.

Sakelarakis is also active right here in Andover, where she is a member of the Republican Town Committee and volunteers with the senior citizens in town. In fact, Sakelarakis was a volunteer at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, MN in the fall of 2008. From 2008-09, Sakelarakis was also vice president of the College Republicans at Evangel University.

The social services director position is a part-time role that is paid by the hour, Burbank said, and it's budgeted at \$2,600. The amount of hours will vary, he said, depending on the needs of the residents in town. For example, this time of year, residents might need more assistance with food and heating.

When asked what she is most looking forward to in her new role, Sakelarakis replied, "working with the residents in Andover and the opportunity to serve my town in this capacity, using the skills I learned as a student."



Lions stand with boxes filled with food and turkeys, which were picked up by residents Tuesday, just in time for a holiday feast. Pictured from left are Tony Gaetano, Bob Whitmore, Ernie Boughton, Rob Pentiss, George Salpietro and Ed Anastasio.



The Colchester Lions held their 55th annual holiday dinner drive Tuesday. Area families also had their pick from handmade scarves, mittens and hats, as well as baked goods.

Colchester Lions Donate Clothes, Food to Local Residents

by Katy Nally

The first day of winter brought a few flurries to Colchester, but luckily the Lions Club provided a little warmth for some residents, making the upcoming season a bit more bearable.

Lions manned Town Hall Tuesday morning, filling cars with food items fit for a holiday meal and offering winter apparel and blankets to families and residents who stopped by.

It was the 55th annual holiday dinner drive, and 160 boxes filled with enough food for a holiday dinner, including a turkey, were picked up by area residents. Stop & Shop and Noel's Supermarket provided the food this year.

"We're just thankful we're able to help," Lion Leo Glemboski said.

Tuesday marked at least Glemboski's 55th year helping with the dinner drive. He said he began organizing the program when just one box of food was donated.

The dinner drive has grown over the years –

and even since last year. In 2009, 139 boxes of food were prepared.

This year residents were greeted by the Lions, and then offered mittens, hats, scarves and blankets, as well as baked goods from Stop & Shop and Dunkin' Donuts.

Lion Lori Dickenson said the Lions' knitting group and other residents contributed to the pile of handmade clothing items. Besides donating skills, Dickenson said people in town also provided yarn and money for the Lions and "we whip 'em up pretty quick."

One of Colchester's younger residents marveled at the spread of colorful scarves hats and booties, and chose a pair of bright red knitted mittens to keep her hands warm this winter.

Older residents seemed more anxious to take home all the fixings for their holiday dinner. Every box contained a loaf of bread, a tin of

coffee, a turkey, stuffing, canned vegetables, potatoes, a pie and other various foods.

Dickenson said Tuesday's event was especially rewarding when one older woman "went down the line" and hugged and thanked every volunteer who helped coordinated the dinner drive.

"She was so happy, she cried," Dickenson said. "I said, 'that's why we do this.'"

Glemboski, who is 88 this year and organizes the dinner drive every year without fail, said he remembered receiving a few letters over the years from residents thanking the Lions for their holiday baskets.

"When they do [thank you] I almost fall over backwards," Glemboski said.

Because the 88-year-old has been working the dinner drive for more than 50 years, he said he's noticed some residents who appear on the

list year after year.

"They can't seem to get out of it," he said shaking his head.

Colchester Lions President Ernie Boughton helped haul boxes of food and turkeys Tuesday and commented on the increase in need this year.

"It's a tough year," he said. "In this economy, this is where it shows."

But Glemboski remained upbeat and mentioned how he was touched by the Lions' camaraderie; several former Lions returned Tuesday to help out their old group and give back to local families.

Glemboski said he was counting down until midnight Mass at St. Andrew Parish on Christmas Eve when "I'm done with my projects."

"For 88 years old, I'm trying to slow down," Glemboski said jokingly.

Portland Food Bank in Spirit of Giving

by Claire Michalewicz

The Portland Food Bank spread some Christmas cheer this week, distributing holiday food baskets to 120 local families who might not otherwise be able to afford a festive meal.

Food Bank Director Ruth Maio said demand for baskets had increased just in the last few weeks, up from the 109 baskets they gave out at Thanksgiving. In addition, 51 families were receiving toys for their children.

Most of these families had been "adopted" by another Portland family, who received information about the children's ages and interests to help them choose toys, Maio said. And families who came in on Thursday would be able to choose one or two additional toys from the pile of extra ones.

In addition, the Friends of the Library donated a large selection of new children's books for the families, and the Portland Garden Club gave festive table centerpieces for their holiday meals.

"This is a big, big help to a lot of families this year," Maio said. Thanksgiving and Christmas are the two biggest events of the year for food bank volunteers, Maio said, but Christmas is even busier because they're giving out toys as well as food baskets.

On Wednesday, food bank volunteers were getting ready to put the boxes together, so they'd be ready for an assembly line of people Thursday to stuff them with all the ingredients needed for a traditional Christmas dinner. Even as they were getting organized, community members were still coming in with boxes and shopping carts full of more donations.

But on Thursday, Maio explained, the scene would be "sheer bedlam," with about 20 volunteers filling boxes full of canned and fresh

food and others organizing bags and boxes of toys. In the afternoon, the recipient families would arrive to pick up their Christmas meals and presents.

"The people who come in are all great people," Maio said. "They're all very appreciative."

Maio's husband, Nunzi, explained that the food bank has two main groups of volunteers – the ones who come in every Monday and Thursday to serve the regular customers, and the ones who help out for the Thanksgiving and Christmas rushes. Many of the volunteers, he said, had been coming back to help for the holidays every year for decades.

"Everyone who comes here wants to come back," he said.

Mike Griffith, who's been volunteering regularly for the food bank for the past year and a half, said the work can be difficult, but he wants to do what he can to help out local families.

"It's stressful, but everybody's here because we want to be," Griffith said.

All the food and toys, Ruth Maio said, came from many sources throughout Portland – schools, churches, businesses and individuals. The food bank didn't have to buy anything, Nunzi Maio added, because community members had been so generous with their donations.

"Everybody has donated in some ways or another," Ruth Maio said. She said that while it was impossible to name everyone who had helped out, she wanted to show the people in the community what their friends and neighbors had been doing to help out.

"You hear a lot about the bad things but not a lot about the good things people do," she explained.

Ruth Maio said she's been involved with the



Mike Griffith, left, and Nunzi Maio arrange canned foods in preparation for the Portland Food Bank's annual holiday basket distribution. This year, food bank volunteers packaged 120 baskets for local families.

food bank in one way or another for over 35 years, starting when she worked as a visiting nurse and helped distribute food to people who needed it. She said she's seen the demand for the food bank increase over the years, but the Portland community has always been generous and able to donate enough to meet the need.

Over the years, the food bank has moved from one location to another before moving into its current location in the senior center base-

ment 11 years ago. Normally, the food bank keeps its wares in a storage room in the basement, but for the holiday season they had taken over several other rooms for storage – an amount of space Nunzi Maio said the food bank could always use, because of the volume of families they serve.

"It's just helping people, and seeing how giving the community is," Griffith said. "It's unbelievable, even in these hard times."

Incentive Housing Study to be Presented in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

The revitalization of the Village Center has been a hot topic in town for years, and the town wants to know how residents would like to see the center develop.

At a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting slated for Jan. 19, Building, Planning and Zoning Administrator Jim Carey said, the commission is hoping to hear from community members about their ideas.

The commission will present the results of a study about Incentive Housing Zones (IHZs). The zones, administered by the state Office of Policy and Management, are mixed commercial and residential areas that include a set number of designated affordable housing units, set aside for families earning less than 80 percent of the median income in the area.

The town received a \$50,000 grant from the state to carry out the study, but is not obligated to go through with the state-run IHZ program, Carey said. The state program probably isn't the right fit for East Hampton, Carey said, but the study has raised some new ideas about redeveloping the village center.

He said East Hampton was focusing on taking some of the guidelines from the IHZ program to create its own zoning overlay zones, allowing developers more flexibility for building housing and commercial sites.

"This little exercise," Carey said, referring to the IHZ study done by the firm Planimetrics, "has helped us quite a bit." He said that while

the town would probably not enter the IHZ program, he planned to send the Office of Policy and Management a report about how the study had helped East Hampton.

The IHZ program calls for areas with developed infrastructure like water connections, which East Hampton doesn't have, Carey said. Moreover, he said, the town doesn't have any areas that could support the higher densities the IHZ program requires.

The IHZ program, with payments to the town for each affordable housing unit that is approved and issued a building permit, is "not a moneymaker anyway," Carey said, since the state is currently struggling with its budget.

If the town adopts overlay zoning regulations, he said, they would be optional for developers, who could still use the existing rules if they preferred. While IHZs call for mixed-use development, determining commercial or residential use would depend on the type of building and location. Carey said there are several properties in the village center he'd like to see renovated and used, including the Barton building on Skinner Street and the vacant factory at 13 Summit St.

Carey said it's important to have housing for people at different income levels, to develop a more diverse community where people can live and work.

"If we can't support young people and working people in our communities, we're gonna be

in trouble," Carey said.

Like many other suburban towns in the area, Carey said, many people in East Hampton have to leave town to go to work or access amenities like shopping and entertainment.

"That's not really the type of community that most of us like," he said. "We want the town to be diverse enough to have opportunities for itself."

He said cities have come to realize the importance of making housing accessible to people of different income levels, but towns were slower in making changes.

The only development in East Hampton that includes affordable housing units is Royal Oaks, which Carey said created controversy in town when it was first proposed. Now, he said, "It's a nice, integrated, wonderful neighborhood," with people of different income levels living alongside each other.

Carey said he feels part of the stigma of affordable housing comes from the fact that it's managed by the state government, which may not understand what towns need. This way developers can talk with the town about what kind of housing the town needs, he said.

"I hope the public will understand this is not something being foisted on them," he said. "Hopefully we'll walk away with some input."

"We're looking for ways to enhance the village center," PZC Vice Chairman Mark Philhower said. He said each commission mem-

ber has their own ideas about how they want the village center to develop, but for him, housing is a top priority. Philhower said he would like to see some of the factories converted into apartments, but he's waiting to see what kind of input residents offer.

Philhower said he was glad the town had decided to focus the IHZ program on the Village Center, rather than looking at building developments in more rural or residential areas of town.

PZC Chairman Ray Zatorski said it's been difficult to get residents interested in the village revitalization, partly because the changes in town happened so slowly that many people didn't notice them. But other changes in the village center, like the extension of the Air Line trail and the plans for a municipal water system, were helping to pave the way for renovating some of the buildings in the area.

"Hopefully we're starting to catch the critical mass to revitalize down there," he said.

Unlike some of the larger housing developments planned for other areas of town, Zatorski said, incentive housing would give the town the opportunity to work with developers "to get a product that everybody feels is the best for the town."

The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 19, at 7 p.m., at the Middle School Media Center, 19 Childs Rd.

Colchester Police Commission Vacancies Filled

by Katy Nally

Two applicants were appointed to the Police Commission Wednesday at a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Frank Jackter and Steve Petty, who don't have experience in law enforcement but have previously served on the Police Commission, were chosen. Petty's appointment passed 4-0, with one abstention from Democrat selectman James Ford who was absent for Petty's interview last Thursday.

However, Jackter's appointment passed by a 3-2 vote, split down party lines, with First Selectman Gregg Schuster and fellow Republicans Greg Cordova and Stan Soby in favor of the move and Ford and fellow Democrat Rosemary Coyle opposed.

Coyle moved to appoint Patrick Mickens, a detective for the Norwich Police Department, and received a second from Ford, but Cordova, Soby and Schuster voted against the appointment.

There was no discussion Wednesday as to why Schuster, Cordova and Soby decided to appoint Petty and Jackter, Coyle said.

Assistant Town Clerk Leann Hill said Petty was previously on the commission from 1995-99, and was its chairman when he left. Jackter had stints on the commission beginning in 1984 and ending in 1993.

Coyle said she was "disappointed" with the outcome of Wednesday's meeting.

"I think it does a disservice to the town and the police department and the Police Commission, not to have somebody who has that [experience]," she said.

Schuster disagreed, saying Petty and Jackter do have "a proven track record" as former commissioners.

"We know that they are going to be able to get along with other people," he said.

With the addition of the two new members, Rob Parlee is the only commissioner who has experience in law enforcement. However, three applicants who have experience in law enforcement were interviewed, including Mickens, Robert Kanaitis, who worked as a police officer and a detective, and John Carroll IV, who

is a state marshal.

Selectmen interviewed Petty and Mickens last Thursday, and had the opportunity to fill the two vacancies at that meeting, however no one was appointed. Coyle attempted to appoint Mickens last Thursday, but with Ford absent, her motion died without a second.

There were no other motions made to appoint applicants to the Police Commission at last Thursday's meeting.

Also at the regularly scheduled meeting, selectmen unanimously voted to join the Chatham Health District – a recommendation almost a year in the making from the Health District Task Force.

As part of the interviews last Thursday, Schuster asked both Police Commission applicants questions such as how they felt about the town being part of the Resident State Trooper program and what short- and long-term goals should be set for the Colchester Police Department.

Petty told selectmen having a resident state trooper provides supervision.

"At this point in time it's the alternative that has to be used," he said.

Soby also asked Petty what he thought the role of the Police Commission was. Petty replied that the commission was mostly a policy- and procedure-making organization that runs the police department independently from its daily activities.

Mickens said he hoped to see Colchester develop its midnight shift to provide Colchester Police coverage on a 24-hour basis. Currently, Colchester is patrolled by State Police from the Troop K barracks during late-night and early-morning hours.

He also said moving toward an independent town force would provide "familiar faces" around town, which would lead to "developing relationships" between officers and citizens and business owners.

Mickens also said the "best thing" was creating a sergeant position, which was recently filled by Rob Suchecki.

Yet, without another selectman to second

Coyle's motion to appoint Mickens, the Police Commission was left with two vacancies.

* * *

After interviews, selectmen heard from the Health District Task Force, a group established in February and charged with deciding whether to join a regional health district, remain independent or create a new health district.

"The Task Force did a tremendous job putting together their recommendation," Schuster said in a press release this week. "They reviewed each and every possibility for the Town of Colchester."

The group worked from May through December, analyzing Colchester's options. As part of its report to selectmen, the group said retaining Colchester's own health department would not be as cost effective as joining a regional district.

According to the report, the per capita cost of the Colchester Health Department comes to \$8.54, while the Chatham Health District's cost comes to \$8 per capita. However, Schuster noted Chatham recently voted to increase the rates, bringing the per capita cost to \$8.25.

But, among other regional health districts, Chatham's per capita cost is the highest, Soby noted. The per capita cost of joining Ledge Light, for instance, is \$7.60, and Uncas is \$6.82.

Soby questioned why the task force ultimately decided on Chatham.

With the services Chatham provides, it was "the best choice for Colchester," Health District Task Force Chairman Dave Dander said.

"We didn't consider that discrepancy to be glaring," he added.

All health districts provide the same services like food and septic inspections, health education, disease control and emergency preparedness.

A large difference between regional health districts is staffing. The current Colchester Health Department has 2.5 FTE staff, which equates to 16 personnel per 100,000 residents. Ledge Light provides the most staff, at 19 per 100,000 residents, Chatham provides 15 per 100,000 and Uncas is at 11 personnel per

100,000 residents.

Chatham would look to create a satellite office in Colchester and staff it full-time, whereas Uncas and Ledge Light did not commit to full-time staffing.

Chatham is also best situated, geographically, with four of its six towns bordering Colchester. Bozrah is the only town covered through Uncas that borders Colchester, and the closest Ledge Light town is East Lyme.

Since the Board of Selectmen voted to join Chatham Health District last week, a public hearing is scheduled for Jan. 6 to solidify the decision.

"If the Town accepts joining the Chatham Health District, we will help preserve the high level of health services that Colchester currently receives," Schuster said.

Once Colchester is part of Chatham, two Colchester residents will join the Chatham Board of Directors to represent the town. Currently it is a seven-member board, with two directors from East Hampton and one from each of the other five towns. Because of Colchester's size, it will have two representatives.

Besides joining an existing health district, the task force also looked into creating a regional district with neighboring towns that had expressed interest.

However, Health District Task Force member John Malsbenden explained the towns interested in starting up a new health district looked to Colchester as a potential anchor.

"We're light years ahead of them" in terms of health services provided, Malsbenden said. "We would be taking resources out of Colchester to bring everybody else up to where Colchester is now."

Joining an existing health district "was the best choice to maintain a high level of health services," Dander added.

The Jan. 6 public hearing will allow for input from residents. It is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

The next regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen's meeting will follow the public hearing.

Police: East Hampton Man Aimed Loaded Gun at Wife's Head

by Claire Michalewicz

A local man was arrested after he allegedly aimed a loaded shotgun at his wife's head to coerce her into depositing her paychecks into his account, East Hampton Police said.

Michael Leiner, 47, of 64 Depot Hill Rd., was charged Monday with first-degree robbery, criminal use of a firearm, first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree threatening and disorderly conduct, police said.

According to an affidavit on file at Middletown Superior Court, East Hampton police received a call from Leiner's wife Monday afternoon to report an incident that happened at their home about 15 minutes earlier. She told police she and her husband have a relationship that is "strained at best" because of financial difficulties, and her husband had threatened her with a loaded gun to get her to transfer her paychecks back into their joint account, court documents said.

Leiner is unemployed, the woman said, and he relies on his wife's income to support both of them. About a week earlier, the woman told police, she changed her payroll direct deposit from the joint account she and Leiner share to an account only she has access to.

Monday afternoon, Leiner demanded that his wife change her direct deposit back into the joint account, but she refused, explaining that it was her money, the affidavit said. Leiner asked again, the affidavit said, and then went into the basement and returned with a shotgun.

According to court documents, Leiner demanded a third time that she change the account information, then pumped the shotgun to move a shell into the chamber and aimed the gun at his wife's head.

Leiner's wife told police she was "absolutely shocked and petrified" by his actions, the affidavit said, and she "said that she was crying and shaking as he stood over her with the shotgun and she attempted to comply with

him." While she was on the computer trying to change her paycheck information, the affidavit said, Leiner kept the gun pointed at her head.

The woman found that she could not change the accounts on the computer, but called her employer and was able to change it over the phone, the affidavit said. Then, she told Leiner she had to go to the Post Office, as an excuse to leave the house and call police, according to the affidavit. After calling, the woman went to the police department, giving officers a sworn statement and permitting them to search her house.

Sergeant Garritt Kelly and Officers Matthew Hanlon and Hardie Burgin went to Leiner's house, and Kelly called Leiner and asked him to come outside, the affidavit said. Burgin handcuffed Leiner, and Hanlon drove him to the police station while Burgin and Kelly searched the house. At the police station, Leiner consulted with his lawyer and declined to speak to police, the affidavit said.

Near the front door, Burgin and Kelly found a fully loaded shotgun with one round in the chamber, six rounds in the magazine and another 15 rounds on a bandolier, the affidavit said. The police seized the gun and ammunition as evidence.

"It all went very smoothly," Kelly said Wednesday. "It could have been a lot more difficult to handle.

"It was just a guy who got enraged and totally made the wrong decision," Kelly added, explaining that introducing a gun into a conflict made the situation worse.

Leiner was held on a \$250,000 bond and was arraigned at Middletown Superior Court on Tuesday. A judge raised his bond to \$500,000, and he has not been released from custody. Leiner is scheduled to enter a plea on Jan. 4.

Oil Spill at Nichols Bus in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

Officials at the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are investigating a heating oil spill that happened at Nichols Bus Service on North Main Street last weekend.

DEP officials were notified of the 25-gallon spill by an anonymous tipster last Tuesday, Dec. 14, spokesman Dwayne Gardner said.

Gardner said the spill appeared to have happened over the weekend, when a 275-gallon oil tank fell over. The outdoor tank holds heating oil for two apartments above the bus company, Gardner said.

Gardner said Thursday crews had finished cleaning the area around the tank, excavating

soil that may have been contaminated, but the DEP is still awaiting the results of tests on nearby land. The oil did not spread into the nearby Lake Pocotopaug, he said.

Gardner said Nichols owner Charlie Nichols had been working with the DEP to manage the spill, and "he's been cooperative with us." Nichols did not report the spill himself, Gardner said, but "it seemed like he was going to report it but didn't have time."

Gardner said he could not comment on whether Nichols Bus Service would be facing any enforcement actions for not reporting the spill. Charlie Nichols could not be reached for comment.

Virginia Man Charged with DUI at RHAM

A Virginia resident was charged with DUI this week after State Police found him passed out in a running car at the entrance to the RHAM High School parking lot, State Police said.

Scott Mcatee, 45, of 14 Willowmere Pond Rd., Stafford, VA, was arrested at 5:45 p.m. Monday, Dec. 20, according to State Police.

Mcatee's next court date was not available on the state judicial website as of press time.

Three RHAM Teens Found with Alcohol

On Thursday, Dec. 16, three juveniles were issued tickets for having alcohol on school grounds, State Police said. The three juveniles, ages 16, 16 and 17, were at RHAM High School on Wall Street, at approximately 12:30 p.m.

The tickets for the infraction, according to the State General Assembly, equates to a fine between \$200 and \$500.

The case is still under investigation, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

12/8: John Forbes, 23, of 29 Main St., was arrested for breach of peace, third-degree criminal mischief, third-degree assault, and interfering with an officer, East Hampton Police said.

12/8: Richard D. Pinney, 51, of East Hampton and Larry Hardesty Jr., 39, of Portland, were involved in a two-vehicle accident at Cobalt Center Valero Gas Station on Route 66. Pinney was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

12/9: Kimberly A. Wilson, 36, of 204 Scotland Rd., Norwich, was arrested for DUI and

failure to drive right, police said.

12/14: Edward Earl Morrill, 42, of 41 East High St., was arrested for second-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

12/15: Heather Miceli, 26, of 5 Colchester Ave., was arrested for possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

12/16: John P. Curtis, 50, of 23 Hickory Rd., Marlborough, was arrested for credit card theft, illegal use of credit card and third-degree identity theft, police said.

Colchester Police News

12/13: A 17-year-old was charged with two counts of violation of probation, Colchester Police said.

12/15: A 15-year-old male was charged with simple trespass, breach of peace and threatening, Colchester Police said.

12/16: David Reyes, 20, of 157 Dickinson St., 1st, Springfield, MA, was charged with possession of crack cocaine, State Police said.

12/16: Edward Haag, 26, of 527 New London Rd., was charged with disorderly conduct and second-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

12/16: William Sullivan, 50, of 67 Melanie Ln., was charged with breach of peace, third-

degree stalking and criminal violation of a protective order, Colchester Police said.

12/17: Grzegorz Kowal, 23, of 21 Hickory Rd., turned himself in for sixth-degree larceny, fifth-degree larceny and third-degree forgery, Colchester Police said.

12/17: Four juveniles were arrested for possession and/or sale of marijuana at William J. Johnston Middle School, Colchester Police said.

12/18: Between Thursday and Friday, Dec. 16 and 17, someone stole a Chevy tailgate from Tower Auto on River Road, Colchester Police said.

Police Say East Hampton Man Used Teens as Thieves

by Claire Michalewicz

A local man was arrested Monday for soliciting teenagers to steal power tools for his landscaping business, East Hampton Police said.

Carlos L. Carrero, Jr., 24, of 53 Blue Heron Dr., was charged with third-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, fourth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fourth-degree larceny, police said.

Police said Carrero had approached three teenagers - a 15-year-old and two 16-year-olds - to steal the equipment for him over the summer. The stolen property included a commercial push lawn mower, a gas string trimmer, a gas hedge trimmer and a log splitter, police said. Some of the property was recov-

ered, police said.

Sgt. Garritt Kelly said the teenagers stole the tools in August, taking some from a home in town and some from a storage shed at Lakeview Cemetery. Carrero owns a landscaping business, Kelly said, and he had been using the tools in his work.

The three juveniles were also arrested, police said, and their cases are pending in juvenile court. Kelly said the teens led police to Carrero.

Carrero was held Monday night on a \$50,000 bond and was arraigned at Middletown Superior Court on Tuesday. He was released from custody and is due back in court to enter a plea on Jan. 11.

Police Break Up Teen Drinking Party in Marlborough

by Katy Nally

A 16-year-old girl was referred to the AHM Juvenile Review Board for possession of alcohol by a minor, after leaving a party on James Lane Saturday, Dec. 10.

At approximately 10 p.m., the Hebron Resident State Trooper's office received information about an "ongoing underage drinking party," according to State Police.

Upon arrival at James Lane, Trooper Mark Gendron pulled over a car that had recently left the party, and found the 16-year-old who was in possession of alcohol, State Police said. Several of the other occupants in the

vehicle had been drinking.

Trooper James Nolting and members of Troop K's midnight shift went to the James Lane residence and issued a 17-year-old girl an infraction for hosting an "underage drinking party." She was a resident of the Marlborough home and her parents were away on vacation, the press release said.

Anyone with more information about this case or other "underage drinking parties" are asked to contact the Hebron Resident State Trooper's office at 860-228-3710 or Troop K at 860-537-7500.

Marlborough Police News

12/10: On Friday, Dec. 10, between noon and 6:20 p.m. a residence on South Main Street was broken into, State Police said. Two digital cameras, an iPod Nano and two jewelry boxes with assorted jewelry were stolen. Anyone with more information about the case is asked to contact Trooper Rashaad Carter at Troop K at 860-537-7500.

12/20: Sometime between 10:50 and 11:30 a.m. a home on Johnson Road was broken into via the basement window, State Police said. A Bombay jewelry box filled with jewelry and a Dell Inspiron laptop were stolen. Two "persons of interest" were seen parked on the side of Johnson Road in a gold Toyota Camry, estimated to be from 1996-2001.

Portland Police News

12/15: A 13-year-old male was arrested for possession of drug paraphernalia, Portland Police said.

12/17: Michael Cannata, 66, of 218 Main St., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

Andover Police News

12/17: At approximately 7:07 p.m. the contents of a trash bin, located in the parking lot of Network Inc on Route 6, were set on fire, State Police said. The case remains active and under investigation. Anyone with more information is asked to contact Troop K at 860-537-7500.

Hebron Police News

12/17: Cory Carabetta, 19, of 397 Toll Gate Rd., South Glastonbury, was charged with speeding, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

12/20: A residential burglary on Niles Road was reported, State Police said. The point of entry was the kitchen window and the exit was the rear deck door. Assorted jewelry was stolen. The case remains under investigation, State Police said.

Obituaries

Salem

Ernest W. Vaill

Ernest W. Vaill of Salem passed away Sunday, Dec. 19, at his residence with his family by his side. He was born Oct. 14, 1938 in Torrington, the son of the late Roger and Flora Mae Neff Vaill.

He worked for many years as a heavy equipment operator for the Seymour Sand and Gravel Company.

His pride was his farm in Salem, driving his tractor and riding his ATV over the 50 acres that he owned. He loved his animals and he called himself "the Swamp Yankee."

Surviving is his first wife Nancy Vaill. He was then married to Joyce Goodyear, who also survived him, plus his two daughters, Ada Vaill and Ernestine Vaill Laroque; a granddaughter, Nancy Ann Laroque; two brothers, Charles E. Vaill Sr. and Gary L. Vaill; numerous nieces and nephews, and his beloved dog "Jose."

He was predeceased by two brothers, Robert R. and Lawrence R. Vaill.

Funeral services with a time of reflection were held Wednesday, Dec. 22, at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, followed by interment in Pleasant View Cemetery in Lyme.

Calling hours were also held Wednesday, Dec. 22.

Colchester

William Wagner

William Wagner, 74, husband of Elizabeth Seabury Wagner of Colchester, passed away Sunday, Dec. 19, with his family by his side. He was born March 15, 1936 in Fulton, NY, the son of Daniel A. and Florence Sikes Wagner.

A graduate of SUNY, in Oswego, NY, he served in the U.S. Navy and was employed for 34 years as a network engineer for the former SNET and AT&T.

Bill and Betty resided in Colchester since 1966, where he was active in Colchester community affairs and served for eight years on the Board of Selectmen and eight years on the Board of Finance. He also served on the Water Pollution Control Authority, Charter Revision Commission, Commission on Aging, coached Little League, was an active Rotarian and served 40 years on the Republican Town Committee.

Surviving besides his wife, he leaves his son, James and wife Kristie of Berlin, MA; a daughter, Mary and her husband John Linacre of Rhode Island; four grandchildren, many cousins and extended family members.

Visitation was held Wednesday, Dec. 22, at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. Funeral services will be held Tuesday, Dec. 28, at 10 a.m. at the Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church in Fulton, NY. Burial will take place in the spring in Fulton.

At the request of the family, memorial donations may be made to the Colchester Rotary Club or to Roger Williams Cancer Center, c/o Dr. N. Joseph Espot, 825 Challestone Ave., Providence, RI 02908.

Colchester

Barbara O'Meara

Barbara Ann O'Meara, 62, wife of Peter O'Meara of Colchester, passed away Monday, Dec. 20, at Hartford Hospital. She was born February 7, 1948 in Hartford, the daughter of Edwin and Irene May Strickland Johnson.

Barbara worked as a bank teller for the Savings Institute of Colchester. She enjoyed the beach, baking, and her love the birds.

Surviving, besides her husband Peter, she leaves two daughters, Jodie LaRosa and Michelle Cech, both of Colchester; a brother, Lee Johnson of Chaplin; three sisters, Bonnie Johnson, Beverly Popowich and Donna Selleck; four grandsons, Jack, Matthew, Sam and Will LaRosa and several nieces and nephews, as well as special companions Rocky, Jake and Dakota.

She was predeceased by two brothers, Harold and Glen, and three sisters, Madeline, Zelda and Gail.

Visitation was held Thursday, Dec. 23, with a service that followed at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. Burial will be in New St. Andrew's Cemetery.

Marlborough

Michael S. Kearns

Michael S. Kearns, 20, of Marlborough, died Thursday, Dec. 16, at the Children's Hospital in Boston. Born June 9, 1990, in Meriden, beloved son of Timothy J. and Susan Kearns of Marlborough, he had lived in Marlborough most of his life.

Michael graduated from RHAM High School in 2009 where he was the captain of the RHAM football team in his senior year and a member of DECA and the honor society. As a freshman at UConn, he participated in Relay for Life while pursuing a pre-med degree. Michael was also an avid snowboarder and surfer.

Besides his parents, he is survived by his brother, Joseph W. Kearns of Marlborough; his grandparents, Dorothy Tattenbaum of New Haven, Judith and David Kearns of New Fairfield; and several aunts, uncles and cousins and many dear friends.

Funeral service was Tuesday, Dec. 21, in the Buckingham Congregational Church, 16 Cricket Ln., Glastonbury. Burial followed in Buckingham Cemetery. Friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Monday, Dec. 20.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the Ronald McDonald House of Boston, 229 Kent St., Boston, MA. 02446 or to the CT Children's Medical Center, Division of Hematology and Oncology, 282 Washington St., Hartford, CT. 06106.

For online tributes, visit www.mulryanfh.com.

Colchester

Helen H. Hayden

Helen H. Hayden, 93, of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Dec. 18, at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester. Born April 20, 1917, in Plains, PA, she was a daughter of the late Nicholas Holaj and Anastasia (Howaey) Havasuik.

After raising her children, Mrs. Hayden was a machine operator for Pratt & Whitney for 17 years. Following her retirement in 1983, she spent several years in Nevada helping raise her four granddaughters, Holly and Vanessa Shefer, Lauren Hayden and Dixie Vestal. She returned to Colchester in 2006 and had currently resided at Harrington Court.

She was a longtime member of the Colchester Federated Church and the "My Brother's Keeper" ministry, helping make sleeping bags for the homeless for many years. Mrs. Hayden had also been active with the Colchester Senior Center.

She is survived by three children, Sterling Hayden of Newington, Bonnie Rebillard of Colchester and Joyce Hayden of Oregon; seven grandchildren; 11 great grandchildren; three sisters, Antoinette Sitek of Ellington, Olga Meadows of Shenandoah, VA, and Victoria Soranno of Rockville; and numerous extended family members and friends.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 8, at Colchester Federated Church, 60 Main St., on the Colchester green, with Rev. Dr. Linda U. Barnes, officiating. The family will receive guests one hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to My Brother's Keeper in care of the church.

For online condolences, visit www.aurora-mccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Portland

Ronald Joseph Chiasson Sr.

Ronald Joseph Chiasson Sr., 72, died peacefully in his sleep at home Sunday, Dec. 19. He was born April 5, 1938, son of the late William and Marie Chiasson in Norwich.

He grew up in Portland, attended Portland High School, joined the Navy and served in the Seabees. He worked for IBEW Local 37 and then the Portland Boat Works for 28 years. He was a former member of the Portland Fire Department, Company No. 1, and the Knights of Columbus of Portland.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Sandra (Johnson) Chiasson; his three children, Christine Healey of Portland, Ronald Chiasson Jr. and his wife Penny of Portland and Ruth Chiasson of Somerville, MA; his six grandsons, Joseph Healey, Sean Healy, Ryan Healey, PFC, Andrew Chiasson, Thomas Chiasson and Michael Chiasson, all of Portland; sisters and brothers-in-law Diane Chiasson of Indianapolis, IN, Marjorie and Carl Fitzgibbons and C. Bud Johnson of Portland, Phillip and Darlene Johnson of East Hampton; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his brother, Rev. Dr. William Chiasson of Indianapolis, IN.

Calling hours were held Tuesday, Dec. 21, at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Funeral services were held Wednesday, Dec. 22, at the Zion Lutheran Church. Rev. James Reemts officiated. Interment, with military honors, followed in the Swedish Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in his memory may be sent to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice Program, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457, or to the Zion Lutheran Church "Organ Fund," P.O. Box 202, 183 William St., Portland, CT 06480.

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

East Hampton

Jimmie W. Guile Sr.

Jimmie W. Guile Sr. was born on Oct. 7, 1948, in Middletown, and died Monday, Nov. 8, at the age of 62 in Salem, VA. He was predeceased by his wife, Sharon (Csinsi) Guile on April 21, 2006.

Jim was the son of the late Burnice and Irene (White) Guile. He graduated from East Hampton High School in 1966. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force from Nov. 6, 1966, until Nov. 6, 1970, where he was a Vietnam veteran, serving almost 11 months. He was employed with Carey Manufacturing in Cromwell before cancer forced him into early retirement. He was a 40-year member and past president of the VFW Post 5095 in East Hampton. He was an avid NASCAR fan and No. 43, Richard Petty, was his all-time favorite driver.

Jim is survived by his three children; Stacy Barone and her husband Joe of East Hampton, Jimmie Guile Jr. of Vernon and Tammy Guile and her boyfriend Devin Stanley of Salem, VA; one stepson Gerald Soucy Jr. of New Britain; a sister Betty Rolleri of Portland; two brothers, Clifford Fuller and his wife, Beverly of East Hampton; and Charles Fuller and his wife, Sybella of Manchester; six grandchildren, Crystal and Emily Barone, Joey Guile, Jerry Soucy III and Jeremy and Jolene Townsend; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will take place at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 26, at Bethany Covenant Church, 785 Mill St, Berlin, CT 06037. Burial will take place at the Connecticut Veterans Cemetery in Middletown on Tuesday, Dec. 28, at 10 a.m.

Memorial donations in his memory may be made to Bethany Covenant Church, 785 Mill St., Berlin, CT 06037, or VFW Post 5095, 20 North Maple St., East Hampton, CT 06424.



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I was very pleased last Saturday when the Senate voted to end the dreadful “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy in the military, sending it to President Obama, who Wednesday officially signed the repeal.

It’s past time for “don’t ask, don’t tell,” which prohibits gay people from serving openly in the U.S. military, to go the way of the dodo bird. If somebody wants to fight for their country, and to fight for my freedom, why should I care about their sexual orientation? Why should anybody?

Of course, not everybody is pleased. Sen. John McCain, the man who fortunately is not our president (thank you, Sarah Palin), criticized the repeal, saying “We are doing great damage, and we are possibly and probably ... harming the battle effectiveness which is so vital to the support of the men and women of the military.”

I really don’t see how. First of all, I don’t think the enemy could give a rat’s tail whether the American soldier they are firing upon is gay or not. But what McCain, and others who have opposed repealing this stupid policy (I don’t even want to call it an “antiquated” policy, because that implies there was a point in time when it would have been acceptable), seems to be more concerned about is the move being a distraction to the heterosexual members of the military.

Look, if straight men and women serving in the military are upset by the repeal, then they seriously need to recheck their priorities. You’d have to be a pretty irrational homophobe to be more concerned about your platoon-mate making a pass at you than about getting shot and killed by the enemy.

Perhaps Woodland Hills, CA resident Sheldon Baer put it best. In a great letter to the editor that appeared in the *L.A. Times* Tuesday, Baer attempted to quell McCain’s concerns, writing: “Rest easy, old man: As a World War II tail gunner, I had a number of friends who hit Omaha Beach, and not one of them ever asked the guy next to him whether he was gay. Isn’t it amazing that we overcame the Axis powers without asking about sexual orientation?”

Well done, sir.

* * *

Veteran readers of my column know I’m prone to random bursts of etymology – telling you all the history of a certain word. So I was intrigued when, earlier this week, a friend alerted me to a “Top 10 Words With Remarkable Origins” section on the Merriam-Webster website. Number one (although I have no idea if the site lists the words in order or not) is “eavesdrop.” Initially, the word was quite literal in meaning: it first referred to the water that fell from the eaves of a house, then it came to mean the ground where that water

fell.

Eventually, the word “eavesdropper” came to mean someone who stood in the eavesdrop of a house to overhear a conversation inside. These days, of course, the word applies to anyone who listens in on a private conversation, regardless of where they’re standing.

I won’t list all 10 word origins, because to be honest, not all of their stories are interesting. But here are a couple highlights: the word “trivia” came from the Roman word “trivium,” an intersection of three roads. Apparently, whenever people would meet at a trivium, they would simply shoot the breeze and discuss “trivialis,” or inconsequential things. (I don’t quite get why you should ramble on about nothing just because you bump into somebody at the corner, but hey, what do I know?) The word “bedlam” comes from England’s first hospital for the mentally ill, The Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem. In the 16th century, “Bethlehem” was shortened to “Bedlam,” and the hospitals inmates were simply called “bedlams.” By the late 17th century, the term was being used to mean a scene of wild uproar or confusion, and in the following decades, wealthy people would sometimes cruelly visit the hospital, just for amusement.

And then there’s “avocado.” In pre-Columbian times, the fruit was considered to be an aphrodisiac. Because of this, one Aztec language named it “ahuacatl,” which was short for “ahuacacuahuitl.” So what did “ahuacacuahuitl” mean? “Testicle tree.”

I’ll never look at avocados the same way again.

* * *

I enjoy watching the games, but I’d be the first to admit I’m not the world’s biggest football fan. And when I do follow the sport, I follow the Jets. But I’d have had to have spent Sunday night and Monday morning under a rock not to have heard about the Giants’ spectacular collapse Sunday, when they blew a 21-point lead before losing on an improbable 65-yard punt return.

The meltdown was so amazing that, on his show on Monday, David Letterman presented the top 10 excuses for the Giants’ loss. Dave’s number one reason? “The Knicks are doing well, which means somebody has to suck while the Mets are off.”

Ouch.

* * *

And with that, I’ll shut up. For now, anyway. As I wrote last week, this is the last issue of the *Rivereast* for 2010 (it’s amazing how quickly the year flew by, isn’t it?), and our offices will be closed until Jan. 3. So I wish all of you the merriest of Christmases and the happiest of new years.

See you in 2011.