

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**A Whole New World...Riley Briggs, Carli Villa, Shayla Belanger and Nate Abraham (pictured from left) perform the song "Prince Ali" from *Aladdin* on the Young People's Center for Creative Arts float during the 32nd annual Old Home Day parade in East Hampton on Saturday, July 10. For a complete story about the parade, see page 28.**

## More Complaints Aimed at Council

by Claire Michalewicz

It wasn't even on the agenda, but the discussion of the recent layoff of Police Chief Matt Reimondo not surprisingly dominated Tuesday's meeting of the East Hampton Town Council.

About 100 residents turned out to show their support for Reimondo, but all attempts to reinstate him to his job failed.

Sue Weintraub, the lone council member to speak out against Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe's actions since Reimondo was laid off on June 22, tried to get O'Keefe to resign. Wearing a T-shirt demanding O'Keefe's resignation, Weintraub made motions to add two items to the evening's agenda – a motion to reinstate Reimondo, and to eliminate Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe's position.

Neither of Weintraub's motions succeeded, as none of the other five council members present (Bill Devine was absent) would second either of them.

Anticipating a large number of residents who wanted to speak, the Town Council scheduled the meeting for the high school auditorium, rather than Town Hall. Before the public comment section, the council laid out some ground rules for the meeting.

"We will conduct this one with the same civility and decorum that we've come to expect in the past two centuries," town council Chairwoman Melissa Engel said. If anyone in the audience yelled or interrupted anyone who was speaking, she explained, they would be asked to leave.

Many of those speaking directed their comments at O'Keefe and at the council members who have supported his actions, some urging them to resign.

Angela Sarahina called O'Keefe and the council's actions "despicable."

"I demand that you bring Chief Reimondo back and either put Jeff O'Keefe on administrative leave or fire him for just cause," Sarahina continued. "And while you are at it, I think that you should all resign, except for Sue Weintraub. Unlike the rest of you, I did elect her because she can be trusted."

"Retaliation is pretty easy to spot," said Laurie Wasilewski, who received a standing ovation for her comments. "Who do you think you're kidding? You're not being truthful and you know it."

"For the sake of the town, your own families and what's left of your reputations, you each should resign your office," said Mary Ann Dostaler.

Many residents denied their comments were politically motivated.

"This isn't about politics. It's about people. It's about ethics," said Kyle Dostaler.

"You people are elected to do what we want," said Sam Moyers. "Not what you want."

One East Hampton police officer, Mark Pekar, stood up to explain that O'Keefe's comparisons of other town's police budgets were

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## AHM Annual Summer Musical Returns

by Lindsay Fetzner

AHM Summer Youth Theatre is no doubt hoping luck will be a lady next week, when it performs this year's musical, *Guys and Dolls*.

The three-day show, which kicks off Thursday, July 22, is a collaborative effort of over 60 youths from Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

*Guys and Dolls*, adapted from the hit 1950 Broadway musical, follows the trials and tribulations of Nathan Detroit, a New York hustler and organizer of a floating craps game. In an effort to find \$1,000 to pay for the game, Detroit bets fellow gambler Sky Masterson that he won't be able to take a young Salvation Army missionary, Sarah Brown, on a trip to Cuba with him. The plot follows Masterson, Brown and Detroit, among others, and the series of complications they run into along the way. The show will also feature an orchestra.

The theatre program began in 1983 and is the longest running program offered by the regional youth service bureau. Kids age 12-18 can participate in the program, which is designed to support positive youth development. The youths spend five weeks rehearsing and putting together a major production. This year, rehearsals began on June 17, running Monday through Thursday.

"It's a wonderful summer activity for young

people in the community, middle school or high school, and is something totally different," said AHM Executive Director Joel Rosenberg. He added that a great aspect of the program is that "there is room for everybody," whether it be on stage, behind the scenes, in the chorus or building sets.

This year, there will be over 60 actors on stage, with an additional 10-plus people backstage serving on the technical and stage crew. Many backstage volunteers, program and production director Mary Rose Meade said, are parents who have donated their time. "There are easily 75 people involved," she said.

"I am so looking forward to the audience experiencing the fun we've had with the show and the characters," Meade said, adding that it is a performance that "everyone can relate to."

Lesley Knaack, a seven-year participant in the program, said she originally joined the program at the request of a friend. But, after that first year, the 17-year-old Marlborough resident, who said she has a passion for musical theater, was "hooked."

"I just love how everybody has a lot of fun when they're doing it," Lesley said. "It's like a big family atmosphere."

Meade, a Hebron resident, has been both pro-  
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**Over 60 youths from Andover, Hebron and Marlborough in the AHM Summer Youth Theatre will perform *Guys and Dolls* next week. The show runs Thursday, July 22, through Saturday, July 24, at 7 p.m. each night in the RHAM High School auditorium.**

### Complaints cont. from Front Page

not accurate, since they had different populations and crime rates. Many of them, Pekar added, relied on state troopers, who frequently took longer to respond to emergency calls.

The police department, Pekar said, was already stretched, with many officers working overtime.

"This is not the time to cut our police force," he said. "We're really busy. We really need the town and the council's help."

Only one resident stood up to support the O'Keefe's actions. Janice Cavanaugh said that when Reimondo was chief, she had tried to contact him on several occasions because she needed his help. Reimondo, she said, had not returned her calls and had refused to meet with her. She went on to list the ratios of police officers to the population of surrounding towns, concluding that East Hampton's force was disproportionately large.

"The town should let this rest," Cavanaugh said. "I may get stoned on the way out of here, but that's my opinion." Cavanaugh's comments were met with loud applause from a handful of residents who were sitting together, but the audience was overwhelmingly in support of Reimondo.

The police cuts came up again during the town manager's report later in the meeting. O'Keefe explained that he planned to restructure the police department according to the Portland model. (A lieutenant oversees the Portland department's day-to-day operations, while the first selectwoman acts as the official chief.)

Weintraub questioned O'Keefe, explaining that comparing East Hampton's police department to those of surrounding towns was "like comparing asparagus to a school bus." Weintraub also addressed rumors that O'Keefe had hired a public relations consultant to help him with his press releases. In an e-mail to Weintraub Wednesday morning, O'Keefe again said he had not outsourced the writing to anyone, and that he and his executive secretary,

Cathy Sirois, had written and proofread all the documents.

"The bottom line is we were advised by the attorney, Sue," Engel said. Town attorney Jean D'Aquila, Engel said, had made it clear to O'Keefe that he had no police powers, such as the ability to make arrests.

Weintraub also asked O'Keefe why he had chosen Michael Green to serve as acting lieutenant. Weintraub said she had reviewed Green's disciplinary records and found "he violated EHPD rules and regulations."

"I'm very concerned about that," said Weintraub. O'Keefe responded that he had reviewed Green's personnel files and those of other officers, and he had other reasons for promoting Green. O'Keefe said he would be happy to sit down with Weintraub in a private meeting to go over the matter, and Weintraub agreed.

Reimondo attended Tuesday's meeting, and while he made no public statements, he said he wanted to show his gratitude for the support he'd received from residents in the past three weeks. That support, he said, included cards, letters and the large turnout at his public hearing on July 2. He added that he was happy to see that East Hampton residents were not only supportive of him, but of the entire police force.

Before the regular meeting, the Town Council was scheduled to hold an executive session to discuss a police officer who had requested a voluntary layoff. The cuts O'Keefe made to the police department in June included four positions – the chief, two other officers and an administrative position. Since one of the officer positions is currently unfilled, fulfilling this layoff request would complete the officer layoffs.

The executive session did not go ahead as planned, however, because of concerns that the meeting agenda violated the state's Freedom of Information Act. Engel, after consulting with Green about the officer's request, said the Town Council would reschedule the executive session

for their meeting on Aug. 10. But, Engel added, the Town Council could always call another meeting if the officer wished to leave the department sooner.

Reimondo, meanwhile, remains on administrative leave, pending the results of his hearing. His lawyer, Leon Rosenblatt, said Wednesday he was preparing his motion to explain why he felt Reimondo was entitled to a hearing. The July 2 hearing was shut down after O'Keefe's attorney, Mark Sommaruga, said Reimondo had no right to a hearing under state statute. Rosenblatt was given a deadline of July 15 to respond with his own motion. (According to Rosenblatt's office, the attorney was going to file his motion that afternoon, after press time.)

Rosenblatt also confirmed he was filing a complaint to the state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on behalf of one of the three women who filed the harassment complaints against O'Keefe. Rosenblatt declined to comment on either his motion for a hearing or the CHRO complaint, explaining he had yet to file either of them.

On Wednesday, O'Keefe said in a press release that the police department was "renewing its relationship" with State Police Troop K in Colchester. In the statement, O'Keefe said he had "no intention" of starting a resident trooper program in East Hampton, but that East Hampton could take advantage of the state police's specialized services, like K-9 units, a SWAT team and a criminal investigations unit at no cost.

\* \* \*

Also at the meeting, the council voted to adopt the revised Planning and Zoning fee schedule. A brief public hearing on the changes was held at 6:15 p.m., between the executive session and the regular meeting, but no residents made any comments. The revision includes multi-family dwellings, which will be charged fees on a per-unit basis.

### Musical cont. from Front Page

gram director and production director since 1992. The first year, Meade filled in for one summer while living in West Hartford, and said, "one year stretched into 19 summers." She has since moved to Hebron and seen the program transform considerably. When she first started, there were about 30 kids who put on the show, which grew to over 100 a few years ago, and has since been scaled back for more individualized attention.

There were several factors that went into choosing *Guys and Dolls* for this year's production, Meade said. In addition to being "an incredibly family-friendly show" that is "appropriate and entertaining for all ages," Meade said it offered the opportunity for several roles and costumes for the participants. Additionally, Meade said the youths expressed interest in it, and "pledged their energy and enthusiasm for the production as far back as March." The show, she said, "fit the bill."

"It's such a phenomenal show because it's so family-friendly," she said. "It's fun, it's funny and the character work is outstanding. I look forward to every scene."

This year, Meade said she is working with "the most focused cast" she has ever had." Put-

ting on this show in particular, she said, is "very, very hard" and going through rehearsals, "there is not a minute of downtime." The three-minute opening of the show alone, which is void of songs or words and features just the orchestra, took the cast the "better part of three rehearsals," or about six hours, to get down, Meade said.

Each summer, Meade said she combines her role as teacher, director and actor to put the show on. Meade attended New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and performed in films and on stage. She also previously taught at RHAM High School and now teaches part-time at Manchester Community College. When she comes through the door at rehearsal, Meade said she puts everything else aside and assumes "the role as the energetic, positive and strong-willed director" that will guide the students to putting on a successful show.

Rosenberg described Meade as "the face of our summer youth theatre," adding that she has been an inspiration for so many kids over the years. "She is absolutely great with the program," he said.

Brenna Kaplan, 18, who plays Miss

Adelaide, the 14-year fiancée of Detroit, has been involved in the theatre program since the sixth grade. "I loved it," she said of the first production she was part of, *Cinderella*. "I came back every single summer." Brenna, a recent graduate of RHAM High School, said she "loves the people" who take part in the production and "is a very good way" to spend the summer.

In the fall, Brenna, a Marlborough resident, will head off to Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia to pursue graphic design, but said she is "definitely going to join the drama club."

Brenna also commended Meade for her dedication to the program. "She is a wonderful woman," she said. "She's a ton of fun to work with, has a really good sense of humor and is highly involved in the community as well."

Fellow cast member Elizabeth Quesada, who plays the role of Sarah Brown and is a five-year veteran of the program, agreed. "She's so passionate about it," she said of Meade, adding that she "brings the show to a whole new level."

"When you are passionate about something, you can just tell," said 16-year-old Elizabeth, a

Council members also reviewed plans to buy the Goff House, explaining they had visited the house earlier this month to see if it would be an appropriate home for some of the offices in the Town Hall annex, which the town is losing in October.

The cost of the house, O'Keefe explained, would be \$150,000, taken from the town's general fund, plus the purchase price of some of the furnishings inside, such as tables and chairs. The Board of Finance will review the possible purchase and send its recommendation back to the Town Council.

The council also voted to adopt an employee handbook, drafted by Sommaruga and Human Resources Director Lisa Seymour. During discussions of the harassment allegations against O'Keefe, residents have frequently asked the town why they had no handbook and no set sexual harassment policy.

In new business, the council reviewed the proposed changes by the Boating and Navigation Task Force and voted to set a public hearing for Aug. 10. The changes include increased police patrol of the lake, more enforcement for Sears Park parking stickers and implementing a safe boating campaign. The changes the task force recommended would require increases in the Parks and Recreation and police department budgets. If the police department bought a new boat, the task force's recommendations explained, they would need a \$45,320 budget increase.

In its final item, the council voted to award the contract for the town's Water Supply Plan update and the Sabotage Prevention and Response Plan to Milone and MacBroom, who offered the low bid of \$13,500. The changes to the plan are required by state statute.

The next regularly scheduled town council meeting will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 10, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 20 East High St.

Hebron resident entering her senior year at RHAM High School. Her favorite part, she said, is "meeting the new people" and "experiencing everyone's creativity and originality."

Seeing the students from three towns form a community, Meade said, is one of the highlights of putting on the show. "They form one group because there is a shared mission," she said, and added, "It's a really wonderful thing to see students looking out for each other."

Rosenberg said reinforcing "how to work in a team" and "building confidence in front of an audience is a great experience for kids." Additionally, the youths learn valuable life skills while in the program.

The show will take place Thursday, July 22, through Saturday, July 24, in the RHAM High School auditorium. Showtime is at 7 p.m. all three nights.

Tickets are \$9 for adults and \$6 for children under 12 and senior citizens. Contact AHM for tickets or other information at 860-228-9488. Tickets can also be purchased in the town clerk's office in the Hebron Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St., Hebron.

# No Room for Colchester Produce Stand?

by Katy Nally

Bear's Produce Stand, recognizable by its white tent on South Main Street, might have to relocate before the end of the growing season, because the neighboring gas station claims the stand is on its property.

Bill Loughery, owner of Bear's Produce Stand, has set up his seasonal tent each summer in the same location for 18 years. Every morning he leaves his East Haddam residence at 5 a.m. to collect fruits and vegetables from farms across the state and sells them from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at the South Main Street site.

But changes are in store for the Colchester landmark that began as "two sawhorses, three planks and a kitchen scale with a pie plate," Loughery said.

Bear's Produce Stand is situated between the Phillips 66 gas station and Plum Tomato restaurant. Phillips 66 recently sent out a surveyor to determine how much the stand encroached onto the gas station's property and found Loughery's tent was over by a few feet, Loughery said. The map created by the surveyor puts one edge of his tent on the property line, he added.

According to town records on file at the assessor's office, Gibbs Oil owns the 1.56 acres the gas station sits on at 299 South Main St. Plum Tomato, at 275 South Main St., sits on 0.58 acres owned by Fenn-Tor LLC. In between the two parcels is a vacant lot listed at 283 South Main St., which spans one-quarter of an acre and is also owned by Fenn-Tor LLC.

Fenn-Tor LLC is owned by Valerie and Hyler Stanavage of Cheriton, VA.

Loughery, who thought he was operating on the vacant lot owned by Fenn-Tor LLC, pays \$150 each week in rent to owner of Plum Tomato, Brian Thomas, Loughery said. He added that Thomas and Stanavage had worked out a rental agreement for the produce stand.

The vacant lot at 283 South Main St. is defined as land without buildings, but it could include Plum Tomato's parking lot, the assessor's office said.

"I was definitely under that impression that this part of the lot was [Plum Tomato's]," Loughery said last week.

Before the surveyor came out, the gas sta-

tion took action to deter farm stand patrons from parking at Phillips 66 and walking over to Bear's. A row of metal bars have blocked former parking spaces and a "no trespassing" sign is out front.

Last year, Loughery said he also moved his tent so it was perpendicular to South Main Street, instead of parallel to, so as steer clear of what he thought was the property line.

Still, two weeks after Loughery opened the farm stand this year on June 16, he said a sheriff told him to vacate because he was on the gas station's property. He was later contacted by an attorney for Gibbs Oil, Steven Greenspan, and told he will have to leave pending an official letter.

On Saturday, July 10, Loughery received the letter telling him he had to be out by Friday, July 23, or else he could face litigation.

Greenspan did not return calls for comment.

The letter from Greenspan states if Loughery does not vacate by Friday, July 23, Gibbs Oil would sue to collect back rent from 2008 through now, and also sue Plum Tomato for collecting rent from Loughery.

"Talk about trying to squeeze every last cent out of somebody," Loughery said this week.

In talks with the attorney, Loughery said he offered to pay rent to Gibbs Oil to keep his spot, but the company turned him down.

But Loughery's greatest hurdle is finding a representative for Gibbs Oil to talk with.

"If they won't talk to me, there's no way I can stay here," Loughery said. "They hide behind lawyers so you can't even talk to these people. ... I thought they would at least listen to what I had to say."

A message was left Monday with a real estate representative of Gibbs Oil, but calls were not returned.

However, in another letter to Loughery, Greenspan said the gas station had "repeatedly asked" him to vacate and he refused. But Loughery said he spoke with a Gibbs Oil representative once a year ago, then again at the beginning of this summer's season.

He added if the gas station was worried about liability, he was also willing to pay for his own coverage; still an agreement wasn't be reached.



**Bear's Produce Stand, pictured left, must leave its South Main Street location by July 23, or face litigation from the gas station pictured right. Bill Loughery's stand has sold native fruits and vegetables at the same location for the past 18 years.**

About \$2 million worth of liability insurance would cost Loughery about \$100 for the season, he said.

Relocating seems to be the best option for Loughery, who was offered the chance to move near an automotive center on Old Hartford Road. He said the produce stand could also possibly operate at the former site of Colchester Fabric, Harry's Place, the closed Sunoco on South Main Street or the former Chevrolet dealership, also on South Main. "I've got five irons in the fire doing something," Loughery stressed.

If the produce stand does relocate, Loughery said Phillips 66 will probably lose some of its customers.

"There's no way I don't help their business," Loughery said. "It's because [customers] are coming to the produce stand that they get gas."

Loughery said he also helps the Colchester

community by hiring local youth like Kenny Spranzo, who began his second year at Bear's this summer.

Kathy Klein of East Haddam stopped by Bear's Produce Stand last Thursday, July 8, and Loughery recognized her right away as a regular. Klein, who "came to get good vegetables," said if Bear's moved she would miss the "community connection" the produce stand offers.

She said it would be refreshing to see the gas station work with the produce stand, instead of against it. "That's what you want in a community like this," Klein said. "There are ways to work with people."

Still, Loughery said he had tried to strike a deal with the gas station, but to no avail. "Any concerns they have I'm willing to address," he said.

## Colchester Resident Speaks About Explosion to National Lawmakers

by Katy Nally

In an attempt to persuade Washington legislators to set a higher standard of worker protection, Colchester resident Jodi Thomas relived the tragedy that claimed the life of her late husband Ron Crabb.

Crabb was killed when the Kleen Energy Plant in Middletown exploded Feb. 7 while workers were purging natural gas lines. He worked as a pipefitter and was a dedicated member of Connecticut Plumbers & Pipefitters Union, Local 777.

In addition to his wife, Crabb left behind his two sons, Tyler, 18 and Dylan, 6.

Thomas spoke at a Workforce Protections Subcommittee hearing in Middletown Monday, June 28. Chairwoman of that subcommittee, California Representative Lynn Woolsey, sponsored the bill Protecting America's Workers Act of 2009, which Thomas spoke in support of. All five Connecticut representatives and senators were co-sponsors.

"The manner and cause of Ron's death have only compounded our family's grief," Thomas said at the hearing. "This tragedy should never, ever have happened. It was preventable. This is

why I urge you, please, do not allow Ron's death to be in vain.

"Real change, real protection for hardworking Americans, must come out of this," she continued. "It is the only way to truly honor him and the other men who lost their lives, whose families are forever broken."

Thomas said this week delivering her testimony was "very, very difficult to do," but, she said "I felt I had to do it to protect workers in the future and to make a difference."

Describing Ron, his dedication to the Colchester community, his co-workers and his family, was a way for Thomas to honor her late husband, she said. And, urging legislators to enact the Protecting America's Workers Act of 2009 was something Crabb would have done himself, Thomas said.

The bill, H.R. 2067, seeks to hold responsible parties accountable in situations such as the Kleen Energy explosion, give more protection to whistleblowers, give victim's families more access to investigations and make sure new power plants are not exempt from regulations.

This last component is a "key piece," Thomas said. With about five new gas-fired power plants coming soon to Connecticut, she said these companies must be subject to state and federal regulations.

"This can never happen again," Thomas stressed.

At the hearing, Woolsey noted the new provisions to the bill would allow family members of workers killed on the job to play a larger role in investigations, as they "they may be a rich source of knowledge," she said. Also, family members "want investigations to get to the whole truth and ensure that the death of their loved one was not in vain," Woolsey said.

The part concerning whistleblowers would introduce due process for them and increased protection against being fired, demoted or punished, Woolsey said.

Although Thomas said her husband was not a whistleblower, she remembered Crabb shutting jobs down when he worked as a foreman and found violations.

"He always did the right thing," Thomas said.

The federal bill coincides with Connecticut Senate Bill 462, an Act Concerning Power Plant Safety. When SB 462 made its way to the state's Public Safety and Security Committee April 27, all members present voted for the bill. The same day, the bill was tabled for the senate calendar, but this was the last action taken.

Unlike the bill in Washington, the Connecticut act would ensure natural gas is used safely at power plants that use fuel, subject gas-fired plants owned by utility companies to the state building code and make it illegal for power plants to receive incentives for completing projects early.

Thomas said Representative Joe Courtney, who is also on the Workforce Protections Subcommittee, has helped her "from the get-go," she said.

"He's been great and caring," she added.

After her testimony, Thomas said Courtney gave her a handwritten note saying how her words had impacted both staff and legislators.

"Hopefully, I think it was worth all the effort," she said.

# Community Mourns Dedicated Resident, Board Member

by Lindsay Fetzner

On July 6, the Hebron community lost a loving mother, dedicated board member, enthusiastic coach and empathetic friend.

Deborah Morocco, 64, passed away last week, leaving behind her husband Joseph, three children, Jonathan and his wife Christine, of Hoboken, NJ, Laura Kompanik, her husband Kevin and son Mason, of Hebron, and David, of Hebron, among many other family members and friends.

Morocco was a mainstay in the community as her three children grew up, serving on the RHAM Board of Education (BOE), being a forerunner in the Hebron Soccer Association (HSA) and volunteering her time at the Church of the Holy Family. Morocco's husband said lightheartedly, "Debbie didn't know half-speed."

Family members say she opened her heart to kids, with a focus on trying to get them to live up to their full potential. "Her focus was on kids," Joseph said.

One of the highlights in Morocco's life was her 2-year-old grandson Mason. "She absolutely loved her grandson," said Mason's mom Laura, adding that he was one of the lights of her life. Laura recalled the fondness that Mason shared for Morocco. "He adored her," Laura said. "He shared everything with her."

But Morocco's dedication did not stop with her own children and grandchild, but stretched out considerably into the community.

During the mid-1980s, Morocco became heavily involved in the youth soccer program in town. Joseph said she wanted to "make the program more encompassing" and gave her heart and soul to the program. With Morocco's help, the program went from a seasonal fall sport to a year-round activity for the community's children.

Morocco served as president of HSA for nearly 10 years. She established the kinder soccer program for kindergarten-aged youths and worked to build a public soccer field at Veterans Memorial Park in town for the kids to utilize. The field was named in honor of the late

town planner Mike Roark, who passed away in 1995. Morocco also worked to establish the soccer program's scholarships awarded to two RHAM High School students each year at graduation.

Hebron resident Bill Tabor worked alongside Morocco in the soccer program. He recalled spending a considerable amount of time with Morocco, be it coordinating for or working with her in the soccer program. "She was very much a family-oriented person," said the 15-year friend of Morocco. He also remembered her as "always smiling" and highly energetic, "play[ing] out her role right until the end."

"Her philosophy and my philosophy [have] pretty much paralleled each other," Tabor said. "Keep them active, keep them involved and give them an opportunity to excel," he said of the youths in the community.

Joseph said his wife viewed education as exceptionally important and wanted to have an influence on the RHAM school district, especially with the upgrading of the facilities and creating a positive educational experience for the students.

Morocco was a devoted RHAM BOE member, serving for 12 years. She was appointed to the board in November of 1989 and served until the November elections of 2001.

Her time on the board included a term as chairwoman, starting in 1994; two years later, in 1996, RHAM High School received a Blue Ribbon award, based on its accomplishments from 1994-96.

During Morocco's tenure as chairwoman, Joseph said construction began on the new facilities. "She worked endless hours," Joseph said, getting different perspectives on the new facility that was to be built.

Former board member John Grasso recalled when the board was attempting to build the new high school and refurbish the middle school. "Those were tough years for the board," he said. But, through it all, Grasso said, "She was always poised and pleasant and hard-working."

"It was a real joy to serve with her and we

are going to miss her," Grasso said.

Bill Silver, the former RHAM superintendent of schools, remembers Morocco in a similar fashion when he was hired by the district in 1999. "She was dedicated to the school district and the community," Silver said. Another dedication Morocco had, Silver said, was to the improvements of the school system, and not just the "visible kind." Morocco also worked to improve the academic choices for the students, he said.

Silver said even when Morocco left the local education board, she remained very active in the community. "She was a terrific lady," he said.

For former board member Bob Merrifield, Morocco embodied "everything you would want in your best friend."

Merrifield, a Hebron resident, described Morocco as empathetic, exceptionally intelligent and energetic. He said she was "a leader in all aspects of her personal and professional life," he said.

Merrifield served as the vice chair when Morocco became chair in 1994. While Morocco served on the BOE alongside Merrifield, he said they experienced "difficult economic times" and several occasions where the regional budget was presented to the voters a number of times. But, through it all, he recalled that "Debbie had a tendency to bring cohesiveness to the board," and the ability to "unify board members to discuss issues at great length."

"The students were foremost in her mind, but she never lost sight of the taxpayer." And, "regardless of how difficult things were," Merrifield said, "she was the eternal optimist."

Optimism, family members said, was definitely one of Morocco's qualities, right up until the end.

"She was so positive and looking for hope," Joseph said. "She didn't accept the fact that she couldn't survive."

Joseph added Morocco "got a lot of strength from her kids."

For two years, Joseph said, Morocco went through chemotherapy while still working at



**Deborah Morocco, a popular resident and former RHAM Board of Education member, passed away from cancer last week.**

Open Solutions in Glastonbury, where she was a quality assurance manager, and later a project manager.

During these times, Joseph said Morocco was "working more than a full day," and really succeeded within the company.

"That's how dedicated Mom was for anything and everything," Jonathan said.

And, through her treatments, Morocco's family said she "made the most of it," adjusting to her situation, even though the family knew the prognosis was not good.

"She found pleasure in the simple things," family members said.

And on July 5, the day before Morocco passed away, Laura said her mother told them, "I'm going to fight."

Morocco was remembered last Saturday, July 10, during a Mass at the Church of the Holy Family.

# New Music Teacher Anxious to Join Hebron Elementary

by Lindsay Fetzner

Christine Gee was hired by the Board of Education (BOE) Tuesday evening as a .7 music teacher at Hebron Elementary School.

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said Gee was "heads and shoulders above the other candidates," adding, "She was a real stand out."

Gee, 22, originally from Long Island, NY, received her bachelor's degree in Music Education from The Hartt School in May 2009. Ever since she was little, she said, she has had a passion for music. She continued her love for music during her college career, participating in several performing groups on campus. They included the symphony orchestra, wind ensemble, symphony band, trombone ensemble, camerata and pit orchestra. In both the symphony band and pit orchestra, Gee was a section leader.

"I love Connecticut," Gee said this week, adding that the state is "not as pressured or competitive as New York." Coupled with her fondness for the area, Gee said she has a number of friends who live in nearby communities. Gee is currently living in Northport, NY, and will move to Connecticut in August.

Although she said she is nervous to start working in the district, Gee feels "ready to really start [her] career in teaching."

"What I found in Hebron is that they have great faculty," she said. "Everyone was very welcoming, from the secretaries, to all the teachers, to all the faculty. I'm excited to be working as part of the district."

Gee said one of the aspects that will ease her transition into Hebron is knowing one of the choral and general music teachers at the elementary school. Kim Pedersen and Gee attended school together. "It's good to know

somebody," she said.

Most recently, Gee has worked at the Paul Effman Music Service in New York, where she traveled to different Catholic schools in Long Island. With the company, she taught instrumental band sectionals and assisted with rehearsals for those in grades three to eight. She also assisted with Honor Band rehearsals.

Gee is also presently a district-wide substitute for band, orchestra, choral and general music in the Northport-East Northport school district. Since 2004, she has also administered private, individual music lessons for students aged four to 18 on the trombone, trumpet, clarinet and piano.

In the same region of New York, from 2004-09, Gee was involved in the Summer Music Program. As an assistant to the lead teacher and assistant teacher, Gee instructed beginning and continuing instrumental classes to students in grades three to five. She also served as a substitute for certified teachers.

While Gee was attending The University of Hartford, she student taught at both Windsor Locks Middle School and Glastonbury High School in 2008, giving her even more exposure in the state she will now call home. Gee co-directed two band ensembles at both locations and instructed classes on general music, theory, piano and music technology.

Between 2007 and 2009, Gee was also involved in a "Benefit For Life" concert put on by the Sigma Alpha Iota, a professional music fraternity for women. Gee was part of at The University of Hartford. Gee served as the benefit concert coordinator, supporting organizations such as National Ovarian Cancer Coalition, Camp Sunshine and the Rape, Abuse &



**Christine Gee is the newest music teacher at Hebron Elementary School. She is shown with her mother Lucia at her graduation from The Hartt School in 2009.**

Incest National Network over the years. In 2009, Gee said the concert raised over \$3,000 for ovarian cancer.

"I find that through music, we can spread hope and reasons to connect to one another,"

she said.

Gee will begin at Hebron Elementary School on Aug. 23, replacing Eileen Chiaro. She will teach elementary instrumental and general music classes.

# Rain Doesn't Dampen East Hampton Old Home Day Fun

by Claire Michalewicz

Ominous skies and a few heavy rain showers threatened the annual Old Home Day parade on Saturday, but that didn't stop the event from carrying on as usual, for the 32nd year in a row.

"We're very hearty here in East Hampton," said Red McKinney, the parade's master of ceremonies, as another downpour started. "We're gonna get through this little shower. All we ask is that you have a good time."

Highlights of the parade – which took a route along Route 66, up Lakeview Street and down Summit Street into the town center – included Epoch Arts, Young People's Center for Creative Arts and Podium Players, which staged elaborate productions with singing on their floats. Many local businesses also contributed floats, including Paul's and Sandy's Too, who came with a flower-covered truck and several cars, including a pumpkin. Jessica's Garden also fit in with the "Once Upon A Time" theme, with telling their fairy-tale story of what happens when a gardener marries a food salesman. Outer Limits Salon was another popular favorite, with an elaborate Rapunzel-themed float.

Judges and spectators evaluated the floats as they went by, and seven floats later received awards. Bethlehem Lutheran Church won the People's Choice Award, for their elaborate jungle-themed float, while VFW Post 5095's Ladies' Auxiliary took home the Old Home Days Award, the second-place prize.

Among the many musical acts – 19 of them, according to McKinney – were the East Hampton high school and middle school marching bands. Connecticut's own Ancient Mariners Fife and Drum Corps were another highlight, dressed as pirates and firing a cannon.

From farther away came the South Philadelphia String Band, whose members marched with banjos, saxophones and percussion in their brightly colored and feathered costumes. Taking advantage of a pause in the parade, the bandleader stopped to dance in the street with a group of children. The band, known as "The Mummies," later played a set at the carnival, and despite the soggy weather, proved to be popular with fairgoers who danced in front of the stage.

"I'm wet, you're wet, but we're all here," McKinney said to the crowds as the carnival started up for the day. Recently-crowned Miss Connecticut Brittany Decker, who marched in

the parade, agreed. "I'm glad everybody is still out there," she said. "This was not a parade to miss."

Old Home Days Association (OHDA) President Jim Vick spoke briefly, calling the event a success and thanking residents for sticking out the rough weather.

"I had fun," said Vanessa Naughton, 7, the lone Girl Scout to the march in the parade. Vanessa said the rest of her troop never showed up, but she decided to march anyway. During the parade and the carnival, McKinney singled Vanessa out for marching by herself, and spectators clapped enthusiastically. Another scout who enjoyed the parade was Boy Scout Evan Selger, who said he liked getting a chance to blow the horn that adorned the Scouts' parade float. Spectator Jackie Yorker, 8, liked all the music in the parade, while 4-year-old Zoe Martin's favorite part was the pirates firing their cannon.

The event remained relatively free of the political tensions that have been plaguing East Hampton since Police Chief Matt Reimondo lost his job last month, though there were several spectators wearing T-shirts proclaiming "Bring Back The Chief/Fire O'Keefe," which were sold from a tent along Summit Street. Town Council member Sue Weintraub wore one as she marched in the parade with her fellow Town Council members.

O'Keefe followed behind the council, accompanied by acting police lieutenant Michael Green. O'Keefe and the council both received noticeably less applause than the other marchers, though audiences on Summit Street remained civil.

Several other dignitaries graced the parade, including state Representative Gail Hamm, state Senator Eileen Daily and Attorney General Richard Blumenthal. Recently-crowned Decker also rode in the parade.

As the carnival began, Town Council chairwoman and carnival organizer Melissa Engel added that this was only the second time it had rained during an Old Home Day parade, but urged people to stick around for the carnival. Many of the town organizations with booths at the carnival, Engel said, earn most of their money from the sales.

Among the many treats available were the fried dough from the Republicans, Italian ice and pulled pork sandwiches from the Democrats, burgers from the Rotary Club and hot dogs, cotton candy, ice cream, Thai food and



Balloon hats proved popular at the Old Home Day Carnival on Saturday. Pictured on the dance floor are, from left to right, Adam Eurbin, Alyson Augenstein, Whitney Rubega, Emma Lanzi, J.C. Eurbin, Krista Fraulino and, in front, Larissa Kauffman.

falafel from a variety of local organizations and vendors.

Nancy Ninesling, the OHDA treasurer, said the entire festival was a success this year. "The townspeople and businesses were very generous this year," Ninesling said, despite the economic difficulties that some of them were facing.

Ninesling pointed out that because of that financial support, the OHDA was able to offer lower ticket prices for the carnival, to thank townspeople for their help.

Among the carnival rides were swings, a scrambler, a Ferris wheel and a slide.

Jared Paluska said he and his friend, Sean Vick, wanted to spend their afternoon on the rides. So far, Paluska said, they'd been on the swings and the scrambler, but were planning on riding all of them multiple times.

The carnival continued until 11 that night,

with the winners of the raffle announced during the festivities. With 12 prizes this year instead of the usual 10, participants had a better than usual chance of winning a prize, which included a riding lawn mower, gift certificates to many local businesses and baseball tickets. The lawn mower, the raffle's grand prize, went to Shelley Morariu.

The rain in the morning and early afternoon didn't seem to ruin the event for the spectators, many of whom said they simply had to come to Old Home Day no matter what the weather.

"It's a tradition," said Jackie Martin, who came with her daughter Zoe. "We come every year. It's our hometown."

Jim Vick said this week he thought the parade went well, despite the weather conditions.

"Despite the heat and the threat of rain, I was pleased with the turnout we had," he said. "I think it was a success."

# East Hampton Neighbors Complain About Angelico's Outdoor Noise

by Claire Michalewicz

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) heard public comments at its meeting Monday about whether the town's regulations permit outdoor entertainment at Angelico's Lakehouse Restaurant, but decided to put off any discussion and decisions until its next meeting in August.

Fran Klein, who lives near Angelico's, filed the appeal after Planning, Building and Zoning Administrator Jim Carey issued an opinion explaining that the outdoor music was an acceptable use. Klein is arguing that outdoor music is not a permitted accessory use for a restaurant.

In late April, Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe asked Carey to give his opinion as to whether outdoor entertainment was prohibited or allowed by the town's regulations.

"Without any doubt, it is a legitimate, documented, permitted use," Carey had said in his opinion, adding that East Hampton was "well-known as a festive community."

Residents of the neighborhood around Angelico's have repeatedly voiced their concerns to the town government for years. The Town Council has discussed instituting a noise ordinance, but it is still in the preliminary stages of studying noise in town. Recently, council members John Tuttle and Thom Cordeiro have been monitoring noise in the neighborhood around Angelico's with a decibel meter.

"It really is difficult to have a stage in front of your house," said Ann Garwood, who lives next to Angelico's. Garwood said the music has been quieter lately, which she said might be due to town council members monitoring the sound levels.

"When it's loud, it's very, very, very loud, but other times it's quiet," Garwood concluded.

"They know they're being monitored," added Phil Wielgosh, who also lives near Angelico's. Angelico's could solve the problem, he said, by moving the music indoors.

"We respectfully disagree with the conclusions [Carey] made," said Eric Rothausser, Klein's attorney. Rothausser explained that Angelico's Lake House was built on two lots, one residential and one commercial, at 81 and 83 North Main St. The outdoor bar, he said, was on the residential lot, not the commercially zoned one.

Even if all the restaurant's property were zoned commercially, Rothausser said, outdoor entertainment is not customarily incidental to a restaurant.

"If anything," he continued, "the restaurant has become incidental to the outdoor entertainment." Rothausser showed ZBA members a picture of a billboard in Newington, which he said emphasized the outdoor entertainment more than the restaurant itself.

Rothausser said Klein had "the right to quiet enjoyment" of her home, and he asked the ZBA to apply the town's regulations as they were written.

"I really believe this is a non-issue," said Mike Dowley, Angelico's attorney. He pointed out that even if the zoning regulations had prohibited Angelico from having outdoor entertainment, Angelico could have claimed grandfather rights to have outdoor music. Dowley said the Hathaway Inne and Restaurant, the former occupant of Angelico's building, had outdoor music, which resident Beverly Blau confirmed.

"We always had parties up there," Blau said, explaining that the Hathaway had been a destination for entertainment since she was a teenager in the 1930s.

Angelico's neighbor John Moore agreed that the noise wasn't a problem, explaining that he lived right next to the restaurant. The outdoor music, Moore had calculated, only played about 3 and a half percent of the time the restaurant was open, which he said he would consider "incidental use."

Resident Nikki O'Neill pointed out that the music only played for the summer, and that Angelico was "very generous to this town" in money to various civic groups and charities, and letting them use his restaurant for events.

But Mary Ann Dostaler said that while she

appreciated Angelico's fundraising efforts, they were not relevant to the discussion. "This is not subjective," Dostaler said. "It's a black and white matter."

"We have tried every avenue," Klein said, to solve the noise problem. "I personally have never begrudged Angelico his ability to make a living," she added.

Paul Angelico attended the meeting, but said he wouldn't speak because he did not want to be recorded. (Town Council member Sue Weintraub was filming the meeting with a camcorder.) Angelico could not be reached for comment after the meeting.

Last week, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) voted to send another complaint against Angelico's to the ZBA's August meeting. That complaint, filed by local resident Angelo Tammaro, alleged Carey didn't have the legal right to issue a building permit for a fence outside Angelico's. The fence, Tammaro said, was built on top of a three foot mound of earth, bringing the total height to eleven feet. According to town regulations, Tammaro said, fences over eight feet tall require a building permit.

The next ZBA meeting will be held on Monday, Aug. 9, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 20 East High St., to discuss both Klein's and Tammaro's appeals.

*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

*Note: The views expressed in this column do not necessarily represent the views of the newspaper.*

I've kept out of the whole mess going on in East Hampton with Police Chief Matt Reimondo, but after reading the Town Council's – except for councilwoman Sue Weintraub – statement last week, I can't stay silent any longer.

The statement, issued by council chair Melissa Engel and fellow council members John Tuttle, Thom Cordeiro, Bill Devine, Chris Goff and Barbara Moore, seemed to attempt to turn this into a political issue. Weintraub, the lone member of East Hampton's independent Chatham Party currently on the council, was blasted for breaking confidentiality and stating Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe had been accused of sexual harassment. The criticism of the harassment investigation, the statement said, was a political attempt by the Chatham Party to remove O'Keefe from his position.

If the Town Council is attempting to cheapen this fiasco by making it yet another chapter in the ongoing Republicans/Democrats vs. the Chatham Party soap opera that has plagued this town for the past few years – *As the Belltown Turns*, perhaps? – then shame on them. This isn't a political issue, and to try to make it into one does a disservice to Matt Reimondo and his supporters.

This may indeed be strictly a budget issue – although it's easy to understand why not a lot of people see it that way. First of all, this \$1.5 million budget deficit the town is facing: why did nobody hear about it until after the axe fell on Reimondo? East Hampton is a small town; its budget is not that large. Shouldn't it have been noticed the town was heading towards a deficit of that amount? And if it had been noticed, why wasn't it discussed during the lengthy budget process the town only recently wrapped? If it was withheld from the public out of a fear the revelation would hamper the chances of the 2010-11 budget passing at referendum...well, that's not a very good reason.

The timing of the whole thing really pokes holes in the "well, it's for budgetary reasons" claim. The layoff came right on the heels of an investigation into claims of alleged sexual harassment by a senior town official – an official that has since been identified by Reimondo and Weintraub as O'Keefe himself. (And the identification has yet to be denied by O'Keefe or anyone on the council.) Reimondo says the sexual harassment claims, made by three town employees, were first brought to the East Hampton Police Depart-

ment, and then Reimondo forwarded them to the town attorney and the Town Council for an investigation.

Knowing all this, it's not surprising the move has been viewed as simple retaliation on the part of O'Keefe. (Not helping the town manager's case is that laid off along with Reimondo is a police secretary alleged to be one of the three who filed the harassment claims – I say "alleged" because this hasn't been confirmed by O'Keefe but, again, it hasn't been denied either.) The town of course has denied any kind of retaliation was at play. But, really, with the rumors that had been swirling in East Hampton in the weeks leading up to the layoff – and the identity of the person behind the alleged sexual harassment was apparently the worst-kept secret in town – didn't town officials know how it would look?

Two days after Reimondo was laid off, Engel was quoted in the *Hartford Courant* as saying the "police department is not going to be the last department that the Town Council looks at in ways to save money." So, if there are other departments the town could look at, why weren't they examined first? If cuts at, say, the town library (not that I'm advocating any, don't get me wrong) were made before the cuts at the police department, or even made concurrently, don't you think that would have helped the town's case that this wasn't one giant case of payback?

But, as we all know, none of this happened, and the end result was a big fat PR nightmare for the town, one that has been documented by seemingly every television station in the state. O'Keefe has since started backpedaling a bit, saying that Reimondo isn't really out of a job but is instead on "paid administrative leave." One almost has to laugh at the fact a move supposedly born out of a need to cut costs has resulted in a police chief being paid *not* to go to work.

Reimondo's still waiting, and hoping, for a public hearing dealing with his termination. His attorney expects the whole matter to eventually end up in court and, unfortunately, I wouldn't be surprised to see it go that path.

As for the Town Council...well, November 2011 will be here sooner than you think. A move as incredibly unpopular as this one isn't likely to be forgotten by then, and I have a feeling its impact will be felt at the polls.

But like I said earlier, this shouldn't be a political issue. It's about doing what's right. And the town...well, it hasn't done that.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

# No Weenies, Just a King and a Queenie in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

Six-and-a-half hot dogs in four minutes was what it took to win \$150 and the admiration of the crowd at Governor's Tavern last week.

A four-minute hot dog eating contest was held at the tavern last Thursday, July 8, as a fundraiser for the East Hampton High School (EHHS) Class of 2000's upcoming 10th year reunion.

Melissa Kelley, one of the event's organizers, said the hot dog contest was just one of the ideas she and her classmates came up with when they were planning their reunion. The reunion, she explained, would be a simple picnic, followed by drinks at Governor's, but the class wanted to raise some extra money.

"We want to give back to the high school," Kelley said, explaining that they were planning on donating a gift. Kelley said she wasn't sure what the gift would be yet, but they wanted to find out what the school might need.

"We'll figure it out when we get there," added April McGarty, another organizer.

Steve Allegra, a 2000 EHHS graduate and the head chef at Governor's, said he and his classmates wanted to hold a fundraiser that people would enjoy watching. Allegra, who decorated his face with war paint to get himself motivated, said before the contest he was aiming to eat 12 in the four-minute contest.

"I haven't eaten all day," he added.

Town Council Vice Chairman John Tuttle, regional vice president of sales at Nathan's Famous, donated the hot dogs and the T-shirts for the contestants. "I wanna help the class out," said Tuttle, adding that the event should be fun for contestants and spectators.

"It should be fun," said spectator Shaun McGarty, April's husband. "But it could end

up disgusting."

Liz Shulman, one of the event organizers, said she came to the contest unprepared when her older brother Bob convinced her to join the contest.

"I had no intention of doing this, but they thought a girl should do it," Shulman said as she put on her yellow Nathan's T-shirt. "Now that I'm in it, I'm not gonna wuss out."

Bob Shulman ended up winning the event, managing to gulp down 6 and a half hot dogs in four minutes. Liz took second place, only a bite behind her brother. (Their father, Dave, also participated, but stopped eating after just one hot dog.) Nic Anderegg came in third, downing six whole hot dogs plus one extra bite.

"I'm really proud of my kids," joked Dave Shulman as Bob and Liz congratulated each other.

"I feel awesome," Liz said. "I don't feel sick, and I can't believe I came in second."

Allegra, who went into the contest expecting to eat a dozen, managed less than half – swallowing five and a half hot dogs. "At least I finished the whole plate," he said.

To raise money at the contest, the organizers sold raffle tickets during the event. The tickets, which cost \$3 for one and \$10 for five, gave contest spectators a chance at winning a Keurig coffee maker, a 22-inch flat-screen TV, a basket of office supplies and a variety of gift certificates at several local businesses, including Governor's.

About 20 or 30 people crowded onto the small patio to watch the contest, many of them supporting their friends or relatives in their endeavor to eat as many hot dogs as possible. Tina Muzzi, another organizer, said she was impressed with the turnout at the event, noting



East Hampton High School Class of 2000 member Liz Shulman and her father Dave race to eat their hot dogs during a contest held to raise money for the class' upcoming 10-year reunion. Liz came in second place, finishing six and a quarter hot dogs in four minutes.

that the weather was hot and many residents were at the Old Home Days celebration, which started that evening.

"I'm so glad everything turned out to be a success," Kelley said. She said they had raised about \$200, but were hoping Bob Shulman would donate his \$150 prize money back.

The EHHS Class of 2000 is holding its reunion Sunday, Aug. 8, from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. at the Haddam Neck Fairgrounds, followed by drinks and hors d'oeuvres at Governor's. Tickets are \$40 per person or \$60 per couple. Contact [ehhsclass2000reunion@gmail.com](mailto:ehhsclass2000reunion@gmail.com) for more information.

## Colchester Transfer Station Burglarized

by Katy Nally

The transfer station on Old Amston Road was burglarized sometime between Thursday, July 8 and Saturday, July 10, Colchester Police said.

A total of \$198 in cash was stolen, as well as a leaf blower, a cordless drill and wrenches, Officer First Class Robert Labonte said this week.

This was the fourth transfer station burglary in the area since the middle of June.

East Hampton Sergeant Garritt Kelly said East Hampton's transfer station was burglarized sometime between June 15 at 4 p.m. and June 16 at 8 a.m. Kelly said only a tool box full of hand tools and a first aid kit were stolen, as cash isn't kept at the station.

"I'm not sure what the rationale was," Kelly added.

He said the person (or people) behind the crime forced their entry through the front door.

According to Marlborough Constable Randy Ransom, the Marlborough Transfer Station and the East Haddam station were burglarized toward the end of June.

Marlborough's safe containing payments made that day was stolen. Ransom said the perpetrators ripped out the safe that was attached to a shelf.

Marlborough Resident State Trooper Mark Packer said there are no longer any valuables kept at the Marlborough Transfer Station.

An East Haddam Resident State Trooper was contacted about the incident in that town, but did not return calls for comment.

In the Colchester incident, Labonte said, the perpetrators probably went through a window, as there was no damage to the front door.

He mentioned the four transfer station burglaries were probably related, adding "it sounds like the same people that are messing with me."

Since the incident, Labonte said "the word's been put out to the guys in the office and the troopers." He noted the Colchester Police force is down to six officers (three left during May, and one is out injured) and there is no midnight shift. But, he added, "We do what we can with what we have."

Colchester Public Works Director Mark Decker said he has asked police to increase their patrol of the Old Amston Road area. The new Colchester Dog Park is opening this Sunday, July 18, at 89 Old Amston Rd., and Decker said he hoped it would "add a little bit of activity in that general area."

In the meantime, Labonte said he hoped police would discover a suspect and be able to charge them with all the transfer station burglaries.

## Settlement Reached in Portland Sex Assault Suit

by Claire Michalewicz

Attorneys have reached a settlement in the civil lawsuit filed against a Portland horse trainer. The settlement, reached last Friday, awards Andrew Srb, one of Robert Johnson's former students, money and property from Johnson's horse farm on Sand Hill Road.

Srb sued Johnson for damages, saying Johnson sexually assaulted him when he was a student at Johnson's riding school in the 1980s. When he filed the lawsuit in 2008, the statute of limitations for a criminal trial had already expired.

While Srb's attorney, Gerald Sack, said the value of the settlement didn't approach the \$1.67 million that Srb had originally been awarded, he called it a "reasonable" solution.

Last Tuesday, July 6, the attorneys attended a hearing on a decision Johnson's attorney, Michael Dwyer, filed to set aside the verdict. Dwyer's motion alleged the jury had been unfairly prejudiced by indirectly hearing about Johnson's previous sexual assault conviction. (In 2001, Johnson was convicted of assaulting a female student; he served nine months in prison and remains on probation until next year.)

Judge Mary-Margaret Burgdorff had 120 days to rule on that motion, but the two lawyers worked out a settlement with Judge Rob-

ert Holzberg before Burgdorff could make a decision.

On Friday, July 9, Sack and Dwyer worked out a settlement with Holzberg. According to the settlement, Johnson will transfer his interest in his horse farm to Srb, Sack said. In addition, he said, Johnson will also give Srb some of his personal property. Sack said Johnson is required to vacate his property by Aug. 15.

Sack said the value of Johnson's property did not approach the amount Srb was supposed to be awarded, after a jury awarded him \$1.27 million and Burgdorff added \$400,000 in compensatory damages.

"But it's the plaintiff's best opportunity to realize some benefit from the jury's decision in a reasonable time period," Sack said.

Johnson's property is currently facing foreclosure, and as part of the settlement, Johnson has agreed not to challenge the foreclosure proceedings. If the settlement waited until after the property had foreclosed Sack said, Srb would have difficulty recovering money from Johnson.

"I think it's a reasonable resolution in an imperfect situation," Sack said.

Dwyer could not be reached for comment for this story.

## Fire Marshals: Smoking Likely Caused Portland Fatal Blaze

by Claire Michalewicz

Town fire marshals have determined the cause of the house fire that killed a Portland man in March. The blaze was likely caused by the victim's smoking, their report said.

The fire broke out at 10 Freedom Way on March 27, taking the life of resident Michael Flood. Flood, 57, was alone at the time of the fire.

In his official report about the incident, Fire Marshal Ray Sajdak said the cause of the fire, "more probable or not, is careless use of smoking materials."

According to Sajdak's report, Flood had emphysema, and was connected to an oxygen tank 24 hours a day. The fire broke out in the den and spread through the house, igniting three oxygen tanks, the report said. Flood was connected to one of these tanks.

Sajdak's report said he had interviewed

Flood's wife and daughter, who both confirmed Flood had a history of smoking. The report ruled out other causes of fire, including foul play and the use of any accelerants. Four butane lighters were found in the hallway of the house, but fire marshals could not determine where they came from, the report said.

According to the report, Flood's wife, Leslie, said Michael had been in the den when she left the house shortly before the fire broke out. Flood was already dead when firefighters found him in the hallway, the report said. His autopsy was inconclusive, but medical examiners did not find anything suspicious, Portland Police Sergeant Scott Cunningham said after the fire.

It was Portland's first fatal fire in 16 years, Cunningham said.

### Colchester Police News

7/6: Jensie Reynoso-Santiago, 19, of 17 Pearl St., Willimantic, was charged with failure to appear, State Police said.

7/8: Kerry Shorey, 48, of 55 Gill St., was charged with breach of peace and interfering with police, Colchester Police said.

7/9: Ryan Henk, 19, of 297 Old Hebron Rd., was charged with sixth-degree larceny, Colchester Police said.

7/9: Jonah Dominick, 21, of 20 Main St., Apt. 5, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

7/9: Joseph Chmiel totaled his 2001 Harley Davidson at about 4:35 p.m. after crashing into a deer on West Road in Salem, State Police said. Chmiel, of Salem, suffered only "minor abrasions" and was not transported to a hospital, State Police said.

7/10: Christian Mock, 28, of 63 Water Hole St., East Hampton, was charged with violation of probation, three counts of failure to appear and interfering with police, State Police said.

### Marlborough Police News

7/11: Marisa Hagggett, 18, of 35 Blish Rd., was charged with breach of peace and threatening, State Police said.

### Portland Police News

7/8: Faith Watrous, 37, of 71 Freestone Ave., was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, Portland Police said.

7/8: Delight Watrous, 40, of 71 Freestone Ave., was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

# Marlborough to Apply for STEAP Grant for Sidewalks

by Katy Nally

In a vote of 2-1, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) decided to apply for STEAP funding for an expansion of sidewalks at its Tuesday, July 13, meeting.

Selectman Riva Clark was opposed, saying she wanted to apply for STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) funds to renovate the second floor of Richmond Memorial Library. Also, she said she has heard negative comments from residents about the sidewalks that are already installed.

Selectman Joe La Bella and First Selectman Bill Black agreed that since there were no engineering and design plans set for the library renovation, the town should apply for funds for a project that had this step completed.

"We're ready to go with sidewalks," Black said Tuesday.

Library Director Nancy Wood said Wednesday she was "disappointed" with the board's decision, adding, the town should chip in for engineering and design, as the library is a town building.

The "connectivity" plan to be spelled out in the STEAP application includes extending sidewalks down to the Shoppes at Marlborough Barn complex, Cheney Road and Jones Hollow Road. La Bella said he had heard from several business owners, especially those at the barn complex, saying they wanted sidewalks.

Black agreed, adding STEAP funds for sidewalks would "reflect all of our taxpayers – our

businesses and our residents."

The application due date for STEAP is Tuesday, July 20. The maximum amount awarded is \$500,000 and it would probably come to Marlborough in September, Black said.

The BOS spent most of the meeting discussing possible plans for the library, including where the engineering and design funding could come from.

La Bella said he wanted the Richmond Memorial Library Executive Board to make a commitment to fund its engineering and design costs. "I would like to see RML step up to the table and provide [that funding]," La Bella said.

Library board vice chair Deb Bourbeau was hesitant to speak on behalf of her board, as no decisions have been finalized, but she said the board would be willing to fund half of what the library expected to pay for engineering and design. She didn't give an exact amount, but said it was less than \$30,000.

She said the library's estimate for engineering and design costs was less than the selectmen's who expect it will total somewhere between \$60,000-\$70,000.

Bourbeau added the library board was "gung-ho" about fundraising, but said "donations haven't been easy" this year. She called the library board's funds, which the less-than-\$30,000 amount would come from, "the only cushion we have."

Clark said she wouldn't be opposed to the

town and library sharing the cost of the engineering and design plans.

However, La Bella disagreed, saying that an estimated \$30,000-\$35,000 would be another person at Town Hall. "I don't see how we could meet them halfway," he said.

Black agreed with La Bella, adding, the town's budget was so tight this year that "we've laid people off."

La Bella and Black noted the town's budget for 2010-11 was already finalized, so engineering and design funds put forward by the town wouldn't be approved until the next budget cycle.

Instead of applying for more STEAP funds for the library, the BOS focused on how to use \$250,000 the library was awarded from STEAP in September 2009. There is also the option of applying for a Small Cities grant that would make Richmond Memorial Library handicapped accessible.

Black said a Small Cities grant would most likely cover installing a handicapped accessible elevator, doorway, ramp and restroom. The BOS estimated the grant could net up to \$475,000.

Although the big question of where to obtain engineering and design costs remained unanswered, selectmen said assuming the library funds it, the town would use the original \$250,000 STEAP grant, plus the possible Small Cities grant, to renovate the second floor of the library. With this commitment from the town,

Black said he thought residents would rally support for the project.

"They need space," Black said. "They do a lot for the community."

As far as a list of "capitol restoration projects" that the library board presented to the BOS at its June meeting, Black said the town would try and complete some of the first-year items in-house, including electrical and flooring work.

"I would like to see if we could get this list done," he said.

Besides the library and sidewalks projects, the BOS also looked at replacing the bathhouse at Lake Terramuggus, installing roads leading into the business park and creating a public water well in the town center.

Clark said she thought if some residents were opposed to the town's sewer project, a water well might not go over entirely well.

Black said the town is authorized to borrow \$380,000 for the business park project, but it would increase Marlborough's overall debt.

As for the bathhouse, Black estimated the project, which would include demolition, a new foundation and a new building, would cost the maximum amount awarded by STEAP, \$500,000. Engineering and design for the bathhouse is also not complete.

The next BOS meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 10, 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

## East Hampton Police News

6/14: Jason Jay Rich, 35, of 40 Falls Bashan Rd., Moodus, was arrested for failure to drive right, DUI, possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia and improper storage of narcotics, East Hampton Police said.

6/18: Sabina Zygmunt, 21, of 47 Westerly Ter., Colchester, was arrested for failure to drive right and driving under the influence, police said.

6/22: Elizabeth Stevens, 37, of 784 Main St., Willimantic, was arrested for criminal damage to landlord's property, police said.

6/22: Stanley Mitchell, 35, of 13 West High St., was arrested for criminal damage of landlord property, police said.

6/25: Matthew Dzialo-Evans, 29, of 37 School House Ln., was arrested for failure to

appear, police said.

7/1: Danielle Colacicco, 23, of 22 Apple Ln., Colchester, was arrested for failure to drive right, DUI, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

7/3: Raymond Kehrhahn, 54, of 6 Depot Hill Rd., was arrested for third-degree larceny, police said.

7/3: Allen J. Guiot, 55, of 18 Summit St., was arrested for failure to display front marker plate, DUI, operating a motor vehicle under suspension and without insurance, police said.

7/4: James Christianson, 44, of 817 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, was arrested for failure to drive right, improper signaling, DUI, failure to renew registration and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

# WPCA Updated on Marlborough Sewer Project

by Katy Nally

At its Thursday, July 8, meeting, the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) agreed to table setting the benefit assessment for the town's sewer project, and vote on it instead at a special meeting in late July, which, as of press time, was not yet scheduled.

Although the benefit assessment numbers are set, Town Planner Peter Hughes said at last Thursday's meeting the board is waiting for the paperwork to be finalized. The total Phase I benefit assessment costs \$12,054 per EDU (equivalent dwelling unit), to be paid back over 20 years, netting \$603 per year per household.

By the Aug. 12 WPCA meeting, Hughes said, "we should be closing out the project financially."

Marlborough voters approved the \$12.02 million sewer project in 2002 by a referendum vote. However, since then, construction was stalled from 2002-07 because the Clean Water Grant, which partially funds the project, was canceled.

By 2007, the size of the project decreased by about half and the price went up for residents inside the district, because there were fewer people to share the cost.

As part of Phase I of the project, some residents by the lake and around the town center began hooking up to the long-awaited sewers this past March.

At the July 8 meeting, Hughes updated the

WPCA on the overall status of the sewer project and presented an estimate for Phase II of the project to be voted on at a November referendum, as well as a chart showing so-called "spikes" in gallons pumped per day.

Also, board members heard a letter questioning the new makeup of the WPCA.

Hughes gave the WPCA an estimate for Phase II of the project, which would extend the sewer down the rest of North Main Street, on Lake Road and Coleman Lane. A force main (pressurized pump system) would also be installed for about \$900,000, as well as a pump station for about \$600,000.

The total cost of Phase II would be about \$3.4 million, Hughes said, which includes an administration fee from Weston & Sampson and 10 percent contingency.

A WPCA meeting was held Thursday, July 15, after press time to discuss the referendum.

Hughes also updated the WPCA on the grinder pumps installation, noting that of the 180 grinder pumps, 110 are currently in service. However, there have been about seven incidents with the grinder pumps failing and about four "unfortunate in-house situations," which included leakage, Hughes said.

Although he didn't elaborate on all the incidents, Hughes mentioned a grinder pump on Denler Drive that was installed in April, ran for two months, and then just stopped. "That is

clearly a warranty issue," he said.

There was also a "twine" issue with a pump at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School. Apparently, someone at the school had flushed a large quantity of twine that eventually backed up the system. The pump was taken apart and "un-twined," Hughes said.

The WPCA also looked at a chart that showed what appeared to be spikes in the flow every Monday. For example, on Monday, June 28, the gallons pumped per day listed about 37,000, while the next day on Tuesday, June 29, it was about 14,000.

The WPCA questioned whether these increases were caused by storms.

Hughes said he asked Weston & Sampson, the engineering firm for the project, to inspect the system and investigate why a spike would occur so regularly. He said the firm asked for a new line item in the budget to do so, and Hughes refused, saying inspections were already in the contract.

However, after the meeting it was discovered that there was not really a spike every Monday; instead, the item on the chart showing Mondays' gallons pumped included the flows from Saturdays and Sundays. The chart only listed weekdays.

At the end of the meeting, during public comment, Murray read aloud Jane Boston's letter that urged the WPCA to amend a new ordinance

that changed the board's required membership.

Currently, the Town Hall website lists eight members on the WPCA, two of whom live inside the sewer district, and there are two vacancies for alternates. The new ordinance, which takes effect Aug. 1, sets the membership at five members, with one person living in the sewer district, plus two alternates.

Boston said in her letter the new configuration "dilutes the sewer representation."

"With the significant impact that the sewers currently have and will continue to have on residents living in the sewer district, it's only right that the commission members be comprised of at least two representatives from our district," Boston wrote.

Resident and Board of Finance alternate Pasquale Amodeo, who was present at last Thursday's meeting agreed, adding that the WPCA "under-represents the people paying the cost of the project."

"I think it continues to be an abusive set up," Amodeo said.

Murray said the one member in the sewer district was just a minimum, and the WPCA wouldn't be opposed to having more than one board member who lives in the district.

The next regularly scheduled WPCA meeting will be Thursday, Aug. 12, 7 p.m., at Town Hall.



# Obituaries

## Colchester

### Susan Tubbs

Susan Tubbs, 51, beloved wife of Marty Tubbs of Lebanon, passed away Saturday, July 10, at the Middlesex Hospital with her loving family by her side.

She was born Dec. 9, 1958 in Middletown, daughter of the late Fred and Lois Evarts Griswold.

Besides her husband Marty, she leaves her son, Brian Kieffer; two daughters, Brittanie Tubbs and Megan and son-in-law Ghregory Bombard; three sisters, Sandra Lunn, Virginia Hunting and Jackie Schull; three grandsons, Seth Bombard, Gabriel Kieffer and Brendon Frantz; a granddaughter, Kailey Bombard and numerous nieces and nephews.

Visitation was held Thursday, July 15 from 5-8 p.m. with a memorial service at 7:30 p.m. at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester.

At the request of her family make donations to Middlesex Hospice, c/o Middlesex Hospital or to the American Lung Association.

## East Hampton

### Mary E. Goff

Mary E. (Anderson) Goff, 90, of East Hampton, beloved wife of the late LeRoy Goff, passed away peacefully Friday, July 9, at Cobalt Lodge, surrounded by her loving family. Born Jan. 14, 1920, in East Hampton, she was the daughter of the late Harry and Mary (Spencer) Anderson.

Mary was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was very active in the Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam. She was active in the St. Martha's Circle, the St. Elizabeth group, the Altar Guild, the vestry and the choir.

She is survived by her children: Gloria Kaltenborn, Roy Goff Jr., Barbara Brussesu, Edith O'Brien, Ronald Goff and Nancy Stickler; 20 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her daughter Donna Froncak, and two grandsons. Mary also leaves her dear friend Dottie Curry.

Mary's family wishes to thank the nurses and aides at Cobalt Lodge for the loving care they gave to Mary during her time at Cobalt Lodge; she truly thought of you as family.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, July 24, at 11 a.m. in Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam. Burial will be private in Lakeview Cemetery.

The family requests no flowers but memorial contributions may be made to either the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Dept., 5 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424 or to the East Hampton Ambulance Assoc., P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

## Colchester

### Joseph Thomas Ballek

Joseph Thomas Ballek, 55, of Colchester, beloved husband of Kimberly, passed away Wednesday evening, July 7, at the Masonic Home in Wallingford. Born Aug. 30, 1954, in Jacksonville, NC, he was a son of Fred and Gloria (Rice) Ballek of Hampstead, NC.

On May 26, 1977, he wed the former Kimberly Anne Smith in East Hampton. Joe worked for the Colchester Highway Department for the past 24 years and was currently assistant foreman. In his spare time, he loved the outdoors – fishing, camping, trapping and clamming, but he found his greatest joy in his devotion to his family and friends.

In addition to his parents and his wife, he is survived by two daughters and their companions, Amelia Ballek and Daniel Gervais of Colchester and Alicia Michel and Michael Gluck of Jewett City; four grandchildren, Brittany, Elizabeth and Madison Townsend and Phillip Michel; a sister, Gloria Marie of New Mexico; four nieces and nephews, Tammy Fink of Virginia, Stephen Prescott of Norwich and Chelsea and Michael Prescott, both of Colchester; his mother and father-in-law, Kay and William Antilla of Colchester; his extended family in various Colchester departments, numerous cousins in East Haddam and a host of friends.

He was predeceased by his brother, Fred J. Ballek, Jr.

A benefit and celebration of his life will be announced at a later date.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Hebron

### Robert Hollingworth

Robert Hollingworth, 86, of Hebron, widower of the late Angelina (Pepe) Hollingworth, passed away Friday, July 9, surrounded by his loving family at the Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester. Born March 7, 1924, in Providence, RI, he was a son of the late Robert Hollingworth and Margaret (Moulton) Hollingworth-Barry.

Mr. Hollingworth was a proud Navy veteran of World War II and worked as an enameler in the jewelry trade for many years before his retirement. He will be remembered for the twinkle in his eye when he smiled at all of his beloved family and friends.

Survivors include four children and their spouses, Robert and Elizabeth Hollingworth of Hollywood, FL, Deborah and Antione Babineau of Lebanon, Christine Kniep of Hebron and Nancy and Christopher Caputo of Bristol; seven grandchildren; four great grandchildren; five siblings, Joyce Hutchinson of Vernon and Dorothy MacIntyre and William, Lawrence and Thomas Barry, all of Rhode Island; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by a daughter, Doloris Ritter, a granddaughter; and seven siblings.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).



## Portland

### Odysseus Lambrinides

Odysseus C. Lambrinides, 75, of Freestone Avenue, Portland, passed away Saturday, July 10, at Middlesex Hospital. He was born in Mytelene, Greece, the son of the late Costas and Ismini (Xenelis) Lambrinides. Odysseus was a graduate of Portland High School, Class of 1953. He was the owner and operator of Middlesex Signs in Portland.

He is survived by his brother, Lambros Lambrinides of Portland.

Funeral services were held Thursday, July 15, from Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, followed by the funeral service at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 301 W. Main St., New Britain. Burial was in Pine Grove Cemetery. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home Wednesday, July 14.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit [www.biegafuneralhome.com](http://www.biegafuneralhome.com).

## East Hampton

### Arthur Joseph Goulet Jr.

Arthur J. Goulet Jr., 86, of East Hampton, formerly of Colebrook, died Saturday, July 3 at Cobalt Lodge with his loving children by his side.

Born June 6, 1924 in Robertsville, Art served as a medic in the Army during WWII. He married Josephine V. Linkovich on October 2, 1948 and they shared 57 years together before she predeceased him on April 18, 2006 of Alzheimer's disease.

He retired from the Torrington Company where he worked as a tool and die maker. Art was an avid Yankees fan and was an outstanding pitcher in his younger days. He was a deeply devoted family man who will be remembered for his kindness, generosity, and humor.

He is survived by his son, Brian, and daughter-in-law, Bonnie of East Hampton; his daughter, JoAnn LePage of East Hampton; his grandchildren, Aaron Libera, Sarah Ingala, Brian Goulet, and Alec, Daniel, and Leah LePage, and great grandchildren, Judah and Ethan Libera, and Amarylla and Ryan Ingala, as well as many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life service will be held at Fellowship Church at 1002 Saybrook Road, Middletown on Saturday July 24 at 10 a.m. A burial ceremony will follow at the State Veteran's Cemetery in Middletown.

## Colchester

### Shirley Lee

Shirley Lee, 77, of Colchester, passed away peacefully, Tuesday, July 13, at Hartford Hospital after a long illness.

Born June 8, 1933 in Montville, she was the daughter of the late Clarence and Mildred (Parker) Taylor.

She wed Charles J. Lee Sr. on December 18, 1948 in Montville. He predeceased her on Oct. 1, 2000.

Shirley leaves three children, Virginia Yockachonis, Theresa Lee and Arthur Lee, all of Colchester; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by a son, Charles "Joe" Lee, Jr., and two brothers, Clarence and Walter Taylor.

Friends may attend calling hours, on Monday, July 19, beginning at 5 p.m. with a memorial service following immediately at 6:30 p.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

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

## East Hampton

### Joaquim Durbin

Joaquim "Jackie" Durbin, 52, of Depot Hill Road, Cobalt, died Tuesday, July 13, at Middlesex Medical Center in Marlborough. He was born in Middletown, the son of the late Roy and Alice (Domingos) Durbin. Jackie was employed with Airex in Portland.

He is survived by his brothers, Robert Durbin of Philadelphia, PA, Gilbert "Buddy" Durbin and his wife Roberta of Messina, NY, Richard Durbin and his wife Lori of Chester, David Durbin Sr. and his wife Sharon of Ivoryton and Ronald Durbin of Middletown; Jackie's girlfriend, Maureen Robinson; his former wife and friend, Mary Arsenault; several aunts and uncles, and his special aunt, Irene McGrath; several nieces, nephews, and great nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his beloved dog, Moxie.

Jackie will always be remembered for bartending at Café 66 in Portland for many years.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 17, at 10 a.m. at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Burial will be in Pine Grove Cemetery. Friends may call at Biega Funeral Home today, July 16, from 5-8 p.m.

Memorial contributions may be made to Protectors of Animals, PO Box 24, South Glastonbury, CT 06073, [www.poinc.org](http://www.poinc.org).

To share memories or express condolences online, visit [www.biegafuneralhome.com](http://www.biegafuneralhome.com).