



Ron Wenzel of Wenzel Sugarhouse demonstrates to visitors the ins and outs of maple syrup production on Saturday afternoon at the Hebron Maple Festival.

Hundreds Delight in Maple Madness

by Lindsay Fetzner

Under a sunny, cloudless sky, hundreds of people lined the sidewalks in the center of Hebron in celebration of the 20th annual Maple Festival. Friday's record-breaking weather began the three-day summer spell across the state, with temperatures that rose into the mid-70s.

Wayne Palmer, Maple Festival organizer and owner of Winding Brook Sugar House, said the notable turnout this weekend was definitely weather-driven and upped the festival from "okay to exceptional." "We just got lucky," he said "Plain and simple." Around this time of the year, Palmer said people are anxious to get outside. "You don't need bright sunny days [for the festival], but when you get them, it makes everyone happy."

Palmer was stationed in the center of town, where he conducted an exhibit on backyard sugaring. He has been offering his expertise in the art of syrup production at this location "since day one," he said.

The learning seminar is directed toward people who want to try their hand at making a gallon of syrup on their own, or with their family. "It's all part of the educational learning process," he said. Palmer had a propane burner and pan boiling, which he used for the demonstration. "It's intriguing to people," he said. "And there are plenty who want to learn." Palmer's sugar house was closed during the festival.

Palmer said sales from syrup were "excellent" and was able to sell everything he brought to the festival. He was even up until midnight

on Saturday night bottling more syrup to sell, which eventually went the next day.

A newcomer to the Maple Festival this year was the Introduction to African Drumming and Rhythms exhibit, sponsored by AHM, on Sunday afternoon. Carla Pomproicz, town clerk and AHM board member, said the demonstration "went very, very well." Rick Liegl, director of the You've Got Rhythm School of Percussion, offered two one-hour workshops, which drew many participants and spectators alike.

Pomproicz said AHM wanted "an activity that would be something fun for people of all ages," and that proved to be true as the two classes filled up.

"The program fit right in with the day – it was very exciting, with a great crowd." Approximately 20 people were part of the two workshops and each participant was given a drum to play during the introductory class. Liegl has been drumming since he was 17 and has studied, performed, given workshops and repaired drums for many years.

Liegl also does drum programs throughout the state, showcasing African drumming, which he says is slowly gaining in popularity. "This drumming workshop can be utilized in education, therapeutically in a healthcare setting, for team-building workshops and as a course of music study," he said. "And, like many instruments, it is a rigorous musical course."

See Maple Madness on Page 2

RHAM Budget Presented to Hebron BOS

by Lindsay Fetzner

Before a packed house, RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski, alongside RHAM Board of Education (BOE) chair, Mike Turner, presented their recommended continuation budget of \$24.40 million to the Hebron boards of selectmen and finance last Thursday night.

Three different budgets were highlighted – a continuation budget of \$24.4 million, which calls for an increase of 2.1 percent or \$501,540; a mid-point budget of \$24.25 million, with an increase of 1.49 percent or \$356,047; and a zero percent budget of \$23.9 million.

Siminski said several factors impacted the budget this year, including high school and special education enrollment. Siminski said there will be roughly 60-100 more students at the high school, which "puts pressure on the school."

"Enrollment is going up and the students need to be accommodated," he said. For the 2009-10 year, the enrollment at the high school is 1,084. Next year, The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) is projecting 1,149, Siminski said. Administration, however, is projecting 1,199.

Health insurance costs also played a role, with increases estimated at 11.5 percent, according to Siminski. This figure dropped from

an increase of 12.5 percent since the end of February.

Additionally, the continuation budget includes the 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) reduction of middle school physical education staff and a 0.5 reduction of middle school music staff.

Curriculum writing, library books, textbooks and supplies are all budgeted at reduced levels. These levels, however, are "levels we won't be able to sustain for very long," Siminski said. Contractual salary increases and tuition for magnet schools were also included.

Siminski highlighted funds that offset budget increases in his presentation. To pay for special education teacher and paraprofessional increases, stimulus money is being used.

The clinical day treatment program, which is a special education program, is also funded by the stimulus. The program includes students who would be sent out of district. Siminski said on average, out-placement tuition is \$48,000 and transportation is an additional \$7,000.

The clinical day treatment program can include up to eight students. Siminski said the program positively affects the budget by reducing costs and would break even with the enrollment of three students. There are six enrolled

at this time, Siminski said.

Cuts to reach a 1.49 percent increase were outlined by Siminski, which would eliminate \$145,493 from the budget, bringing it down to \$24.25 million. Instructional supplies, textbooks and curriculum writing would have to be reduced even further to reach this figure, Siminski said. Supplies would mirror the levels of the 2009-10 fiscal year. Concessions from the administrators would also be a part of the reductions.

A zero percent increase, Siminski said, would result in "drastic" further reductions to supplies. Two library paraprofessionals would also have to be cut in addition to high schools sports (gymnastics, golf, indoor track). Middle school athletics, clubs at both the middle and high school level and the late bus would also be reduced. A 0.5 school psychologist and 0.5 special education teacher would also be among the reductions to reach an increase of zero percent.

Siminski said his goal was for the cuts to impact all areas, affecting everyone evenly, while still trying to provide activities for the students.

Based on the proposed continuation budget, with a 2.1 percent increase, Hebron's levy is \$13.21 million, or 54.14 percent, of the total \$24.39 million. Marlborough accounts for \$7.16

million, or 29.36 percent. Andover, at \$4.02 million, accounts for 16.50 percent of the total, Siminski said.

According to 2008-09 statewide data, Siminski said the per pupil expenditure (PPE) average in Connecticut is \$12,805. RHAM's PPE is \$12,310, which is \$495 less. "We favorably compare to the state average," he said.

Turner said the BOE received e-mails from residents concerning possible cuts to athletics and their implications.

Board of Selectmen member Brian O'Connell voiced his concern for sports as well. "Education is about the whole package," he said. "When we look at the competitiveness of our youth globally, in my opinion, sports give them something to do, teaches them camaraderie and builds character." O'Connell said he is firmly against reducing sports, like many parents who have contacted school officials.

The cuts to the late bus and library aids were of particular concern for Turner, who said they would cause disadvantages for students. "Part of me would still hate to cut the late bus," he said, adding it would be a cut affecting students all across the board, from their participation in clubs, sports and tutoring, to name a few.

See RHAM Budget on Page 2



Ned Ellis, of Mapleleaf Farm, demonstrates how to milk Babe at the Wenzel Sugarhouse, where visitors had a chance to try The Farmer's Cow milk.

Maple Madness cont. from Front Page

Every Monday night from 6-8:30 p.m., Liegl teaches an instructional drumming class at the Wilson Congregational Church in Windsor. (More information can be found on his website, www.drumeventsunlimited.com.)

The Hebron Historical Society (HHS) hosted several events over the course of the weekend – a bake sale, a quilt exhibit and tours of some of the town's historical properties – just to name a few. HHS President Donna McCalla said, "It was simply fantastic. The Society is so grateful for all of our volunteers and the hard work they put into our activities, which keep growing every year at the Maple Fest."

"Every last crumb" from the maple syrup infused baked sale sold by 3 p.m. on Saturday, McCalla said. She credited HHS member Barbara Soderberg for her efforts "in getting bakers in town to donate their time and services to the first bake sale the HHS had in 15 years."

The Gull School House, which was opened to the public on Saturday with the help of Carolyn Aubin, saw over 125 visitors, McCalla said. The Old Town Pound was equally as popular with over 150 people who experienced the jumping goats and chickens, hosted by Parker Aubin and Nate Baribault. McCalla said, "These numbers are quadruple the number of visitors we've had in the past."

Sales of the icy maple milk were just as successful. On both Saturday and Sunday, the HHS sold out in about two hours, McCalla said.

McCalla had to return to her house in the early afternoon on Saturday where she made several more batches of the "secret family recipe." "Every year I double what I make, and every year we sell out within a couple of hours," McCalla said. To make a half-gallon of the festival favorite, McCalla said it takes about 15 minutes. McCalla had prepared 13 gallons, which she hoped would be enough for the second day. Not surprisingly, though, it all disappeared pretty quickly.

Back at the Wenzel Sugarhouse, milk was also on the minds of the members of The Farmer's Cow who were present at the sugarhouse. Visitors not only got a chance to taste fresh milk produced by the group of six family-owned Connecticut dairy farms, but they also got to try their hand at milking Babe as well.

Babe's mom, Amber, appears on the side of The Farmer's Cow milk carton. Ned Ellis, from the Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron, said "People are so disconnected with farms," adding, the Maple Festival was a great "way for people to connect with agriculture," and experience firsthand a major source of the milk they drink.

According to Ellis, Babe produces about 18 gallons of milk per day. Lena Conway, from Madison, was one of the children who received instruction from Ellis on how to milk the cow. On Saturday alone, Ellis said Babe had hundreds of visitors, both adults and children. Ron Wenzel agreed, and said this weekend's festivities drew people "from all over the state." Even *Rivereast* reporter Lindsay Fetzner tried her hand at milking Babe upon Ellis' insistence.

Ellis said, "We believe we have to save what God gave us." As members of The Farmer's Cow, Ellis said they "feed off one another" and "promote open space." "We take good care of what we got," he said.

RHAM Budget cont. from Front Page

Board of Finance (BOF) member Lynn Guerriero told Turner and Siminski she has concerns with the reductions in curriculum writing and the impact they would have on the program.

"I am very concerned about it," Siminski said in response. "I tried to touch everything and that's why curriculum writing was affected," he said.

Thomas Sousa Jr., BOF member, thanked the

BOE members for their presentation, which he said was "outstanding." Sousa noted that it was very helpful to see the three different levels of the budget broken down. "Thank you very much," he said.

The next selectmen meeting is scheduled for April 12, 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of RHAM High School. A public hearing will also take place.

Joyce Wenzel said it was a great opportunity for the public to be informed on the process of producing dairy products, especially with such an abundance of farms across the state. Other farms, in addition to Mapleleaf Farm, which is part of The Farmer's Cow, included Fairvue Farms in Woodstock, Hytone Farm in Coventry, Fort Hill Farms in Thompson, Cushman Farms in Franklin and Graywall Farms in Lebanon.

Some of the Farmer's Cow products, which Ellis said are all natural and produced locally, are milk, eggs, half & half, heavy cream and apple cider.

This spring, The Farmer's Cow will begin to sell ice cream. A naming contest for the flavors was just wrapped up, Ellis said, and nearly 3,200 suggestions were made. Ellis said it will not only be "good," but "high-end" as well.

But for those who couldn't wait for The Farmer's Cow to introduce its line of ice cream, the Gilead Congregational Church sold maple pudding cake with ice cream at the Wenzel Sugarhouse. The Wenzels also sold their own maple syrup, which Ron said sold well over the weekend.

Although Joyce said Saturday drew a larger crowd than Sunday, overall "things went very well." Visitors took advantage of the tables and chairs the Wenzels put outside, where people enjoyed maple-syrup-inspired desserts underneath the blue sky.

Joyce said it was "kind of hectic for everybody putting it on" due to the delayed start, but the delay was well worth the wait. "Most people had a good time," she said. The Wenzel's have been a part of the yearly Maple Festival since the start and have produced maple syrup every year. Ron said currently, there are 400 buckets hanging from the trees on his property, which will be coming down next week, marking the end of the season.

But the sugar houses weren't the only venues that experienced crowds throughout the weekend. Several Girl Scout troops sold cookies to hungry visitors over the course of the two days. Cub Scouts also made fresh s'mores over a fire pit on the green in front of Subway as well.

The extensive line for popcorn from Majestic Kettle Corn filled the sidewalk and spilled onto the corner of Main and Wall Streets. According to Palmer, preparation for popcorn sales started early in the morning in an effort to keep ahead, but nonetheless, it saw an influx of people all weekend.

Sugar on snow and maple cotton candy were big hits at the fire department. Just down the street, visitors snacking on maple fudge and fried dough topped with maple syrup picnicked on the grass in front of the bounce house at the beginning of Main Street, where live entertainment was provided.

Although this year's festival has come to an end, Palmer said a wrap-up meeting will follow shortly. Discussions on how the committee can soften the impact if the festival had to cancel again have already started. Palmer asked the rhetorical questions, "How can we handle it?" and "How can we make notifications less stressful?" Despite the efforts and preparations that have been made in the past, "there is always a learning curve," Palmer said.

Marlborough Man Charged with 15 Counts of Sexual Assault

by Lindsay Fetzner

A Marlborough man turned himself in on more than 15 charges, including five counts of first-degree sexual assault, stemming from incidents involving an 11-year-old relative.

On March 4, Paulo J. Sousa, 42, of 342 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough, turned himself in on a warrant, according to State Police. Sousa was charged with one count of risk of injury/impair the morals of a child, five counts of first-degree sexual assault, five counts of third-degree sexual assault and five counts of fourth-degree sexual assault, according to State Police. Bond was set at \$250,000.

Sousa was previously arrested on Jan. 9, and charged with one count of risk of injury/impair the morals of a child and two counts of fourth-degree sexual assault, State Police reported, and bond was set at \$150,000.

According to an affidavit on file at the Manchester Superior Court, the Connecticut State Police Major Crime Squad conducted the

investigation.

Based on the affidavit, on Jan. 8, State Police interviewed the 11-year-old victim about the alleged sexual assault complaint. When State Police met with the victim at Troop K in Colchester, the victim disclosed that Sousa “had touched the victim inappropriately.”

The victim said Sousa began to touch her when she was between the ages of 8 and 9, occurring “a lot of times,” with the most recent incident about three weeks ago, the affidavit stated.

As reported in the affidavit, Sousa told police on Jan. 8 during a voluntary interview, “that he believed the last time that any events happened between himself and the victim was this past Labor Day weekend, 2009.” He also said that the victim was related to him by marriage.

The victim told police that Sousa babysat for her at his residence while her parents were at work. The affidavit states that some of the al-

leged sexual assaults happened at the victim’s residence in Colchester, Sousa’s residence in Marlborough, a location in Hartford and also in Glastonbury. On several occasions, Sousa touched and rubbed the victim, both on top and underneath her clothes. Sousa also said he pulled down the victim’s pants, according to the affidavit.

Sousa said, “he never had to force the victim to perform any of these events,” the affidavit states. Sousa told police if the victim told him to stop, he would stop, and would usually try again later on in the day. If the victim said no again, Sousa said “it just would not happen.” But other times the victim did not tell him to stop, and Sousa still continued, according to the affidavit.

When the Eastern District Major Crime Squad met with the victim’s father in Colchester after Jan. 6, he said, “the victim told him that the victim did not realize what was happening,

but as the victim got older, the victim realized it was wrong.”

In a Jan. 11 interview at The Aetna Foundation Children’s Center in Hartford, the victim said she told her parents about Sousa’s actions because “she realized it was wrong” and “to stop Sousa from touching her anymore.” The victim also said “that she started having problems dealing with the emotional pain of what was happening to her including having problems sleeping at night,” according to the affidavit.

Police were informed that Sousa went to Troop K in Colchester to “get everything off his chest and take responsibility for his actions.” According to the affidavit, “Sousa stated that none of this is the victim’s fault, that all of this is on him.”

According to the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch website, the court is currently awaiting a plea. Sousa’s next court date is April 21.

ADK, Zero-Percent Budget, Reviewed at Hebron BOS Meeting

by Lindsay Fetzner

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz presented a recommended budget with an increase of 3.14 percent at last Thursday’s Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting.

The budget reflects a decrease of 0.85 percent from the original budget the Board of Education (BOE) voted on at the end of January, which called for an increase of 3.99 percent.

Several residents voiced their concerns for items that would be cut, or further reduced, if a zero percent increase were to become a reality. Many people also commented on the pros and cons if the proposed all-day kindergarten (ADK) expansion were to be put in place.

Resident Dale Maxwell spoke to the boards alongside her son Ben. “I am very concerned that the programs that are on the chopping block for a zero percent budget might be deemed as not essential,” she said. Maxwell also added that the implementation of ADK is “necessary for some kids.” Ben also spoke later during public comment, informing the boards that programs such as music and challenge and enrichment (C&E) should not be dismissed and are essential for the children.

Resident Peter Carlin said although he has no children in the school system, he has voted for the budget “every single year I’ve been in town.” Carlin urged the boards to “take a scrutinizing look at the all-day kindergarten” expansion.

Cruz highlighted several factors that impacted the budget. A \$52,216 increase in health insurance benefits was a major factor as well as an unknown number for the total enrollment for pre-k.

“It is something we don’t know until we get further into the school year,” Cruz said. An increase of 1.04 percent of the overall increase is due in part to special education students who require support in magnet schools or outplacement. Without these special education

costs, Cruz said the increase would have been 2.1 percent overall.

Contractual obligations were another factor, which Cruz described as “a challenge.”

Under the reduced recommended budget totaling \$12.08 million, Cruz said there was a savings of \$66,494 due to less than expected enrollment in kindergarten for the 2010-11 year, and reallocation of staff. As a result, a 1.0 position for all-day kindergarten and furniture was eliminated. Resignations accounted for \$18,188, non-union employee concessions for \$10,575 and administrative concessions for \$15,379. Cruz said since Jan. 28, when the BOE voted on the budget, reductions have totaled \$151,195. The total increase under the 3.14 percent budget is \$368,165.

BOE chair Jane Dube discussed the ADK pilot that was started in the schools two years ago. “It is an important program for us,” she said. Dube said it is crucial for the town “to provide an education program that provides for all children.”

Cruz said the full-day kindergarten program, including five full-day sessions and one half-day session, would be run at no added costs to the district.

Although The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projected 116 incoming students, the actual enrollment at this time is 106. With the decrease in enrollment, and the 1.0 FTE reduction, it is possible to have five full-day kindergarten sessions with 18 students and one half-day session with 16 students. Cruz also said a 1.0 teaching position would be moved from pre-k to kindergarten and paraprofessional support would be provided by a 1.0 paraprofessional position moved from pre-k to kindergarten.

“For a long time, it was assumed that the half-day would meet the needs of all kids,” Cruz said. It is a matter of giving parents a choice of

which program they want to enroll their children in, she said, in addition to respecting the values and points of view of the parents.

Cruz said the all-day program would provide more time for student to master the necessary skills. In her presentation, she noted that ADK increases instructional classroom time by more than half.

Potential budget cuts to reach a zero percent increase to the budget were also discussed. A flat budget would mean reducing the budget by an additional \$368,165, bringing the overall total to \$11.72 million. Some of the cuts include one C&E teacher, one librarian, a classroom teacher and a 0.7 reduction of a music teacher. Cruz said, among other potential cuts and reductions.

ADK professionals would be reduced to all half-day positions. Cruz said the potential cuts are “not something we’re advocating,” and would “require more time and discussion.”

During public comment, resident Cheryl Lage voiced concern for the impact cutting staff would have on the school curriculum. “Teachers year after year are incorporating more and more things into the curriculum,” she said. “Talking about eliminating vital support staff would also really increase the burden on the teachers and directly impact the children’s education and the schools.”

Many hard decisions have been placed on the BOE, but Lage said it’s “doing a great job in finding out how to creatively spend the money.”

BOS chair Jeff Watt said he has “always felt the kids in Hebron perform so well because of parent involvement.” Cruz said she plans to work closely with families as well as teachers to reach out to parents and inform them of the expectations of the students.

However, Cruz said despite a family’s best efforts, a students might not be ready, in which case the school is forced to step in. Cruz said

offering ADK and increased hours in the classroom is one way to help students master the necessary skills needed to move on to the first grade.

Lage informed the boards later in the meeting that she has been pleased with communications between the school and parents, citing how staff informed parents on the expectations of incoming students as well as those already enrolled in the school.

Brian O’Connell, BOS member, commended the BOE for its hard work in preparing the budget. O’Connell said the performance of the schools in terms of the money expended is “very admirable.”

The board had very limited areas where reductions could be made, he said, which posed a great challenge to work with. “We are here as a community to work together,” he said. “You have done the best with what you have to work with.”

Watt informed the public that the board received a total of 17 emails from residents. Out of the 17, 15 were in regards to the Hebron BOE, one discussed the RHAM BOE and the last one, the town budget.

The e-mail addressing RHAM recommended there be no cuts made to after-school activities. One resident supported the town budget. The remainder of the e-mails voiced opinions on supporting the Hebron BOE budget and whether they preferred half-day or full-day kindergarten programs. Thirteen out of the 15 e-mails addressed kindergarten, with eight in favor of the half-day program and five recommended the full-day program. “I appreciate the 17 individuals who sent in the e-mails and their comments,” Watt said.

The next BOS meeting is scheduled for April 1 at 7:30 p.m. in the Douglas Library, located at 22 Main St.

Bus Safety, Parking Fees, Topics at East Hampton Council Meeting

by Claire Michalewicz

The issue of school bus safety continues to dominate discussion at East Hampton’s meetings. At its meeting Tuesday evening, the Town Council reviewed the steps Nichols Bus Service was taking to improve safety.

Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden attended the meeting to update the council on the ongoing concerns about bus safety. Golden read a letter from Charles Nichols, director of Nichols Bus Service, which has provided school bus services to the town for decades. The letter, which also had been presented to the Board of Education (BOE) the previous evening (see article “Nichols’ Bus Safety Dominates BOE Conversation” on page 13), explained some of the violations, and outlined the steps that the company was taking to improve safety.

Golden added that despite the publicity about Nichols’ safety record, she had not received many complaints from parents.

“The low number has to equal that you’ve done a good job with your communication,” Engel said, referring to the letter Golden had sent to parents explaining what was being done

to improve safety, and Golden’s repeated willingness to answer questions from parents and other residents.

Thom Cordeiro agreed, and said that he had heard from parents who said that Golden’s quick response had put them at ease. He added that because of the scrutiny, violations were less likely to happen during the two years the Nichols had left in its contract with East Hampton.

“We’ll have a light shined on the company,” Cordeiro said. “We’re all watching.”

“I put a lot of merit into Mr. Nichols’ record,” Town Council member John Tuttle said. “I know Charlie.” Tuttle suggested that technology might be a problem for the bus company, and asked about software that would make it easier for the company to keep its safety records organized. Golden responded that all the safety records had been entered into a database.

Council member Sue Weintraub questioned Golden about Nichols safety record, explaining that she wasn’t satisfied with some of the explanations that Charles Nichols had given the

Hartford Courant about his buses’ violations. Nichols had said that his buses did not have any violations, Weintraub said, but the safety records indicated otherwise.

Golden replied that she was unable and unwilling to speak for Nichols, but that Nichols had explained to her that he meant there had not been any recent major violations, rather than in the past few years.

An article in the *Courant* last week highlighted the town council’s repeated decision to offer Nichols a no-bid contract, rather than open up to bids from other bus companies. On Tuesday, Engel explained that no one, not even Nichols, had been aware of the safety violations, and that the town council had voted on the no-bid contract with no reservations.

“Stuff happens,” Engel said, “and [Nichols] is responsible for it.” She also commended Golden for the steps that she and the BOE had taken toward improving the buses’ safety. “If you’re happy with that work, then the naysayers be damned.”

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Calling All Doll Enthusiasts in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

Hundreds of dolls fill the front rooms and hallway of a newly-restored house in Cobalt, lovingly arranged on tables and shelves. Renee Silvester has been collecting the dolls for years, and her shop, Calling All Dolls To Cobalt Center, opens next Friday.

Collecting dolls and restoring old houses have always been two of Silvester's biggest passions, she explained, and opening the shop was a long-term dream that let her combine these interests. She bought the rundown house in 2008, and restored it to its present pristine condition.

"You've gotta be a maniac to do this," she said of her project. The large yellow house at the corner of Middle Haddam Road and Route 66 was built in 1770, Silvester explained. A Victorian front had been added in 1860. After buying it, Silvester set to work restoring the woodwork and having the windows and chimneys replaced.

When she started the renovations, she was working as a medical administrator. She left that job last fall so she would have more time to devote to the doll shop, though she still works part time.

Silvester said she had always loved the house, and it bothered her that it had fallen into disrepair.

"I could feel the warmth in the keeping room," she said. The keeping room, which Silvester said was once the center of activity in the house, is now filled with boxes of dolls and doll clothes. (A keeping room is also known as a living room.) Silvester uses the room as her repair shop, where she cleans and repairs dolls. The store itself takes up the two front rooms and front hallway of the house. Silvester herself plans to move in once she sells her current home in Middle Haddam, where she's lived for 30 years.

The collection in the shop encompasses new dolls as well as antique ones. Some of the dolls

are inexpensive, Silvester explained, but she also sells high-quality designer dolls. Also in the store are collections of stuffed animals, doll furniture and clothing, and books.

Silvester said there are only one or two other dolls shops in Connecticut. Some people, she said, have questioned the practicality of opening the shop, considering that vintage dolls are readily available online. But Silvester said that her shop offers a different experience from online retailers.

"There's nothing like going in and seeing the collection and picking out one," Silvester said.

"I want to inspire people to have collections because they bring beauty," Silvester said. "There's so much you can do with them," she said, explaining that many people don't think to decorate with them. Silvester gestured to a row of dolls sitting on the mantle. "They make the room sparkle. They're characters, they have stories."

"I'm a collector," she said, showing off the collections of pottery and antique shoes that she keeps elsewhere in the house. Silvester said she also has a private collection of dolls that aren't for sale because they mean too much to her.

Dolls can be strongly sentimental for many people, Silvester explained. Many people are immediately reminded of their childhood when they see vintage dolls. She explained that dolls were a big part of her own childhood, which she thinks is a big part of why they're so important to her today.

"You can't imagine how it brings back memories for people," she said, picking up a Howdy Doody doll from a cabinet. The cabinet is devoted to character dolls, from Howdy Doody to Disney's Mouseketeers to Shirley Temple, and Silvester has found vintage books that go with many of the dolls.

The store's motto, Silvester explained, is "A Collection Starts With One." That's how she started collecting in the early 1980s. She didn't have much money at the time, Silvester said,



Renee Silvester with just a few of the dolls in her new store, Calling All Dolls To Cobalt Center, which opens next Friday.

so she would only buy one doll at a time. But soon her collection grew larger. She started with vintage dolls from the 1930s and 1940s, she said, and also collected many Native American dolls.

Silvester stressed that collecting dolls doesn't have to be an expensive hobby. Though she was still working on pricing the dolls, she said many of them would only cost between \$10 and \$25. Others, she said, were worth hundreds or even over a thousand dollars.

Though the shop is primarily Silvester's project, she's enlisted friends and family to help her run the store. Carol Clark said that while

she's not that interested in dolls, she's been friends with Silvester for decades and was happy to help out with the store.

Silvester's cousin, Gail Silvester, is also helping with the store, and she said she's struck by the sheer number of dolls and the amount of effort Renee Silvester puts into arranging them.

"Every time you turn around there's a new doll there," Silvester said with a laugh.

Calling All Dolls To Cobalt Center will open Friday, April 2, and will regularly be open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The store is located at 1 Middle Haddam Rd., at the corner of Routes 66 and 151.

East Hampton Residents Dissect Town Operations and BOE Budgets

by Claire Michalewicz

The Board of Finance (BOF) invited East Hampton residents to speak out at a special meeting held Tuesday evening in the high school auditorium.

"I just want you to know that we're doing a lot of thinking," BOF member Patience Anderson said to the audience. "We need to hear from you what your thoughts are."

Many residents voiced their concerns about Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe's decision to cut \$200,000 from the school board's original budget.

Jeanne Peaslee, a teacher at Center School, said there were not many programs in the schools that could be reduced. She likened the budget cuts to becoming a single parent, with fewer people managing the same amount of work.

O'Keefe defended his budget, explaining that he had made cuts in several other areas.

"I don't view this as a town operations versus Board of Ed operations issue," O'Keefe said. "I need everyone to understand there was significant cuts on both sides of the issue."

BOF Member Judith Isele explained that the board was holding the meeting "to get feelers to see if most people support a one mill in-

crease."

"The sooner we know that," Isele said, "the better we'll be." She explained that the BOF's current task was to find out whether taxpayers could afford the budget in its current forms. Changes to specific programs, she said, would come later.

Anderson pointed out the Board of Education (BOE) budget takes up most of the total budget. A small increase in the town operations budget could have large consequences, she explained, since town operations already took up only about a third of the total.

Some residents said that they were willing to pay higher taxes if they could see the benefits.

"Many communities are judged on the quality of services they provide, and the number of services," resident William Dinunzio said. "If I can see the benefit of [raising taxes], I don't have a problem with that."

But town officials explained that the town was just trying to maintain its current level of services.

"This isn't necessarily some grand increase where we're adding all these programs," Town Council member Thom Cordeiro said. "We're

just treading water. It's not an exuberant budget by any means."

Town Council Chairperson Melissa Engel acknowledged that cuts to the BOE budget were a major concern, since some teachers could face layoffs.

"Those jobs can be saved if the teachers' union agrees to give something back," Engel said. Earlier that evening, Engel and the Town Council had agreed not to touch the teachers' benefits when they reviewed their contract and considered options like furlough days.

"Where is my family going to produce this extra money?" resident Laurie Wasilewski asked. She said taxpayers were being urged to dig deeper into their pockets for more money. "Some of us don't have that place to dig," Wasilewski said. She added that the town needed to ask for concessions in employees' salaries to avoid cutting services.

Residents and town officials also debated O'Keefe's decision to hire a town engineer. O'Keefe explained that East Hampton spends considerable amounts of money on engineering services, and hiring one person to do much of the work would cut costs over the years.

"There's plenty of engineering work that's going to last a long, long time to come," O'Keefe said. But BOE member Joanne Barmasse questioned whether one engineer would be able to cover all the projects the town needs. O'Keefe replied that the town would still contract outside engineers for some projects.

But some residents and board members urged the town to focus on education before considering engineering services.

"If you're looking at engineers or teachers," Town Council member John Tuttle said, "pick teachers."

Senior services were also an important issue at the meeting. Many seniors attended the meeting to ask about senior services. Coordinator Jo Ann Ewing asked about the possibility of hiring another full-time employee at the senior center, saying that it was difficult for her to manage all the programs for the over one thousand residents who use the senior center.

The BOF will deliberate on the budget at its meeting, Monday, March 29, held at the town hall at 7 p.m. The budget will go to a public hearing at the high school the following Monday, April 5, at 7 p.m.

Portland Selectmen Scrutinize Education Budget

by Claire Michalewicz

The Portland Board of Selectmen examined the Board of Education (BOE) budget at its budget workshop Wednesday evening. Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen, along with BOE members, defended the budget to the selectmen.

The school budget, which the BOE approved in January, calls for a 2.97 percent increase, or \$525,541. Doyen explained that the budget was barely enough to maintain the current level of programming in the schools.

“Our main goals are to preserve existing staff and programming,” Doyen said. She stressed that the budget does not call for any new programs, and the school system will be losing 3.5 positions due to reassignment and retirement.

Doyen urged the selectmen not to make cuts, explaining that in some cases, the loss of one teacher could mean the loss of an entire academic program.

Looking for other cost-saving measures, Selectman Mark Finkelstein asked BOE Chairman Chris Phelps if his board had considered asking teachers to forego a pay increase, as town employees had done the previous year. Phelps responded the BOE had been able to balance the budget without asking for specific givebacks, largely because of the American

Resources Recovery Act money the school district had received.

Phelps also explained that the paraprofessionals weren’t receiving a pay raise this year, but that the BOE couldn’t ask for concessions from teachers until they knew what the final budget would be.

“It’s sort of a catch-22 situation we find ourselves in,” said Phelps.

Finkelstein and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield both explained that they negotiate with town employees before the final budget is approved, so they didn’t understand why the BOE couldn’t do the same.

“We haven’t felt that we’re at that point where we have good enough leverage where we could ask for something specific,” said Doyen, expanding on what Phelps had said. “It’s a major issue with our teachers in particular to open up an existing contract.”

Doyen added that the teachers’ health plan had been opened to bids from other companies than Anthem, but she was unsure if they had received any bids yet. Finance Director Tom Robinson responded that they had received bids, but he was not yet able to talk about them.

Robinson also thanked Doyen and the BOE for saving money last year by avoiding spend-

ing some money until the end of the fiscal year, when they knew how much money was still available.

Phelps and Doyen both praised the new Academic, Career, Technical (ACT) program, which was replacing the Experience-Based Career Education program. Both situate high school students in outside job placements to learn about careers, but the ACT program places more emphasis on academic classes, Doyen explained.

“Sally made it something we can’t cut,” said Phelps of the revised program.

Paul Bengston, director of buildings and grounds, outlined some of the maintenance projects that he hoped to complete within the next year. The biggest project, Bengston explained, was the repair to the driveway at Gildersleeve School, which would be funded by the capital expense plan. The proposed renovations would make a student drop-off area along the driveway, where students could be dropped off on a walkway. The repairs would make the driveway safer for students and eliminate traffic congestion in the circle, Bengston said. Other repairs that would be necessary in the next few years, Bengston continued, include removal of asbestos at Brownstone and

Gildersleeve, repairs to the Brownstone roof, and sealing cracks on the high school track.

Although the programs are funded by the general town budget rather than by the BOE, Bransfield asked the BOE about Portland’s after-school programs.

“It’s obviously part of the overall care and education of our children,” said Bransfield, explaining why she brought up the programs at the meeting.

BOE member MaryAnne Rode defended the programs, explaining that her two children attend Kids Blast once a week.

“It provides a lot of our kids with a place they can be when their parents aren’t home,” Rode said. Finkelstein replied that he knew the program was valuable, but the issue was whether or not the town could afford to run it. Robinson explained that the programs are costly to run, and the Youth Services budget, which funds them, has been losing money.

Budget deliberations continue Wednesday, March 31, and Thursday, April 1. (The meetings were rescheduled from Tuesday and Wednesday because of Passover.) The Board of Selectmen will vote on its budget at the next regular meeting on Wednesday, April 7.

Nichols’ Bus Safety Dominates BOE Conversation in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

The Nichols Bus Service has taken steps to improve the safety of its school buses, East Hampton school officials asserted at the Board of Education (BOE) meeting Monday evening.

Representatives from Nichols were not present at the meeting, but BOE Chairman Michael Vasquez read a letter from Charles Nichols explaining that he was following all the BOE’s recommendations to improve safety.

“The buses were never unsafe to operate,” Vasquez read from Nichols’ letter. In his letter, Nichols also explained that many of his company’s violations were minor, and he was requiring bus drivers to immediately report any safety problems they notice.

“Mr. Nichols has been nothing but cooperative,” said Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden. Golden explained that the BOE was looking to hire a third-party inspector who would check Nichols’ buses. Nichols had agreed to pay for the inspector, Golden said, and the BOE was hoping to make a hiring decision within the next week or two.

Nichols’ safety record first came to attention after a *Hartford Courant* article, published two weeks ago, provided the inspection reports from school bus companies throughout the state. A second article last week questioned why East Hampton never invited other bus companies to

bid against Nichols for the contract.

Golden presented a summary of Nichols’ violations from 2007 to the present. The problems ranged from issues like cleanliness and heater problems to more serious concerns like brakes and tires.

Golden also provided a list of the steps that the BOE and Nichols had taken so far. In addition to hiring a third-party inspector, the BOE is requiring bus drivers to fill out daily inspection reports. The BOE also wants to confirm that bus drivers are undergoing random drug and alcohol tests.

Another major issue, Golden said, is the age of the vehicles. Nichols’ contract requires all vehicles to be less than 10 years old. Golden explained that all the buses met this requirement, but some smaller vans were older. She said Nichols was looking to replace its vans.

“We’re well on our way to solving this problem,” BOE member Donald Coolican said, commending Golden and Vasquez for the work they had put into this issue so far. But Coolican was also critical of the town’s repeated decisions not to allow other companies to compete with Nichols for contracts with East Hampton.

“There’s plenty of blame to go around here,” Coolican said, explaining that the BOE, as well

as the Town Council, were somewhat responsible for not considering other bus companies. Nichols has two years left in its contract with East Hampton, Coolican said, and the town should continue to closely monitor the safety of Nichols’ buses.

But not everyone was assured that Nichols’ buses are now safe.

“If I’m Mr. Nichols, I’m going to bend over backwards to work with East Hampton and the other towns,” parent Jim Berg said, stressing that Nichols would lose a great deal of money if the town didn’t renew his contract.

Still, Berg said he felt the increased safety measures were a step in the right direction. He commended the BOE for its decision to hire a third-party inspector.

Golden insisted that Nichols had acted responsibly, and was working to restore the trust of the BOE and East Hampton residents.

“He reacted quickly, and has been very responsive,” said Golden. “He wants the confidence of families. He’s had them for 66 years.”

Though bus safety dominated the conversation at the meeting, some other issues were discussed as well. LuAnn Hardacker, the district’s language arts coordinator, updated the BOE about a grant the district received under the

American Resource and Recovery Act to improve reading programs for special education students. With the grant, the district had hired four consultants who came into classrooms to help the teachers with reading techniques for special and general education students. Hardacker recommended continuing the program for the next year, by which point the teachers would be trained to use the techniques without the consultants.

BOE members Josh Piteo and Joanne Barmasse also discussed adding more time for play and creative activities to the school day. During the day, Piteo explained, elementary school students only had a short recess and their lunch period, in which they could relax and socialize. Piteo stressed that numerous studies showed that play was extremely important for young children.

Barmasse agreed, but explained that it would be difficult to extend the school day to allow more play time. She said that if the school day was extended at some point, the extra time would be devoted to creative activities. Vasquez suggested that the issue of play time be moved to another meeting.

The next BOE meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 5.

East Hampton Police News

3/6: John P. Fournier, 55, of 491 Main St., Portland, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

3/12: Randolph Scherp, 41, of 47 Hog Hill Rd., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for third-degree assault and second-degree reckless endangerment, police said.

3/12: A 16-year-old male juvenile was referred to juvenile court for threatening, police said.

3/13: Erika Langella, 23, of 20 Old County Rd., Colchester, was arrested for speeding, police said.

3/14: Donald Feltovic, 62, of 138 Flood Rd., Marlborough, and Wendy Willis, 47, of 7 Cheney Ln., East Hartford, were involved in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of West High Street and Laurel Glen Drive. Feltovic was arrested for operating under suspension, operating without insurance and following too closely, police said.

Portland Police News

3/17: Two 12-year-old males were referred to juvenile authorities for first-degree criminal mischief and second-degree criminal mischief, Portland Police said.

3/18: A 13-year-old male was referred to juvenile authorities for first-degree criminal mischief, police said.

3/18: A 13-year-old male was referred to juvenile authorities for first-degree criminal mischief and second-degree criminal mischief, police said.

3/19: A 14-year-old male was referred to juvenile authorities for possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, police said.

3/19: A 14-year-old male was referred to juvenile authorities for sale of marijuana, police said.

Hebron Police News

3/17: John Devine, 23, of 6 Oak St., Lynn, MA, was charged with third-degree burglary and sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/18: Angela Lomnicki, 21, of 626 Gilead Rd., was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

3/19: Stephanie Gabarec, 28, of 306 Burnham Rd., Lebanon, turned herself in for second-degree harassment and violation of parole order, State Police said.

3/21: Keith Rochette, 37, of 103 Chestnut Hill Rd, was charged with disorderly conduct, second-degree harassment, and threatening, State Police sa

Colchester Police News

3/17: Dalton Ford, 20, of 462 Westchester Rd., was charged with DUI, State Police said.

3/18: Gary Bartomioli, 19, of 27 Riverview Circle, Marlborough, was charged with possession of narcotics, possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

3/18: Raymond Wachtarz, 49, of 18 Hickory Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

3/18: Raymond Wachtarz, 21, of 18 Hickory Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

3/18: A 17-year-old was charged with sixth-degree larceny, criminal attempt, and interfering with arrest, State Police said.

3/18: Eric Koch, 21, of 235 Old Hartford Rd.,

was charged with interfering with arrest, criminal attempt, and sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/19: Murray Ostrager, 87, of 119 Deepwood Drive, Amston, was charged with breach of peace and first-degree criminal trespass, State Police said.

3/19: Andrew Frizen, 21, of 68 Lake Rd., Portland, was charged with second-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

3/21: Floyd Renninger, 48, of 75 Nelkin Rd., was charged with DUI and operation of a motor vehicle when license or registration is suspended, State Police said.

3/22: John Iannuzzi, 63, of 158 Paddock Ave., Meriden, was charged with DUI and failure to maintain lane, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

3/16: Theodore Reinholtz, 38, of 64 Johnson Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

3/17: At 4:20 p.m., Dominick Caputo, 39, of Groton, lost control of his 1993 Ford Escort and swerved into the right shoulder twice. He lost control of his car and drove over the wire rope rail on the right shoulder, slid down an embankment and came to rest against a tree, State Police said. Caputo and the back right passenger, Sarah Parker, 28, of Niantic, were transported to Hartford Hospital by Life Star for minor injuries. The front passenger, Steven Kus, 45, of Old Lyme, was not transported,

State Police said.

3/20: Wieslaw Gadomski, 48, of 99 Jackson Flat Rd., Hope, RI, was charged with speeding and DUI, State Police said.

3/20: Mark Preston, 55, of 126 Curtis St., Bristol, was charged with DUI, failure to maintain proper lane, and failure to notify change of address on license, State Police said.

3/21: Jose Cornejo, 40, of 117 Grand St., Middletown, was charged with evasion of responsibility in operation of a motor vehicle, failure to maintain proper lane, and DUI, State Police said.

Observations & Ruminations

by Katy Nally

I played editor this week. Enjoy my...I'll call them ruminations.

So even though I recently got my BA and I found a job here at the *Rivereast*, unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on how you look at it, I still live with my dad. He's a single parent so it's just me and him, locked together in a small split-level house.

My friends who still live at home are itching to leave, and my friends who immediately moved out urge me daily to do the same. But people I know who are in their late 20s, and live paycheck to paycheck, advise me to leech off my dad for as long as possible.

Now, there's an obvious upside to living at home. I don't pay rent, the food is... mostly free and I don't have to make that giant leap into adulthood quite yet.

But, there are obvious, annoying factors, like...his go-to TV channels are SyFy and Versus – which gets the reject sports casts like biking and fishing. Since he's obsessed with biking, somehow the Tour de France makes a monthly appearance in our house. I think I've seen Lance cross the finish line more than I thought was humanly possible.

As far as *Star Trek*, I've come to know the crew of the Next Generation. Needless to say, I'm less than enthused at the sight of Captain Picard's baldhead, and don't even get me started on Data – he's so creepy. Monday I came home to him enjoying a *Star Trek* marathon and him pondering how the crew's transporter worked. Luckily, I side-stepped that discussion.

Like *Star Trek*, every Monday from 8 to 9 p.m. is Jack Bauer's hour – I think my dad is one of the few Americans left who actually watches 24. During that hour, my dad

says he can't talk to anyone because "he has to help Jack." He's so engrossed in the show he jumps out of his seat when the phone rings. Even as I'm writing this he's hooting, clapping and chanting "Go Chloe! Go Chloe!" I realize the minute-by-minute effect can be thrilling, but how involved can you get in a TV show?

But aside from the monopoly on the TV, he has his usual untidy dad quirks. These qualities usually manifest into our weekly fight about cleaning. I've come to realize, things are never as simple as dirty or clean, instead, it comes down to people's tolerance of grime, and I'll leave it at that.

Now, because he's retired, and still continues to be a creature of habit, he usually gets his lunch from the supermarket salad bar, then orders dinner from a take-out restaurant. I'm fine with this, except on the occasions when he's maxed out his tolerance of pizza and Chinese food, and asks me "what's for dinner." I have to inform him that because he never eats at home, the fridge isn't exactly stocked.

Aside from the obvious going hungry affect, this situation has turned me into a rather creative cook. When neither of us want to make the trip to the store, but are still craving something sweet, I can now concoct treats with only a few ingredients.

So what have I gained since graduating from UConn? I'm an expert on the *Star Trek* transporting system and feel I know the ship so well I could be a crew member, I've successfully "helped" Jack Bauer and his buddies in one of his, thankfully, final seasons, I've learned to overlook messy rooms, and how to cook when there's no food.

Ah, putting my degree to work. Hey, at least there's no rent...we'll see after he reads this.

Obituaries

Hebron

John "Pop" Joseph Tarquinio

John Joseph Tarquinio, "Pop", 78, of Hebron, beloved husband of Nancy, passed away on Thursday, March 18, at home, surrounded by his loving family.

Born January 9, 1932 in Hartford, he was the son of the late Joseph Tarquinio, of Hartford and the late Grace (Puro) Brenda, of Rocky Hill.

He served proudly from 1952 to 1954 as an M.P. with the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was a past member of the American Legion in Hebron.

On October 25, 1952, he wed the former Nancy Anne Grano in Hartford.

He worked as an LNG Technician for CT Natural Gas from 1958 until his retirement in 1988.

The family settled in Hebron in January of 1968. Over the years, he loved to work on his farm with his children and play, coach and watch sports, especially baseball and softball, with his grandchildren, who all were the light of his life. He will be remembered for his compassionate nature, wonderful sense of humor and strong work ethic, but most importantly for being a devoted provider, husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle and friend. Papa's smile would melt your heart.

In addition to his loving wife of 57 years, he is survived by their three children and their families: Gary, his wife, Diane and their children, Marcus and Jacqueline, all of North Carolina; John, his wife, Heidi and their children, Rachael, Dominic, Nicole and Thomas, all of Hebron; Karen Thompson of Willington, her children, Clint and Natalie, of Hebron and Karen's fiancé, John Burnett and their son, Joseph, also of Willington; his loving sister, Marilyn and her husband, Sebby Catanzaro of Hebron and their children and families; nephews, Nicholas Grano of Suffield and Thomas Grano of Columbia; and numerous other extended family members, relatives and friends.

Friends called 5-8 p.m. Tuesday at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester.

The funeral assembled at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at the funeral home before proceeding to the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron for the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at noon. Rendering of full military honors and a Reception followed Mass at Church. Burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Arthritis Foundation, P.O. Box 96280, Washington, D.C. 20077-7491.

For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Lawrence R. Desautels

Lawrence R. Desautels, 86, of Clark Lane, Colchester, widower of the late Joanne (McPherson) Desautels, passed away peacefully Sunday, March 21, at home.

Born Dec. 9, 1923 in Putnam, he was the son of the late Omer and Anna Trahan Desautels.

A proud Naval veteran, he served for 22 years spanning WWII, Korea and Vietnam as Chief of the USS Sea Robin and as a Recruiter in Hartford and Norwich, before his retirement as the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer.

Lawrence then went on to work as a letter carrier for the U.S. Post Office in Colchester before his retirement.

On January 10, 1955, he and Joanne were married in Boston and shared 48 years of marriage before she predeceased him on Nov. 1, 2003.

Over the years, he was very involved in the Colchester community, serving as past president and coach for Little League, past treasurer and honorary Cub Scout with Pack 13, and was a communicant of St. Andrew Church and member of the former Holy Name Society there. In his spare time, he was an avid gardener and fan of both the Boston Red Sox and UConn Women's Basketball.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Peter and Lori of Colchester; three grandchildren, Matthew, Jennie and Adam; a sister, Simone Jensen of Wethersfield; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his wife and parents, he was predeceased by four sisters, Estelle Joiner, Gertrude Hurley, Antoinette Simonides and Blanche Girard.

Friends called from 6-8 p.m., Wednesday, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester.

The Funeral Liturgy was celebrated 11 a.m., Thursday at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Avenue, Colchester. Rendering of full military honors followed Mass. Burial in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester, was private.

For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

William F. Wells

William F. Wells, 83, of Portland passed away Monday, March 22 in his home, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born on August 28, 1926 in Carmel, Mahopac, N.Y. and was the son of the late William Wallace Wells and Marion (Beal) Wells. He was predeceased by his wife Lois (Edwards) Wells and his sister Irene Dell.

During WWII he proudly served his country in the Navy Air Corps. He was a building contractor and ran a very successful business for 40 years. Bill was an active member of the community. He served as President of Portland Exchange Club, served on the Trinity Church vestry, was a member of the Redevelopment Commission, a founding member of the Portland Sports Hall of Fame and served on various school building committees.

Bill had many hobbies: tending to his gardens, building his own greenhouse, playing golf, and fishing with his friends. He most enjoyed attending his children and grandchildren's sporting events. In later years you could always find Bill at Dunkin Donuts with his coffee buddies and buddies. He is survived by his children and their families; Linda and John Gotta, William E. and Annette Wells, Steven and Kathy Wells, David and Lauren Wells and Janet and John Oliva. Bill will be missed by his 14 grandchildren; Jennifer, Michael, Elizabeth, Kevin, Kristine, Amy, John, Josh, Justin, Nicole, Simone, Ashley, Mitch and Matt. Bill was also the proud great-grandfather of eight. A special thank you to all the caring nurses of the Middlesex Hospice and to his dear friend Ellen.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Lois Wells Art Scholarship fund that is awarded to a Portland HS senior, c/o of William E. Wells, 14 Edwards Road, Portland, CT 06480.

Services will be held at Trinity Church today at 10 a.m. The Rev. Steven Ling, Priest-in-Charge will officiate. Interment, with military honors, will be in Trinity Cemetery. For directions, or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net.

Colchester

Chester G. Emrick

Chester G. Emrick, 92, husband of the late Mary Roberts Emrick of Colchester passed away Friday, March 19, in Colchester. He was born on January 2, 1918, in Hartford, son of Elmer G. and Henrietta Clark Emrick.

Chet worked for many years for the CT Transit as a bus operator. He was a veteran of WWII and the Korean War, serving in the U.S. Army, and was a member of the V.F.W. Post 6990.

Surviving are five sons, Chester G. Jr., Robert H., Ronald M., John A. Emrick and Anthony Orolofski; a daughter, Jean O. DeFranzo; a brother, Robert Emrick; two sisters, Phyllis C. Avery and Muriel C. Deming; 14 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by three sisters, Lorraine Webber, Marion Lockhart and Barbara Strenge.

Visitation was Wednesday, March 24, from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., followed by his service at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. Burial to follow in the Middletown Veterans cemetery.

