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Angry East Hampton residents, from left, Laurie Wasilewski, Angela Sarahina and Mary Ann Dostaler shout at the Town Council during Tuesday's lengthy and heated council meeting.

Alleged Victim Speaks At Council Meeting

by Claire Michalewicz

One of the town manager's alleged harassment victims spoke out at an East Hampton Town Council meeting Tuesday, urging the council to do "the right thing" in investigating the allegations she and two other women brought against Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe.

Her address to the council was just one dramatic moment in a long meeting in which the council also discussed changing the town's ordinances to remove all references to the police chief, voting to send the proposal to a public hearing on Aug. 31.

During public comment at the beginning of the meeting, Elizabeth Shepard, an office worker in the police department, stood up and told the 125 people gathered in the high school auditorium how O'Keefe allegedly touched her in his car.

On her third day at work, Shepard explained, O'Keefe offered to give her a ride from Town Hall to her car in the Stop & Shop parking lot. Shepard said that while she didn't want to get into all the details, O'Keefe rubbed his hand up and down her thigh.

"This behavior is disgusting and it has to stop," Shepard said, urging the Town Council to "do the right thing" in investigating the complaints against O'Keefe.

As Shepard returned to her seat after speaking, she briefly exchanged a handshake with laid-off Police Chief Matt Reimondo as she sat down behind him. Reimondo sat silently near the back of the auditorium throughout the meeting.

This was the first time one of O'Keefe's alleged victims spoke publicly. While the three

harassment complaints have been released, the three women's names and other hints about their identities were carefully removed from the documents.

Shepard said she didn't want to speak further without her attorney, Leon Rosenblatt – who also represents Reimondo – present. But she said she spoke at the meeting to remind residents about what she said O'Keefe had done, and to inspire O'Keefe's other alleged victims to speak out.

Later in the meeting, O'Keefe started to respond to Shepard's comments. It was true, he said, that he gave Shepard a ride to Stop & Shop on her third day on the job.

But before O'Keefe could explain any more, Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel and O'Keefe's lawyer Mark Sommaruga urged him to stop speaking. The harassment complaints, Engel said, were still under investigation.

Engel later clarified that Mark Miele, an investigator at State's Attorney Timothy Liston's office, had been looking into the harassment allegations against O'Keefe since June. When Reimondo was laid off, Engel explained, he passed the harassment complaints on to another officer, who took them to the state's attorney's office. So far, Miele had interviewed about 25 people in the town, Engel said.

Sommaruga conducted another investigation in May, but found no evidence of harassment. In response to Sommaruga's investigation, the Town Council voted to take no action.

Acting on Rosenblatt's advice, the three com-
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Carpino Tops Chudzik in State Rep Race

by Claire Michalewicz

Christie Carpino won the nomination for Republican State Representative for the 32nd District by a large margin at Tuesday's primaries.

Carpino, a lawyer from Cromwell, took 760 votes – about 69 percent of the total – while her opponent Carl Chudzik, a real estate agent from Portland, took 339.

Carpino will go on to face incumbent Democrat Jim O'Rourke, who's held the seat for nearly 20 years, in November.

In Cromwell, Carpino's victory was especially dominant. She earned 557 votes in her hometown, while Chudzik received only 114.

Chudzik, though, saw more support in Portland, taking 222 votes compared to Carpino's 195. In the small sliver of Middletown that is included in the district, only 11 Republican voters turned out, with eight voting for Carpino and three for Chudzik.

"It was a tremendous victory," Carpino said. "I think the voters really did speak."

Speaking on Wednesday, Carpino said she was excited, energized and ready to start preparing for the November election. Her main focus in the next few months, she said, will be to get out and meet more people in her district and show them how she differs from O'Rourke.

The biggest differences between her and O'Rourke, Carpino said, were her promises of financial responsibility and her fresh ideas. She said Connecticut voters were looking for new people with new ideas, and she hoped they

would offer her the chance to work for them.

"We're gonna continue to run a clean campaign," she said, focusing on her strengths and avoiding any attacks. Carpino said her victory was the result of the hard work she'd put into her campaign. In the past several months, Carpino said, she had taken time to go out and meet with voters in her district, answering questions and listening to their concerns.

Voters' largest concerns were financial ones, Carpino said, and she's running on a promise of fiscal responsibility, with a commitment to reduce spending and to cut struggling government programs. In addition, Carpino has said she wants to make the state more business-friendly, by reducing utility taxes and consolidating state agencies so it's easier for businesses to access the services they need. Bringing more business to the state, Carpino said, would help increase revenues and reduce the burden on taxpayers.



Christie Carpino

Carpino said she was happy with the support she'd received from the people she met during the campaign. Now that the primary is over, Carpino said she hoped Chudzik's supporters would unite behind her and push for her victory in November.

Carpino has lived in Connecticut for 10 years and in Cromwell for seven. She said that while running for office is something she'd been considering for a while, she wanted to wait until the timing was right.

Carpino was the first candidate to enter the race, earning the official endorsement from the Republican Party. She works representing clients in their insurance claims with MetLife, and serves as Vice chairwoman of the Cromwell Republican Town Committee and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Chudzik said that, despite his loss at the polls, he was "happy." His campaign had been a good experience, he said, and was impressed with the support he'd received from residents in the district.

"The numbers are the numbers," he said about the polls, explaining that he was happy that the voters had been able to make a choice.

Chudzik said he was pleased with the way he and his supporters ran his campaign. "It's really about them, more than about me," he said, thanking them for their time, money and effort in running his campaign.

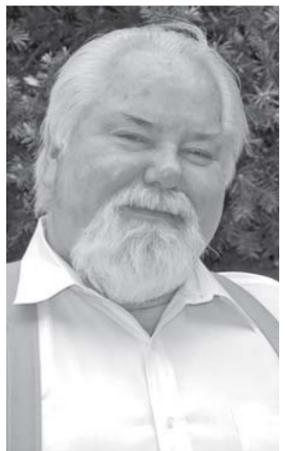
"I'm very proud of my supporters," Chudzik continued. "They never took any shots at the opposition. We ran on the planks that we stood by."

Chudzik said he had faced some difficulties in his campaign, with signs being confiscated by the state Department of Transportation and with people making hurtful and untrue comments about him on numerous websites. He said he worried the problems he faced might drive qualified would-be candidates away from politics.

"Our government's at a crucial point right now, and we need honesty," Chudzik said.

Now that the race is over, Chudzik will continue to focus on his realty business, and his duties as a Portland selectman. "We gotta make Portland a better town for all of us."

Carpino, meanwhile, is starting to gear up for the race against O'Rourke, and she said she's optimistic as she looks toward November. The voters, she said, were looking for a new individual with new ideas, and hoped to show them that she's that individual.



Carl Chudzik

Alleged Victim cont. from Front Page

plainants had refused to speak with him, Sommaruga said. The first time he ever heard from Shepard, he said, was earlier Tuesday evening when she spoke publicly.

“The town did take this seriously,” Sommaruga said. “There was an investigation done.”

When O’Keefe announced the downsizing of the police department on June 22, one of the positions cut was a civilian administrative position. O’Keefe said at the time that he did not know which employee would be laid off, but for now, all police support staff remain at work.

The entire meeting, which was moved from Town Hall to the high school auditorium because so many people attended, was marked with hostility from beginning to end. Audience members repeatedly interrupted the council as they discussed changing the town’s ordinances and charter to remove references to the police chief, booing and calling upon O’Keefe to resign.

The proposed changes to Chapter 109 of the town’s ordinances would abolish the position of police chief, and give the town manager administrative control over the department. The lieutenant, though, would oversee daily operations of the police department, as well as the responsibilities and duties that the chief of police previously held and that the town manager cannot perform.

The Town Council voted 5-1 to send the proposed ordinance changes to public hearing, with only Sue Weintraub voting against it. (Council member Bill Devine was not present.) A public hearing is the first step in changing an ordinance – after listening to public comment, the council will vote on it. The hearing will be held Tuesday, Aug. 31, at 6:30 p.m., at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

“I have big problems with this ordinance,” Weintraub said. “I don’t think it should be enacted.”

“To restructure the police department during this time is foolish,” she continued. “It’s shattering the public trust.”

Weintraub asked O’Keefe how many ordinances would be impacted if the town council voted to remove all references to the police chief. There were six, O’Keefe responded.

“Do you think there might be more than that, like closer to 18?” Weintraub retorted.

“This is a tough one, no question,” council

member Thom Cordeiro said as he looked at the revised police chief ordinance. He stressed that when looking for ways to save money, it was important to look at the position of police chief as being separate from the individual occupying that position.

Weintraub questioned O’Keefe as to how much money restructuring the police department would save. Weintraub said she had learned Acting Lt. Michael Green had received an \$8,000 raise when he was promoted to lieutenant, which O’Keefe confirmed. She said O’Keefe previously told her Green would not be receiving a raise, which he also confirmed. In addition, Weintraub said, the town was accumulating legal fees from the investigations into the harassment allegations and Reimondo’s layoff.

Weintraub also pointed out that she would be apprehensive to make the town manager the police chief, since, as an appointed official, the town manager is not directly accountable to the public. Sommaruga called the concerns about making O’Keefe police chief “fictitious.” According to the state attorney general’s office, he said, whether a town manager could be police chief was “a matter of local concern.”

“There was no intention to make the town manager the police chief,” Sommaruga said.

On June 22, immediately after O’Keefe laid Reimondo off, the council voted to make O’Keefe the interim police chief until the position could be removed from the town’s ordinances. That decision, Weintraub pointed out, was still in effect.

“This council does not deserve the continued respect of this audience,” shouted resident Mary Ann Dostaler as the council discussed sending the changes to a public hearing. Engel urged her to be quiet. Dostaler relented, but remained standing. Around her in the crowd, other residents started standing up and chanting “No! No!” as the council voted to send the proposed ordinance changes to a public hearing.

In the public remarks at the end of the meeting, many residents criticized the Town Council for seemingly ignoring the public’s wishes.

“When you sleep at night, do you ever think about the public you’re supposed to serve?” asked Bonnie Sweete-Reilly.

Others hoped that Shepard’s decision to speak out would make the Council rethink their position.

“Tonight, a woman had the courage to stand before you and the person she made those allegations against,” said Kyle Dostaler. “What did you do? Nothing.”

“I think it’s about time you really listen to what the public has to say,” said Angela Sarahina. Sarahina also said O’Keefe should be on administrative leave until all investigations into his conduct were complete. By leaving O’Keefe at work, she said, he was intimidating the town employees.

Tuesday’s meeting was the first time residents had a chance to publicly discuss Reimondo’s layoff since the last Town Council meeting on July 13. Two days after that meeting, the town accepted a motion from Reimondo’s attorney, Leon Rosenblatt, arguing in favor of giving him a public hearing about his layoff. Reimondo had the start of a hearing on July 2, but it ended quickly when Sommaruga argued Reimondo had no legal right to a hearing.

Addressing questions Tuesday about whether Reimondo would be granted a hearing, O’Keefe said Attorney Nick Grello was still reviewing Rosenblatt’s motion. O’Keefe said Rosenblatt would be on vacation soon, which would further delay the hearing if he and Grello decided to grant it.

* * *

In other business at the meeting, the Town Council reviewed the employee handbook, recently drafted by Human Resources Director Lisa Seymour with the advice of Sommaruga. Weintraub said the language in parts of the handbook was intimidating, including a section about investigations that said that failing to cooperate with a supervisor or manager in an investigation “may lead to discipline which may include discharge.”

Sommaruga said that when an employee agreed to the handbook, they were not signing away their rights. But he said he had no problem with sending the draft handbook back to Seymour to make changes, including adding an index to make the book more user-friendly.

Sommaruga thanked Seymour for her help with the handbook, explaining that “she should be heralded for spending the last few years gathering this information.”

The council voted to accept the changes to the Boating and Navigation Task Force. The largest changes to the ordinance are the intro-

East Hampton ZBA Approves Outdoor Entertainment at Angelico’s

by **Claire Michalewicz**

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) Monday upheld an opinion that outdoor entertainment is a permitted accessory use at restaurants, allowing live bands to continue playing on the patio at Angelico’s Lakehouse.

In May, Town Manager Jeff O’Keefe asked Building, Planning and Zoning Administrator Jim Carey whether outdoor entertainment was a permitted accessory use for a restaurant. O’Keefe’s question came in response to a complaint from Bellevue Street resident Fran Klein, who said the live music at Angelico’s was disrupting her quality of life.

Carey said he felt it was a permitted use, pointing out that East Hampton has a long history of outdoor entertainment, and that there were other restaurants in town that also played music outside. The ZBA would have needed four votes to overrule Carey’s decision, but instead it voted 4-1 (with member Don Martin opposed) to agree with him.

Klein’s attorney, Eric Rothauser, argued that, according to newspaper articles from the late 1990s, owner Paul Angelico had no intention of continuing outdoor entertainment at his restaurant, the former Hathaway Inne. For him to resume outdoor entertainment, Rothauser argued, Angelico would have required a special

permit. In addition, Rothauser said, the restaurant occupied two lots, and the one with the outdoor patio was zoned residentially.

“This isn’t a popularity contest,” Rothauser said, addressing comments from residents at a previous meeting, when several residents said the restaurant was an important part of the community. Instead, he said, he was just asking that the town enforce zoning regulations fairly.

But Angelico’s attorney, Mike Dowley, said the restaurant never needed a special permit, since, as Carey had said, outdoor entertainment was not a nonconforming use. The repeated complaints about noise were an attempt by neighbors to shut down Angelico’s, Dowley said.

“They’re gonna take every avenue they can to stop the restaurant,” Dowley said. Recently, he pointed out, nearby resident Angelo Tammaro had contested Carey’s decision to allow a large fence along the edge of the Angelico’s patio. The fence was built atop a mound of earth, which Tammaro alleged was done to get around zoning regulations about fence height. (Last month, the Planning and Zoning Commission voted to send Tammaro’s complaint to the ZBA, which has not yet discussed the issue.)

If the neighbors were actually concerned about noise, Dowley said, they would have welcomed the fence, which was built to deflect noise away from the houses to the north of the restaurant.

“My client, despite what the neighbors are saying, is doing what he can,” Dowley said. In addition to erecting the fence, Dowley said, Angelico frequently asked bands to turn down the volume of their speakers when he felt they were too loud. Dowley said the ongoing complaints about the restaurant were upsetting to him and Angelico, since Angelico had been cooperating with the town to find ways to reduce the noise.

“I’m proud of my client,” Dowley said. “Mr. Angelico’s intent is clearly not to aggravate the neighbors.”

ZBA member Thomas Keegan said that if they voted to overturn Carey’s decision, they would have to shut down outdoor entertainment throughout the town.

ZBA Vice Chairman Brendan Flannery agreed, saying Carey had historically applied the same regulations to all zoning applications and appeals. To prohibit outdoor entertainment at Angelico’s, Flannery said, would be unfair unless they did the same at the town’s other res-

taurants.

duction of speed limits – slow enough not to create a wake during nighttime hours, and 40 miles per hour from 7 a.m. until half-an-hour after sunset.

Before the regular meeting, the Town Council heard public comment about the navigation ordinance. One resident, Roy Duncan, said that while the town was instituting speed limits for the lake, the real issue in the area was noise, from boats with loud engines and stereo systems.

“The Town Council has been dancing around the issue for years,” Duncan said. But another resident, Fred Galvin, said the Department of Environmental Protection had recently inspected all the boats on the lake, saying engine noise was not a problem.

Other residents, including Mary Ann Dostaler, questioned how the ordinance would be enforced, since the police department’s boat was currently out of service.

During the regular meeting, the Town Council voted to establish an arts and cultural commission, consisting of council member Cordeiro and nine other people involved in East Hampton’s arts community. The commission, Cordeiro explained, would provide direction and help coordinate events between the town’s many arts organizations.

Cordeiro also provided an update about the ongoing noise monitoring that he and Town Council Vice Chairman John Tuttle had been conducting. Cordeiro said he and Tuttle had been checking the neighborhood around Angelico’s Lake House throughout the summer to take decibel measurements. So far, Cordeiro said, the noise had not been excessive, though he urged residents in the neighborhood to offer him and Tuttle more feedback.

The council also voted to have O’Keefe and Director of Finance Jeff Jylkka look into switching the employee pensions from a defined benefit, in which government employees receive pension benefits for life, to a defined contribution, which would end the town’s liability when an employee leaves their job. The change, Engel explained, would only affect new employees, but was expected to save the town money over time.

* * *

The next regularly scheduled Town Council meeting will be Tuesday, Sept. 14, at 6:30 p.m., at Town Hall, 20 East High St.

Scout Spruces Up RHAM Trail for Eagle Project

by Lindsay Fetzner

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Life Scout Sean Greene, the nature trail at RHAM High School has gotten a much-needed facelift.

The year-long effort was part of Sean's Eagle project, and one of the many requirements to become an Eagle Scout, which is, according to Boy Scouts of America (BSA), the highest advancement rank in Boy Scouting. (Ranks are Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle.) Sean is part of Troop 28 in Hebron.

Sean, 15, began the planning phases of his project last June, and completed work on it this past June. In total, Sean said, he devoted approximately 100 hours to complete the project, not counting the time of the other volunteers. He cleared, marked and mapped the trail, in addition to creating a sign and brochure which highlights the areas of interest along the trail. Sean said he hopes to put the brochures at the Douglas Library for visitors of the trail to use.

According to the BSA, an Eagle project is targeted at the scout's religious organization, school or community in an effort to "plan, develop and give leadership to others" as a Life Scout.

The best part of the project, Sean said, is "sitting back and seeing it finished." "Every time I go past it and see the sign, it's nice knowing you did that," he said.

The sign Sean constructed marks the entrance to the trail at the high school visitor's parking lot, said Sean's mom, Kathy Greene.

One source of inspiration in choosing the nature trail for the focus of his project was the condition of the trail, Sean said. He said he often went on the trail and noticed trees that were down and signs that had either been knocked down or painted over.

Kathy said Sean has "always been very involved in the outdoors," and choosing this for his project "kind of made sense."

This particular nature trail has been the site of at least two other Eagle projects, Scoutmaster Mark Sabia said. "Every couple of years, there are things you have to refresh," he said.

Sean said teachers at RHAM use the trail on a regular basis. Renee Cahill, a biology teacher at RHAM High School, served as Sean's advisor. Sean said Cahill utilized the trail several times during class and Kathy, an aquatics

teacher at the high school, also brings her students to the pond for instruction.

"A lot of teachers use this," Kathy said. The improvements to the trail, she said, are "very helpful" for the teachers who visit the trail often.

The first step on the list of improvements was to widen and level out the trail. Sean said the trail was "so skinny it was hard to get through at some parts." After this was completed, woodchips donated by the town (through Public Works Director Andy Tierney) were put down. Sean said logs and/or rocks were placed around the woodchips to prevent them from falling into the nearby pond.

Signs that informed visitors about the trees along the trail were also given attention. Signage that had either fallen over or been painted on were either straightened or the paint was removed. And, Sean said he also marked trees to show the direction of the trail, which was often unclear.

The hardest part, Sean said, was removing large trees that had fallen onto the trail or were hanging low above the trail. Sean, with the help of volunteers, used a chainsaw to clear the area and make the trail more presentable. Sabia said Sean had a couple of scoutleaders on hand to help with this aspect of the project.

"It was an incredible amount of work," Kathy said. "We're very proud of him. He's worked very hard on this." Sabia agreed, adding, "He has been working for quite a while."

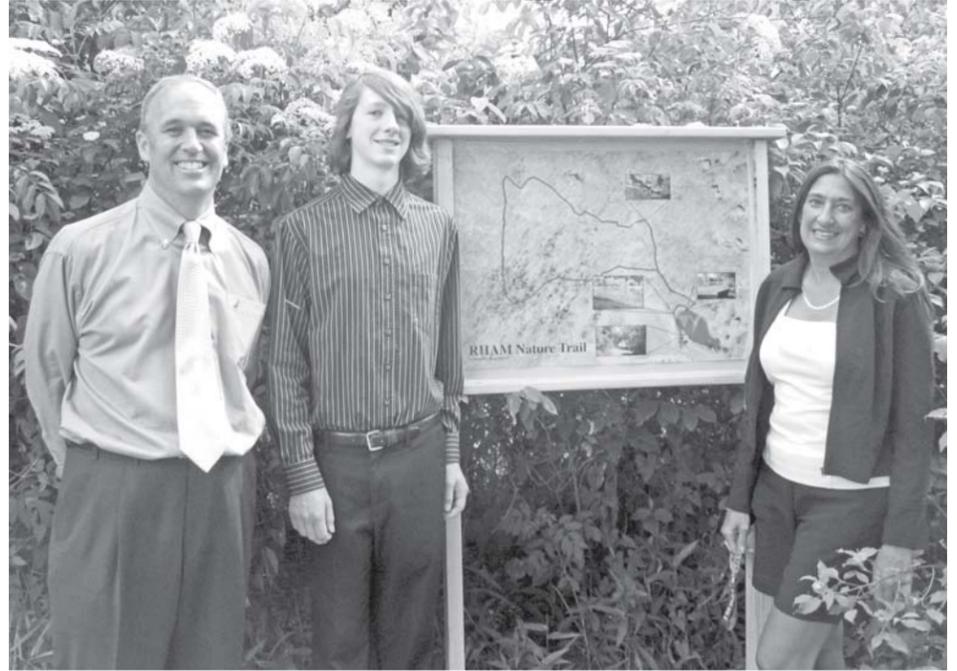
Kathy said Sean felt that if the trail was mapped and marked, residents would utilize it more often. Sean agreed, and said he hoped with the improvements, more people would take advantage of the nature trail.

Cahill is among those. Cahill uses the trail often for her honors classes, including honors biology, which Sean was a student in last year. She said she is "looking forward to taking my new classes out this fall."

She was also impressed with what Cahill had done with the trail.

"I've worked with other Eagle Scouts before and he just had everything in a row and lined up perfectly," Cahill said. Sean's project, she said, was "very, very structured and very well-organized."

Overall, she said, "He really put his heart and



Sean Greene, 15, recently completed his Eagle Project, a facelift to the nature trail at RHAM High School. He is shown with, at left, Principal Scott Leslie and, at right, biology teacher Renee Cahill, who was an advisor to the project.

soul into it."

Sabia explained that Troop 28 has an Eagle coordinator that helps the scouts go through the project application process, understand the project and to plan/organize for it.

"It's a test of all those as well as leadership capacity," Sabia said. The scouts have to fundraising and/or soliciting donations, find the resources to complete the task as well as organize the entire project, he said. Sabia added that the scouts must also get the permission and approval of the organization that the project entails.

The requirements that Sean has met or still has to meet to become an Eagle Scout are as follows: progress through the ranks from Tenderfoot to Life Scout in order; earn 21 merit badges; serve six months in a troop leadership position; complete the service project; take part in a scoutmaster conference; and successfully complete an Eagle Scout board of review, according to the BSA.

Sean has been a scout since the fifth grade, and will be a junior at RHAM High School this year. Sabia, who has been scoutmaster for seven years, said Troop 28 has been around since 1956. A little less than 100 scouts in Troop 28 have earned the rank of an Eagle Scout, he said, and about a half dozen scouts are currently finishing up the requirements to be one.

Sean is part of this pool of scouts, but hopes to move up in rank by the fall. With the Eagle project behind him, Sean still has to complete an Eagle Scout board of review.

According to the BSA, the board of review is the last major step in the process, where "all his efforts peak." Similar to that of a job interview, the panel determines whether the scout is "worthy of the [Eagle] recognition." The candidate's attitude and acceptance of scouting's ideals are also focuses of the interview.

For more information on the BSA, visit www.scouting.org.

Embezzlement Charges Stun Marlborough Neighborhood

by Katy Nally

Residents in the close-knit community of Caffyn Drive thought they knew their neighbors; that is until this summer, when they were shocked to learn one resident had been reportedly stealing from her lifelong locals since 2005.

State Police charged Doreen Chapman, 44, of 36 Hopewell St., Apt. 6, Glastonbury, with second-degree larceny on Tuesday, Aug. 3, alleging she had embezzled about \$11,000 from the neighborhood's water association, Laurel Hill Water Association.

Chapman had been the treasurer for Laurel Hill Water Association since 2002.

"You would never think in talking with her that she would be capable of something like this," Trooper Craig Fox, who made the arrest, said. But, Chapman, like some others Fox has dealt with, will "show the face you want to see and the other one when they're operating behind closed doors."

Fox described her as a "very nice" person, as did Bill Foster, president of the Laurel Hill Water Association.

"She had a lot of trust among the people, because we've known her since she was a little girl," Foster said this week.

Chapman moved into the home her parents owned on Caffyn Drive, Foster explained. She lived at 11 Caffyn Dr. with her husband for the past 12 years until she moved to Glastonbury, according to the arrest warrant affidavit, on file at Manchester Superior Court.

"She really hurt everybody," Foster added.

The Laurel Hill Water Association was set up in 1966 to provide well water for the 24 homes in the neighborhood. The nonprofit organization is responsible for maintaining the wells, paying for water quality tests, electricity bills and taxes, Foster said. Every six months, residents on Caffyn Drive are billed to

cover these fees.

As the treasurer for Laurel Hill, Chapman was in charge of billing residents and tracking expenses, Foster said. Fox added that, in the past, Chapman had advocated for higher water usage fees.

Foster and Chapman were the only two with permission to write checks on the association's account but, the affidavit says, Foster has never written a check from Laurel Hill's account.

Since it was discovered that Chapman allegedly stole from Laurel Hill Water Association, the organization has appointed a new treasurer, and plans to audit the books every six months, Foster said. Previously, there was no audit procedure because the nonprofit had no problems for over 40 years, Foster said.

According to the affidavit, in the beginning of 2010, Foster learned Chapman had been fired from her position of vice president at Connecticut River Community Bank in Glastonbury for "some kind of wrong doing," so he decided to look into how Chapman had been handling the association's checking account.

Connecticut River Community Bank Chief Financial Officer Lina Curtin declined to comment on Chapman's firing this week.

Foster noticed the deposits given by residents did not match up with "what we should have collected," the affidavit states, and he later filed a complaint with the State Police.

According to the affidavit, documents from the Connecticut River Community Bank show "Chapman wrote checks out to cash and cashed them, paid her own personal bills and withdrew money and deposited money into her personal joint checking account from the Laurel Hill Water Association Inc. Checking account." These documents include canceled checks, withdrawal and deposit slips and bank statements, the affidavit says.

All the transactions show Chapman's "personal signature" and no others are noted, the affidavit said.

One transaction shows Chapman used the association's account to write a check to Connecticut Light and Power to pay her own personal light bill, the affidavit said. Later on, when asked about this, Chapman told police that was "because of a mix up."

The documents from 2005 until this year follow Chapman's alleged pilfering of funds from the association's account. One packet of evidence covers transactions made from November 2007 to March 2009, which includes when Chapman was fired.

In March 2009, the Laurel Hill Water Association checking account was moved to Liberty Bank in Marlborough because of Chapman's firing, the affidavit said. Chapman also filed for bankruptcy March 29 of this year, according to the United State Bankruptcy Court in Hartford.

Since the account was moved, however, all funds at Liberty Bank have been accounted for, according to the affidavit.

Fox surmised this account might have been left untouched because Foster's wife works at the Marlborough bank.

Yet, based on a summary of payments made by Caffyn Drive residents, \$925 was missing for all of 2009, and \$205 for 2010, the affidavit said. Fox explained, for a while, the association was operating at two different banks. In total, through bank transactions, \$11,852.26 is "the amount of loss" identified by the investigation, the affidavit said.

When Fox came to her residence in Glastonbury on July 25, he reportedly asked Chapman about her role with Laurel Hill Water Association and if she could verify her signature.

Fox said this week, although residents had paid their bills with cash, no cash deposits had ever made it to the association's account. While interviewing her, Fox asked Chapman if receipts for these payments could be found and, according to the affidavit, Chapman "put her head down and became quiet." Then the trooper asked her, "You knew what you were doing right?" and she replied "yes."

She said no one but her had written checks from the Laurel Hill Water Association account and confirmed "she was responsible for receiving money from residents and paying bills for the association," the affidavit said.

Chapman also asked Fox how much was allegedly stolen and said, "can I pay it back?" the affidavit states.

When asked why she allegedly stole from the Laurel Hill Water Association, Chapman reportedly said it was because "My Husband abused me and was not happy unless we spent money," the affidavit says. However, she said she never called to report the alleged abuse and Fox said Tuesday there was no evidence that any abuse occurred.

Her ex-husband, according to Fox, said the abuse didn't occur and he was concerned such an allegation might make his neighbors "think bad of him."

According to his statement in the affidavit, the ex-husband "had no knowledge his then wife was stealing money out of that account and was confused and upset as to why she would steal from their friends and neighbors."

Chapman is due in Manchester Superior Court today, Friday, Aug. 13, and was released on a \$1,000 non-surety bond, State Police said.

No Action Taken on Marlborough Sewer Referendum Question

by Katy Nally

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) decided this week to take no action on a request for a sewer referendum question, saying it needed some more information on where funds would come from.

Selectman Joe La Bella said Tuesday night going forward on the request would be a “fool’s errand,” because the proposal would commit the town to paying about 60 percent of the project, and some of the grant money rests on a deviation.

“I’m not firmly convinced enough to bring it forward tonight,” La Bella said.

La Bella and First Selectman Bill Black agreed a special meeting of the BOS could be arranged, when more information becomes available, and another discussion could be held.

Selectwoman Riva Clark said the number of people the project would impact “warrants [the proposal] going to a town vote.”

La Bella said it was less about the actual project and more about the timing and funds. “I fully support the idea of bringing this around the lake,” he said. “It’s a terrific project and a terrific asset to the town.”

Another issue was staffing. La Bella asked Black if the town had the “capacity to support this project as we’re currently staffed,” and Black replied, “I would have to say no.”

The proposed referendum question would ask voters to approve a \$1.95 million project to complete sewer installations around Lake Terramuggus, on Lake Road, Coleman Lane and Old Cider Mill Lane, and extend sewers to the rest of North Main Street. The total estimate budgets two years’ worth of inflation and 5 percent contingency.

The \$1.95 million would use \$487,500 from the Clean Water Fund, and the town would take out a loan with a 2 percent interest rate to be paid back over 20 years, to cover the remaining \$1,462,500, or 75 percent of the project.

The town’s 75 percent is broken down into three chunks. The 54 EDUs (equivalent dwelling unit) in the area to be constructed would cover 35.2 percent of the town’s portion through a yearly benefit assessment payment of \$603.

Thirty percent would be funded through taxes, and the remaining 34.8 percent would come back to the town through new users’ con-

nection fees. Anyone who hooks up to the sewers, and is outside the original design, will be charged a \$4,000 connection fee.

This proposal on the referendum question would continue to complete plans that were originally proposed in 2002.

When construction first began on the sewers, the town went ahead with plans based on a deviation secured by Black and granted by the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which manages the Clean Water Fund. Shortly after Marlborough was granted the deviation, it received funding, Black said.

A deviation allows for the construction to commence and the project to remain in the DEP’s queue for funding consideration. Black said if the DEP is willing to sign off on a deviation, then “one can most likely expect funding” from the Clean Water Fund down the line.

La Bella explained this deviation wasn’t tied to the \$12.02 million that was originally slated for the project, but to the scope of the project. Now, with some of the project already complete, the town estimated it would need another \$6 million to complete the plans proposed in

2002. La Bella said the DEP would allow construction to continue under the town’s original deviation, because installing the sewers around the lake was part of the original proposal.

However, the “danger” in continuing a project based on a deviation, La Bella said, is that, with a new government in 2011, the state “may or may not be able to fund” the project.

Black noted though, he was not aware of an instance when the DEP granted a deviation and did not provide funding later on.

“By granting a deviation, they recognize a need,” he said.

Still, without the Clean Water Grant money secured, La Bella called the proposal a “very tough nut for the town to swallow.”

If the BOS holds another meeting to vote on the project, the town clerk would have to submit the referendum question to the Secretary of State’s Office by Sept. 2. By Sept. 17, the state would have to complete its review for the question to appear on the ballot.

The next regularly scheduled BOS meeting will be Tuesday, Sept. 14, 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

East Hampton Police Investigating Breastfeeding Case

by Claire Michalewicz

Police are investigating the case of the East Hampton woman who said Sears Park employees asked her to stop breastfeeding in public.

Kendra Dickinson has said she was asked to move from the beach at Sears Park last month when she was breastfeeding her two-year-old daughter Ella. When she tried to file a complaint with the police, she said, officers were dismissive and rude to her.

Dickinson hired a lawyer, and said she planned to file a complaint against the town with the state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO).

Last Thursday, Aug. 5, Dickinson, her husband, Chris Briggs, and their lawyer, Eric Henzy, met with Acting Lieutenant Michael Green to discuss the situation.

Green said he took statements from Dickinson and Briggs, to be used in the investigation into the incident. Green said the incident is currently under investigation, with Sergeant Paul Battista collecting statements from park employees and other witnesses.

“I don’t get the feeling that she’s trying to sensationalize this,” Green said of Dickinson.

“She was just sticking up for herself.”

Green said he thought the situation was caused by miscommunication. Part of the problem, he said, was that the officers were unaware of Connecticut’s breastfeeding laws, which prohibit anyone from interfering with a woman’s ability to breastfeed in any place she is allowed to be.

“Our lack of knowledge on the situation fed into her fears,” Green said. “We weren’t sure what to do.”

Green predicted the situation will raise more awareness about the state’s breastfeeding laws, both within the police department and among the general public.

Dickinson did not return calls for comment. However, her husband said Henzy still planned to file the CHRO complaint about the incident. Still, Briggs said, their meeting with Green was a success. The officers, he said, were much more helpful and responsive than they had been before.

“Kendra was pleased with how it went, and so was I,” Briggs said. “They were very helpful. It was a much more pleasant experience.”

Portland Man Crashes Car, Charged with DUI

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland Police arrested a man after they said he drunkenly crashed his car and called a friend for a ride home in the early morning hours of last Friday, Aug. 6.

Matthew Kastel, 21, of 500 Moodus Rd., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with illegally operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs, evading responsibility, failure to drive in the proper lane and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

Police received a call around 12:45 a.m. Aug. 6 about a car accident on Riverview Street, from a witness who had seen the driver fleeing the scene on foot toward the boatyard, said Portland Police Sergeant Jim Kelly.

When police arrived on the scene, Kelly said, they found a Subaru Impreza crashed about 20 feet down an embankment. Police checked the car registration and learned it belonged to Kastel. Police called in a K-9 unit from Middletown to track the suspect through the woods, Kelly said.

Shortly afterward, Kelly said, a woman pulled up in a car and said she was picking up a friend named Matt at an apartment on

the street.

“She had no knowledge of the crash,” Kelly said. “Her friend had just called for a ride.”

Kelly said police asked the woman if her friend’s last name was Kastel, and she said yes.

Police found Kastel waiting at the apartment building where his friend was headed to pick him up, Kelly said. After doing some sobriety tests, they found he was intoxicated and arrested him.

Kelly said that based on the tire marks on the road, it was clear that speed was also a factor in the crash. It appeared that Kastel lost control of his car and veered off the right shoulder of the road, he said.

“Fortunately, he wasn’t injured seriously,” Kelly said. Kastel had some cuts and scratches on his arm from running through the woods, Kelly said, but no obvious injuries from crashing his car.

Kastel was released on a \$250 bond and is due to be arraigned at Middletown Superior Court on Aug. 18.

Portland • East Hampton • Portland • East Hampton

Kinsella Tops Barber in Primary Race

by Claire Michalewicz

Current Portland Probate Judge Steve Kinsella narrowly beat East Hampton attorney Ken Barber in the Democratic primary for probate judge Tuesday.

Kinsella garnered 1,320 votes, or about 53 percent, from Democrats in Portland, East Hampton, East Haddam and Marlborough, the four towns that make up the newly created 14th probate district. Barber took 1,158 votes.

Kinsella will now face off against Republican candidate Jennifer Berkenstock in the general election in November. Berkenstock is an attorney in East Hampton.

Both candidates won in their hometowns, with Kinsella dramatically beating Barber by 517 votes to Barber’s 176 in Portland. Barber won East Hampton by 498-313.

Kinsella also took Marlborough, where he has been serving as interim probate judge for the past several months, by a narrow margin of 219-194. Barber, meanwhile, narrowly won East Haddam, taking 290 votes to Kinsella’s 271.

“I’m happy, I’m tired and I’m looking forward to starting all over again,” Kinsella said Wednesday morning. “I’m just glad it’s over, because it’s been rough.”

The primary race hit some difficulties this

summer when Barber posted Kinsella’s divorce papers on his campaign website. Barber later said that while posting the papers was “probably not the smartest thing I ever did,” he did it because he thought Kinsella had misled voters about his marital status.

Kinsella said the controversy over the divorce papers may have affected the campaign. He said some voters told him they felt posting the papers was an “unconscionable” move, and others even said they were supporting him because they were disappointed with Barber’s decision to post the papers.

With the primary behind him, Kinsella said he’s looking forward to what he hopes will be a cleaner race against Berkenstock. After the primary, he said, he briefly spoke to Berkenstock, and said they’d agreed to run a civil campaign.

“I think we have a good shot,” he said. “But it is another battle.”

Kinsella said he’s glad to have support in all four towns in the district, and he hopes Barber’s supporters will unite behind him. In addition, he said, he knows some independents and Republicans who plan to support him as well.

“They’ve seen my record and know what I’ve done,” Kinsella said.

Kinsella plans to start in on his campaign for November in the next few days, after taking a brief break.

“Now I can sleep,” he said. “At least for a few days.”

Barber said that despite losing the primary, he was glad he ran. He said he was happy for the support he’d seen in all four towns, and thanked the residents of all four towns who gave him their help and their votes.

“For a first-time politician, it was a very good experience,” he said. The democratic process, he said, sets the U.S. apart from many other countries, and he was grateful for being able to participate in it.

Barber said that for now, he’s going to focus on his law practice, since his clients needed his help. At the moment, he said, he wasn’t going to think about running for judge again in the next race, though he wouldn’t rule out the possibility.

“I gotta take care of my people first before I even think about it,” Barber said.

Berkenstock said both Barber and Kinsella had their own different strengths, and to her, it didn’t really matter who she would be running

against. But, she said, “I’m happy to be running against Steve.”

“I’m looking forward to running a positive campaign and emphasizing our qualifications,” Berkenstock said.

So far, Berkenstock said, she’d been learning a lot from meeting residents in the new probate district, and she was looking forward to meeting more of them as the campaign continued.

The probate judge in Portland since 2007, Kinsella formerly worked as a city attorney in Hartford. Kinsella has lived in Portland for 20 years, and served on numerous boards and commissions. Though he comes from a long line of Democratic politicians, including several Hartford mayors, Kinsella has said he doesn’t view the judgeship as a political position. Instead, he said, it’s all about helping people.

Probate judges handle matters such as wills, trusts, and appointing or removing guardians or conservators. Currently, all four towns in the new district have their own probate court. In January, either Kinsella or Berkenstock will take over for all four towns, in a court tentatively planned to be located in Marlborough.

Portland Residents Sue Energy Plant, Claiming Lost Property Value

by Claire Michalewicz

Thirteen Portland households are suing the companies that built the Kleen Energy Plant, alleging that the February explosion caused physical damage to their homes, and a loss in property values.

The Portland plaintiffs all live in the area of Wellwyn Drive, Lyman Lane and Payne Boulevard, the neighborhood directly across the river from the plant. They join 17 households from Bow Lane and Cedar Lane in Middletown.

The lawsuit alleges the companies building the plant were negligent and ignored important safety procedures during construction. In addition, the lawsuit says, the defendants failed to notify the plaintiffs that they could not contain the natural gas and were not providing adequate safeguards against the gas becoming ignited.

When a massive explosion rocked the gas-powered plant on Feb. 7, residents in the surrounding neighborhoods suffered damage ranging from broken windows to cracked walls and foundations. In addition to the physical damage, the lawsuit alleges, the explosion caused emotional trauma, a devaluation of their property, and an increase in insurance costs.

The eight defendants are O&G Industries, Keystone Construction and Maintenance Ser-

vices, Kleen Energy Systems, Bluewater Energy Solutions, Power Plant Management Services, Worley Parsons Group, Spectra Energy Operating Company, and Siemens Energy.

"O&G have not taken responsibility for what OSHA found were horrific conditions," Joel Faxon, a New Haven-based attorney representing the 13 households, said.

Last Thursday, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a statement explaining the citations and \$16.6 million in fines they had levied against the companies involved in the plant construction.

In a statement about the citations, OSHA representatives said the companies constructing the plant had been in a rush to finish construction, and in that hurry, had skipped important safety measures.

"These employers blatantly disregarded well-known and accepted industry procedures and their own safety guidelines in conducting the gas blow operation in a manner that exposed workers to fire and explosion hazards," said Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA.

The fee OSHA levied against the companies for neglecting safety regulations was the sec-

ond-highest fine for workplace violations in U.S. history, Faxon said.

Faxon said the property owners were suing to be reimbursed for the physical, financial and emotional damage from the explosion, which the companies caused by their negligence.

Living near the plant, Faxon said, was like living "in a blast zone."

"Who wants to buy a house there?" he asked. "No one."

The defendants have until Sept. 23 to respond to the lawsuit summons, but Faxon predicted the case would end up in a complex litigation court. His firm, he explained, was handling several other suits against Kleen Energy, including cases of those who were injured and the families of those who were killed. Faxon said it was likely the separate cases would be combined into one large trial against the Kleen Energy Companies.

Steven Townsend and his wife Lynne are among the 13 Portland families suing the eight companies for damages. Their house on Wellwyn Drive sustained cracks throughout the structure when the plant exploded.

"Needless to say, they need to be taken care

of," Steven said about the cracks in his house. In addition, he said, living across from the power plant was stressful because the repeated loud noises that occurred during construction, which he compared to loud fireworks being shot off just a few feet away.

Like all the other residents suing, Townsend said he was concerned about decreased property values, both from the physical damage and from the stigma of living so close to the plant.

The Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) is currently considering extending the plant's Certificate of Environmental Impact and Public Need until next June, allowing the plant owners to finish building. The CSC heard arguments at a public hearing last Tuesday, Aug. 3, at which Portland was a party. At the hearing, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield pushed for the plant owners to reimburse residents for damages and get important safety measures in place before construction could continue.

O&G spokesman Dan Carey would not comment for this story, due to the pending litigation.

Eagle Project Celebrates Sounds of Colchester

by Katy Nally

Because of one youth's Eagle Scout project and his passion for music, residents, seniors and homebound citizens can now enjoy the sounds of Colchester with the click of a button.

Frank Ball, a member of the Class of 2010 at Bacon Academy, zeroed in on the music around his town as the focus of his Eagle Scout project. Ball created sets of "A Musical Journey Through Colchester" that include 10 CDs, one of which is a picture CD. The photos show the process Ball went through and places where he recorded.

He donated two sets to Cragin Memorial Library, two to the Colchester Senior Center, one to each rehabilitation center in town and he kept one for his family.

Ball went around to five places of worship in Colchester and all four schools, recording choir and band performances as well as sermons. Each location also received a disc.

There has already been some positive feedback from seniors who listened to the discs at Genesis Healthcare Harrington Court Center, Ball said.

"They're able to listen to that music and enjoy it, even though they can't leave that area," he said this week.

Ball, a member of Boy Scout Troop 72, spent four months recording around town. He said

he got the idea from his mother and decided to go ahead with the project when he realized it would cost little money. The scout's family donated the CDs and cases, at a cost of about \$65 and the equipment, Ball borrowed from his music teacher at Bacon, Jeff Kerr.

While working on his project, Ball said he recognized there is "some sort of need" for recorded worship services for homebound residents.

"Without it we could go on, but with it we now have a way for older citizens, and people who work Sundays, to be involved on Sundays, without being in church," Ball said.

The Eagle Scout project was also a lesson in diversity for Ball. He said his favorite part of making the CDs was "experiencing all the people in each house of worship."

"Going to, and meeting all of them, let me know how diverse these places were," he said.

When Ball recorded at the Congregation Ahavath Achim, he was surprised to hear a service that was sung by synagogue leaders, and in Hebrew.

"It was cool how they use their singing in their services," Ball said.

Now that his project is completed, Ball, a Life Scout, said the status of Eagle Scout will probably be secured this October. To get to

his current level, Ball came up through the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class and Star, according to the Boy Scouts of America website, www.scouting.org. To become an Eagle Scout, Ball must earn 21 merit badges, serve six months in a troop leadership position, accomplish a service project, take part in a Scoutmaster conference and complete an Eagle Scout board review, the website says.

This fall will mark another milestone for Ball, 18. In addition to becoming an Eagle Scout, Ball will attend Central Connecticut State University to study music education.

He said creating "A Musical Journey Through Colchester" prepared him for his higher education plans because it taught him how to lead other people.

As a clarinet player and a member of the choir, Ball said he always enjoyed tutoring his peers when it came to music.

"I've always loved to teach the other kids in my grade," he said.

Since third grade, Ball has aspired to teach music education, he said, and creating his 10 CDs of music and worship services around town, was one more stepping stone to reaching his goal.



Frank Ball, a member of Boy Scout Troop 72, created "A Musical Journey Through Colchester" for his Eagle Scout project by recording music at Colchester houses of worship and schools.

Portland Man Charged With Stealing from Quarry Ridge

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland Police caught a local man in the act of stealing from his former employer, the Quarry Ridge Golf Course, last Friday, according to Police Lieutenant Ron Milardo.

Milardo said police set up surveillance in the course's main building for several nights last week, after the golf course's owner came to them with concerns that someone was stealing money from the safe.

Last Friday night, Aug. 6, Officer David Bond was waiting inside the building when he heard someone enter the kitchen area around 10 p.m., Milardo said. Bond heard the person walk upstairs into an office, then go to the basement where the safe is located, Milardo said.

When Bond heard the suspect pushing buttons on the safe, he entered the room and arrested him, Milardo said.

The suspect was identified as Gregory E. Glass, 29, of 25B Church St., who worked at the course until recently, Milardo said.

Bond took Glass to the police department, where officers found a set of keys to the building and a piece of paper with the safe's combination written on it in his pocket, Milardo said. Milardo said Glass confessed to stealing from the safe four or five times, taking between \$1,000 and \$1,200 in total.

Glass explained he had been having financial difficulties since losing his job, Milardo said.

Milardo said the golf course owner went to police because he had noticed money missing from his safe. The police knew when to wait for the suspect because the owner contacted his security company for a printout of when the alarm system was activated and deactivated. The owner found that someone had entered the office on several occasions in the previous two weeks between 10 p.m. and midnight, Milardo said.

Reached this week, golf course owner Michael Milano did not want to offer many details about what happened, and would not discuss Glass' employment at the course. The incident, he said, "was unfortunate, but police did a great job."

Milardo said Portland Police had put surveillance on buildings before, when owners came to them with concerns about repeated thefts. The surveillance at the golf course, he said, had a "very fortunate outcome," since Bond was able to catch the suspect and arrest him without incident.

"The officers did a really good job with this case," Milardo said.

Police charged Glass with third-degree burglary and attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny. He was held over the weekend on a \$25,000 bond and was arraigned at Middletown Superior Court Monday morning. Glass was released on a \$5,000 bond and is due back in court on Aug. 23.

Colchester Car Crashes Send Several to Hospital

by Katy Nally

Route 2 in Colchester saw its share of car accidents last week, as crashes on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday sent several to the hospital, State Police said.

After a two-car accident on Route 2 eastbound shortly after 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 4, three women were transported to the hospital for "non-incapacitating" injuries, State Police said.

Ismailbhai Bilimoria, 63, of 56 White Oak Dr., was traveling in a 2005 Toyota Highlander on Route 2 behind Colleen Kerr, 65, of 143 Leverich Dr., East Hartford, when he rear ended Kerr's 2006 Toyota Camry, State Police said.

Kerr and her two passengers, Jacqueline Gates, 67, of 21 Fairfield Rd., Enfield, and Mathilda Infante, 65, of 543 Old Hartford Rd., were transported to Marlborough Clinic via Colchester ambulance for "treatment of injuries," State Police said.

Both Bilimoria and Kerr had pulled into the left lane due to a lane closure from a previous accident, when Kerr was rear ended. The highway was shut down for approximately one hour while the accident scene was cleared.

Bilimoria, who was listed as not injured, was issued an infraction for following too

close, State Police said.

On Thursday, Aug. 5, a one-car accident on Route 2 westbound near exit 16 sent two to the hospital with minor injuries.

Curtiss Thompson, 56, of 32 Greenhaven Rd., Pawcatuck, and his 12-year-old passenger were transported to Hartford Hospital via Colchester ambulance after Thompson's 2005 Ford F150 veered off Route 2 shortly before 3 p.m., State Police said.

Thompson reportedly lost control of the truck, went off the right shoulder and struck a tree, according to State Police.

Also, on Saturday, Aug. 17, an East Hampton woman was transported to the hospital after her car rolled over the center median on Route 2 westbound near exit 17 at around 7:19 p.m., State Police said.

Anna Lond, 28, of 8 West Ave., was traveling in her 2000 Volkswagen Jetta when, according to State Police, she lost control of the vehicle, veered off the roadway and struck the metal rope guardrail in the center of the highway. State Police said her car then rolled over the median.

Lond totaled her car and sustained "minor injuries," State Police said. She was transported via Colchester ambulance to Marlborough Clinic.

McGrath Wins Colchester Probate Primary

by Katy Nally

Attorney John McGrath of Windham topped Judge Jodi Thomas of Colchester by 121 votes at Tuesday's primary, to win the Democratic nomination for judge of probate. Of the total 3,129 votes, Thomas netted 1,504 and McGrath, 1,625, who won by a margin of 3.87 percent.

Democrats in six towns cast their votes for the two candidates, and the winner of November's election will preside over the Windham-Colchester Probate District, which encompasses Chaplin, Colchester, Hampton, Lebanon, Scotland and Windham.

Two courts – one in Windham and one in Colchester – will remain open, and the elected judge will work at both locations.

On his Facebook page, McGrath posted Wednesday, "Thank you to everyone who voted and everyone who volunteered, what a great day!" He did not return calls for comment.

Although Thomas lost the primary vote, because she was unanimously endorsed by Republican town committees in the probate district, she will appear on November's ballot on the Republican line, but she will still run as a Democrat. Since McGrath won Tuesday's primary race, he will run against Thomas on Election Day.

Thomas' campaign manager Karen Romero said Thursday Thomas wanted to "express that she's very grateful for her Colchester voters who came out in droves for her." Romero said Thomas had no "immediate campaign plans" for November's race.

According to the Secretary of State's website, Windham was McGrath's biggest supporter, where 75.31 percent of Democrats voted in his favor. McGrath won 1,022 votes and Thomas, 335. In Windham, about 12.92 percent of registered Democrats cast ballots Tuesday, Windham Town Hall said.

While she lost the overall vote, over 83 percent of Colchester voters still supported Thomas over McGrath; she tallied 771 votes, and McGrath, 157. "She was really very pleased with the turnout," Romero said.

About 33.56 percent of registered Democrats in Colchester came out to vote Tuesday, Colchester Town Hall said.

Thomas also won the support of Lebanon voters, but the win was the closest in the six towns. Thomas won 59.85 percent of the votes, netting 249, and McGrath, 167. About 33.84 percent of registered Democrats cast ballots Tuesday, Lebanon Town Hall said.

The races in the remaining three towns all

showed about the same split for Thomas and McGrath, putting McGrath ahead by about a 31-percent margin. The race in Hampton was the second-closest, after Lebanon, where McGrath secured 60.34 percent of the votes, totaling 105 for him and 69 for Thomas.

Hampton had the greatest voter turnout for Democrats in the probate district; about 40.4 percent of them cast votes Tuesday, Hampton Town Hall said.

In Scotland, McGrath was again the winner, securing 66.99 percent of the votes, at 69 and 34 for Thomas. A total of 109 registered Democrats, of the 380 in town, cast votes Tuesday, netting a 28.68 percent voter turnout for Democrats, Scotland Town Hall said.

Chaplin had a similar split, where 69.54 percent of voting Democrats supported McGrath, who tallied 105 votes, and Thomas, 46.

Chaplin had a similar voter turnout to Hampton for registered Democrats. About 38.29 percent of them cast votes Tuesday, Chaplin Town Hall said.

McGrath, who will appear on the Democratic line for November's ballot, works as an attorney with his wife Barbara at McGrath & McGrath in Willimantic.

If elected, McGrath said his wife would continue to keep the couple's law office open, but

he would not work there because of the time constraints of being a judge.

McGrath has lodged 10 years of active work in the juvenile court system, and 25 years as a lawyer, his Facebook page says. Throughout his career, he has represented children and families in custody cases, and also worked on wills, trusts, estates, housing matters and civil and criminal litigation.

McGrath will run against Thomas again, who will appear on the Republican line this November.

Thomas is the current judge of probate for the Colchester-Lebanon Probate Court and was elected to her position in November 2006.

During her time as judge of probate, Thomas has stressed, her decisions have never been appealed, nor grieved.

In addition to being a probate judge, Thomas has worked as a senior claims attorney and officer for Chubb Specialty Insurance, as well as a trial attorney for Hartford-based law firms Rome McGuigan Sabanosh and Howard, Kohn, Sprague & Fitzgerald. She began her law career as a law clerk for Bridgeport Superior Court.

Colchester residents will have their chance to vote for either Thomas or McGrath, Tuesday, Nov. 2.

Darby Wins Greater Manchester Primary for Andover Probate Judge

by Lindsay Fetzner

In a three-way fight to be the Democratic candidate for judge of probate of the new Greater Manchester probate district, Michael Darby won Tuesday, beating his fellow Democrats Elaine Camposeo and Paul Rubin.

The probate district includes Andover, Bolton, Columbia and Manchester. Overall, in the four towns, Darby received a total of 1,915 votes, to Camposeo's 1,807 and Rubin's 758.

"I am delighted to be the Democratic candidate," Darby said Wednesday.

His Republican opponent at the general election in November will be a familiar face: Camposeo. While she lost Tuesday's primary, Camposeo was unanimously nominated by the Republicans at the May 6 Republican Judge of Probate Convention, which will allow her to appear on the Republican line for the November ballot.

"I am looking forward to the Republican backing because they would like to see me continue in office in this non-partisan position," Camposeo said Wednesday.

Camposeo was the favored candidate in Andover, Bolton and Columbia. The three towns compose the Andover probate district, where she has been the judge of probate since

January 1991. The Andover and Manchester probate districts will merge in November, after the election.

Camposeo topped Darby by 61 votes in Andover, 193 in Bolton and 44 in Columbia. But, it was in Manchester where Darby beat Camposeo for the Democratic candidacy by a margin of 406 votes.

"My district overwhelmingly voted for me," Camposeo said. "The Manchester vote was just a little bit ahead of me."

In response to the Manchester-based support, Darby said, "I'm gratified."

"After 28 years of practicing law in Manchester, it's humbling and gratifying to receive a vote of confidence," he said. "It makes me feel really good."

Darby joined the Phelon, FitzGerald and Wood law firm on Main Street in Manchester after graduating from law school, and since that time, has practiced law for over 28 years. Darby served as the Manchester town attorney from 1991-2007, while still maintaining his practice.

Camposeo also practices law in Manchester, on Center Street at the Law Office of Attorney Elaine Camposeo, which she formed 16 years

ago. Camposeo began practicing law in 1989 in the same town.

Rubin was unavailable for comment.

The votes in each town were as follows: In Andover: Darby, 64; Camposeo, 125; and Rubin, 13. In Bolton: Darby, 92; Camposeo, 285; and Rubin, 22. In Columbia: Darby, 161; Camposeo, 205; and Rubin, 34. In Manchester: Darby, 1,598; Camposeo, 1,192; and Rubin, 689.

Going forward, Darby said he is hopeful that the Democratic parties in all four towns "will band together and support" him as the elected Democratic candidate.

Camposeo also drew attention to the low voter turnout during Tuesday's primary across the four towns. Particularly in Manchester, the low number of voters "had the party loyalists voting and Mike Darby was their favorite," which she said was made "very clear" to her.

"I knew I had my work cutout for me," she said.

"I knew when I saw the low numbers throughout the day that the Manchester team backing Mike Darby had an advantage," she said.

Across the four towns, Democratic voter turn-

out percentages ranged from 28.5 percent to 39 percent. The town with the highest percentage of voters was Bolton and the lowest, Manchester, for that party. In Andover, 29.86 percent of Democrats went to the polls; 39 percent in Bolton; 34.95 percent in Columbia; and 28.56 percent in Manchester.

But looking ahead, Camposeo said, "I'm very positive going forward." She is looking forward to the general election in November, as well as the unaffiliated vote, which she said is "the majority of voters in all four towns."

"It's not the end," she said. "It's only the beginning."

The merging of the probate courts across the state will become effective Jan. 5, 2011. However, Camposeo's district will move into Manchester and start operating out of the Manchester Probate Court shortly after the November general election, Camposeo confirmed last week after speaking with the probate court administration office.

Camposeo and the current Manchester Probate Judge John Cooney, who will retire at the end of this year, will share the responsibilities for each of their courts.

Store Helps Colchester Veteran After Mugging

by Katy Nally

After a community gesture of compassion, the mugging of a 65-year-old disabled Vietnam veteran now has a happy ending after all.

Martin Lopez of Colchester was robbed outside the Stop & Shop on Linwood Avenue, Saturday, Aug. 7 and his collection box containing \$280 was stolen, State Police said. Lopez was not injured in the mugging.

"I was thinking, 'wow,' stealing from a veteran, such nerve," Lopez said Wednesday, as relayed through his wife Connie.

But, on Tuesday, Aug. 10, the supermarket decided to donate \$250 to Lopez' cause in an act of goodwill.

"We felt pretty bad that something like that happened at the store," Stop & Shop store manager Jon Reardon said Wednesday.

Reardon said the supermarket allows Lopez to sell raffle tickets for gift certificates and other small prizes outside the storefront several times a year, to raise funds for his annual trip to the National Veterans Golden Age Games.

"We think we've done a pretty good job of supporting him and we wanted to continue the support," Reardon said about the recent donation. "We did feel bad, and it felt pretty good to help him out."

"I thought it was great," Lopez said this week about the donation, adding "I was surprised." According to State Police, at about 1:30 p.m. last Saturday afternoon, Lopez was mugged by

three white men who grabbed his collection box. As the men fled, a witness copied down the vehicle's license plate number.

Reardon said a customer and a few Stop & Shop associates were able to help police track the three men.

Later that day, state troopers from Troop K located the three offenders and arrested them. Police said the accused had used the money to purchase drugs.

State Police arrested Nicholas Peters, 24, of 202 Bull Hill Rd., David Ruutel, 25, of 12 Southgate Cir., Franklin, and Justin Mikan, 27, of 288 Lake Hayward Rd. All three men were charged with sixth-degree larceny and possession of drug paraphernalia and Mikan was also charged with possession of a controlled substance/narcotics.

Reardon said he was shocked when he heard what had happened to Lopez.

"I couldn't imagine that, one, that happened, and two, that somebody would do that to anybody, let alone a disabled veteran," he said.

Police said Lopez uses a wheelchair, has limited use of one arm and operates an electronic keyboard to communicate. A regular customer of Stop & Shop, Lopez, Reardon explained, is somewhat of "a fixture in town."

"Everybody knows who he is – he's a good guy," Reardon said.

Andover Seeks Another Use for STEAP Money

by Lindsay Fetzner

A Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant received last year to put toward the construction of a senior center will perhaps be used for a new town recreational area instead, pending approval from the state Office of Policy and Management (OPM).

The Board of Selectmen last Wednesday, Aug. 4, authorized First Selectman Bob Burbank to present the transfer request for the STEAP funds to be used for the recreational area. The town applied last year for a \$500,000 STEAP grant to construct a new recreational area, but has yet to receive word from the OPM. The \$250,000 grant would be used to complete part of the proposed project from 2009, if granted permission.

STEAP grants are awarded to towns in Connecticut for capital projects and are administered by the OPM. Towns can receive up to \$500,000 in grant money.

In 2008, town officials applied for a \$500,000 STEAP grant with the intention of applying for a Small Cities grant for an additional \$500,000, in order to fund construction of a new senior center. However, due to restrictions such as only serving the 65-and-older population and needing to have hours that mirrored Town Hall, the town decided not to pursue the Small Cities grant.

The state Small Cities grants are funded by the federal Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program. The grants provide funding and technical support for local community and economic development projects in Connecticut towns and cities with populations less than 50,000, according to the Department of Economic and Community Development website.

In September 2009, Gov. M. Jodi Rell announced Andover was the recipient of a \$250,000 STEAP grant to be put toward a new senior center. However, because this money was not enough to construct a new building and only half of the amount applied for, the town considered several options for where to put the money at the time.

Renovating the old firehouse on Center Street, the location of the current senior center, was one possibility. But it was later learned that if any renovations were made to the old firehouse, the building must be brought up to code. Burbank confirmed this week that this included updating the septic system, wiring, plumbing and the foundation, among other aspects of the building. Costs were estimated to be greater than the actual grant amount.

Another option was to apply for a \$500,000 Small Cities grant and use those funds in addition to the \$250,000 STEAP funds for a new senior center. Regulations that kept Andover from applying for a grant from Small Cities back in 2008 had since changed.

However, Burbank said this week that even with \$750,000, "we couldn't do what we wanted to do." Town officials decided not to apply for the Small Cities grant, as senior centers are also a low-priority funding item and the chance of Andover being a recipient of funds was fairly small, Burbank said.

Burbank again brought up the topic of the senior center at last week's meeting, with the proposed action to transfer the money to the recreational project.

"We could not build or come close to building a senior center with a quarter million dol-

lars," Burbank said last Wednesday. "We looked at all avenues of additional revenues and it doesn't appear in the foreseeable future that we are going to be able to come up with enough money for a senior center."

Selectwoman Elaine Buchardt said last week that if the town could put the money toward another project "that we can actually do, then that would be wonderful," as efforts with the senior center are "going nowhere."

Burbank said it is not uncommon that towns are allowed to use the grant for another project; however, there is no guarantee. With a vote from the selectmen, Burbank said he would write a letter and request that due to inadequate funding, the funds be redirected toward the recreational area.

When a town wishes to change where STEAP funds are directed, typically it will write a letter to the secretary of OPM detailing the request, said Jeffrey Beckham of OPM. If the town's request is for "appropriate use," Beckham said they may be able to grant the approval for the project.

The April 2009 STEAP application for a new recreational area off Long Hill Road included a soccer field, picnic area, exercise course and parking area. The soccer field would provide the town with an additional athletic field, "providing relief for the current overused fields," in addition to an area for "passive recreational activities," the application states. The land is currently owned by the town, Burbank said.

According to the application submitted last April, the total project cost is \$630,000, and proposed STEAP funding was \$500,000. Out

of that amount, \$76,000 would be used for professional services, \$380,000 for construction/renovation and \$44,000 for contingency. Funds requested would be used for both construction and for final design. The remaining \$130,000 would come from local funds.

Buchardt said this week that with the \$250,000, "At least we could clear [the area] out and make more fields," adding that the town has "a huge soccer program."

"The biggest need for the town right now is soccer fields," Burbank said. "It's becoming an extremely popular sport. Basically, we have no soccer fields at all in the town of Andover."

Burbank explained that youths use part of the ballfield down on Long Hill Road as a soccer field, and some areas behind the elementary school, but added that they are not level.

"The younger kids utilize it, but it's not a soccer field," he said. "It's really a need that parents would like us to address."

Burbank said if approved, the town would utilize the \$250,000 to "do as much as we can with what we have" and try to accomplish as much of the construction listed on the application packet as possible. He said two soccer practice fields and a playing field would be options if the funds allowed for it.

But, groundbreaking will not occur until town officials receive confirmation on utilizing the STEAP grant for the recreational area, and not the senior center. Burbank said STEAP funding must be used within two years of receiving the money, and the one-year mark is fast approaching.

Andover School Board Discusses CMT Scores

by Lindsay Fetzner

On Wednesday, Superintendent of Schools Andrew Maneggia highlighted the strides students made on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) they took this past spring, and also announced that \$165,709 will be able to be returned to the town due to a surplus.

Maneggia was excited to announce at the Board of Education (BOE) meeting that Andover Elementary School third-grade students received the highest score across the state in reading at or above the goal level on the CMTs. The percentage of students that met the mark was 91.2 percent.

"If you take a look at previous years, it's a gigantic move forward," Maneggia said.

In 2006, 65.9 percent of third-graders scored at or above goal; in 2007, 66.1 percent; in 2008, 64.3 percent; and in 2009, 62.5 percent of students met the mark.

Fifth-graders also received recognition, particularly in the area of science. This year, 80.9 percent of students were at or above goal. Last year, however, that figure was only 61.2 percent. Maneggia said this almost 20 percent jump in scores "really points out that the teachers focused on areas where the students didn't do as well in the previous years."

One other noteworthy accomplishment was again in fifth-grade math, where 100 percent of the students who took the CMTs were at or above the proficiency level.

"When you look at these scores, scores are not the beginning and the end of an education," Maneggia said. "But, they are an indicator. It's a positive indicator."

Chairman Jay Linddy agreed with Maneggia and said, "We're probably one of the best schools around." And, he added, "It all starts here with the administration."

There were several factors that accounted for the \$165,709 surplus in the 2009-10 budget. In the teacher salary account, a teacher that recently retired was accounted for in the budget, in addition to a teacher who was not getting full pay due to being out on maternity leave for half a year. In her place, a substitute was brought in. Additional savings came in

the form of the custodian budget line item, due to the fact that a part-time custodian was not replaced.

Medical benefits were another source of savings, as well as heating oil and diesel, due to one less bus in the afternoon at the school. The items mentioned accounted for about 92 percent of the surplus, with the others in smaller amounts over various line items.

The most important thing, Maneggia said, was that "no one went without" and "no budget freeze was put on to generate this."

Last year, \$187,698 was returned back to the town from the 2008-09 budget, largely due to a savings in the salary line item and a favorable price on heating oil, according to a 2009 *Rivereast* article.

In other news, the board accepted the resignation of Joan Disco, who, effective July 1, has retired, and appointed Sara Cathell-Williams as a music teacher.

"There are not enough words to say about all the years [Joan has] put in here - 24 years," Linddy said.

Maneggia agreed and added, "You have teachers that spend many years in the school district and they make vast contributions," he said, recalling the recent retirements of a few other teachers. "This year, we are talking about Joan. Those kinds of people have made great contributions to the school district."

The BOE also voted to re-elect Jay Linddy as chairman of the board, elect Christina Tamburro as vice chair and to re-elect Scott Sauyet as secretary. Danny Holtsclaw previously served as vice chair.

In celebration of the end of the summer, the Andover Recreation Department will present a Family Fun End of Summer Celebration on Saturday, Aug. 28, from 5:30-8:30 p.m., at the Town Hall Gazebo, 17 School Rd. Hamburgers, hot dogs, popcorn and drinks will be available, along with live music. The event is free of charge.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the BOE is Sept. 8, at 7 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School Library, 35 School Rd.

Portland Police News

8/4: Joseph Camerato, 40, of 19 Courtney Ln., was charged with second-degree threatening, breach of peace, interfering with an emergency call and second-degree criminal mischief, Portland Polich said.

8/4: Peter Moen, 26, of 59 High St., Milford, was charged with violation of protective order, police said.

8/4: Andrew Grier, 25, of 690 Broad St., Meriden, was charged second-degree failure to appear, police said.

8/6: Gregory Glass, 29, of 25B Church St., was charged with third-degree burglary and sixth-degree larceny, police said.

8/7: Matthew Kastel, 21, of 500 Moodus Rd., East Hampton, was charged with DUI, evading responsibility, failure to drive in proper lane and traveling too fast, police said.

8/8: Travis Puida, 20, of 215 Thompson Hill Rd., was charged with operating an ATV on a public road and simple trespass, police said.

Marlborough Police News

8/7: Thomas Brucher, 33, of 40 Elderberry Ln., Central Sq., NY, was charged with DUI and speeding, State Police said.

8/7: Wesley Zaino, 21, of 22 Oak Dr., was charged with failure to appear, possession of narcotics, and possession out of container, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

7/30: John Lane, 72, of 99 Clark Hill Rd., was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Clark Hill Road. Lane was issued a ticket for failure to drive right and failure to carry registration, East Hampton Police said.

8/1: Karen McKeever, 40, of 18 Park Rd., Haddam, was arrested for improper use of high beams, failure to drive right, failure to carry a license and DUI, police said.

8/5: Owen Burgess, 29, of 72 Shailor Hill Rd., was arrested for third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Colchester Police News

7/30: Joseph Patrick Kiernan, 42, of 51 River Rd., turned himself in for criminal possession of a firearm, Colchester Police said.

7/30: David Seaquist, 18, of 103 N Moodus Rd., East Haddam, was charged with third-degree assault, Colchester Police said.

8/7: Timothy Baker, 44, of 91 Amston Dr., was charged with breach of peace and third-degree assault, Colchester Police said.

8/7: Kellie Donovan, 20, of 13 Samuel Hill Rd., Columbia, was charged with DUI, State Police said.

8/9: Phillip Russ, 48, of 38 Redding St., Apt. 2E, Hartford, was charged with failure to register the motor vehicle, DUI and tinting windows without a sticker, State Police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

James Fish

James Fish, 73, of Sharptown, MD, formerly of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Aug. 7. He was the son of the late Charles and Marjorie Fish of East Hartford.

Born July 18, 1937, in Pennsylvania, Jim grew up in East Hartford then went on to serve in the U.S. Air Force as a mechanic. He worked for many years at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford where he met the love of his life, Annore Snell Fish, who predeceased him last year. They were married April 2, 1966, lived in Colchester and had a loving marriage. Jim retired early to take care of his wife, who had multiple sclerosis. He was an avid Red Sox fan and enjoyed watching the UConn Huskies. Jim also enjoyed gardening, being with his family and his pets.

Jim is survived by three children and their spouses, Carson Lee McCullers of West Hartford, Eleanore and Steve Kelly of Salisbury, MD, Deborah and Gilbert Kaback of Colchester; also six grandchildren, Jessica, Sean, Anthony, David, Jon and Jimmy.

A funeral service will be held today Aug. 13, at 4:30 p.m., at Westchester Congregational Church.

Colchester

Lula Belle Turner Morgan

Lula Belle Turner Morgan, 88, a longtime resident of Colchester, passed away after a lengthy illness Sunday, Aug. 8, at the Village Green of Waterbury nursing home. She was born on June 22, 1922, in Eastman, GA, to the late Rev. William L. and Fannie M. Crocker Turner.

She had seven siblings, Bethenia Geter, Fannie Bray, Ollie Pearl Jones and Moses, Aaron, Payton and Samuel Turner, and a niece, Margaret Turner Davis and nephew, Aaron Turner Jr., with whom she grew up in Eastman, GA.

She was married to the late Winzor L. Morgan Sr. on Sept. 22, 1943, in Bowling Green, OH, and they settled in Colchester. An accomplished seamstress, she worked for Levine & Levine, Dana Fashion, John Meyers and Jones of New York. She leaves her son Winzor L. Morgan, Jr. and his wife Karen Morgan of Willimantic, daughter Rose Marie Morgan of New York City and Beverly Morgan-Welch and granddaughter Alexandra Morgan-Welch both of Andover, MA, and step-grandchildren, great-grandchildren by her late son-in-law, Rev. Mark Welch and step-grandchildren Susan Couture and her children Tyana and Nicholas of Connecticut. Also surviving is her brother Samuel and his wife Hattie Turner of Colchester, sister-in-law Wilma Morgan of California as well as many nieces, nephews and other extended loving family members. Visitation will be held Saturday, Aug. 14, starting at 10 a.m., followed by an 11 a.m. funeral service at the Colchester Federated Church, 60 Main St.

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

Andover

Ann B. Whitcomb

Ann B. (Hatheway) Whitcomb, 88 of Andover, widow of L. Edward Whitcomb, died Thursday, Aug. 5, at her home. She was born in Bloomfield Oct. 12, 1921, the daughter of Newell and Harriett (Ashwell) Hatheway, and had been a resident of Andover since 1934.

Prior to retiring in 1983, Ann had been employed at the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company for 17 years and had previously worked at the former Post Narrow Fabric Mill in Andover. Ann was a member of the Andover Congregational Church and the Andover Young at Heart Club.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Cindy and Deming McGilton of Port Charlotte, FL; two sons and daughters-in-law, Louis and Linda Whitcomb of Rumney, NH, and Robert and Maria Whitcomb of Andover; a son-in-law, Denny Moard of Harrison Valley, PA; her sister, Marian Naiss of Yalesville; nine grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Besides her husband, Ann was predeceased by her daughter, Kathleen Moard.

Memorial calling hours were held Saturday, Aug. 7, at the Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main Street, Manchester. Burial was private in the Townsend Cemetery in Andover.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Andover Volunteer Fire Dept., 11 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232 or North Central Hospice, 8 Keynote Dr., Vernon, CT 06066.

For directions to the funeral home or to sign the online guestbook, visit www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Marlborough

George F. Overbaugh

George Fordyce Overbaugh, 79, of Marlborough, born in Hackensack, NJ, was the son of the late Fordyce and Catherine Overbaugh.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Casmira (Orzel) Overbaugh, son, Peter Overbaugh, daughter, Gretchen LaButti, her husband, Jason, and granddaughter, Anna Regina LaButti. He was predeceased by two sisters, Margaret Lambert, his twin, and Lillian Burke.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Navy during the Korean Conflict. He worked in sales and also safety and workers compensation. Most recently he worked at Pratt & Whitney where he met fine friends with whom he spent many wonderful days sailing on Narragansett Bay. He enjoyed coffee, doughnuts and conversation with his friends at the local bakery.

He was an accomplished carpenter, filling his home with many beautiful pieces of furniture. He continued developing his woodworking skills by building three boats: a Lawley Tender, a Herreshoff Pram and a Chaisson Dory. He expressed his love for woodworking and the sea by building several boat models. He did his research at Mystic Seaport.

He was an avid fan of jazz and classical music. He was a voracious reader and served on the board of the Richmond Memorial Library.

His last days were at Marlborough Health Care Center. The care he, his wife, and children received was outstanding. Each and every person encountered was thoroughly compassionate, serving every need abundantly and with a smile. We will always remember and be eternally grateful. Finally, his hospice care workers relieved his suffering and he passed away peacefully.

A funeral Mass will be held at St. Augustine Church in South Glastonbury on Saturday, Aug. 14, at 10 a.m. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Smile Train at SmileTrain.org.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Anyone who's worked in retail or likely in any job where you deal with the public has had times where you've encountered a particularly difficult person that you just want to scream at, perhaps in language most foul. But you realize you can't because, well, you'd likely wind up getting fired. So you sit there, with a pasted-on grin on your face, and just try to bear it.

Well, not always. In case you somehow haven't heard – though you probably have, since the story has sort of taken on a life of its own since it happened – a flight attendant on a plane touching down at JFK Airport in New York was pushed to the breaking point Monday by a particularly rude passenger.

According to the *New York Times*, the JetBlue plane had just arrived in New York when a passenger stood up to get his belongings from the overhead compartment, before the flight crew had given permission. Flight attendant Steven Slater told the passenger to remain seated. The passenger just kept on going. Slater then walked down to the passenger, getting there just as the passenger was pulling his luggage down from above, which then struck Slater in the head.

Slater demanded an apology; instead, the passenger cursed at him. (The *Times* wouldn't say what the curse was, but the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Daily News*, both of which also covered the story, said the passenger told Slater to "f— off.") Slater then took to the airplane intercom, relayed the same obscenity to all on board, saying he particularly meant it to the passenger with the luggage, and then announced that 20 years of flight attending was enough. "It's been great!" he exclaimed.

What happened next was so bizarre I couldn't help but laugh. Slater opened one of the plane's emergency exits, activated the inflatable evacuation slide and, after grabbing a beer from the beverage cart, slid down to the tarmac. He then ran to the employee parking lot, hopped in his car and took off.

Slater was later arrested at his home in Queens, charged with criminal mischief and reckless endangerment. (A law enforcement official told the *Times* those emergency evacuation slides drop down within seconds, and if someone had been underneath it when Slater had without warning activated it, they could've been injured or killed.)

Talk about burning bridges; one would have to imagine Slater's time not just with JetBlue but as a flight attendant altogether is over. But that's one heck of a story Slater, not to mention all the passengers on that plane, now have.

* * *

I was in Philadelphia last weekend, visiting a friend, when I learned the news. SNY, the cable the station that carries a minimum of 120 Mets games per year, had inked a deal with UConn to carry several Huskies football games, as well as some men's and women's basketball games, during the 2010-11 school year.

To say I was happy by this news would be an understatement. For years, I'd been able to watch a Mets game basically every night of the week during the summertime. I remember, when I was a kid, kinda dreading the All-Star break, because that meant three straight days I couldn't watch the Mets. Like everything else one takes for granted, I never really imagined the day would come when I *couldn't* watch the Mets every day.

But that day came, at the start of the 2006 season. SNY launched, and the vast majority of Mets games moved to that station. That was all well and good for people in New York and New Jersey, but Connecticut is split between the Red Sox and the Yankees. We Mets fans number relatively few. So, most of the cable companies in the state – at least, those north of Fairfield County – were in no big

rush to add SNY to their systems. While I had the all-Yankees channel, YES, forced on me from the day it launched in 2002, and had had the all-Red Sox channel, NESN, basically as long as I could remember having cable, I had to wait it out to get SNY.

More than four years later, I'm still waiting.

That's why the UConn news had me so excited. This, I figured, would finally be my ticket to SNY. True, the Mets aren't having great season this year – I'd have loved to have had the channel in 2006, when they won nearly 100 games and were one game away from a World Series appearance – but I could still see the boys in blue and orange nearly every night, just like I used to. After all, SNY now has the Huskies. No cable system could deny Connecticut sports fans their Huskies, can they?

Well, Cox Communications – which is my cable company in Manchester – just might. While Comcast immediately climbed on board the SNY train and said it would add the channel to its Connecticut systems in time for the Sept. 11 UConn football game, as of Tuesday night, Cox has made no promises. Cable company officials have said that, if they added the system, their costs would rise and so would customers' cable bills. (I say, if Cox was able to increase everybody's cable bill back in 2002 when they added YES – which had no UConn content – then they should be able to do so to add SNY.) The company, however, said it is "certainly willing to talk."

I'm betting Cox will reach an agreement with SNY eventually. There are far too many UConn fans – not to mention some high-ranking UConn Athletics officials – in the area Cox serves for them *not* to add SNY. It's a shame they're playing hardball, though, and forcing their customers to sweat it out.

* * *

In closing, let me just congratulate California Judge Vaughn Walker for his decision last week to overturn Proposition 8, a.k.a. the ban on gay marriage. As I'm sure I've opined here in the past, I'm a supporter of gay marriage. I don't at all view it as undermining the idea of marriage; if marriage is all about the love two people share for each other, does it matter what their sexual orientation is?

When I was in Philadelphia, I picked up the Sunday edition of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and it had an interesting "point/counterpoint" type of feature, dealing with the Prop 8 decision. One was in favor of the decision, the other against it. The former one was well-written and hit the nail on the head; to ban gay marriage is, simply, discriminatory. The latter was quite verbose but, beyond saying that other states have defined marriage as between a man and a woman (the standard "but everybody else does it!" argument that even a high school student knows is rather weak), didn't really present a convincing argument as to just *why* gay marriage is wrong, just *what* makes it so unacceptable and something that should not be tolerated.

(The columnist did state at one point, "On measurement after measurement, children raised by their married, biological parents do better than children raised in other household situations." But that statement didn't give any examples of these studies and where and when they were done and, moreover, the inclusion of the word "biological" kind of made the sentence a veiled dig at adoption too; what century are we living in?)

So, California's gay marriage ban has been overturned. It's a good move. Like I said earlier, a marriage should be based on love; the orientation of those involved shouldn't matter.

* * *

See you next week.