

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Didn't Quite Fit...This was the scene Tuesday morning on Route 2 in Marlborough, when the driver of a tree removal truck left his boom up and got stuck under an overpass, causing the vehicle to tip on its side. No injuries were sustained and the bridge suffered only cosmetic damage, according to the state Department of Transportation. A full story on this incident appears on page 24.

East Hampton Council Talks Short-Term Plans

by Joshua Anusewicz

Keeping with the theme of moving the town forward, the East Hampton Town Council outlined some of its short-term priorities for the next six months at its regular meeting on Tuesday night.

The first priority that was raised was creating a "timeline" for the proposed high school renovation project, a matter that councilor Kyle Dostaler brought up. Dostaler, who was in attendance at Monday's Board of Education meeting (an article about this meeting appears in this issue), mentioned that the timeline proposed for the project to begin included a referendum in June 2012 to approve the project. To hit that target, the Town Council will have to work closely with the school board and a newly-formed building committee to get it done.

"I think it's important that the town manager [John Weichsel] and the superintendent [of schools Dr. Judith Golden] get together to create a timeline," Dostaler said. "If we appoint a building committee, we need to give them guidance. People will say, 'sure I'll be on it, but what do you want me to do?'"

Another priority was brought up by Town Council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub, who proposed creating a more efficient emergency operations plan for the town. In light of the recent

weather-related issues the town has faced, Weintraub believes that the town can do more to prepare and respond to power outages, road closures, cleanup, and improve communication with residents.

To that capacity, councilor Barbara Moore announced that a meeting would be held on Tuesday, Dec. 20, at 4:30 p.m. at Town Hall to serve as a "debriefing" regarding the recent storms. Moore, who volunteered to coordinate the meeting after the October snowstorm, said that the meeting would be open to the public for residents to comment or ask questions.

But the priority that brought up the most discussion was a matter that has plagued the town

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Christmas is Coming

Next week is the last *RiverEast* of 2011. The offices will be closed the week of Dec. 26-30, and there will be no Dec. 30 issue.

The deadline for copy for next week's edition will be, as usual, Tuesday at noon.

Price Wars at Pumps Yield Savings for Customers

by Bailey Seddon

With a new Stop & Shop gas station opening this week, there are now three gas stations located in close proximity on South Main Street in Colchester – and a mini-price war appears to be underway.

"This is nuts!" said Phil Gladue Tuesday, as he pumped gas at the Citgo station, which was charging \$3.23 per gallon of regular unleaded for customers paying with cash, and \$3.28 per gallon for those paying with a credit card. The Phillips 66, located next door, was charging the same price cash or credit: \$3.27 a gallon.

The "gas war" began over last weekend as the unveiling of the Stop & Shop station grew closer. The Stop & Shop gas station opened this past Wednesday, charging \$3.22 a gallon for regular unleaded and \$3.55 a gallon for premium. There are 10 pumps that customers can use. To use their points customers swipe their Stop & Shop card and a reader on the pump tells them how many points they have. If, for instance, a customer spent \$100 dollars, they would have 100 points which would earn them 10 cents off every gallon. (The points are only good for 30 days.)

People accumulate points whenever they purchase groceries at Stop & Shop; the more they shop, the more points they earn. With the possibility of losing customers to this new sta-

tion, Citgo and Phillips 66 were lowering prices to entice more customers to fill up.

"I think it's great," said Janice Mawson of the price war, as she filled up at Citgo. She added she felt the new Stop & Shop gas station was good "because these prices are way too high."

Another Citgo customer, Marjorie Skidmore, speculated Citgo and Phillips 66 "hate that the Stop & Shop is going in." But, she said, she's glad the competition had brought down the price of gas.

Tony Batista, who was also pumping gas at Citgo, said he and his wife were happy that they would be able to use their Stop & Shop points to get money off gas.

This was echoed by numerous customers, many of whom up to now have not been able to use their points, as the closest Stop & Shop gas station is in Norwich.

"We are very excited to open the station," said Stop & Shop spokeswoman Judy Palmer.

Both Citgo and Phillips 66 declined to comment about the lowering of prices at their businesses. However, Hassan Namatullah, an employee at the Mobil gas station on Old Hartford Road, said the prices at his pumps were also lowered because of the price drops at the other gas stations.

"We were really busy," he said. "Busier than
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With the new Stop & Shop gas station opening this week, there's a mini-price war going on in Colchester. The Citgo and Phillips 66 stations, located next to each other on South Main Street, have been lowering their prices since last weekend. Shown here is what the prices were at on Tuesday.

Holiday Shopping Guide Inside

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for over a year – the police department. Councilor George Pfaffenbach said that the council could not continue “beating around the bush” and should start working to resolve any deficiencies.

“We have to get that police department straightened out,” Pfaffenbach said sternly. “It’s detrimental to the whole town.”

Weintraub agreed, stating that she wanted the council to “have closure.” She added that she has spoken with residents who have asked her questions about the police department and what is going to be done, and she wants the council to have answers.

The most recent developments regarding the police department involve a 90-page memo sent from Police Chief Matthew Reimondo to Weichsel and the Town Council, explaining concerns raised by former Acting Interim Town Manager Anne McKinney last month. The memo comes after a recent “no-confidence vote” against Reimondo, which was submitted by the town’s police union last month after being signed by 11 of the 14 officers in the department.

Councilor Ted Hintz, Jr. explained that the memo from Reimondo was not satisfactory, and that the town needed to investigate the matter further.

“Where there is smoke, there is usually fire,” Hintz added.

Weintraub again agreed, stating that the matter does need to be addressed. She also expressed the importance of gathering “the facts” regarding the matters in the police department so that an appropriate evaluation could be done.

Weichsel added to Weintraub’s comments, stating that, “At no time has the police union given me a list of what their specific grievances are.” He added that he has heard similar claims of mismanagement before, and that to perform an evaluation or investigation, he needs “something specific.”

“I’m not going to chase a phantom,” Weichsel added. He also informed the council that his “door is always open,” and that if any members of the union have any “specific” claims, he would “go into it with [them] and the chief.”

Councilor Derek Johnson recommended that if Weichsel looked into the matter, he should report to the Town Council with his judgments on what could be done and present them with “something official that says what measures are

Price Wars cont. from Front Page

usual.”

On Saturday Namatullah said the price at Mobil went from \$3.55 a gallon to \$3.29 for regular gas, and customers flocked to the station. As of Tuesday, the price for regular gas was still \$3.29. While the *Rivereast* was interviewing him Tuesday, Namatullah got a call from the company that the prices would lower the next day, to keep up with the competition.

To this end, Namatullah said he is not worried about losing customers to the Stop & Shop gas station because Mobil will try to keep the prices consistent with those of its competitors.

Not every station was playing the price war game, however. The BP station on Old Hartford Road was, as of Tuesday, charging \$3.55 for a gallon of regular unleaded. “Our cost is too high,” said BP employee Muhammed Tarar.

Tarar felt differently than Namatullah, saying he felt the Stop & Shop coming in was going to be bad for business, as it would drive the

being taken.”

* * *

Regarding the police department, former Town Council member Christopher Goff took the opportunity during public comment to explore Weichsel and the Town Council to investigate the police department issues further.

In a prepared letter, Goff stated: “The directive to ‘ignore’ the gross mismanagement of departmental resources and taxpayers dollars would be nothing but neglect and dereliction of duty on the parts of the Town Manager and the Town Council and is not in the general welfare of the town...I am requesting that the Council move forward to investigate this matter and I would like a written response as to how you intend to proceed.”

During the recent “no confidence vote” submitted by the police union against Reimondo, one of the complaints alleges “gross mismanagement of departmental resources and taxpayers dollars.” Goff stated that, per the town code, it’s within the town manager’s duties to “keep...complete books or account showing the financial condition and financial transactions of the town” and “keep the council fully advised as to the financial condition of the town.”

Weichsel and the council did not comment on Goff’s request.

Weintraub, however, did respond to allegations that were made by McKinney at the Nov. 22 Town Council meeting regarding McKinney’s dismissal as acting interim town manager on Nov. 10. These allegations included McKinney claiming that Weintraub contacted her regarding possible disciplinary action regarding Reimondo and questioned Weintraub and Dostaler for dismissing her while she was investigating issues at the police department.

In a statement, Weintraub refuted the claims that McKinney made, stating that the “biggest priority was dealing with the police department issues and that [Weichsel] had the experience and know-how” to deal with them and McKinney did not. Weintraub also refuted the claim that she was forwarding her “agenda” by dismissing McKinney, and also that she “called the media” to report that Weichsel would be returning.

* * *

The next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 10, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple Street.

gas stations to go lower, making the companies lose money. However, Tarar said he hopes after the new gas station has been there for a while that prices will “calm out” and the gas wars will halt. On Tuesday, Tarar said BP had called to say the gas prices were going to be lowered, but he was not sure what it would be lowered to.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said he welcomes the Stop & Shop gas station to Colchester. He feels it is great that residents “will now be able to use their Stop & Shop points” to get money off gas.

Schuster also said he is glad to see another business opening in Colchester to help bring more people to the town. Normally, he said, a gas station would not bring in a lot of out-of-towners, but because people get money off with their points he feels it “will bring some additional people in.”

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

It’s that time of year again; the most popular baby names of 2011 have been identified.

As I’ve said before, I’m always intrigued to read the lists, and see what people are naming their kids these days, and what names are going out of style.

According to babycenter.com, the top name for a boy is, as it was last year, Aidan. The most popular name for a girl, meanwhile, continues to be Sophia.

However, the other names in the Top 10 – both for boys and for girls – have undergone from shifting. The biggest gainer among boys is Mason, which shot up eight places from last year to become the third most popular name of 2011. Mason still seems to me more like a last name (a la Perry Mason, or that dude who came up with the Mason jar) than a first, but hey, to each their own.

Mason’s gain seemed to be at the expense of the name Caden, which fell from the Top 10. Caden always seemed too similar to Aidan for me, so at least with Mason in and Caden out the Top 10 has a little bit more variety. (Alas, Jayden is still there.)

Another big gainer among boys is Liam, climbing from number 10 on last year’s list to number four this year.

There were no dramatic climbs in the Top 10 for girls. Emily broke into the Top 10, going from number 12 last year to number nine. Addison, meanwhile, dropped out, settling in at number 11. (Madison, meanwhile, still has a home in the Top 10, at number 9.)

It’s probably showing my age a bit, but few of these Top 10 names, for either gender, were represented among my friends and classmates when I was a kid. Sophia was Dorothy’s mom on *The Golden Girls*; Madison was the name of a wealthy town in southern Connecticut. Oh well; times change. (Michael, by the way, is still holding strong, at number 16. The true classics never go out of style.)

In case you’re wondering, the full Top 10 list for boys is, in order of rank, Aidan, Jackson, Mason, Liam, Jacob, Jayden, Ethan, Noah, Lucas and Logan.

For girls, the list is: Sophia, Emma, Isabella, Olivia, Ava, Lily, Chloe, Madison, Emily and Abigail.

For all 200 top names – 100 boys and 100 girls – go to babycenter.com/top-baby-names-2011.

* * *

Speaking of lists, I saw another one recently that gave me quite a laugh: The 50 Dumbest Quotes in Sports, presented by the website bleacherreport.com. I won’t print all

50, but some of them were too good not to share. Among the soundbites:

“I owe a lot to my parents, especially to my father and mother.” – Australian golfer Greg Norman

“Any time Detroit scores more than 100 points and holds the other team below 100 points, they almost always win.” – Philadelphia 76ers head coach Doug Collins

“My career was sputtering until I did a 360 and got headed in the right direction.” – All-Star basketball player Tracy McGrady

“The only thing that keeps this organization from being recognized as one of the finest in baseball is wins and losses at the major league level.” – former Tampa Bay Devil Rays general manager Chuck Lamar

“Sometimes they write what I say, not what I mean.” – former World Series MVP Pedro Guerrero

“My sister’s expecting a baby, and I don’t know if I’m going to be an uncle or an aunt.” – former NBA center Chuck Nevitt

“Yankee pitchers have had great success this year against Cabrera when they get him out.” – sportscaster Tim McCarver

“Don’t say I don’t get along with my teammates. I just don’t get along with some of the guys on the team.” – football star Terrell Owens

“We must have had 99 percent of the match. It was the other 3 percent that cost us.” – Dutch football manager Ruud Gullit

“Well, either side could win, or it could be a draw.” – former English soccer player and manager Ron Atkinson

“Therapy is a good thing; it can be therapeutic.” – Yankee All-Star Alex Rodriguez

“He’s the man of the hour, at this particular moment.” – Boxing promoter Don King

“I can’t remember the names of all the clubs we went to.” – NBA great Shaquille O’Neal, when asked if he visited the Parthenon while in Greece.

“Nobody in football should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein.” – football legend Joe Theismann

“I want to rush for 1,000 yards or 1,500 yards, whichever comes first.” – former Heisman Trophy winner George Rogers

But perhaps my favorite on the list came from Yogi Berra. I’ve got a feeling Yogi knew what he was saying here (as opposed to the rest of these guys), but the quote’s too good to pass up. When asked my his wife where he wanted to be buried, Yogi’s simple answer was, “Surprise me.”

Suspect Responsible for RHAM Lockdown Arrested

by Geeta Schrayter

An arrest warrant has been issued for the man suspected of robbing a Citizens Bank in Plainfield last Monday, Dec. 5, which led to a lockdown of the RHAM schools that evening.

The Plainfield Police Department issued an arrest warrant for East Haven resident Christopher Bishop, 37, who was in custody at the Madison Police Department at the time, Plainfield Police said.

After the Dec. 5 robbery, the suspect took off in a vehicle that was later discovered in Hebron, the *Rivereast* reported last week. The vehicle the suspect drove away in was found abandoned at Veterans Park, prompting state police to call RHAM administration and tell them to lockdown.

The lockdown was in effect from around 5 to 8 p.m., during which time police checked the building for any signs of the suspect and examined the backseats of cars as students were released.

However, despite the additional use of police dogs to aid in the search, there was no sign of the suspect until Dec. 9, when Bishop was arrested by Madison Police and charged with third-degree larceny and breach of peace. Bond was set at \$250,000. At the same time, he was also served a warrant from North Branford, on the same charges. Bond in the North Branford case was set at \$100,000, said Sergeant Neal Mulhern with the Madison Police Department. Mulhern would not elaborate on what led to these arrests.

The connection between Bishop and the Plainfield robbery was made “based on the investigation in general” and information passed between departments, said Mulhern.

Bishop is due to appear in Danielson Superior Court in connection with the bank robbery charges on Dec. 19. He is due in New Haven Superior Court in connection with the Madison and North Branford charges on Jan. 9.

Cruz Proposes 3.89 Percent RHAM School Budget Increase

by Geeta Schrayter

At the Board of Education meeting on Dec. 8, Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz proposed a budget of \$12.25 million for the 2012-13 fiscal year. This is a 3.89 percent increase over last year's budget, or \$458,473.

In her presentation, Cruz explained some upcoming challenges, which included an increase in health insurance premiums, the expiration of Education Jobs funding amounting to a decrease of \$226,000, pay increases as a result of the teachers' contract moving from zero percent to 2.85 percent, and an increase in fuel costs.

However, she said, "I'm not standing up in front of you saying we need seven percent... that's just not happening."

She went on to explain there were various areas where there would be significant cost savings.

"We were able to cut about \$15,000 from electrical costs," as a result of the solar panels, she said. Closing the fourth-grade portables, an item discussed later in the meeting, would also save "about \$20,000."

An additional \$60,000 worth of savings was also expected due to the Goal Program at Hebron Elementary School, which looks to support students with special needs in-house rather than send them to an outplacement program.

Cruz stated this week that she didn't put tuition money for out-of-district placement into the budget because of the Goal Program. However, she said, "things could change," depending on the needs of students in the program as well as those that come into the program in the future.

Another \$66,000 in savings was expected through restructuring administration. Cruz ex-

plained this week that after the director of special services left in July, she had been covering the special education department. Next year, the plan is to hire a retired special education director to work part-time and pay a small stipend to a facilitator in each of the buildings rather than make it a full-time position, resulting in the above savings.

"We would do it on a trial basis next year, then sit down and examine if it did an adequate job," said Cruz.

Declining enrollment was discussed as well, the result of which meant the recommendation of "taking three teaching positions off the table," Cruz said at the meeting.

"We simply don't have the students to sustain the number of staff that we currently have," she said.

Reducing by three teachers could save almost a quarter million dollars, Cruz explained.

Increases in the proposed budget include 1.83 percent in salaries (\$144,283), 10.11 percent in benefits (\$2,189,456), 27.50 percent for professional services (\$474,054) and 16.06 percent for supplies (\$531,138).

A 6.58 percent decrease was noted in the area of utility services, building contracted services, repair and maintenance and computer lease requirements (\$407,509) and a 2.63 percent decrease was noted in membership items such as dues and fees (\$19,438).

Also provided for contemplation by the board were three decision packages – Cruz explained these are not included in any of the numbers, but are considered important and could be added in. The three packages are Smart Boards for the first grade (\$17,000), iPads/Kindles (\$4,800) and new e-mail hosting (\$15,000).

E-mail is currently hosted on RHAM's server, and Cruz said the bill went from \$9,000 to \$20,000.

"I think we could do it cheaper and better on our own," she said.

The proposed budget was presented along with a mid-point budget increase of 1.94 percent and a zero percent increase. The 1.94 percent increase at \$12,022,595 would require various cuts, the largest being in certified salaries (\$172,096), insurance (\$37,930), and curriculum supplies (\$15,000) to account for the difference of \$230,058.

If the budget were to remain the same as it was in the 2011-12 fiscal year at \$11,794,180 additional cuts would have to be made in areas such as paraprofessional salaries (\$24,689), various professional services (\$8,726), and a larger decrease in certified salaries to amount to the additional decrease of \$228,415.

At the meeting, Cruz noted there was only a .8 percent budget increase the last two years, and said that was a "really tough percent."

"I don't know how long we can maintain what we're doing with that," she said. "It's been a real struggle the last two years."

Despite the lack of significant increases, Cruz stated the expectation for Hebron's schools remains the same.

"Everyone has the expectation that we'll continue to do the job that we're doing," she said, adding, "It's a concern and something I think the community needs to be aware of... they get an awful lot for their money."

Cruz explained this was only the first step in the budgetary process. Now, the Board of Education would look over the budget throughout the month of January and "pick it apart."

"It's really an integrative and interactive process," she said, adding there are parts the board may agree with and others they might not – "that's why we do it together. It's a team effort."

After the budget is examined by the board, it will be broken down into departmental presentations in January. The school board will then adopt a budget and send to the Board of Selectmen in the beginning of February, Cruz explained last week.

Also at the meeting, a decision was made regarding the fourth-grade portables that had been closed due to the presence of mold. Cruz explained she and board member Kathy Shea, Hebron Schools' Maintenance Foreman Wayne Durocher, Town Manager Bonnie Therrien and the new public building committee "thoroughly" toured the portables.

"We just were looking for an opinion so [the Board of Education] could move forward a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen as to what happens," Cruz said.

That recommendation was that no attempts should be made to restore the portables, and the town should proceed with their removal. The suggested motion passed unanimously.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Board of Education also held the election of officers. Shea was unanimously elected chair while Tina Blinn was elected vice chair and Maryanne Leichter was voted secretary.

The next Board of Education meeting is Jan. 5 at 7 p.m. in the music room at Gilead Hill School.

School Board Revisits EH High School Renovation Plan

by Joshua Anusewicz

During the most recent campaign season, the talk from most Board of Education candidates focused on the upcoming accreditation of East Hampton High School. With most of that process centered on renovations and upgrades to the school's science labs, the board on Monday revisited a proposed \$36 million renovation that was originally presented to the board in March.

The school district is roughly halfway through a 10-year accreditation process by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which brought up glaring deficiencies at the high school, the science labs in particular. The school is expected to meet these criteria by the end of the process and, over the past few years, has worked toward formulating a plan that would address these issues.

As in March, Brian Solywoda of the New Britain-based Kaestle Boos Associates was on hand to present the board with the proposed renovations. While he only presented one plan to the board in March, this week he presented three separate ones.

The first option was the plan that was presented in March; it would include adding a second story to the west end of the school for additional science labs, an upgrade of the athletic facilities, new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, refurbishing the school grounds and parking lots and demolition of the wings on the east side of the school.

The second option would include the same renovation, excluding the upgrades of the athletics facilities. The third option would be the

same as the second, but would instead demolish the wings on the east side and put the two-story addition in its place.

Solywoda said that because the plans are proposing renovation rather than building a brand new facility, the state is more likely to reimburse a portion of the cost. The estimated cost for the first option, Solywoda said, would be \$36.98 million, with the state reimbursing the town \$17.12 million and bringing the total cost to the town to \$19.85 million. The second option would be \$34.48 million, with \$15.01 million being reimbursed to bring the cost to \$19.46 million. Solywoda did not have an estimate for the third option.

Solywoda said that all of the estimated figures are "very ballpark" and are based on the state's current reimbursement rates, which is currently just over 64 percent. (In contrast, the reimbursement rate for a new school is 54 percent.)

The timeline of the project that Solywoda provided put the town approving a referendum in June 2012, allowing for design and site work to be done over the year for construction to begin in June 2013. The total construction would take roughly 28 months, reaching completion in September 2015 for the start of that school year.

Two of the terms that were used during this discussion at the meeting by Solywoda and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden were "footprint" and "swing space." Footprint, according to Solywoda, refers to the amount of space within the school in relation to the num-

ber of students attending the school. Solywoda said that if the plan does not increase the footprint of the school or actually reduces it, the state is more likely to reimburse for the project.

Swing space, according to Golden, is where students are put in the school when they are displaced by the ongoing construction. Because of this, Golden said that the first or second options may be more attractive than the third option.

Golden also discussed the importance of preparing the community for the future, even though they are faced with uncertainty.

"There is no way of knowing the future," Golden said. "The entire landscape of our district could change over the next few years. We don't know what we'll need in our school, so we make our best educated guess." She added that "technology changes every year," holding up her iPad as an example.

As the discussion opened up to the board, most agreed that forming a "building committee" would be the top priority to get the ball rolling on the project. To do that, Golden said, the board would have to recommend a proposal to the Town Council for them to appoint members to the committee.

Board member Scott Minnick also recommended employing feedback from the public as the decision-making process moved along. He said that having "public forums" to gather information to share with the committee could prove valuable in educating both the board and the residents.

"In the past, the residents are given a pro-

posal and told, 'take it or leave it,'" Minnick said. Board member Joanne Barmasse agreed, stating that residents need to know "why we need this...we're not just doing this for something new; we need to do this."

The biggest concern at this point for the board is time; a "five-year report" for the accreditation is due in March, and, as board member Glenn Gemma stated, "The town has not made significant progress" toward the infrastructure of the high school. On top of the report, for the proposed timeline to be in place, the town would have to hold the referendum by at least May 2012 and submit the plan to the state before June 30, 2012. If the plan is not submitted before that date, the town would have to wait an entire year to submit the plan and have it approved.

"Between now and June 30 is key, it seems," said board member Don Coolican.

With all of the ideas taken into consideration, board chairman Mark Laraia recommended that the board look over the concepts to decide which one to recommend to the Town Council at their next meeting in January. He also approved of the idea of "educating the community" on the project in hopes of gaining the town's support.

"We don't want to push this down the town's throat," Laraia said. "The only way we get this passed is with public support."

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

Town, Church Reach Agreement on East Hampton Parking Lot

by Joshua Anusewicz

After a meeting of the two sides last Friday, the town has come to an agreement with the Congregational Church of East Hampton to provide funding for snow removal during the upcoming winter. The “memorandum of understanding” was approved unanimously by the Town Council at its meeting on Tuesday night.

The agreement states that the town will pay the church \$500 “for the privilege to use the church’s parking lot by Center School patrons and staff,” and will also pay “up to a maximum of \$2,500” for snow removal. The church will be reimbursed the money by submitting paid invoices to the town’s finance director, Jeff Jylkka.

The deal ends a nearly year-long push by the church for an agreement. In the past, the church has kept the lot plowed for the courtesy of the Center School, which uses the lot as a pick-up and drop-off spot for students (a rule stated in the school’s handbook). The church has said that the only reason for plowing the entire lot is for the use of the school, as the church only needs several parking spots for its staff.

After last winter’s record snowstorms, church officials said they realized they could no longer support plowing the entire lot on their own and enlisted the help of the town to help

pay for snow removal. For the past few months, the church has been in negotiations with Town Attorney Jean D’Aquila and the two most recent town managers, John Weichsel and Anne McKinney, to draft a license agreement to present to the council.

Over the past week, the council has looked into the “need” of the lot as it pertains to the Center School. Chairwoman Sue Weintraub said that this week, she actually parked in the lot to document the use by parents, busses and employees. Weintraub said that at the beginning of the school day, 49 parents and 14 vans dropped off children, seven school employees used the lot and two post office employees parked there, as well.

Also during public comment, resident Lori Weech, who is also a bus driver for the town, called the church parking lot something that the school “has to have.”

“If we can’t use that lot, it will be an absolute nightmare,” said Weech. “Only one bus can use the school driveway at a time, and that leaves the parents with only [the church lot] for drop-offs.”

With it seemingly confirmed that the town and the school did need the lot, Weintraub felt that the agreement would be a good temporary

solution.

“This is a very good agreement for this coming winter,” Weintraub said.

The reason the agreement is being looked at as temporary is that there may be an alternative plan on the horizon. Weintraub said she has contacted Police Chief Matthew Reimondo about the possibility of using Bevin Boulevard, which runs along the east side of the school, as a spot for parents to drop off and pick up their children. Weintraub said that Reimondo, Weichsel and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden have already shown support of the idea, and that Director of Public Works Keith Hayden has submitted a rough site plan of the property that would include a designated area for dropping off and several parking spots for employees.

Weintraub said that if all goes well, the plan could be implemented by the spring and be ready for the next school year.

Other members of the council supported accepting the agreement, but some of the councilors weren’t pleased with how the negotiations were handled. Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. expressed concern that the fees to have D’Aquila participate in the negotiating ended up being over \$3,000 – more than the value of

the agreement itself. He added that he was disappointed that D’Aquila and the church were primarily negotiating, and that Weichsel was not always present.

“I feel like there was a lapse in the negotiation,” Hintz said. “I think that John [Weichsel] should have been more in the loop, not our attorney working directly with the church.” Weintraub agreed, adding that the negotiating would be “a learning curve” for the entire council.

Anita Guerin, the moderator for the Congregational Church, said Wednesday she was “pleased” that an agreement could finally be reached.

“It is simple and will not require any changes in how we work with Center School,” Guerin said. “We feel that it is fair to us in providing the financial help we sought. We are especially pleased that Chairman Weintraub took the time to observe firsthand how our parking lot is used by Center School to confirm the facts, and then shared that with the rest of the council so they had a clear understanding, as well.”

Guerin also said the church “looks forward” to working with the council in the future as new traffic plans for the school are discussed.

Survey on Colchester Teen Substance Abuse Detailed

by Bailey Seddon

In June, town and school officials administered a survey to kids in grades six through 12 asking questions about substance abuse. The results are now in, and officials are deciding what to do with the information.

Youth and Social Services Director Valerie Geato said in a press release the reason they wanted to do the survey was to “have an effective way to monitor the pulse of our youth with regard to drugs and alcohol.” She said they also wanted the information so they could better provide support and prevention programs to kids.

Of the 1,382 students that took the survey, 332 reported drinking alcohol in the last 30 days. It stated that the top three places kids get alcohol are from their friends, people who buy it for them or at parties with adults who are unaware of underage drinking. The students who answered they did not drink indicated they abstained due to personal choice, disapproval of parents or moral or ethical reasons.

Meanwhile, 199 students admitted to using marijuana in the past 30 days – and more than half of all high school students stated they found marijuana was easy to obtain. Cigarette use was slightly less, with 129 students reporting that they had smoked in the past 30 days.

Out of the three substances listed above,

youth reported feeling that cigarettes had the greatest risk.

While marijuana use is higher, Resident State Trooper Supervisor Marc Petruzzi said there was a “greater fear of heroin use in the general population.” However, number four on the list of substance abuse in Colchester schools was prescription drug use, which Petruzzi said was “almost a direct route to heroin.” The survey found that 3 to 19 percent of youths reported using prescription drugs without a prescription at some point in the past.

Petruzzi said this is why it is important to stop kids when they are young. While most kids under 18 do not use heroin, Petruzzi said it is about a “matrix” of behavior. If youths are willing to drink or smoke they might someday turn to more risky behavior, he said.

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle agreed, saying, “We need to limit access” that kids have to substances.

It was also noted that substance abuse peaks in 10th grade, likely because this is when students are starting to get licenses and jobs and venturing out more on their own.

After going through the data, Loiselle said she wants the community to have a “very active and viable coalition” to help kids stop or stay off these substances. Loiselle emphasized that it is not just about teachers and adminis-

trators talking to kids, but parents also need to let their children know how they feel about substance abuse.

Geato backed this up in her press release, saying that from the survey “we also learned that many Colchester teens don’t receive clear messages from their parents regarding substance abuse.”

Parents need to talk to their kids, instead of “avoiding the conversation,” said Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein.

Loiselle said that while she wants to stop kids before substance abuse starts, she also wants to make sure schools have policy development and enforcement for the kids that do break the law. She said she wants to make sure the message getting out is that “this isn’t acceptable.”

As for the laws, Petruzzi said anyone under the age of 21 that is caught in possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana is “subject to a 60-day suspension of their driver’s license. If the individual does not yet have a driver’s license, they must wait 150 days after successfully completing all other requirements for a driver’s license before it can be issued.” In addition, any juvenile cited for possession of “any amount of marijuana will be sent to Juvenile Court,” instead of just being issued an infraction, said Petruzzi.

On the schools’ end Goldstein and Loiselle

said students caught abusing substances could get expelled, even if the student was off school grounds and it was on a weekend, depending on the circumstances. Students could also get kicked off any sport teams or after school programs they are part of.

Loiselle was happy to say that while parents had the choice to have their children opt out of the survey not one did. “That shows the community wanted this data,” she said. She said this was likely because the survey was anonymous and students could feel safe taking it.

Now that they have the information, Loiselle and Goldstein said they would like to see a curriculum that is based on the issues to address them directly. In this regard, there is going to be a Colchester Community Conversation next month, similar to the Summer 101 program that took place in June. The Summer 101 program was open to students in grade 12 and their parents and included pizza, safety videos, panel discussions (one for students and one for parents) and a local summer activity booth.

The January event will be very similar with parents and kids coming together again. The event will take place Thursday, Jan. 5, from 6:30-8 p.m., at Bacon Academy, and will include youth and teen activities in addition to substance abuse discussions. It will even offer dinner and free daycare for any parent who needs it.

Truck Gets Stuck Under Bridge in Marlborough

by Bailey Seddon

West Road was shut down for three and a half hours Tuesday after a tree removal truck got stuck under an overpass.

The driver of the truck worked for AshBritt, a Florida-based company working with Connecticut tree-removing crews to help clear debris that were left in the wake of the October nor’easter, said Department of Transportation (DOT) spokesman Kevin Nursick.

The truck was going under the bridge on West Road under Route 2 at around 10 a.m. when it “got stuck in a precarious position” after the driver accidentally left the “boom” stuck up in the air, said Mark Merritt, a rescue captain for Marlborough Fire Department. Merritt said the boom is a “claw-like” apparatus attached to the back of the truck that can pick up debris. He said the company has been in Marlborough for two weeks helping Connecticut crews clean up from the storm.

Kevin Asklar, a fire captain of the Marlborough Fire Department, said the crews

were clearing debris from Route 2 Tuesday. When the driver came under the overpass of the highway with the boom in the ‘up’ position, it got “caught in the undercarriage of the bridge and wedged in there,” Asklar said. He said when the boom hit the overpass, “it caused the truck to tip on its side.”

Asklar said there was not a lot the fire department could do, as there were no injuries or fluid leaks, so it turned the investigation over to the state police and the DOT.

Nursick said the bridge was fine, only suffering “cosmetic damage,” as is the case 99 percent of the time in these types of incidents. In most cases the vehicle, not the bridge, is damaged he said.

Nursick said the October storm resulted in around four million cubic yards of debris or more that Connecticut and out-of-state crews will be cleaning for a long time to come. It is a “massive work force,” Nursick said.

Route 66 Crash in East Hampton Injures Two

by Joshua Anusewicz

East Hampton Police are investigating a Wednesday morning crash on Route 66 that sent the drivers of two vehicles to Hartford Hospital.

According to police, at 7:20 a.m. Wednesday, two vehicles collided head-on on West High Street (Route 66) just east of the intersection of Route 151. Police said a preliminary investigation found that a silver Chevrolet traveling eastbound appeared to have moved left across the center line and struck a blue Hyundai traveling westbound.

The operator of the Hyundai was extricated from the vehicle by the East Hampton Fire

Department and was transported by LifeStar helicopter to Hartford Hospital, police said. The operator of the Chevrolet was transported to Hartford Hospital by East Hampton paramedics.

As of Thursday morning, East Hampton Police have not released the names of the operators or the extent of their injuries, but did say that the accident remains under investigation. They have asked that anyone who may have witnessed the accident or has any additional information to call the East Hampton Police Department at 860-267-9922.

Marlborough Selectmen Talk Reval, Possible Grants

by Bailey Seddon

The Board of Selectmen this week discussed the revaluation of people's homes, potential small cities grants and incentive programs the town could receive.

At Tuesday's meeting, First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski talked about the revaluation process going on in Town Hall this week. Revaluation is the process of estimating new values on real estate based on specific rules and current market data. Valuations are based on sales at a particular time, so as the market changes, property values may rise or fall. So, a revaluation is periodically conducted. According to Connecticut state law, cities and towns have to perform a revaluation every five years.

Gaudinski said she was not anticipating a huge change in the values; the last time revaluations were done was in 2005 and the market was "pretty similar" then, she said.

(While 2005 is six years ago and not five, Gaudinski said the state in 2010 offered Marlborough a one-year extension and the town took it, due to the various projects – such as the sewers and the business park – it was dealing with at that time.)

Gaudinski said she was hoping that by Tuesday's meeting there would be a summary of the homes for the board to go over, but as yet there was none. When the revaluation process is finished, Town Assessor Marie Hall will notify the Board of Selectmen of any changes in

value from the 2005 revaluation. Gaudinski said if there were any changes, it would probably mean decreases to the value of citizens' homes.

Selectman Mike Gut, who could not make it to the meeting and was speaking through teleconference, said if values did go down that he wanted to make sure people knew that just because the values of their homes were going down that their taxes are not necessarily going up.

Gaudinski agreed and said the value of a home "aligns your house with the current market." Furthermore, if someone did not like their revaluation Gaudinski said they have the option of filing with the Zoning Board of Appeals in February and hearings would then be held in March.

* * *

Next, the board discussed the possible application for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program or a Small Cities Grant. Gaudinski said the grants were given more for housing rehabilitation than for infrastructure, as they had originally thought. If they were to get a grant she said they could use it to help people in the sewer district connect or help elderly people fix things around their home that they are not physically able to do anymore, such as fixing their roofs, she said.

"Those are two areas we were looking at," Gaudinski said. Selectman Dick Shea agreed.

"I don't think you want to turn away from

any possible source of funds," he said.

Gaudinski said the board will look into the grant further and decide in January.

"I have the sense that this is something to pursue," she said.

* * *

The board also discussed a Regional Performance Incentive Grants program, sponsored through Capital Region Council of Governments (CROCOG). The programs would be administered by the state by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM).

Two of the programs Gaudinski said the town would be interested in were a Back Office Sharing Study and a Geographic Information System (GIS). In the Back Office Study CROCOG would "look at the work flow in a typical town hall" such as staff work, information technology, and public works tasks performed, said Shea. CROCOG could then decide if these could be regionalized or shared with other towns to make Marlborough more cost efficient. After it was done the town would get a report based on the study and CROCOG would then make recommendations as to how to do things "in a cost effective manner," Gaudinski said.

As for the GIS, it would give a more detailed look at the geographic layout of the town and would be updated into the GIS database. The GIS would show topographical information by

showing the town's contour lines and elevation data. It would also give an "update of CROCOG Regional Parcel Dataset with the most current data; development of automated update tools for each municipality, enabling refreshing of the data via the internet," according to an email from Gaudinski.

The cost for the Back Office Sharing Study would be \$150,000 and the GIS would be \$850,000-\$1,050,000. However, the projects are cost neutral to the town as CROCOG applies for grants and uses the money to fund the projects.

"I think I would like to start participating with CROCOG," Gaudinski said. She said the town has until Dec. 31 to tell CROCOG if it is interested in these programs.

"It seems pretty straight-forward," said Shea, and added with a laugh, "You can't beat the price."

Gaudinski agreed. "It's pretty straight-forward and doesn't commit us to anything," she said.

The board approved a motion to tell CROCOG it was interested in the two programs. After the motion was passed Gaudinski added that she has attended two CROCOG policy board meetings and felt it was good for the town to be involved with the group.

"I think it would just be good to be sitting at the table of CROCOG as a town," she said.

Marlborough WPCA Talks About Unconnected Properties

by Bailey Seddon

The number has dropped, but there are still eight properties that remain unconnected to the new sewer lines, Town Planner Peter Hughes told the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) at its Dec. 8 meeting.

Of the eight, three are appealing their orders to connect. This number is down from September when there were 12 unconnected properties, he said. To help the five that are not appealing, Hughes and the WPCA are pursuing a Housing Rehab Program grant.

The last time the town got money from this grant was in 1995, in the form of \$100,000, Hughes said. In 2010, the town still had \$30,000 left from the grant and the WPCA "utilized these funds" to connect five other houses to the sewer system, he said. Now the WPCA is again hoping to get money from the program to connect the remaining houses. Hughes said four of the five homes that still need to be connected are "income-eligible" for the program. The loan has zero percent interest and this way, the town and residents "are not spending money on lawyers," and the "situation resolves itself," Hughes said.

"That's something we need to discuss with the Board of Selectmen," Hughes said. He said the selectmen have to make a decision in January about what grants they are going to apply for, and if this will be one of them.

During citizens' comments, resident Russell West asked the WPCA why those in the sewer

district are not yet connected. He also asked what the "course of action" would be to connect those properties. WPCA Chairman Jack Murray said the options would be to help people find the ability to fund the connection, like with the Housing Rehab Program, or they will have to go through the courts to get them to connect. The possibility was also again discussed of going into the properties, forcing a connection and putting a lien on people's homes. Murray said the board hopes to find a "more comfortable" way of connecting the properties, such as the rehab loan.

West also asked if citizens not connected were being charged usage fees, and, if not, why. Murray said as of now they are not being charged, but added the board is "exploring" doing so. Murray said it is difficult to charge someone a usage fee if they are not using anything. On the other hand, he added, residents were asked to connect and they have not, which he said is not fair to those that have and are paying fees. He said the board wanted to figure out if this was something that's a common practice in other towns.

* * *

Tropical Storm Irene was also talked about at the meeting. In the aftermath of the August storm, Hughes said, the town spent \$3,500 pumping septic systems when power was out. However, he said 75 percent of this will be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Manage-

ment Agency (FEMA). Hughes said he had submitted a bill to Vincent Susco, administrator of the joint facilities in East Hampton, for the damages, who then filed the claims to FEMA. Hughes is not sure when the town will get the money but was told by Susco that he had gotten a follow-up phone call from FEMA saying "that his submission looks good" and the town will get the money, Hughes said.

While this was good news for the town, Hughes said FEMA was so far not offering the town reimbursement for the October nor'easter. Hughes said he will file "funds we utilized" after the storm to pump septic systems when the power was out, in case FEMA decides to offer reimbursement in the future. He said the funds the town used were slightly less for the snowstorm than they were for Irene, as more residents had acquired generators in the period of time between the two storms.

* * *

Next discussed was a topic that first came up at the Oct. 13 WPCA meeting. Resident Dennis DeBonnee was back to discuss the damage that was done to his property when the construction company F&J came in to connect his sewer in April 2008.

At the October meeting, Murray said that in order to get DeBonnee's outflow from the septic system, blasting and excavation had to be done in his front, side and back yards. DeBonnee had previously said F&J also dug a trench eight feet

deep and eight feet wide and removed part of a stone wall and a walkway. The construction resulted in the unearthing of 10 large boulders, which were just left in a pile in DeBonnee's yard, and a walkway around the side to the back of his house was destroyed. F&J came in and patched it up but did a "horrendous job," said DeBonnee. DeBonnee said in October he's talked with other construction companies and they estimated it would cost \$23,000-31,000 to get his property back to the way it used to look.

In October, WPCA had asked DeBonnee for photos of his property. He brought them with him to last week's meeting. They were taken before, after and during the construction work done at his home.

Murray said he wanted to see F&J's photos of the property; according to DeBonnee, the company had taken at least 100 photos during the course of construction, but, when Hughes contacted the business for the photos, he was told the pictures could not be found. Murray said the board would keep making an attempt to get the photos from the company.

DeBonnee told the WPCA he was willing to waive some of the damage as long as he got the "major stuff" done. He said he was even willing to do some of the work himself.

* * *

The next meeting of the WPCA is Thursday Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Andover Selectmen Not Thrilled with Losing Prague

by Geeta Schrayter

Due to the recent redistricting of the state's senatorial district, Andover's representation is changing from state Senator Edith Prague to Steve Cassano. Town officials said this week they're sorry to see Prague go.

Redistricting, as explained on the website for the Connecticut General Assembly, is the process of "redrawing legislative and congressional district lines...based on the results of the decennial federal census." It takes place every 10 years, as required by federal and state laws, with the purpose of establishing and maintaining "voting districts that are faithful to the principle of one-person, one-vote." Federal law states that each district is meant to have about an equal population, guaranteeing every vote holds equal importance.

On average, districts statewide are supposed to contain approximately 101,000 residents, said Cassano, but the 2001 census showed his district had 104,052 residents. As a result of the redistricting, the district now contains 100,951 residents.

"[My district] was the second largest," Cassano said, so "they took Marlborough,

which was twice the size of Andover," and switched the two.

The redistricting – which will take effect after the November 2012 elections – places Andover in the Fourth Senatorial District with Glastonbury, Manchester and Bolton, replacing Marlborough which is now a part of the 19th District with towns such as Hebron, Columbia, Lebanon, Norwich and Ledyard.

"It puts the district in the ratio," Cassano stated, adding that Prague's district had a lower population, so "it worked out perfectly."

However, some of Andover's selectmen are concerned over the change in representation.

"We're very concerned that we lost Edith Prague as our representative as our state senator," said selectman Jay Linddy. "She was just always out there fighting for us... Whoever comes in will have big shoes to fill."

First Selectman Bob Burbank agreed, stating this week he's concerned Andover will get "lost" being with Glastonbury and Manchester.

"I think the disadvantage is that now the town is thrown in with larger cities so maybe we

won't get the representation that we had before," he said, adding, "you almost feel ignored, like they don't care [because Andover] is such a small voting block and that's disappointing... We got such very good service from Edith."

But Cassano said Wednesday that's not going to occur.

"That would never happen with me – that's just not my style," he said.

He also mentioned Bolton, which is a similar size to Andover, is in his district as well.

"I actually have some very exciting things going on [with Bolton] and I would do the same with Andover," Cassano said.

Looking toward the future, Cassano said an issue he's excited to be involved with is the economic development along Route 6. Discussion is currently underway with the transportation study group from the Capital Region Council of Governments (CROCOG) and the Economic Development Commissions in Andover, Coventry, Columbia and Bolton regarding the development of sections of the road in each town, including a portion in Andover that would slow traffic and allow for more business. Plans

were brought forth to the public on the "Andover Village Vision" for Route 6 at a workshop on Dec. 15.

Cassano also stated he has some longtime friendships in Andover and has worked with the town through CROCOG.

"It's not just a senator going in there," Cassano said. "I have a history of working with Andover and I will continue doing so [in the future]."

But Prague's history with the town goes back to the beginning of her legislative career.

"I feel very badly about losing Andover," she said, adding that she's represented the town since starting in the legislature in 1982. "But my friends in Andover will always be my friends."

Prague also stated she's looking forward to having Marlborough, which she called "a nice town," and said Cassano "will be fine" representing Andover.

"He's a bright guy," she said. "He's done a great job as a senator. I think he'll do a great job for Andover," she said.

Fire Drill Preceded by the Real Deal at Andover Elementary

by Geeta Schrayter

A routine fire drill took place at Andover Elementary School (AES) on Tuesday, but it was preceded by the real thing on Monday, when Principal Dave Griffin pulled the fire alarm.

At Wednesday's Board of Education meeting, Superintendent of Schools Andrew Maneggia explained the situation, which was due to the roof project at AES that began nearly a month ago.

"This roof project has gotten to be a dragged out project," Maneggia said. He cited weather interruptions and delays in receiving materials as reasons for the holdup.

"The project was supposed to have been completed by this meeting and the workers did not show up today," he stated, adding that the workers had been pulled by the company due to the weather forecast to complete projects where the roof had been opened in order to prevent water damage.

"He promised they'd be there on Friday to compete a major portion of the project," Maneggia said.

Also hindering the project's completion was Monday's incident, when the roofers began installation. In the process of removing old matter from the roof, a piece of 2x4 started to smolder. The roofers discovered the charred wood and proceeded to use a fire extinguisher on it, Maneggia explained.

Using the extinguisher created "a lot of smoke and steam... that filled up the hallway here," said Maneggia.

When Principal Dave Griffin discovered the resulting vapor, he promptly pulled the fire alarm.

Staff and students exited the building until

firemen from the Andover Fire Department checked out the situation and deemed it safe to reenter.

"The most important thing is that the alarm was pulled... kids exited the building, staff was in control, the kids did a great job – they thought it was a fire drill," said Maneggia. "We were very fortunate the roofers discovered it," he added.

In a letter on the school website, Griffin said students "are to be commended on their behavior outside while the fire department did a check to ensure the fire was out and it was safe to reenter the building."

Griffin also explained the event caused students to leave school about 20 minutes late, and an alert message was sent out to parents to "allay fears that are natural when children do not arrive on schedule."

But he said calls were still received from various parents who saw the school had called but didn't listen to the voicemail which was left, and he urged parents to take the time to listen before calling.

Also in the realm of communication, Maneggia explained at the meeting that radon testing will soon take place at AES, and notifications will be sent to parents explaining "what this is all about" as well as the results once they're received.

Collection devices are placed in classrooms, and Maneggia said it's important to let parents know what they're for ahead of time, before students return home, say something about the machines and cause unnecessary concern.

"We will keep everybody informed [on the situation] but there really isn't any choice in

doing it" Maneggia explained.

In a radon testing guide put together by the state Department of Public Health (DPH), radon was described as "a naturally-occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer." Radon is colorless, odorless and tasteless, and comes from the natural breakdown of uranium. The gas travels through the soil and enters buildings via cracks and foundation holes, the guide explained.

According to state statute, schools are required to test for radon every five years, but because the initial measurements at AES were less than 4.0 Picocuries per liter (pCi/L), Maneggia explained the entire school won't need to be tested. Rather, 10 percent of the school will be re-evaluated.

Maneggia said the process is currently underway to schedule the work.

Also at Wednesday's meeting, the school health report revealed the school had experienced 16 cases of lice.

Maneggia said other schools in the area have had an issue with lice, "and we have not been spared the problem."

"This is one of those things that runs its course but you have to be very diligent about it – and our school and staff are," he said, adding it's an "uncomfortable situation" that no one likes to deal with or talk about "but it is a reality."

In order to keep the lice from spreading, Maneggia said they were refraining from using classroom listening centers and limiting use of the headphones in the library. But he added things are a bit more complicated because "the strain of lice – they're heartier than they used

to be years ago," and some treatments and medications are no longer as effective.

"The only way to treat it is to be tenacious and diligent," he said.

According to the DPH, the treatment for head lice, which are described as "blood sucking parasites... approximately the size of a sesame seed," involves using an over-the-counter or prescription medication and a nit (head lice egg) comb.

Lice are spread from close personal contact and do not survive for long once they fall off a person. Therefore, DPH states it's not necessary "to spend a lot of time or money on housecleaning activities." However, to avoid re-infestation it is recommended that the floor and furniture be vacuumed. Clothing and bed linens used by the infested person prior to treatment should be washed in hot water and dried at high heat, and items which can't be washed like stuffed animals and comforters should be stored in a sealed plastic bag for two weeks. Combs and brushes should be soaked in rubbing alcohol or washed with soap and hot water.

Measures to prevent lice in the future include avoiding close contact "during play at school and at home" and not sharing personal items like hats and scarves, combs and brushes. For more information, visit the DPH website at ct.gov/dph

Back at AES, Maneggia affirmed "we're just being cautious and that's what it boils down to."

The next Andover Board of Education meeting is Wednesday, Jan. 11, at 7 p.m. in the school library.

Solar Panel Plans Hit Snag in Colchester

by Bailey Seddon

Although there are differing explanations as to why, it appears a plan to provide free solar panels to town buildings has – at least for the moment – fallen through.

In April, the Board of Selectmen authorized Director of Facilities and Operations Greg Plunkett to pursue a contract with Glastonbury-based DCS Energy for free solar panels for town buildings. After getting the go-ahead, Plunkett submitted a list of buildings for consideration to DCS, and over the summer the company came out to assess buildings for their solar capabilities.

The proposal called for DCS to install a nine-kilowatt system at the town garage and a 4.5-kilowatt system at the Parks and Recreation garage.

One of the stipulations of the deal was that the town would have had to sign a five-year contract, stating that DCS would do all the maintenance on the solar panels for five years and then, at the end of the term, the town could purchase the panels from the company for a dollar.

Once the parameters of the deal were established, the Board of Selectmen signed contracts in August and sent them off to DCS to be signed.

"It was certainly something," Plunkett said of the offer.

However, about three to four weeks later, Plunkett said he received notification from DCS saying the company would not be able to provide solar panels at the town garage, due to problems with the panels' manufacturer, Solyndra, which recently went bankrupt.

While DCS owner Craig Bradway said this week "it was kind of a shock to everybody" when Solyndra went "belly up," he said the bankruptcy was not why the Colchester project fell through. He said DCS was able to provide the free solar panels due to funding from a private partner and a tax grant check program offered by the U.S. Treasury. However, after the Colchester officials signed off on the deal but before DCS could provide the panels to town, the funding partner withdrew, in part because the U.S. Treasury's program was itself discontinuing, said Bradway.

This left DCS without the funding to continue the project. However, Bradway said the company is trying hard to get a replacement funding partner.

"We have not totally waved the white flag" on the project, he said.

However, Plunkett said earlier this week he had received no indication from DCS that the company is looking for other ways to fund the project.

Plunkett said the project would have given the town a chance to see how well solar energy worked and how much money it could really save. (Plunkett had estimated the project would have saved the town a couple thousand dollars a year.) Then the town could "maybe make a decision to expand our use of solar energy," he said.

Plunkett said it is just "a matter of time" before the town finds other ways to save on energy. "We will definitely look at solar" in the future, he said.

One-Car Crash Severs Utility Pole

A car crash Thursday, Dec. 8 left a utility pole severed, State Police said.

Anthony Caye, 18, of 6 Quinn Rd., was driving his 1998 Ford Escort along South Main St. He was 100 feet from the fork that divides South Main Street from South Road, when his vehicle went off the road and right shoulder and hit a CL&P pole, State Police said.

Caye was uninjured but his Ford was left with heavy damage to its front end. He was issued an infraction for improper right turn, State Police said.

Car Strikes Pole, Closes Road

Traffic was shut down after a vehicle struck a pole on Norwich Avenue Wednesday, Dec. 7, State Police said.

At around 7 p.m., police said, Shane C. Drum, 42, of 188 Chestnut Hill Rd., was driving his 2009 Subaru Forester on Norwich Ave., just east of Halls Hill Road, when he struck the utility pole. He was transported to Backus Hospital for possible injuries.

As a result of the crash, Norwich Avenue was closed for a few hours because of unsafe wires, police said.

Andover Selectmen Endorse Town Website

by Geeta Schrayter

At their Dec. 7 meeting, the town selectmen gave their official endorsement of the new Andover website.

"We approved to make it an official website of the town," First Selectman Bob Burbank said this week, "and basically we're going to try to assure that all the info gets on it in a timely manner."

Making the website official is a process that's been in the works since the site was first unveiled to the selectmen in December 2010.

In order for a town website to be compliant with the Freedom of Information statutes, meeting minutes have to be made available on the site no more than a week after the session takes place. How to make certain this happens posed a lengthy delay for the selectmen as well as the Website Committee, but

just over a year later, it finally came to an end. The responsibility of ensuring minutes are available on the website in a timely manner will lay with the town clerk's office.

"That's all been taken care of," said Lindy, adding that the committee will report back to the selectmen every month "for like three to four months to work together to get any kinks out."

Burbank added they won't be placing past minutes on the website, but are "going to try to move forward and get minutes on as they come in."

As of Thursday, the website contained the notice "we are beginning to add official meetings to the site," and the minutes of a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting from Nov. 21 were available.

The website is located at andover.ct.org.

Colchester Police News

12/6: Arion Bakrina, 26, of 60 Standish St., Hartford, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

12/8: Jonah Jonathan, 40, of 61 Loomis Rd., was charged with having no insurance, misuse of plate and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

12/6: Eric R. Schmidt, 23, of 69 Chapman St., Willimantic, was charged with criminal violation of a protective order, State Police said.

12/9: Jay Scott Crump, 22, of 79 North Pond St., Bristol, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

12/11: Kyle Brueckner, 22, of 21 Windham Rd., Willimantic, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

12/11: Deena Griffin-Collett, 44, of 60 Deer Run Dr., was charged with DUI and three counts of risk of injury to a child, State Police said.

12/12: Patrick Curley, 47, of 4 Dobson Rd., Vernon, was charged with first-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

Portland Police News

12/5: Patrick Brogan, 20, of 23 Dogwood Dr., East Hampton, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, Portland Police said.

12/6: A 16-year-old juvenile male was arrested for first-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct, police said.

12/7: A 16-year-old juvenile male was arrested for third-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct, police said.

Hebron Police News

12/6: Police are investigating the theft of several items from a Gilead St., home between 6:50 a.m. and noon. The house was broken into through a smashed out basement window. Anyone with information is asked to contact Resident State Trooper James Nolting at 860-537-7500.

12/9: Eric Koch, 23, of 235 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, was charged with DUI and improper parking, State Police said.

12/9: Zachary K. Surdam, 19, of 87 Merritt Valley Rd., Andover, was charged with second-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

12/13: Brandon Nalle, 24, of 400 Whitney Ave., Apt. 9, New Haven, was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

11/30: John Paul Fournier, 22, of 45 Forest St., was arrested for sixth-degree larceny, credit card theft/fraud and illegal use of a credit card, East Hampton Police said.

12/3: Todd T. Bower Jr., 22, of 230 Old West High St., was arrested for DUI and reckless driving, police said.

12/6: Michael Curtis Sentell, 27, of 7 Starr Place, No. 2, was arrested for violating a protective order, police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Elizabeth Rybitski

Elizabeth Rybitski, 80, of Colchester, passed away Friday, Dec. 9, in Manchester. She was born Feb. 10, 1931, in Hartford, daughter of Stanley and Nellie Trailer Rybitski.

Surviving are her sister, Regina Michalak, and a nephew, Stanley J. Michalak.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Dec. 14, at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. Interment followed in St. Joseph Cemetery. There were no calling hours.

Amston

Constance Jean Hines

Constance Jean Hines, 81, of Moodus, formerly of Amston and Seattle, WA, and loving mother of Brenda J. Quinn of Moodus and Mark V. Hines of Sumner, WA, passed away Thursday, Dec. 1.

Connie was born in Nebraska Aug. 19, 1930, the daughter of Helen and Don Moist. She lived most of her adult life in the Bellevue and Federal Way sections of Seattle, WA. She was employed as a financial manager with Associated Grocers for over 30 years.

Connie loved playing cards and enjoyed an occasional visit to the casinos where she often was lucky at the slots. Connie will always be remembered for her outgoing personality and her candor.

Besides her son and daughter, she is survived by her brother, Marvin Moist of Ocean Shores, WA; a son-in-law, John Quinn of Moodus; a daughter-in-law, Lauren Hines of Sumner, WA; and a grandson, Brandon Hines of Enumclaw, WA. Connie's extended family includes grandchildren Kim Quinn of Ansonia, Colleen Cull of Prospect, Kelly Chella of Salem, Shawn Quinn of Portland and Frank and Jessica Silone of Sumner, WA. Also, seven great-grandchildren, Jack, Garrett, Connor, Tyler, Samantha, Brody and Ryan.

There are no calling hours and burial will be in Seattle, WA.

Memorial donations in Connie's memory may be made to the VNA South Central Connecticut, One Long Wharf Drive, New Haven, CT 06511.

Colchester

Julie Ann Winch

Julie Ann Winch, 21 of Deerfield Beach, FL, and formerly of Colchester, passed away early Thursday morning, Dec. 8. Born Oct. 25, 1990, in Hartford, she was the daughter of Gary and Dorothy (Dadona) Winch of Colchester.

Julie was a role model for the many young kids in the neighborhood where she grew up. She was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester.

She loved flowers and enjoyed working at the Colchester Florist during high school. She will be remembered most fondly for her positive outlook on life and adventurous nature by those who knew and loved her.

Julie attended school in Colchester and graduated from Bacon Academy with the Class of 2008, where she was the captain of the Girls Varsity Golf Team. She then went on to earn a degree in hotel and hospitality management from Lincoln College in Suffield.

Julie started her career working for the Sheraton Hotels in Cambridge, MA and Hartford. She then took a position at MGM Grand at Foxwoods and was a VIP guest service representative. Early in 2011, Julie moved to Florida where she embarked on her new career with the Marriott Renaissance Boca Raton.

In addition to her parents, survivors include her brother, Kevin; her uncles and aunts John and Mary Winch and Gail and Art Cinea of Florida, Phyllis and Mark Coleman of Columbia, Robert and Linda Dadona of East Hampton, Richard and Marybeth Dadona of Colchester; her godparents, David and Nancy Piella of Colchester; along with her many loving cousins and numerous extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by her brother, Casey D. Winch.

Visitation was held Tuesday, Dec. 13, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Wednesday, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial followed in New St. Andrew Cemetery.

Donations in Julie's memory may be made to Bacon Academy Girl's Golf Team, 611 Norwich Ave. Colchester, CT 06415 or to the Cragin Memorial Library, 8 Linwood Ave., Colchester 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Thomas Paul Serenson

Thomas Paul Serenson, 65, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Betty (Brannan) Serenson, died Wednesday, Dec. 7, at Yale New Haven Hospital. Born Sept. 26, 1946 in Middletown he was the son of the late Jonathan and Gertrude (Sutkowski) Serenson.

Thomas had served his country in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He had worked for most of his life as a self-employed truck driver. Thomas fully enjoyed life and spending time with his family and friends. He enjoyed vacations in Florida and riding his Harley Davidson Motorcycle with his wife. Tom always looked forward to Bike Week in Daytona. He was an animal lover, especially his six cats.

Besides his wife of 39 years, Betty, he is survived by his son, Jonathan M. Serenson and his wife Jennifer of Brooklyn; his daughter, Jennifer Wulff and her husband Robert of Meriden; and his granddaughter, Samantha.

Family and friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Sunday, Dec. 11. Funeral services will be private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., I-91 Tech Center, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Margaret A. Gould

Margaret A. Gould, 81, of Portland, wife of the late Harry H. Gould passed away Thursday, Dec. 8, at home. She is the daughter of the late Joseph and Marguerite (Pollard) Ringwood.

Born Oct. 4, 1930, in Hartford, she grew up in East Berlin and has lived in Portland for the past 57 years. She was a member of the Church of St. Mary in Portland and enjoyed cooking and bowling.

She is survived by two sons and daughters-in-law, Timothy and Linnae Gould of Portland and Stephen and Susan Gould of Anchorage, AK; five grandchildren, Rosemary, Jeffrey, Laura, Caitlin and Cameron, a great-grandchild, Kayden and two nieces.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, Dec. 13, leaving from Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., for a Mass at the Church of St. Mary, Portland. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Monday, Dec. 12, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

The family would like to thank Dora for her loving and compassionate care and to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice Home Care Program.

Marlborough

Richard L Kaminske

Richard L Kaminske of Marlborough, husband of the late Patricia (Lindsay) Kaminske, passed away Sunday, Dec. 11, with his family by his side. Born July 23, 1932 in Hartford, he was the son of the late Charles R and Alice (Delaney) Kaminske.

Rick proudly served his country as a Corporal with the 82nd Airborne attached to the 557th Quartermaster Aerial Parachute Delivery Unit stationed in Germany during the Korean War.

After getting out of the service Rick worked as a Mason before starting his own Sheet Metal and Door Company, P&R Associates, in East Hartford. Rick sold the company to Greene Enterprises in 1984 and continued to work with them until he retired in 1991.

Rick is survived by his son, Richard Kaminske, his wife, Angela of Colchester and their two sons, Daniel and Ryan; a daughter, Kristina Dannemiller and her husband Douglas of Duxbury, MA, and their children, Michael, Patrick, Douglas, Nathan and Andrew; a nephew, Mike Woody and his wife Sue Ellen; a sister-in-law, Melissa Lindsay of Kailua, HI, and a brother-in-law, Gordan Lindsay of Huntsville, TX.

Rick was proud of his involvement with the Marlborough Fire Department, where he was a volunteer fireman for 15 years. The last few years he spent his weekends participating in antique car shows across Connecticut with his 1940 Ford Coupe Deluxe winning many awards.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Wednesday, Dec. 14. Funeral services were private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department P.O. Box 237 Marlborough, CT 06447.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Anthony C. Foto

Anthony C. Foto, 77 of East Hampton, husband to Patricia Burke Foto, passed away peacefully after a short illness Monday, Dec. 5, surrounded by loved ones.

He was predeceased by his son, Michael Foto, and is survived by sister, Elizabeth "Betty" Garvey of Wethersfield; daughters Cathy Foto and Anna Meyer of Morris, NY, Judie Demille of Palm Bay, FL, Laura Foto of West Hartford, Jamie Fuhrmann of East Haddam, Deana Gabinetti of Chagrin Falls, OH; his sons, Jay Fish of Charlotte, NC, and Dennis Charles of Wethersfield; in addition to 12 grandchildren.

He was a loving and committed husband, father, grandfather and friend to all who knew him.

In lieu of flowers, Tony was committed to research education, and would appreciate donations to UConn Anatomical Donations Program, UConn Health Center, 263 Farmington Ave., MC 1911, Farmington, CT 06030-1911 made in his name.

All are invited to join the family at a celebration of his life Saturday, Jan. 7, 2012, from 2-6 p.m., at Angelico's Lakehouse Restaurant, 81 North Main St., East Hampton CT 06424.

Portland

Barbara Briggs

Barbara Briggs, 89, of Old Saybrook, wife of the late Glenn Briggs, died Friday, Dec. 9, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born in Hartford, daughter of the late Joseph Bishop and Julia (Shulthiess) Bishop. She was a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Old Saybrook and Martha's Circle.

Barbara is survived by a son, Tom Briggs and his wife Colleen of Portland; daughters, Joanne Westerson and her husband Grant of Old Saybrook, and Julie Rossi of NJ; four granddaughters, Lisa, Olivia, Rachel and Jess.

She was predeceased by her brother, Carl Bishop.

The family would like to give special thanks to the staff and residents at Portland Rehabilitation for all their care, compassion and love.

A funeral service was held Tuesday, Dec. 13, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Old Saybrook. Burial was in State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Friends called Monday, Dec. 12, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver Street, Middletown.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions to the Portland Care and Rehab. Center Recreational Fund, 333 Main St., Portland, CT 06480.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit bigafuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Eileen Kalinowski

Eileen Kalinowski, 60, wife of Laurence Kalinowski, of East Hampton, died unexpectedly Saturday, Dec. 10, at home during a brief illness. She was born July 12, 1951, in Middletown, to the late Thomas J and Evangeline (Bushey) Conroy.

She was a graduate of Mercy High School and Briarwood College, where she earned an associate's degree. For 20 years, she served as the receptionist for Dr. Richard Brown until her passing. She enjoyed camping, trips to Mohegan Sun with her husband Larry, and spending time with her children and precious grandchildren.

Besides her husband and mother, she is survived by a daughter and son-in-law, Jamie and James Hull of East Haddam; son and fiancé, Kevin Kalinowski and Ericka DiVicino of Marlborough; mother, Evangeline Conroy of Portland; sister and brother-in-law, Patricia and David Gannon of Portland; brother and sister-in-law, Thomas and Virginia Conroy of Windsor; three grandchildren, Nathan, Timothy, and Christopher Hull; and also many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother, David Conroy.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Dec. 15, from the Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, followed by a funeral liturgy at St. Mary Church, Portland. Burial will be in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Friends called at the funeral home Wednesday, Dec. 14.

Those who wish may send memorial contributions to the American Cancer Society.

Colchester

Loretta B. Guillemette

Loretta B. Guillemette, 90, of 71 Westwood Park, Norwich, died Tuesday, Nov. 22, at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was born in Lisbon Sept. 22, 1921, the daughter of the late Arthur and Clara (Deslandes) Pothier.

Loretta dedicated herself as a homemaker for her family. She was a communicant of Sacred Heart Church in Taftville. Loretta was twice married. She first married Henry X. Lambert, who died Oct. 14, 1952, and later married Eugene Guillemette, who died June 2, 1997.

Survivors include one daughter, Clara Kalnitsky of Gales Ferry; two sons, Paul Guillemette of Norwich and Dennis Guillemette of Bozrah; one sister, Imelda Konow of North Franklin; seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by one son, Arthur Lambert, and one brother, Rene Pothier.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, Dec. 16, at 11 a.m., at Sacred Heart Church in Taftville, meeting directly at church. Burial of cremains will follow in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Taftville. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Sacred Heart Church, P.O. Box 208, Taftville, CT 06380.

Guillot Funeral Home, 75 South B. St., Taftville, is in charge of arrangements.

East Hampton

Elizabeth H. Treat

Elizabeth "Bette" H. Treat, 85, formerly of East Hampton, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 7, in York Hospital in York, ME. She was born Dec. 5, 1926, in Willimantic, and was the daughter of the late William and Mabel (Jenkins) Hughes.

A brother, William E. Hughes Jr., predeceased her.

Elizabeth "Bette" was a graduate of the University of Connecticut, with a bachelor's degree in bacteriology, and was employed by the state of Connecticut as a bacteriologist and later by the U.S. government as a chemist.

Bette was married for 60 years to John W. Treat Jr., having three children, John W. Treat III of Connecticut, David H. Treat and wife Sarah of Vermont and Elizabeth T. Rodenhizer and husband Carl, also of Connecticut. Their five grandchildren include Michael Y. Treat, Christopher H. Treat, Mark K. Rodenhizer, James T. Rodenhizer and William J. Rodenhizer.

While Bette most enjoyed being surrounded by family and friends, she was actively involved with numerous bridge groups and was an avid golfer. She also found great enjoyment with her contributions to the local garden clubs and civic activities.

A funeral Mass for Bette was held Monday, Dec. 12, in St. Christopher Church, 4 Barrell Ln., York, ME. A calling hour was held Monday in the Lucas & Eaton Funeral Home, 91 Long Sands Rd., York, ME. Burial was in the Willimantic Cemetery Tuesday, Dec. 13, in Willimantic.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The Greater New England Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Visit lucaseatonfuneralhome.com for an online guestbook.