

**RIVEREAST**

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The historic Marlborough Tavern is going out of business. The popular eatery will close its doors after a farewell party Saturday night. According to the restaurant's co-owners, an increase in sewer fees is largely to blame for the closing.

Marlborough Tavern Closing Its Doors

by Bailey Seddon

After being opened for a quarter of a century the Marlborough Tavern will be closing its doors this Saturday, after one last day of "meals and libations," owners of the popular eatery said this week.

Co-owner John Spellman, who lives in Wethersfield, said this was not completely unexpected. Thanks to the economy and an increase in sewer fees and taxes, the restaurant could no longer hold on, he said.

"It's been a struggle for us in the past three years," Spellman said. The other owner of the tavern, Jim Bradley agreed.

"It was going to happen sooner or later," Bradley said.

Bradley and Spellman went into business together at the tavern Dec. 1, 1985, and have remained friends throughout the entirety of their ownership of the restaurant.

"Still talking to your partner for 25 years is unbelievable," Spellman quipped.

Spellman said he started noticing difficulties after the Marlborough Country Barn closed in 2008. Spellman said the barn had brought people to the town, which provided customers for other local businesses. After its closing, Spellman said he noticed a decrease in his customers. Spellman said people everywhere have to deal with the economy, and his restaurant is no different.

Bradley said the Tavern "fought the good

fight for three and a half years," and Bradley and Spellman even put a lot of their own money back in to try to keep it going.

The final blow to the restaurant came when Tropical Storm Irene hit and the tavern was left without power for three days, losing most of their food. After the cost of having to throw everything out and the loss of money, Spellman and Bradley decided it was time to call it quits.

But, while the loss of customers from Marlborough Country Barn and the Irene – related power loss hurt, it was the increase in sewer fees that had the greatest impact to the tavern. Bradley, who has lived in Marlborough since 1979, said the restaurant is paying \$3,600 a year in maintenance of the septic system fees. Soon though, the restaurant would have to pay around \$26,000 a year in sewer usage fees and betterment taxes. Bradley said this fee was calculated by his landlord, Bob Elliot.

"That was the figure that was thrown around" by Elliot, said Bradley.

Bradley said their fees are based on their Equivalent Dwelling Unit, or EDU, which is considered a 30. The average home's EDU is considered a 1 or 2, depending on the number of bathrooms it has. Bradley said he and Spellman knew there was going to be an increase, but both men were stunned this spring when they found out the amount of that increase.

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Portland Fair Canceled After Venue Change Scrapped

by Joshua Anusewicz

After an hour-long discussion at Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting, the selectmen decided not to co-sponsor the Portland Fair, forcing the fair association to cancel the event for the year.

Town officials and members of the fair association were on hand at the heated meeting, which raised concerns about dealing with potential emergencies in an abbreviated timeframe. With the fair less than three weeks away, safety officials were most concerned that there would not be enough time to plan and train at a new venue.

"Our biggest concerns are based on the timing," said Fire Chief Bob Shea. "I just don't think three weeks is enough time."

The fair association's president, Don Bascom, approached First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield two weeks ago to ask for the town to co-sponsor the fair, a request stemming from the condition of the existing Portland Fairgrounds on Route 17A. The grounds have seen considerable water from flooding throughout the summer, and the recent tropical storms have left the area in particularly poor shape.

Bascom recommended that the fair be moved to the Jarvis property, a 12-acre tract of land near the corner of Route 17 (Gospel Lane) and Route 66. But because the land is not town-owned land, like the fairgrounds, the fair assoca-

cation would have to ask the town to co-sponsor the event to obtain a special zoning permit for the event.

Concerns were raised by the selectmen at a special meeting last Wednesday to discuss the fair, and the town requested the opinions of public safety officials to address the feasibility of the fair. Over the past week, Shea, Fire Marshal Ray Sajdak and Lt. Ron Milardo of the Portland Police conducted a review of the new site to see if it met the requirements of the state's mass gathering statute.

Shea said at this week's special meeting that the fire department studied different scenarios for emergency management and several concerns arose. One of the main concerns was the limited access to hazards throughout the fair; Shea said that there are "no current or planned roads" that a fire truck could pass through on the site, which could raise an issue in the event of rain.

The lack of a water supply was also a concern for Shea, who said that a pond on the adjacent Butler property would need a "dry hydrant system" to pump water. Shea said that if the equipment was available, the pump would have to be tested by the Fire Marshal and the volunteer firefighters would have to be trained on the equipment.

A concern for all of the public safety offi-

cials was the manpower requirements, as officers would need to be stationed throughout the fair and the surrounding areas, putting a strain on both the police and fire departments. Shea said he had contacted outside departments and asked if they would be available to assist, but said he had not heard back from them.

Although the concerns could be addressed over time, Shea said that less than three weeks just wouldn't be enough time.

"Our department can't protect this the way we need to," Shea said. "We tried our best to come up with alternatives."

But Shea's comments did not sit well with Bascom, who said Shea didn't address any of these concerns when he visited the site last Friday. This led to a heated exchange between Shea and Bascom, who disagreed over the specifications and timing that Shea brought up at Wednesday's meeting.

Bascom said the association could obtain the necessary equipment, but did not see the need for additional training. "Your guys are trained to deal with emergencies everyday," Bascom said.

Shea, visibly perturbed, asked, "Do you have two weeks to get everything set up and tested? It's not going to happen."

Sajdak and Milardo both supported Shea's view of the situation, agreeing that there would

not be enough time to properly plan for the fair.

"It's a complex issue, and just not enough time," Sajdak said. "I can't endorse this. The change in venue changes a lot of things, and I don't feel comfortable with it."

Milardo said that the issue of pedestrians on Route 66, an issue that arose at last week's meeting, could be addressed by his officers. But he added that through his talks with Shea and Sajdak, there were "too many concerns in too short of time."

Many of the members of the fair association, including Bascom, were upset by the recommendations of the public safety officials and could be heard voicing their disapproval.

"Well, looks like we're not having a fair," said one resident in attendance.

Selectman Brian Flood, who said he felt Bascom was "blaming the public safety officials" for the fair being in jeopardy, tried to explain the situation the town was in.

"If something goes wrong, the town will be on the hook for it," Flood said. "It doesn't seem reasonable for the town to take this risk."

At least one fair association member, John Dillon, said he was in support of the selectmen's decision, "as much as it hurts." He recalled an instance several years ago when a Portland resident was killed at the Durham Fair, in an at-

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"It was basically a shocker," Bradley said.

While the \$26,000 figure did not come from the WPCA, said Bradley, Elliot did a good job estimating what the cost would be. "I have never ever gotten a straight answer from the WPCA," Bradley said.

While WPCA Chairman Jack Murray said he felt the \$26,000 fee seemed too high to be accurate, Town Planner Peter Hughes said this week "those numbers sound right." Hughes said the plaza at 3-5 East Hampton Rd. – where Marlborough Tavern is located – has a combined EDU of 46.3. (The other tenants in the plaza include such businesses as Marlborough Bakery, It's So Ranunculus flower shop, Pat's Market and the Jacqueline Roach School of Dance.)

Elliot, said Hughes, broke down each of these tenants and calculated the fees based on the EDU of each user, which is where the estimated \$26,000 came from. The tavern has an EDU of 23.5 out of the 46.3 EDU for the whole property containing the other businesses. Hughes said the landlord decides how to break up the EDU's on his property.

"Some serious money is being paid," said Hughes.

Elliot did not return calls for this story.

At a WPCA meeting last November, Bradley said he had tried to ask what the fee was going to be but was only given a "guesstimate." Because of this, Bradley said he was disappointed by the "lack of foresight," by the WPCA, on what the fees would be.

Many were not prepared for the closing of the tavern. Selectman Jo La Bella was one such person.

"The tavern closing was a surprise to me," said La Bella. La Bella said it was a "matter of concern" that the restaurant was closing because of too high sewer district rates.

While La Bella was concerned about the issue, he was not too quick to place the blame on the WPCA. He mentioned that having to calculate the fees is the hardest issue the WPCA faces. La Bella said the WPCA uses a state-approved formula to assign costs to members within the water district.

However, another option, La Bella said, that the WPCA did not choose is to have people pay based on their water flow rates. Nonetheless, said La Bella, this can also be difficult as it requires a meter that would have to be paid for and installed. This means someone, probably an employee of the WPCA would have to come out and check the meter to see how much water each home is using.

"Using flow rate does not change the overall fees; it just redistributes them," said La Bella. "It's a difficult situation; we are in a difficult economy."

Despite the possible difficulty of the flow rate option, La Bella said it is still "a very logical way to go," when applying fees to residents. This way if one family uses more water they will pay more, and vice versa.

Murray said the WPCA looked into this option and decided against it.

"We thought it would be a logistical nightmare," he said. "If you meter one, you have to meter them all."

Murray, like La Bella, said the board would have to hire someone to install the meters, continually check all the meters and potentially have to replace any if one does not work.

"Water meters are a little more difficult," Murray said. It is "a nightmare on a small system." Murray also said that a meter is more subject to interpretation as people might want to argue their costs, then the person in charge of the meter might have to go re-check the meter.

"There has been such a delicate balance struck with our sewer system," that it makes everything difficult, said La Bella. La Bella said that citizens within the sewer district feel overburdened and citizens outside it feel they should not have to pay fees.

"The WPCA has to make some tough choices," he said.

La Bella said he was saddened by the tavern closing, and is hoping this situation can be avoided in the future. "We are open to ideas from the business community," he said "We try to be mindful of their agenda and their needs."

While much of the blame is going to the sewer system, some of it is laid on the tough economic times, both Spellman and Bradley said. The restaurant is not yet hooked up to the system and Bradley said Elliot was trying his best to not get the fees raised.

"It's been the economy; independent restaurants are dinosaurs," said Bradley.

While Bradley does not know what he is going to do once Saturday comes and goes, Spellman said he is going to Cape Cod for a couple of weeks to relax, sleep and think about what the next move in his life is going to be.

The Marlborough Tavern is having an auction of their equipment and antiques on Tuesday, Sept. 27, at the restaurant. The showing of the items up for bid is from 8:30-10:30 a.m.; 10:30-4:30 p.m. is the auction.

Fair cont. from Front Page

tempt to bring the issues the selectmen faced into perspective.

"We've seen what it can do to our community," Dillon said. But Dillon also added an idea that those in attendance agreed with; because the fairgrounds had been damaged by Hurricane Irene, he asked whether the fair association would be available for federal disaster funding from FEMA to account for the loss of revenue.

Bransfield said she had spoken with Bascom about that possibility and recommended that the association, along with the Exchange Club which runs the grounds, should register for the funding soon. Selectman Fred Knous agreed, stating that the town should do "all they can in terms of supporting the fair."

Many in attendance agreed that moving the fair to the Jarvis property would be something the association should look into, and the association also said they would like the town to co-sponsor the fair in the future. But while talks floated toward next year's fair, Bascom explained a harsh reality – the fair's future is in jeopardy.

"We can't talk about the fair for the future," Bascom said. "With the loss of money, it might not happen." Bascom said that the fair association will lose roughly \$20,000, and will start

the planning for next year's fair "\$10,000 in the hole."

Several selectmen said they would expect that residents that had already bought passes or donated money would be unlikely to ask for their money back, hopefully hedging some of the loss from the fair.

Bransfield assured the association that it was a difficult decision, and that none of the selectmen wanted to see the fair canceled.

"I see a lot of faces here who put in a lot of hard work," Bransfield said of the disappointed association members. "We will help you."

After the meeting, Bascom officially announced that the fair would be canceled, amongst a group of angry fair association members. He said that the association will hold a meeting soon and will find an exact figure of how much they will lose before contacting FEMA. As for the fair's future, he's still not completely sold.

"We'll address the issue of the cost for next year," Bascom said. "If we can't do it, there's no fair."

This will be the second time a major town event was canceled this year, as wet weather at the fairgrounds washed out the Portland Fireworks twice over the summer.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I was disappointed when I heard Monday that Marlborough Tavern was going to be closing its doors this weekend. I regret that I've never been there, but during my time with the *Rivereast* I've heard a lot of people speak fondly of it, and of their visits there.

Plus, even if you've only seen the outside (which is something I have done), you know it's an absolutely beautiful building. And an historic one, too. Current owners John Spellman and Jim Bradley have run the business for the past 25 years, but the Marlborough Tavern itself actually dates back to 1740, and is perhaps the oldest operating tavern in the state. To give you an idea of its history, the tavern's two dining rooms are named after two of its most famous patrons – Presidents James Madison and Andrew Jackson.

When I heard about the closing, I flashed back to a big cover story the *Rivereast* ran in early January, in advance of a special 25th anniversary party Spellman and Bradley were planning for that weekend. Looking back at that story now, one can't help but feel a little sad, particularly when Spellman is quoted as saying, "We hope to be here for another 25 years."

I hoped you could have been too, John. It's a shame a place with such history is going to cease operations; it truly is.

Anyway, as reporter Bailey Seddon writes in this week's issue, the Marlborough Tavern isn't going away quietly; there will be a big farewell party this Saturday night. It'll no doubt be a bittersweet affair, but I hope lots of people go, and give the place a great send-off.

* * *

The ratings are in and Monday's season premiere of *Two and a Half Men* garnered an eye-popping 27.8 million viewers, the show's best ratings ever. The reason for the high tune-in, of course, was that everyone wanted to see what the show was going to do with Charlie Sheen's character. Sheen has been remarkably tame the last few months, so you may have forgotten that he was fired from the show after repeatedly insulting – to put it mildly – the show's writers, creator Chuck Lorre and production studio Warner Bros. Television.

Judging from Monday's show, Lorre and his staff are still pretty mad at Sheen. The episode opened – spoiler alert! – at the funeral of Sheen's character Charlie Harper. Hey, they had to get rid of Charlie somehow, right? Well, yes, but the writers really had fun getting rid of him.

Turns out – again, spoiler alert! – Charlie was pushed in front of a moving subway train by his crazy lover Rose, after she found him in the shower with another woman. Charlie's body "just exploded like a balloon full of meat," Rose said.

Later in the episode, Alan, Charlie's brother, is carrying his late sibling's ashes out

to the balcony when, startled by the sight of a dripping wet Ashton Kutcher, he spills them all over the living room floor, and later Dustbusts them up.

So yeah, there wasn't much dignity in the way Sheen's character was disposed of. I'm not a big *Two and a Half Men* fan, but I've seen enough of it over the years that I knew Monday's episode wouldn't have been a sentimental send-off. It just wouldn't have been in the show's nature, regardless of the circumstances under which Sheen departed. But I didn't expect the treatment of Charlie Harper to be quite so....gruesome.

As for the episode itself, I found it sort of funny, but not uproarious. The funeral stuff went on a little long; things picked up a bit once they got back to Charlie's Malibu beach house, which Charlie's mom revealed she needed to sell. (This set up a funny surprise cameo by Jenna Elfman and Thomas Gibson in their title roles from *Dharma and Greg*, the popular late-'90s sitcom that coincidentally was also produced by Lorre.)

But the show didn't really start to improve until Kutcher's character, Walden Schmidt, arrived on scene. Yes, I realize his character is pretty much just a wealthier, older Michael Kelso, the dimwitted teen Kutcher played on *That '70s Show*. But here's the thing: Kutcher does a good job with that type of character. He continually made me laugh the first four seasons or so of *That '70s Show* (I don't know if he began to tire of the character or what, but his performances started to get rather flat during season five of the show, and remained that way until he left the series), and he was back at that level on Monday's *Two and a Half Men*.

In fact, Kutcher was responsible for the funniest moment in the episode. When Walden discovers Alan was carrying Charlie's ashes when he startled him, he said, "I'm sorry I made you spill him." The line itself isn't hilarious; what made it pop was Kutcher's delivery, which was with just the right amount of dunderheaded sincerity.

Anyway, Monday's installment of the show ended with Walden declaring he'd buy the beach house; the episode ended with a "to be continued..." written on the screen. Next week's show will no doubt reveal how Alan and his son, Jake, come to continue living there – which, of course, they need to continue to do, as they still represent one and a half of the men in the show's title.

Though this week's episode wasn't hilarious, I'll likely tune in next week at least to see how it ends up. It'll also be interesting to see what the ratings are for next week's show. Like I said, I'm sure curiosity played a large part in Monday's episode scoring as high as it did; I wonder how many of those viewers will come back.

* * *

See you next week.

Disagreement Brings Shake-Up to East Hampton Village Center

by Joshua Anusewicz

Starting next week, residents will see a different configuration in the Village Center, as the Xchange for Change consignment store will be moving from its current address at 66 Main St. to 81 Main St., the former location of Bella Victoria.

Opening in its place will be 66 Main Marketplace, which will offer space for vendors and small businesses on Saturdays and Sundays, and will open during the Harvest Fest on Saturday, Oct. 15.

Xchange for Change is what owner Diane Bohmiller calls "a community project" that offers quality used items for residents in need. Bohmiller said she has over 1,000 consignors that consider themselves "a big family," and that the space has served them well.

However, the business' move across the street was spurred not by a lack of space, but disagreement between Bohmiller and the building's owner, Todd Schrager.

According to Bohmiller, she had intended

to use the third floor of the building to open a shop for refinished furniture, and had reached an agreement with Schrager to do so. But Bohmiller said that Schrager, who lives on the second floor of the building, asked her to help pay for "half of the construction" and upgrades, as well as a larger portion of the heat for the building.

Bohmiller said that she would not be able to pay for any increased fees, as she does not "take a paycheck" from the consignment store. Shortly after, on Sept. 6, Bohmiller said she received a notice to quit and was given until Oct. 30 to move out of the property, although she said she needed to give at least 60 days' notice to her consignors.

Schrager, however, tells the story differently. He said that he and Bohmiller were "in negotiations to renew the lease," but he wanted to change from a "three-month lease" he was offering Bohmiller to a one-year lease. He said she did not want to have a one-year lease and,

like Bohmiller said, did not want to pay for half of the construction for the third floor.

"We just didn't see eye to eye," Schrager said Wednesday. "It was just a business thing, and we're both moving on."

The issues with Schrager, Bohmiller said, drove her to resign from the Economic Development Commission (EDC) last week, adding that she would "find it hard to encourage others to do business in the Village Center when I have had bad experiences."

But the story has a happy ending. Jason Pierce, who owns the property at 81 Main St., talked to Bohmiller and asked how he could help.

"He said, 'I'm not going to see you guys close,'" Bohmiller said.

Pierce offered his space to Bohmiller and even donated 1,000 gallons of gas to get the business through the winter, an announcement that Bohmiller said made her "cry hysterically." The space will have a second floor that will

open in October, and will allow her to still sell some refinished furniture, she said.

The move will begin this Tuesday, but not before a party this Sunday to celebrate the occasion, Bohmiller said. There will be food, entertainment, and sales, Bohmiller said, to "show the town what we have."

And Schrager will open 66 Main Marketplace in October, a venture that he hopes will help expand business in the Village Center, as he is also a member of the EDC. He said that the opening during Harvest Fest will include "music and entertainment," as well as various sales from the businesses in the village.

Schrager said Wednesday that he "wish[es] her the best" in her new location, and that as a member of the EDC, is happy that she won't be moving far.

"I think it's good for her to move on," Schrager said. "I'm glad to keep her in the village, it's a great business."

East Hampton Residents OK \$3.315 Million Road Improvement Project

by Joshua Anusewicz

On Monday night, residents unanimously approved (32-0) a bonded road improvement program at a town meeting held in the auditorium of East Hampton High School.

The program will consist of the revamping of 56 East Hampton roads – 19.42 miles, or 23 percent of the paved roads in town – and will cost the town \$3.315 million. The project is slated to begin this spring and is expected to be completed by 2015.

The project, which the town anticipates will be "contracted out," will consist of four year-long parts. The first part, beginning next year, will be "full-depth reclaims" and "overlays" of roads throughout the town. Some of the roads that will be repaired in the first year are Long

Hill Road, Smith Street and residential streets in the area of Brewer and White Birch roads.

Over the following three years, other main roads, including Hog Hill Road, North Maple Street and South Main Street, will be repaired.

Roads that will be overlaid will be "shimmed" – filling in the gaps in the roadway – and a layer of two to four inches of asphalt will be laid down. On roads that receive full-depth reclamation, the entire roadway will be ground to a depth of roughly 12 inches, and then the road will be reshaped before being overlaid with two layers of asphalt.

Proper drainage will also be addressed as necessary, with catch basin tops being reset or replaced if needed.

The \$3.315 million price tag is broken up into four years – year one will cost \$855,200; year two will cost \$983,070; year three will cost \$686,180; and year four will cost \$703,850. An additional \$86,700 will be included for financing and bonding costs.

According to Finance Director Jeff Jylkka, the payments for the project will begin in fiscal year 2013. Jylkka said that based on the town's current debt payment schedule, the overall debt service is not expected to increase.

The estimated annual cost on a home assessed at \$200,000, Jylkka said, will be \$56, and the average annual mill rate is expected to increase 0.28 mills. The bond is expected to be paid off over 15 years, he said.

Jylkka said the main reason for starting the project now is the widespread need for road repair in the town, particularly after the impact of last winter's weather. He said that Director of Public Works Keith Hayden completed a "road study" on the roads in the greatest need, and it was decided that bonding the project could put the town in a position to get the job done.

"Bonding will still allow for an influx of capital and cash," Jylkka said, "or else we wouldn't be able to afford a project of this size."

Hayden was out of town this week and unavailable for comment, but Jylkka said he expected Hayden to secure a "state contractor" by the end of the year.

East Hampton Democratic Slate Announces Platforms

The East Hampton Democratic Town Committee (DTC) has announced their platforms for the municipal elections to be held in November. The DTC announced their slate of candidates in June.

For the Town Council, the slate will include incumbents Barbara Moore and Chatham Carillo, as well as James Vick, John Moore, and George Pfaffenbach. The candidates have stated that their most important goals will be: returning to open communication between all boards, and reinstating liaisons to keep government open and informed; enhancing trust, integrity and accountability in town government; inviting and proactively responding to the concerns of all citizens; promoting efforts by all groups to improve the water quality of Lake Pocotopaug; ensuring the ongoing success and improvement of our public safety organizations; and returning to the unity that once characterized East Hampton.

The DTC will run four candidates for the Board of Education: Ken Barber, Teri Schlosser, Denise Russo and Carol Williams. They have stated four main goals for their campaign: continuing to balance the needs of our students with fiscal accountability to the taxpayer by identifying opportunities to improve efficiency and achieve excellence in the town schools; working with Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden, responding to community feedback, in order to meet their goals and to address the needs of the town students; strengthening com-

munication to assure an informed community regarding the direction of our school district, federal and state mandates and accreditation requirements; and ensuring that students are prepared for the workplace of the 21st century by pursuing technology upgrades and innovative curriculum.

Laura Taylor Borg, Tom O'Brien and Ted Turner are the three Democratic candidates for the Board of Finance. Their platform will be: supporting elderly tax relief and working to support human service agencies in our town; supporting regionalization of services and purchases where financially prudent; supporting facilities and infrastructure improvements; striving to hold town government accountable for wasteful expenditures and work to make sure the town budget is properly balanced; working with the town and financial managers to find alternative means of funding for all town departments; and continuing to keep an open dialogue with the taxpayers of East Hampton.

The slate also includes Andrew Tierney, who is running for Municipal Planning Agency, Dennis Wall, who is running for Zoning Board of Appeals beginning in 2011, and Brendan Flannery, who is running for Zoning Board of Appeals beginning in 2012.

For more information on the candidates or their platforms, or for general information about the DTC, contact DTC Chairwoman Barbara Moore at barbara.moore83@gmail.com.

East Hampton Dems Hold Auction

The East Hampton Democratic Town Committee (DTC) held their semi-annual auction fundraiser on Thursday, Sept. 15, at Angelico's Lake House Restaurant. Over 100 people were in attendance and helped the DTC raise \$12,000.

Over 50 items were available for bidding, including the ability to have a Democratic candidate be your waiter. Town Council candidates John Moore and George Pfaffenbach, Board of Education candidates Denise Russo and Ken Barber, Zoning Board of Appeals candidate Dennis Wall, and Municipal Planning Agency candidate Andrew Tierney were all in attendance to serve the diners.

Also among the items up for bid were New

England Patriots tickets donated by Town Council member Chatham Carillo, a dinner for six from Chatham Caterers donated by Town Council member Barbara Moore, a three-day weekend on Cape Cod donated by Kevin and Matthew Reich, an Amazon Kindle donated by Linda and David May, and UConn men's basketball tickets donated by Ted Rossi.

Money raised from the auction will go to the campaign for the upcoming municipal elections. According to the DTC, some of the funds will go to other town programs; \$800 will go to the East Hampton Food Bank for the Liberty Bank/Rotary Thanksgiving Dinner Drive; and \$500 will go to a scholarship for an East Hampton High School senior.

Andover Assistant Principal ‘Dr. Z’ Moving On

by Geeta Schrayer

After five and a half years with Andover Elementary School, Assistant Principal and Director of Special Education Dr. Michelle Zeuschner is resigning – leaving, in the words of at least one parent, “some big shoes to fill.”

Zeuschner, who started in June 2006, sent a letter of resignation earlier this month and will leave mid-October. She is departing to become supervisor of special education for grades pre-kindergarten to grade five in Berlin, where there are three elementary schools. Zeuschner starts in Berlin Oct. 17.

Over the years, Zeuschner – fondly referred to in the community as “Dr. Z” – has been “a tremendous force,” according to Andover Elementary School Principal David Griffin. Along with overseeing special education in Andover, she’s “taken the bull by the horns,” he said, and gotten the school set up with Scientific-Research Based Interventions (SRBI), a program which, according to the state Department of Education, helps eliminate the need for children to be identified as special education by providing support and instruction early on to those struggling to learn.

During her time as assistant principal, Zeuschner also wrote and won a school readiness grant that allowed the preschool to expand from half days four times a week to two sections Monday through Friday, and played an active role in getting the pre-school program accredited, Griffin said.

He added that while Zeuschner will be sorely missed in Andover, he knows it’s an excellent opportunity. “You’ve got to take a look at the positive,” he said. “She’s stepping into a larger school system . . . as far as a growth potential, it’s an excellent opportunity.”

Griffin said he believes Zeuschner has ample reason to look back on her time in town fondly. “She’s got a lot of things to be proud of and we as a school, as a community, certainly are proud of her,” he said.

Board of Education Chairman Jay Linddy shared similar feelings. “It’s going to be a great loss for the school,” he said. “She was a very valuable part of our administration.”

But, while acknowledging that the Board of Education never likes to lose good employees, Linddy also realized the importance of looking towards the future. “We will hopefully look for and get somebody as good as Michelle is, and we will keep going because we have to,” he said.

Zeuschner herself considers the change bittersweet. Although she’s looking forward to the opportunity to grow professionally and a position that’s closer to her West Hartford home, she admitted leaving was a tough decision.

“It’s been a great experience. I think a lot of the early childhood work has been very rewarding,” Zeuschner said. “I’ve learned a lot, but it’s been great for the town as well.”

Zeuschner added that she has liked the opportunities she was presented with as well as the people.

“Each community is different. You get to meet different people and you get to work with different people, which is nice,” she said. “I’ll definitely miss everybody here. It’s been a fabulous experience, and people have always been very warm and welcoming. . . . You want to take everyone with you, but you can’t always do that.”

Andover resident and mother Kim Hawe, who’s also a member of the Board of Education, has a son who started at Andover Elementary in preschool. Now in seventh grade, all of his elementary years were spent with Zeuschner as assistant principal. Hawe said it’s her personality as well as her professional abilities which made her such an asset.

“She was so approachable,” she said. “I mean, sometimes you have to talk to the principal and the assistant principal and you feel like you’re being *sent* to the principal. But with Michelle, I could stop by and she was always



Andover Elementary School Assistant Principal and Director of Special Education Dr. Michelle Zeuschner is leaving the school next month, to take a position in Berlin.

there.

“She always had a smile on her face, the door was always open if you had any problems or if you just wanted to say ‘hi,’” Hawe added. “We were very fortunate to have her for five years.”

Although Zeuschner still has a few weeks

left with Andover Public Schools, Linddy has confirmed that they’ve already begun advertising for a replacement. As the search progresses, one thing is for sure: “The next person,” Hawe said, “will definitely have some big shoes to fill.”

Military Component Manufacturer Coming to Andover...Eventually

by Geeta Schrayer

Plans for a contract manufacturer of military components, to set up shop in Andover are moving along, slowly but surely.

The proposal, submitted by RTI Technologies, caused some initial safety concerns, but it was approved in August after it was determined there would be no significant safety issues, First Selectman Robert Burbank stated. Although originally touted as an “explosives factory,” Burbank noted what they manufacture is fuses for blasting, not exactly explosives.

Burbank asserted that the location, at 11 Bunker Hill Rd., isn’t “exceptionally” close to residential homes, so the Planning and Zoning Commission “felt that there was absolutely no risk to residential persons or property.”

Jon Bawabe, owner of RTI Technologies, is in agreement. “Once people understand what’s going on, certainly there’s no concern to anybody,” he said. “All we do is assemble blasting caps.”

RTI Technologies currently has one other manufacturing facility, in Plainville.

With the worry out of the way, Burbank is focusing on the fact that this is a new business coming to Andover. “We always encourage businesses to come into town,” he stated. He added that it’s in an appropriately zoned area

and will provide additional tax revenue.

But it’ll still be at least six months before things get underway. “Now that we got through zoning,” said Bawabe, “there’s still two other government agencies that have to approve the site.”

The agencies Bawabe is waiting on are the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Defense Contract Management Agency.

After the necessary steps are taken, Bawabe plans to start out in a small modular building and then move into a structure that is already present at the Bunker Hill Road location. As far as business, Bawabe said his company is likely to start out with four employees and then increase to about eight in a year or so. The company’s contracts are with the U.S Army and Navy, Bawabe said, and added that “most of the contracts, once you win them, are five years’ duration,” ensuring steady business after they’re attained.

But that business is on hold for now, as Bawabe waits to hear back from the aforementioned agencies. He’s confident in their approval, though.

“It’s going slow, but we’re getting there,” he said.

Marlborough Man Admits Role in Bank Fraud Conspiracy

The United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut recently announced that Mirza H. Baig, 48, of West Road, has pled guilty before United States District Judge Janet Bond Arterton in New Haven to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud stemming from his involvement in a multi-million dollar bank fraud scheme.

According to court documents and statements, Baig worked for New England Cash Dispensing Systems (NECDS), of Branford, which was in the business of operating a network of ATMs. Beginning in approximately March 2000, NECDS entered into an agreement with Domestic Bank of Cranston, Rhode Island, where NECDS would supply ATM services in conjunction with Domestic Bank located throughout several northeastern states, including Connecticut.

While all of the ATMs in the NECDS network bore the logo of Domestic Bank, NECDS was responsible for contracting with merchants and placing the ATMs in their establishments, and would perform maintenance on the ATMs.

There were three funding sources for ATMs within the NECDS network: Domestic Bank provided the cash for specified ATMs in the network, NECDS supplied cash for other ATMs in the network, and certain merchants supplied cash for other ATMs.

Braig admitted that he and others engaged in a conspiracy to defraud Domestic Bank of cash the bank supplied for use in the ATM network. Baig and other NECDS personnel would order excess cash from Domestic Bank

and then divert the cash, which was meant to be used to refill Domestic Bank ATMs, to refill ATMs that would otherwise have been refilled with NECDS’ funds. Baig and others also engaged in a “cover-up” to prevent the bank from recognizing that money was missing by “floating” Domestic Bank’s money.

NECDS personnel involved in the conspiracy often would order extra money for an ATM that was funded by Domestic Bank, knowing that the extra cash would be used to fill another ATM that previously had been shorted cash. This was done regularly over several years, and resulted in Domestic Bank receiving false information through the periodic replenishment process indicating that its cash was appropriately accounted for.

Domestic Bank ultimately lost approximately \$4.8 million in funds that it had supplied to NECDS. In pleading guilty, Baig admitted that he personally stole approximately \$2 million in cash, which he used for his own personal enrichment.

Sentencing is scheduled for March 16, 2012, at which time Baig faces a maximum term of imprisonment of 30 years. In addition, in lieu of forfeiture, BAIG has agreed to pay a money judgment in the amount of \$1 million prior to the date of his sentencing. Baig also faces a restitution order of up to approximately \$4.8 million at the time of his sentencing.

Three other members of NECDS have already pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud stemming from this scheme. Each awaits sentencing.

Members Appointed to Colchester Building Committee

by Bailey Seddon

The rounds of Building Committee interviews that had been prominently featured at Board of Selectmen meetings the past couple of months wrapped up last Thursday, and members of the seven-person committee were finally appointed.

The Building Committee is charged with overseeing the proposed renovation of William J. Johnston Middle School to incorporate the senior center. The project is still in its planning stages and nothing as of yet is concrete, but First Selectman Gregg Schuster has said he hopes that, when the renovation is done, the school will be able to add not just the senior center but also Youth and Social Services. Schuster has said this should help the town save money because they will be able to shut down the current two facilities for the senior and youth centers and combine them.

There were only two interviews left for the committee at the Sept. 15 meeting. Joseph A. DeLucia Jr., the first to be interviewed, said that if he were appointed, he would like to see a list of what people want to happen in the project and then the committee can figure out what it can afford. He said he would also like to be part of the committee because he would like to help with "teacher collaboration...and to what students would really find attractive," he said.

Up next was Steven Kardys, who said he had just retired from being a city building official in Hartford and an electrician for the city. Now that he has more time on his hands, he said, "I'd like to do something for my community." He said he also wants to focus on the education aspect of the renovation.

Kardys said he would bring experience as a

building official, and is also knowledgeable on how the system of a building committee works, such as what to expect in meetings and what important decisions to make. Kardys also said he understands how tradesmen work, and the paperwork that has to be followed up on for any project.

"I have the background, I know how the [trades]men work," he said.

After the interviews came the time to make the decisions; there were 17 applicants and only seven slots for the committee.

Selectwoman Rosemary Coyle first recommended two people: Teresa Hendrickson – who was a part of the Senior Center Study Group, which Coyle said made her a good choice for the committee – and Pamela Scheibelein.

Schuster recommended three men: Paul Picard, Stephen W. Wells and Anthony J. Tarnowski. Schuster said that Picard "just does so much around town," and Wells "has continually helped the town." Schuster said it is hard to find people with experience and felt these two men had it. Schuster liked Tarnowski because he felt it was "important that we have someone that has served on a building committee," he said. (Tarnowski served on the building committee for renovations at the old Bacon Academy in 1980-81.)

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein was at the meeting as a liaison between the two boards. He was asked to help weigh in on the decision-making.

"It was a tremendous showing and a tremendous amount of talent," said Goldstein.

Goldstein recommended Thomas A. Tyler because he felt that the "combination of his

energy and engineering expertise," made him a good pick. Goldstein also said Tyler has a "passion for the education system," which is important.

Lastly, Coyle recommended Joe Ruiz, a commercial general contractor who has worked on building projects before.

All the recommended candidates were unanimously chosen by the board.

"It's a really tough decision," said Schuster. The board agreed that all the people they interviewed were good.

* * *

Next was the one interview for the Agricultural Commission. The purpose of the commission is to "promote and preserve farming in Colchester." There will be five regular members and two alternate members.

Jeff Savitsky said he has been a lifetime resident of Colchester, and is interested in the commission because his family has been working on farms for his whole life. Because of this Savitsky felt that he would bring diversity to the commission.

"I have an extreme interest in agriculture," Savitsky said, and mentioned that he plans on being involved in agriculture for a long time. He said he feels that it is important "to have good land conversation now," while farms can still be saved.

"I think farming in all communities is a dying breed," and he wants to help save them, he said.

Schuster noted that Savitsky's father, Alex, was also interviewed for the commission. He thought this was interesting, as no other related persons have applied.

There were no decisions on the makeup of the Agricultural Commission made at last Thursday's meeting. Indeed, there is no timetable for when the commission will be formed, as not enough people have expressed interest in being on it.

* * *

Also talked about at last week's meeting was an application for an Assistance to Firefighters grant. At the meeting were Chief Walter Cox and Deputy Chief Don Lee, of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department. The department was at the meeting to seek approval to apply with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the grant, which would be used for the purchase of a Self Contained Breathing Apparatus Maze Training Trailer and associated confined space air-management equipment.

The grant would be for \$260,010; 95 percent of which would come from FEMA, with the other 5 percent coming from the town. The grant application is due Sept. 23, and the town will find out in six to 12 months if it was approved.

Selectman Gregory Cordova asked about the possible ongoing cost of the equipment upkeep, and if this would be more added expenses for the town.

"There's general maintenance and upkeep...but we are able to keep cost to a minimum," Cox said.

The board unanimously approved applying for the grant.

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is Thursday, Oct. 6, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

Portland Residents Voice Kleen Energy Concerns

by Joshua Anusewicz

A dozen or so residents met Tuesday with representatives of the Kleen Energy power plant in Middletown to discuss concerns related to the facility, the site of a deadly explosion last year.

The meeting, held at Portland Library, was scheduled by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, who said she felt it would be important "for residents to meet face-to-face with the people who run the plant" on a daily basis. The meeting was also attended by the town's attorney, Jean D'Aquila, and state Rep. Christie Carpino.

Kleen Energy was represented by Gordon Holk, the plant's general manager, Chip Haley, plant manager, Joe Ruggiero, compliance manager, and compliance coordinator Jason Farren. Also present was Lee Hoffman, Kleen Energy's legal counsel.

Hoffman explained that this four-person team took over the plant, which is located on River Road, in mid-July, when the plant went online, and all of the individuals "have been there on a day-to-day basis." He added that the men have combined for "over 80 years" of experience in power plant management, hoping to reassure residents that all precautions would be taken to prevent any more disasters at the plant.

In February 2010, during the construction of the plant, six workers were killed in a blast caused by natural gas reacting with an open flame. An investigation into the explosion showed numerous safety violations, and the plant was rebuilt with the proper repairs and upgrades.

The blast was felt throughout the area, including in Portland. But the residents in attendance Tuesday weren't so much concerned with another explosion as they were with two things the plant was emitting – pollution and noise.

Ruggiero said that the plant has been fitted with an "air quality monitoring system" that will be calibrated on a daily basis. These levels will be reported to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the state Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) for compliance, he said, and the DEEP will also perform "regular audits" on the plant, one of which was done in the last few weeks.

In May 2011, odors coming from the plant raised concerns from residents in the area, but the plant released a statement saying that it was coming from a test of the plant's turbines. At the meeting, some residents spoke of occasional faint smells and smoke billowing from the plant.

Kim Inglis, a Middletown resident who said she lives "only 800 feet" from the plant, said she has seen smoke billow onto her property and was concerned for the safety of her children. Holk said that the "smoke" was actually water vapor that was being used to cool the plant, which he compared to "seeing your breath when the weather is cold."

But more important to some residents was the constant noise coming from the plant throughout the day, which was described as "a wrench banging on a pipe" and "whirring and humming."

Holk said that the plant is "within the requirements for the state statute," which is enforced by the DEEP. He admitted that there have been calls to the plant about the noise, and that a "noise survey" would be performed by an outside agency soon. He said that noises are particularly hard to determine, as it takes time to "isolate and pinpoint the location" of the particular noise.

"Noise is a funny animal," Holk said. "There are so many possible locations. There's not just a switch we can turn off and make it quieter." He added that while the sound may be reasonable in one area, it may cause "echoes or vibrations" that sound louder in a different location. Holk said that to combat this, noise levels will be measured by their frequency in various locations, including across the river in Portland.

Another resident, Earl Roberts, who lives on Bow Lane in Middletown, said there have already been several occasions where he reported "an acrid smell" and "strong rattling" from the plant. He said that he understands that from "time to time, it will happen," but asked if this was what he had to "deal with for the next 25 years."

"What assurance will we have?" Roberts asked the representatives about disturbances caused by the plant.

Holk explained that the plant has been work-



Six people were killed in an explosion at the Kleen Energy power plant in Middletown last year. This week, about a dozen residents met Tuesday with representatives of the plant, to express their concerns related to the facility.

ing on "fine tuning" the facility and that it will "improve over time." He said that the plant is "being highly scrutinized" because of the history of the facility, and that the goal is to run the plant "safely and efficiently."

Hoffman interjected, adding that Kleen Energy was "going above and beyond what the law requires" to make sure the plant does not interrupt residents' everyday lives.

"We've heard the complaints from residents," Hoffman said. "It will take time, but the company is committed to doing it."

As for emergencies, the company admitted they are not "qualified to handle emergency management," and told residents to call 911. Haley said that the South Fire District in Middletown has been trained to handle emergencies at the facility, and that the Middletown Fire Department has said they will handle any

emergency issues at the plant.

Also, residents can sign up for updates from the plant, via text message, phone call, or e-mail, that will notify residents of "issues or changes" at the plant. Bransfield added that through Portland's website, portlandct.org, residents can sign up to receive emergency information from the town and the police dispatch, located in Middletown.

The plant, which opened in July, has 25 full-time employees, while only two employees will be on duty on nights, weekends and holidays. Holk explained it only takes two workers to run the entire facility.

Bransfield said she was satisfied with the meeting, adding that the representatives were "open and honest." She also said that the "good dialogue" between the company and the town will be "important" as the years go on.

Brownstone Intermediate Named a Blue Ribbon School

by Joshua Anusewicz

When *Money* magazine named Portland to its list of "100 Best Places to Live for 2011" last month, it cited the town's "good schools" as one of the reasons the municipality made the cut.

Turns out the U.S. Department of Education agrees.

Last Thursday, Sept. 15, the education department last week named Brownstone Intermediate School one of its 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence, one of just 304 schools throughout the country and five in Connecticut to receive that honor.

School administration, understandably, was excited to hear the news.

"I am so proud of my staff and students for achieving this national honor," said Laurie Boske, the principal at Brownstone, last Thursday. "We pride ourselves in making personal connections with our students, which we feel helps us better understand their learning needs. From there we provide top-notch instruction."

According to the Department of Education, the Blue Ribbon program honors public and private schools based on one of two criteria: 1) schools whose students are high performing, and ranked among the best in their state for performance on standardized testing; or 2) schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that improve student performance to high levels on standardized testing.

Usually, schools that meet one of these criteria are either invited to submit an application or are nominated by the top education official in their state or district. Boske said, however, that Brownstone was "selected" by the Department of Education and was notified by a letter from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

"You have demonstrated that, working together, parents, teachers, staff, administrators,

and community leaders can nurture all students to reach their full potential," Duncan said of Brownstone in the letter. "You remind us that with determination and effort, anything is possible."

Brownstone houses Portland's fourth and fifth grades, which account for about 250 students. Boske, who has been Brownstone's principal for five years, said that the short amount of time at Brownstone for the students provides a challenge, but the faculty does their best to "pack those years with caring, compassion, and individualized teaching."

The only one in the school system who might equal Boske's excitement is Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen, who almost ran out of adjectives — "wonderful, outstanding, awesome, fantastic" — to describe the news of the recognition. In her superintendent's newsletter, Doyen wrote that the Blue Ribbon is the "highest honor" that can be given to an individual school by the federal government, and congratulated Boske and other Brownstone faculty and staff on the accolades.

"Their achievement makes the Portland school system, the Town of Portland, and the entire state unbelievably proud," Doyen said. She also thanked the teachers and staff at Valley View and Gildersleeve schools for laying "the foundation and background, as well as important work habits of the students who are at Brownstone now."

This year's Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) scores, which were released this spring, show that Brownstone was more than deserving of the honor; the test scores for fifth- and sixth-grade students were well above state averages in all subjects.

In fifth grade, students were 81 percent at/above goal and 96 percent at/above proficiency in math; 81 percent at/above goal and 90 percent at/above proficiency in reading; 83 per-



The U.S. Department of Education has named Brownstone Intermediate a 2011 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. It is one of just 304 schools in the country to receive the honor.

cent at/above goal and 95 percent at/above proficiency in writing; and 79 percent at/above goal and 93 percent at/above proficiency in science. All scores were at least 5 percent higher than the state average.

Somehow, the sixth grade students did even better. In math, students were 81 percent at/above goal and 100 percent at/above proficiency, the first perfect score Portland has ever received; 93 percent at/above goal and 96 percent at/above proficiency in reading; and 87 percent at/above goal and 97 percent at/above proficiency in writing. All of these scores were at least 10 percent

higher than the state average.

For all of the hard work being done at the school, Brownstone will be honored at a conference and awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 14-15. The school will be represented by Boske and sixth-grade math and language arts teacher Suzanne Spindler.

The four other Connecticut schools that will receive the Blue Ribbon award are Helen Keller Middle School in Easton, Kelly Lane Intermediate School in Granby, Middlebrook School in Wilton and Saint Gabriel School in Windsor.

Elderly Property Tax Relief Discussed in Marlborough

by Bailey Seddon

Among the topics discussed at Tuesday's Board of Selectman Public Hearing, the one that generated the most interest was the proposed property tax relief for residents 65 or over or those who are totally disabled.

The tax relief proposal was originally put forward by the chairman of the Commission on Aging, Dennis Hawrylko. The program would give \$500 to anyone who makes \$32,201 or less, \$400 to anyone making \$32,201-45,300 and \$300 to those who make \$45,300 or over. Residents would be eligible for the tax relief if they are 65 or over or totally disabled.

"There was a very passionate plea to provide relief to our seniors," said First Selectman Bill Black. Black mentioned that some seniors are on a fixed income, some are living off their savings and others only have their social security as an income.

"Seniors are tax contributors," Black said. "They pay more in taxes than they receive in services."

This was a contributing factor to why the board wants to have a tax relief. Hawrylko agreed with Black's statements and said that the original intent behind the proposal was to keep seniors in their homes in Marlborough.

Several members of the commission were there to give their input on the proposal. One such member, Marilyn Murphy, said she did not feel that she should get \$300 even though she is eligible, because she feels she has a good enough income. Commission member Emma Cranfield agreed.

"We do not, in any way, want the town to think we are taking money from the town that could be better spent in other directions,"

Cranfield said. Commission member Midge Denno felt the same.

"This was never meant to be an entitlement program," Denno said. It was meant to help people who really need it, she said. Members felt that making the proposal for anyone 65 and over was too broad. They felt that it would be better to have it help a small number of people, who really need it, than to help a larger number of people, like Murphy, who are not as much in need.

Resident Amy Traversa said she was "glad to hear the commission favoring income caps," but wanted to know why the proposal was being done without a lien against homes. Traversa said she hoped consideration would be given to having a lien.

Board of Finance member Cliff Denniss agreed with Traversa.

"I too would like to see a lien provision in there," he said. Denniss said he was fine with the idea of tax relief for those who need it, but did not want the relief to become "estate planning," for anyone eligible for the relief. Denniss said there were 728 residents over the age of 65 and a tax benefit of \$300 would leave a minimum of \$109,200 in tax liability.

Another member of the Board of Finance, Dick Shea, said that this type of proposal is supposed to be recommended by the Board of Finance. Shea also felt that any seniors who could afford a second home should not be eligible for the tax relief. He also agreed with commission members that the proposal would be better if it gave relief to a smaller number of people who need it.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Cathi

Gaudinski spoke next and said she was also in favor of a lien program. However, Hawrylko disagreed.

"They don't work," he said. "It gets you to a second-class citizen type of mentality."

All three members of the Board of Finance said that they were speaking as residents, not as members of the board.

In the regular Board of Selectmen meeting, which followed the public hearing, the board discussed the tax relief proposal. Selectwoman Riva Clark said she did not want there to be a lien on homes but agreed that she wanted the program to get greater help to a lesser number of people.

"It's a relief program, not an entitlement," she said.

Selectman Joe La Bella agreed with Clark, saying he was also opposed to a lien.

"I think we should keep seniors in their homes...and in town," because it is good for the town, he said.

Black discussed the possibility of having two distinct ordinances, one with liens and one without, to help solve the conflict. Black said he was going to review the proposal and bring it back to vote on at a later date.

"Tonight has left us with some homework, more than anything else," Black said.

* * *

Another topic of interest at the hearing was the discussion of peddling and solicitation permits. As of now, anyone can obtain a permit, which is good for one year, and can go door-to-door in the town either for a certain cause or to sell products to residents.

"It raises concerns," said Black, if someone you don't know comes to your door unexpected. The board has a new proposal to do background checks on anyone seeking a permit, so that authorities can be aware of who is in the town. The background check would cost anywhere from \$25-\$35 each, and the information would go to both state and local police.

The proposal also requires peddlers to pay more because the background checks cost the town money. There was also talk of having picture identifications

"It will prevent someone from just wandering through the neighborhood," said Black.

Resident Robin Hodge said this was a concern of hers because men had been on her street some time back, selling furniture off a truck. They had a permit, said Hodge, but she felt they had been able to obtain their permit too easily.

"I don't think somebody should get a same-day permit," she said.

During the regular board meeting, Clark said she liked the same-day permit point Hodge made. The board also discussed the time frame that people can solicit, saying the cut-off should be 6 p.m. The board also wanted to change when the permit expires. Right now the expiration date is June 30, which is the end of the town's fiscal year, but La Bella felt that it should be a calendar year because the peddling season is highest in the summer and this would be an unnecessary interruption. Black said he would revise the proposal and bring it back for a vote on another day.

"We can't be unique," Black said, but have to do what other towns have done.

Marlborough Playscape Vandalism Frustrates Citizens

by Bailey Seddon

Residents were shaking their heads this week at the extensive vandalism discovered at the Blish Park playscape last weekend.

"It's so frustrating when you go there," and see all the graffiti, said Parks and Recreation Commission board member Louise Concodello. "It took a lot of hours, a lot of money and a lot of time," to build, she said.

As well as the playscape, there was also graffiti done out back at St. John Fisher's church. Concodello and others speculate that it was likely performed by underage kids who walk into the park at night with nothing to do. Among all the profanity – phrases such as "F—the police" – there were also pictures of mushrooms and the marijuana-related reference "4:20." There have been instances of this in the past, said Concodello, but this time the damage is so extensive that whomever did it could be charged with a felony instead of a misdemeanor.

The vandalism is a blow to many in the town as the Parks and Recreation department fundraised for over 2 years, raising \$80,000 to renovate the playscape, which is over 20 years old. Part of the renovation included the addition of a "tot area" for 2- to 5-year-olds. Concodello said that over 1,000 people came to help with the renovation, which was done in 2008.

The renovated playscape was made with Trex Composite Decking Material, which is made from a combination of wood and plastic. Not just any spray paint remover can be used to get this material off because it could damage the Trex, Concodello said. She said the town is going to have to find something strong enough to take off the spray paint, but gentle enough not to hurt the Trex.

There were "blood, sweat and tears" put into the renovations and will now have to be put into the removal of the spray paint, Concodello said. If it were up to her, said Concodello, the bill to fix the playscape would be sent to whomever committed the vandalism.

Police are still investigating to determine who exactly the culprits are.

"It is definitely an active case right now," said Resident State Trooper Jeff Dunshee. Dunshee said that the incident was first reported to him this past weekend; at that time he went

out to the park to assess the damage with members of the Parks and Rec. When asked if the perpetrator would be charged with felony charges, Dunshee replied, "We will have to wait and see."

Selectman Joe La Bella said this was the second instance of vandalism at the playscape that he has heard of – but noted this was by far more severe.

"We are addressing it," La Bella said of the vandalism, stating that the first step is to get the right materials to clean off the graffiti. La Bella echoed the same thoughts as Concodello, saying that the time and material that will have to be put into restoring the playscape will be costly.

"Looking at what was done, I would certainly anticipate that this would rise to the level of a felony" because of the extent of the damage, said La Bella.

"We are cooperating with the police," he said. La Bella did not want to say too much that might hinder the investigation, but did mention that the police had several leads. La Bella also said the town is working with the Parks and Rec. department to help them in any way they can.

In the past, said La Bella, the town has tried to ward off vandalism at the playscape by having the highway department cut down some of the brush and undergrowth to make the park more visible from the road. La Bella said the town might consider putting motion-sensitive lights and maybe even motion-sensitive cameras, to further ward off criminals. He said this was not a definite, as "there is a cost associated with all of that," but he said it is something worth discussing.

First Selectman Bill Black and Parks and Recreation Commission Chairwoman Barbara Lazzari had a meeting Monday to discuss the issues and the options the town has because of the graffiti, La Bella said.

"Rest assured, we will be moving forward," said La Bella.

Lazzari did not want to discuss the investigation, for fear of hindering it, but she did say what was done to the playscape was "a shame."

Black also met with Dunshee and fellow state trooper Craig Fox Tuesday, where they looked at pictures of the vandalism and discussed what



State Police are currently investigating vandalism that occurred at the playscape at Blish Park last weekend. The vandalism, shown here, was extensive and contained profanity and drug references.

actions were going to be taken. Black said this was not the first time in recent history for this kind of vandalism. Two weeks ago there was also graffiti discovered inside the storage building of the soccer club.

"That's kind of pointing us in a direction," Black said, since the similarities in the drawings point to the same person or persons doing the graffiti. Black, like La Bella and Concodello, said this will most likely be treated as a felony for whomever has committed the crime.

"We are going to seek them out," he said. "We are going to solve this and it is not going to be treated lightly."

Two years ago, Black said the board had looked into obtaining grants for cameras to put in the park. Also in the last couple of years the

town has been undercutting brush in the area, to make the playscape more visible. However, this can be difficult, said Black, as the town has to get permission from inlands and wetlands in case certain trees or specimens have to be left alone. This undercutting of the brush will eventually reach tennis courts and the boat launch; the town has even applied for a series of permits to go forward with it, he said.

Black also said the selectmen are pricing motion-sensitive lighting and looking at other ways of "getting eyes on the scene."

This type of vandalism "is not done in a vacuum," Black said, and the perpetrators will be eventually caught eventually.

Anyone with any information is encouraged to call the resident state trooper's office at 860-295-9098.

Hebron Police News

9/12: Police are investigating an attempted break-in on Hall Road. The suspect(s) cut through a screen window in an attempt to get into the residence, Colchester Police said.

9/17: Police are investigating the vandalism of a backhoe and pickup truck that took place sometime between Sept. 13-17. The vehicles were parked on 55 Old Colchester Rd., on Camp Connecticut grounds. All the windows on the vehicles and all the lights in the pavilion were smashed; damage was roughly at \$5,000, State Police said. Anyone with information is asked to call Troop K at 860-537-7500.

Marlborough Police News

9/17: Police are investigating a robbery of gold jewelry from Flood Road. The suspect(s) had entered the victim's home sometime between 7:45 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Sept. 16, State Police said. Anyone with information is asked to contact Trooper David Laboy at 860-537-6500, ext. 4060.

9/20: Thomas Cyrankowski, 49, of 46 Phelps Rd., was charged with DUI and restricted use of left hand lane, State Police said.

Suspect Evades Scene of Crash in Colchester

Colchester Police are investigating an evading motor vehicle crash that took place on Wednesday, Sept. 14.

The crash occurred east-bound on Old Hartford Road one-tenths of a mile east of the intersection from Sunset Boulevard. The suspect made an improper left turn and struck a drainage ditch and a wooden post marking the driveway of 508 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester Police said.

The vehicle sustained damage to its front end and the undercarriage. Anyone with information is asked to call Trooper Shannon Owens at 860-537-7270.

Portland Police News

9/12: Andrew Diaz, 25, of 3 Quarry Ln., was charged with possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, Portland Police said.

9/13: Jessica Scroggin, 18, of 25-A Church St., was charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace, police said.

9/13: Joseph Cannata, 27, of 2 White Birch Bend, was charged with violation of protection order, disorderly conduct, interfering with police and second-degree threatening, police said.

9/13: Patrick Brogan, 19, of 23 Dogwood Dr., East Hampton, was charged with third-degree criminal trespass and sixth-degree larceny, police said.

9/13: Brendan Turner, 21, of 23 Mai Rd., Hebron, was charged with third-degree criminal trespass and sixth-degree larceny, police said.

Colchester Police News

9/11: Police are investigating four trashcan fires at 1:15 p.m. at Cragin Library. The fire caused a sprinkler at the rear door to activate. Colchester Hayward Fire Department responded and put out the fire, State Police said.

9/11: A 13-year-old male juvenile was charged with third-degree arson and first-degree criminal mischief related to a garbage can fire at Liberty Bank, State Police said.

9/13: Police are investigating the theft of two Xbox 360 wireless headsets from Radio Shack at 119 South Main St. Each of the headsets were valued at \$49.99, Colchester Police said.

9/15: Michael Amato, 54, of 489 Old Hartford Rd., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

9/16: John C. Rivosa Jr., 20, of 56 Country Ln., Hebron, was charged with failure to pay,

East Hampton Police News

8/31: Michael J. Rose, 62, of 9 West High St., was arrested for disorderly conduct and second-degree threatening, East Hampton Police said.

9/9: Matthew Eagan, 52, of 130 East High St., was arrested for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle and DUI, police said.

Andover Police News

9/19: David Fuger, 28, of 22 Shoddy Mill Rd., was charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree assault and criminal mischief, State Police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Albert E. VanBlaricom

Albert E. "Gene" VanBlaricom, 83, of East Hampton, beloved husband of 58 years to Gloria VanBlaricom, passed away Monday, Sept. 19, at Middlesex Hospital surrounded by his loving family. Born Oct. 15, 1927 in Coatsville, MO, the son of the late George and Lena (Veach) VanBlaricom, he was raised in Iowa along with his 11 brothers and sisters.

Gene left home as a teenager to proudly serve his country in the Marine Corps during WWII. During his time in France he had the privilege of serving as the bodyguard to the U.S. Ambassador to France. Upon completion of his military service he was employed as an assistant foreman at EIS in Middletown for 30 years.

He was a life member of the VFW and the American Legion in East Hampton. He was an avid New York Yankees fan and enjoyed watching them on TV. Gene also enjoyed talking with his old friend especially at McDonald's and the Donut Shop. Gene's family meant the world to him, both here and in Iowa.

Besides his wife he is survived by his two sons, Gene VanBlaricom and his wife Cathey of Westbrook, Timmy VanBlaricom of East Hampton; his brother Dick and sisters Clara and Loretta; three grandchildren, T.J. and his wife Leah, Travis, and Todd; three great-grandchildren, Taylor, Hailey and Damon; and his good friends, Mike and Shirley Mager.

He was predeceased by either of his brothers and sisters.

Gene's family would like to thank the VNA and Middlesex Hospice for their compassionate care.

Funeral services will be held today, Sept. 23, at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Robert Faulhaber officiating. Burial will follow with military honors in Lakeview Cemetery. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home Thursday, Sept. 22.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice Program, c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Ruth Johansmeyer

Ruth (Hanna) Johansmeyer, 83, of Portland, beloved widow of the late Harold E. Johansmeyer Sr., passed away peacefully Sunday, Sept. 18, at Middlesex Hospital, with her loving family at her side.

Born July 1, 1928, in Middle Haddam she was the daughter of the late William and Elizabeth (Ellison) Hanna Sr. and was a 1947 graduate of East Hampton High School. Ruth had worked at Gong Bell before moving to the Bronx in 1957 with her husband Harold. They returned to Portland in 1992. She was a member of the 2nd Congregational Church in Middle Haddam and was a member of the Ladies Society at the church.

Ruth is survived by her son, Harold Johansmeyer Jr. of Portland; two daughters, Karen Johansmeyer of Portland and Elizabeth Johansmeyer and her companion Robert Seiferman of East Hampton; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

She was predeceased by her two brothers and four sisters.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, Sept. 22, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Lois Kennedy officiating. Burial will follow at Lakeview Cemetery in East Hampton. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home on Wednesday, Sept. 21, again on Thursday morning before the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Second Congregational Church, P.O. Box 206, Middle Haddam, CT 06456.

The family would like to thank the staff at Middlesex Hospital and Portland Family Practice for their kind and compassionate care.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Charles Wayne McDuffie

Charles Wayne "Duff" McDuffie, 74, of Venice, FL, formerly of East Hampton, Boulder, CO, and Portland, ME, died July 26. He was born July 4, 1937, in Portland, ME.

After graduating with Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Bridgeport and a Master of Science degree at University of Colorado, he spent many years teaching recreation, health and physical education at the public school and collegiate level. He coached skiing, swimming and soccer during this time and continued coaching soccer until his move to Florida. Subsequent to his teaching experiences, he worked in the concrete and the sand and gravel businesses. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and many other outdoor activities and spent many summers on East Island in Lake Pocotopaug.

Duff is survived by his wife Merrilee "Misty" of Venice, FL and his son Chad of Erie, CO. He is predeceased by his brother Glenmore McDuffie.

The family will receive relatives and friends from 10-11 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 30, at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. A memorial service will be held at the funeral home immediately following the calling hours with burial at the Lake View Cemetery. Memorial contributions can be made to the charity of your choice.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Peter Gorski

Peter Gorski, 88, of Westerly, RI, passed away peacefully at Apple Rehab Tuesday, Sept. 6. Born in Lebanon, he was a son of the late William and Barbara Gorski. He was predeceased by two brothers, Steve and Harold as well as two sisters, Anne King and Sophie Rokicki.

Peter was employed as a technical aide at General Dynamics for thirty two years until his retirement in 1985. Pete was a U.S. Air Force veteran of WWII assigned to the Signal Corps in Tampa, FL. He was a member of the Democratic Town Committee in Colchester, where he was elected to the Board of Assessors. He was a president of the Farmers Club and past member of the Lodge of the Elks in Norwich and Jupiter, FL.

Peter will be sadly missed by his dedicated, loving wife of 62 years, Annie (Goral) Gorski. He also leaves a son, Ron Gorski, his wife Lisa and their children, Kristen and Ryan of San Diego, CA; his daughter, Barrie Hill, her husband Alan of Charlestown and their daughter, Marissa of San Diego, CA. He will be missed by his two grand-Yorkies.

Relatives and friends attended a graveside funeral service Friday, Sept. 9, at River Bend Cemetery, 117 Beach St., Westerly, RI.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Home and Hospice Care of RI, 1085 North Main St., Providence, RI 02904, in Pete's memory.

For online condolences, go to gaffneydolanfuneralhome.com.