

RIVEREAST

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Soccer Stars... Portland High School girls' soccer coach Norman (Sandy) Booth and PHS senior Alyssa Unikewicz attended the CGSCA (Connecticut Girls Soccer Coaches Association) 2011 Senior Bowl held at Sage Park in Berlin on Saturday, Dec. 3. The CGSCA selected Sandy Booth to coach in the Senior Bowl and selected Alyssa as an All State recipient in soccer to play in the Senior Bowl. Booth was selected Shoreline Coach of the Year. Alyssa was selected All-State in soccer, All-Conference and All-Area.

Expanded Senior Center Ready to Open

by Joshua Anusewicz

It took a little bit longer than expected, but after a large overhaul, the East Hampton Senior Center is ready to reopen its doors on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Ground was broken over the summer for the project, which included a 1,500-square-foot addition and renovation of the existing facility. The project was originally slated to be completed in October, but unforeseen contamination in the soil set the completion date back.

But a little over two months seems like nothing compared to waiting for over two years. The town first received state funding for the project from a state Community Block Development Grant in October 2009 for \$750,000. In the July 1 *Rivereast*, Facilities Manager Frank Grzyb said that the project was originally delayed by an approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission, but problems with the architect set the project back further.

But with new crews in place - ME Design of Cheshire and CLA Engineers of Norwich - the project has now been completed, and Senior Services Coordinator Jo Ann Ewing couldn't be happier.

"I love it, can't you tell?" she said with a laugh on Wednesday. "We're excited to see all of the changes and see how our seniors use the new space."

The jewel of the project is the 1,500-square-foot "multi-purpose room" that has been built

between the senior center and the abutting public library. Ewing said that when asking seniors what they were looking for out of the project, many asked for more space, as programs were overlapping in the small main room of the original building.

The new multi-purpose room will now serve as the cafeteria, and now is home to the center's flat-screen television, electric piano and karaoke system. Ewing said an electric divider will soon be installed that can separate the room if more than one activity is occurring at the same time.

There have also been major renovations to the existing structure, which are noticeable the minute you walk through the door. A large receptionist's desk will greet seniors as they enter, with a new member card system that will allow seniors to digitally check into programs and activities scheduled for that day. There is also a new closet for coats, a massive storage area and more open space for activities, such as dance, quilting and card games.

The kitchen, which previously was a cramped galley kitchen, has been converted into a large, functional space that will serve lunch five days a week and continue providing delivery service for homebound seniors. Ewing has also converted an area in the hallway next to the kitchen into a "coffee corner" where seniors can congregate in the morning.

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Hebron Seniors Express Road Safety Concerns

by Geeta Schrayter

It was a full house at the Hebron Board of Selectmen's meeting last Thursday, Jan. 5, as numerous seniors were present to express concern over the lack of turning lanes on Route 66.

During public comment, resident Milton Porter petitioned the selectmen to start the process for the implementation of a turning lane onto Loveland Road.

"It's a dangerous road," he said, adding, "it's a sharp turn - it's on a hill from both directions."

Porter suggested the selectmen form a committee to report on the conditions of the road, saying "my main concern here is to get the initiative and energy [going]." He stated he wanted the selectmen "to get Route 66 with turning lanes started," and mentioned accidents and increases in traffic flow as reasons for such action.

On Wednesday, Porter explained traffic had increased since Loveland Road was paved several years prior, as it's now used as a shortcut between Route 316 and Route 66 in Hebron.

"Now that it's paved, all those homes on 316 use Loveland Road, so it has many more cars coming and going," he said.

A petition Porter formed was also submitted with 150 signatures from residents of The Village at Loveland Hills, a 55-and-over community located at the intersection of Loveland and

Buttonwood roads, as well as residents in the surrounding area.

There's "sufficient room to pass" when a car is turning onto the road, said Porter, "but if there's no turning lanes, cars follow right in back of one another," which can lead to accidents when a car in front slows down to turn.

Along with Porter, resident Elaine DeSilva signed the petition and was also present at the meeting. She agreed with Porter on the safety concerns, saying she noticed a lot of teenagers "go quite fast" and "a lot of them just barely stop" as they approach the turn onto Loveland Road.

DeSilva said there was a concern among residents of Loveland Hills who frequently turn at the intersection, "but we're also concerned about the community."

Also present on Jan. 5 was George Sellman, president of The Village at Loveland Hills Condominium Association. Sellman said he was there to reinforce the request made by Porter, adding the association doesn't normally become involved, but was in this case "because of the seriousness of the situation..."

Sellman said Wednesday a "disproportionate number of our residents are really put at risk just because of the number of people that live here and the fact that it's our only connector road."

"We would appreciate whatever it is you could do in support" of what Porter discussed, he said at the meeting.

Sellman added to the concerns Porter expressed regarding accidents, saying there had been 14 at the intersection since 2007, three of which resulted in injury.

"Take the time [to get involved] because nobody here would want to wake up some morning and find out that there was another accident at that intersection and there was a fatality," he told the selectmen.

Sullivan said he knows the selectmen have a lot on their plates, and offered the help of the association if needed.

"If we can help the process somewhere we are more than happy to do it," he said, adding, "I feel really strongly about this."

In response, selectmen chair Jeff Watt said the board was concerned with the safety issues presented, and thanked those present for coming forward with the situation.

"I know my colleagues - we won't take this lightly. We'll be in a position to see if there's any action we can take."

Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney added the town has a record of supporting the concerns raised by residents of the Loveland Hills community, and in the past, new street signs have been put up with print that's easier to read,

street lines have been painted, and "even though it's a state road the town has cleared sightlines per requests."

Tierney said Wednesday he discussed the situation with Tom Fenton, the town's consulting engineer, and Fenton was going to contact John DeCastro, Special Services Section Manager with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT).

"We're going to try to supply the state with accident history from the state police," said Tierney, "giving them the concerns from the residents, set up a meeting with DOT and see what can be done."

"Then we'll report back to the selectmen and citizens," Tierney said, adding "we want to involve the proper channels."

A decision was made on Jan. 5 to place the item on the agenda for the Jan. 19 selectmen's meeting.

* * *

Also at the meeting, appreciation was expressed to Resident State Trooper James Nolting, who has moved on to the Central District Major Crimes Unit out of Hartford.

Nolting came to Hebron in October 2009, and since that time, Watt explained, "Jim endeared himself to the community." He shared Nolting had gone into various stores in Hebron

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Contractors broke ground this summer, seen left, on a 1,500-square-foot addition to the East Hampton Senior Center on Main Street, a project that was funded by a \$750,000 state grant the town received two years ago. The result: a beautiful new “multi-purpose” room, seen right, that will serve as the center’s cafeteria and will provide more room for various activities and programs. With the final touches being completed this week, the senior center is scheduled to officially reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 17.



Senior Center cont. from Front Page

have a quick cup and chat.

Also added in the renovation of the original facility are a separate exercise room, a library room, a medical area, and larger handicapped bathrooms. New carpeting and lighting, and a new color scheme, have been added as well.

Ewing said that as the process of cleaning and moving back in has drawn on, some seniors have chipped in, also getting a sneak peek

of the new space. And early reviews are positive, Ewing said.

“They really like the colors,” Ewing said of the white and blue scheme. “Most of them are just happy that we have our normal hours back.”

Since July, the senior center programs have been stationed at the nearby East Hampton Congregational Church, which Ewing said went “great.” However, the space was being shared

with town and church programs, and senior center staff often had to haul materials back and forth each day. Ewing said that despite that, she saw “very good attendance.”

But having the ability to use their own facility - with the additional space - will allow the center to get back to its true goal: being “a resource center for our seniors.”

“It’s fresh, up to date, and we just want them to come in and feel welcome,” Ewing said.

Aside from the reopening next Tuesday, Ewing said a plan is in the works for a formal dedication ceremony that would invite local and state officials to see the new facility and how it serves the seniors of East Hampton. However, no date has been set as of yet.

Road Safety cont. from Front Page

on his first day to introduce himself and let residents know they could come to him if they needed anything.

Tierney said Nolting was a “pleasure to work with,” and called him “more than just a resident state trooper.”

A certificate of appreciation was presented to Nolting by the selectmen, who in turn thanked the board and the town.

“The town meant a lot to me,” Nolting said, adding that he’s “learned and grown a lot as a trooper and as a person for the two plus years” he was in Hebron.

Nolting said this new position was “an opportunity I couldn’t pass up.” He added “hopefully it’s a long stint up there.”

Nolting said Wednesday he’d miss the people of Hebron, the line of work and “all the programs we ran out there,” but he added he was looking forward to the opportunity to work in a different unit.

Nolting’s last day was Dec. 29. He began work in his new location the following day.

Probate Court Judge Peter Alter was present at the meeting to give an update on children’s court.

Alter explained Hebron and Glastonbury courts had merged a year ago, with a “seamless transition,” and now, an opportunity “to become a part of a regional children’s court” in Hartford had presented itself, starting Feb. 1.

The change will “provide better service to

families in particular, with children’s matters,” Alter said, explaining probate court faces a great number of children’s issues – 45 in 2011 – that include adoptions and guardianships.

“We have that responsibility as part of what we do,” he said, but went on to say the matters aren’t always handled as efficiently as they could be, and probate judges and clerks aren’t trained to specifically deal with the different matters that may present themselves.

A regional children’s court would offer appropriately-trained social workers and staff, Alter explained.

“The benefit to the community is significant,” he said, explaining children’s matters are presently “serviced by Manchester and Hartford Department of Children and Family Services.”

“We have an excellent working relationship [with DCF], but response time is difficult,” he said. The change provides the “immediate opportunity for mediation and reconciliation.”

Alter stated it will be his responsibility to resolve whatever issues he can, but joining a regional children’s court means the option to utilize the court will be there, making for “much better results.”

“I’m in complete support of [the opportunity] - I’ve seen results... I think that our communities will benefit substantially from this,” he said. “It’s a terrific opportunity to provide better service for the kids.”

Joining the regional children’s court comes at no cost to the town. The change has the sup-

port of legislators, Alter said, and is funded accordingly.

Town Assessor Debra Gernhardt was present at the Jan. 5 meeting to provide an update on the progress of the Oct. 1 revaluation.

Assessment notices were mailed Dec. 7, and informal hearing appointments were scheduled for 110 parcels or 2.7 percent of the town.

“That doesn’t sound like a lot, but percent-wise, we did very well,” said Gernhardt. “I’ve spoken with other towns and they’ve had 1 percent or less [request hearings].”

An extension to file the Grand List was requested due to a change in staff in the assessor’s office requiring the temporary staff member be trained on the computer system and given a “refresher on procedures of processing the work,” Gernhardt explained in a Jan. 5 letter to the selectmen.

Gernhardt also stated various tasks performed by the assistant in the past now needed her “assistance, guidance and quality checking.”

“I think reval is in really good shape,” she said at the meeting, but added “I wouldn’t feel comfortable signing the Grand List without reviewing it more in-depth.”

The final date the Grand List has to be signed and submitted is Feb. 29. By law, notices must then be sent within 10 days, however Gernhardt said Wednesday she expects them to be sent sooner. Afterwards, residents have until March 20 to submit a written request for a hearing with

the Board of Assessment Appeals. Appeal forms can be obtained from the assessor’s office.

During an executive session at the end of the meeting, the selectmen discussed possible action on a stipend for Tierney as interim town manager. No action was taken, however. The need for such action stems from the separation agreed upon by then-town manager Bonnie Therrien and the board of selectmen, and the resulting appointment of Tierney as interim town manager.

Therrien, who had been town manager since April 2010, separated ties with the town on Dec. 30. In a press release from the selectmen it was stated the board “appreciates Bonnie’s efforts with starting new programs for the town and leading Hebron through two difficult storms.” The selectmen added their “direction of managing and allocating resources going forward is different than Bonnie’s and we both felt it would be better to separate employment ties.”

But the financial ties won’t end as quickly. As part of the separation package, Therrien will continue being paid through April, 2012. She’ll receive payments of \$4,422.96 for nine more pay periods. She will also receive \$8,984.14 for 56.5 hours of vacation. In total, Therrien will be paid a total of \$48,790.78.

The next Board of Selectmen’s meeting is Thursday, Jan. 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hebron Town Hall.

Colchester School Board Reviews New Programs for Students, Nurses

by Bailey Seddon

New programs – one to help at-risk students and one to help school nurses – were the order of the day at Tuesday's meeting of the Board of Education.

At the meeting, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle discussed with the board the new local chapter of Families With Service Needs (FWSN), which is being created by revamping the school district's existing juvenile review board, (JRB).

Loiselle explained FWSN is a statewide organization that was created several years ago, after Connecticut courts asked local school districts and youth service agencies to become more involved in helping at-risk students. Previously, students who had behavioral issues in school, such as truancy or acting out in the classroom, were referred to the juvenile court system. That system, Loiselle said, was not often successful in changing the behavior of such students, who would continue to perform poorly in school. While the school district has had the JRB since 1998, there has not been a referral to it since 2007, because the board did not always have the resources it needed to help students.

That is why, starting this month, the JRB will be revamped and become the FWSN. With FWSN, students are seeing intervention at the school level so any problems can be stopped before it reaches the courts, school officials said. Valerie Geato, the town's director of Youth and Social Services, outlined for the board how the new agency will work.

Geato said guidance counselors at the school refer to the agency students they feel are in need of intervention. Children and their parents then come before the FWSN board, which consists of school staff, representatives from the state's

Department of Children and Families (DCF), United Community and Family Services (UCFS), and members of Colchester Youth and Social Services, such as Geato.

According to a handout Geato provided, the board meets with kids and parents during the school day and tries to work on ways to "divert at-risk children from entering the court system. The board will recommend diversions that encourage positive pro-social development, school attendance, family engagement and participation in community-based programs."

After the initial meeting with a referred youth, the board will schedule a follow-up for a month later. Geato stressed the importance of not only having school staff and Colchester Youth and Social Services members involved in the process, but people from UCFS and DCF there as well.

"The resources that those people bring to the table...are more than we could ever get on our own," Geato said. "It's a great partnership."

"Providing the services locally is always preferable" to the court system, said Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein.

One member of the audience asked if guidance counselors are the only people that refer children to the board. Geato said parents can also refer their children if they feel their behavior warrants it, and police sometimes refer children who are engaging in "risky behavior" outside the school, such as if a child tries to run away from home.

Goldstein encouraged Geato to seek the school board's help in the new undertaking.

"We always support you in that effort," he said.

Goldstein also commended Youth and Social

Services, particularly Geato, for the new initiative.

"Val has also brought the bureau into a whole different level," Goldstein said.

"We could not ask for a better partner" working with the schools, added Loiselle.

Also at the meeting, the school board discussed SNAP, a new health management software program for school nurses. Katherine Shaughnessy, the school nurse supervisor and the district's director of people services and special education, told the board how well SNAP works as a medical documentation and tracking software. Shaughnessy said SNAP, created by Professional Software for Nurses Inc., creates an "electronic place" that contains all the health data for students in one place. Previously, Shaughnessy said, nurses had to keep all this information written down, which was a time-consuming process.

For example, things such as immunizations are "very difficult to track because they change every year," she said. With only the paper method to use when a student has a medication the nurse has to write it all down. Shaughnessy said a nurse could easily get distracted if a sick student comes in or someone calls at that exact moment. She also said health information for students is often written down in separate places, with a log for student visits to the nurse, medication and immunization.

"Their task is daunting," Shaughnessy said of the nurses who have to keep track of such information. It's also difficult for nurses who are new to a school system, she added. School nurses often previously worked in hospitals

prior to coming to their school jobs and are used to working with other nurses. At a school they are "flying solo," Shaughnessy said, and they have hundreds of children to tend to.

With SNAP, nurses are no longer alone. The program downloads Connecticut requirements for student vaccinations and then shows if students are in compliance. If a student is not, the system flags it and the nurse no longer has to flip through paper files to find that data. There is also a medication log, allowing nurses to track students' medications electronically. The log also has a book that tells nurses what the medication looks like, what the dosing should be and if there are any side effects.

"You never have to leave your screen, much less your office," Shaughnessy said. SNAP also helps nurses create individual health care plans for any student who may have a medical emergency, such as a student who has asthma, diabetes or is allergic to bees. Shaughnessy said online training comes with the software package, to get nurses accustomed to the new system.

Following her presentation, the board voted to purchase the \$7,132 system. Loiselle said that while the expenditure was not budgeted, it is something the school system needs. Goldstein said Thursday the money will come from unexpended funds from the 2010-11 budget.

"We feel that strongly...they need to have it," said Loiselle. The program will be installed this summer and be up and running in September for the 2012-13 school year, Goldstein said.

The next Board of Education meeting will be held Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m., at Jack Jackter Intermediate School.

Colchester Parents, Students Gather to Talk About Substance Abuse

by Bailey Seddon

Close to 200 parents and students, along with various school and town officials, gathered at Bacon Academy last week for a community conversation to discuss a recent survey regarding drug use among local teens, and how to best combat substance abuse in town.

Resident Trooper Supervisor Marc Petruzzi led off the Jan. 5 event, which was sponsored by the town's Youth Services Department, by presenting the results from the Southeastern Regional Action Council (SERAC) survey, which students in grades six through 12 took last June, right before the end of the school year. The results of the survey were first released in December.

The survey indicated that Colchester is not immune to the problem of substance abuse among teens. For example, it showed a higher use of marijuana among Colchester teens than those in other towns. Of the 1,382 students that took the survey, 199 admitted to having used the drug in the past 30 days. Also, more than half of all high school students surveyed stated they found marijuana was easy to obtain.

After reviewing highlights of the survey with parents and students, event organizers separated the two groups. The 106 students, all eighth-through 12th-graders, stayed in the cafeteria and played a trivia game based on the drug survey, with the winners receiving \$10 gift certificates to Gallery Cinemas in Colchester.

The students were broken up into groups of 10 and were asked multiple-choice questions related to various elements of the survey. For example, one of the questions asked students to guess the percentage of ninth-grade students that said on the survey they had consumed alcohol in the previous 30 days. The possible answers were 90, 42 or 54 percent. Many of the students thought the answer was 42 or 54, but the correct answer was 90 percent, which seemed to surprise most of the students.

"They were really shocked" at how many kids have experimented with alcohol, Jen Karcich, a PE and health teacher at William J. Johnston Middle School, said last week.

Karcich said the point of the trivia game was to educate children on drug use and clear up misconceptions, such as how students perceived the extent of alcohol use among their peers. The kids, she said, "were pretty actively involved."

The 80 parents who attended last Thursday's event, meanwhile, were sent to the school library, and were just as surprised as the teens at what they heard. The parents heard news about kids and drug use from Erik Ebrus, who has been a special agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) for the past 16 years. He told parents about the different drugs their kids

might be taking, how to tell if their children are using drugs and what drugs can do to children. He also talked about the rise of popularity of heroin among teens and young adults, and that it sells in Hartford for \$20-25 a bag, the second-lowest price for heroin in Connecticut.

Selling drugs is "a dirty, dirty business," Ebrus said.

Marijuana, he said, is considered a "gateway drug" for teens and Ebrus showed parents what pipes and marijuana buds look like. He also showed them what marijuana grown indoors looks like. Ebrus said the growth season for marijuana begins in April, and it is harvested in August or September. He joked that if a teen suddenly becomes interested in gardening it could be a warning sign about marijuana cultivation.

Another, more serious warning sign, Ebrus said, is discarded cellophane or shrink wrap, as it can indicate that kids are having drugs delivered to them.

Other warning signs parents should look for to determine if their kids are smoking the drug include bloodshot eyes, short-term memory lapses and difficulty in maintaining balance while walking or becoming "giggly." He also said parents should be concerned if they see a digital scale in their child's room, rolling papers or if they use incense. All are signs their children could be smoking marijuana.

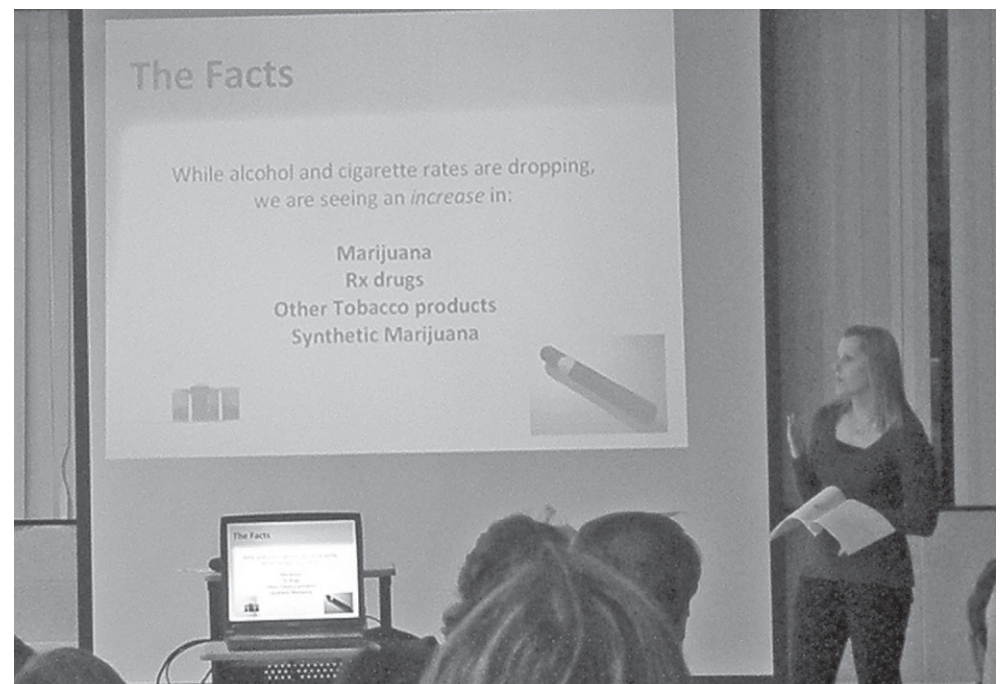
Ebrus said marijuana, on average, sells for between \$1,000 to \$3,000 per pound, or \$5,000 for "the really good stuff."

Ebrus also described a "controlled delivery" he was involved in where DEA agents confiscated marijuana, posed as dealers and then arrested a person who tried to buy the drug from the agents.

Ebrus also talked about methamphetamine, commonly known as meth. In the past, he said, truck drivers who undertake long hauls would use meth to stay awake and alert while on the road for hours. He stressed meth is not as common in this part of the country as it is in the West and Midwest, but Ebrus still offered parents warning signs for abuse of this drug, including hyperactivity, wakefulness and loss of appetite, among others.

Ebrus also said the drug can have serious consequences among its users. For instance, while just 10 percent of people that try alcohol will eventually become addicted, 90 percent of people that try meth end up becoming addicts, Ebrus said.

He also showed the parents pictures of the "faces of meth," what a person looks like be-



Stephanie Spargo, program coordinator for SERAC, helps present Colchester parents and students the findings of the recent survey on substance abuse among local youth.

fore and after they begin to use the drug. After only a couple of years, meth addicts lose significant weight, hair and teeth.

Ebrus also talked to the parents about the use and popularity of inhalant drugs. A new and popular one, he said, is the body spray Axe. He said kids use the spray for "huffing," a form of spraying and then inhaling the spray to get high. Ebrus warned the parents that if their child is using a lot of Axe body spray they should determine whether their child might be using it as an inhalant drug.

After the event, parents and their children met up again before heading home.

Organizers of the community conversation said they were pleased with the turnout and with the overall participation in the event.

Ebrus said it was important for parents to "understand and recognize what the kids already know." Petruzzi agreed, saying, "This stuff is obviously out there."

Meanwhile, the group presentations allowed the students to have "meaningful discussions about drugs and alcohol in their community," said Michael Schaff, a program coordinator for the town's youth services agency.

"We were hoping to break myths" about drug use, said Jen Sloat, a program coordinator for youth services.

Both Petruzzi and Ebrus said they were pleased with how many parents and students showed up.

"It was a great turnout," said Ebrus.

Students also said they felt the program was a success.

"It was very informative," said eighth-grader Griffin Waller. Fellow eighth-grader, Bryanna Paquette, agreed, saying the night was "very educational." Eighth-grader Cameron Farnsworth said he thought the event "was cool."

Parents, too, felt it was an informative night.

"It's just a topic that everyone needs to hear about," said Wendy Waller.

Cheryl Whipple said she "thought it was great...a really good idea." Whipple works as a substance abuse nurse in Hartford, and said she has seen the damage drugs can do. She said it was refreshing to take part in a program that focuses on the preventive side of dealing with substance abuse.

Whipple's daughter, Sophia, an eighth-grader, said she would attend another conversation, or similar event, if it were held.

Also a fan of the event was parent Rick Konon who matter-of-factly stated he'd "rather hear about it in a seminar than when it happens to your kid."

Colchester Selectmen Hear Complaint About Non-Appointment

by Bailey Seddon

The Board of Selectmen last week revisited the ongoing controversy over the non-appointment of a resident to the building committee that is overseeing the proposed renovation of William J. Johnston Middle School to incorporate the town senior center.

The selectmen last month rejected Norman Dupuis' bid to serve on the committee. The rejection came via a 2-2 vote, with Rosemary Coyle and James Ford in favor and Stan Soby and First Selectman Gregg Schuster opposed; Greg Cordova abstained. Soby's and Schuster's objections stemmed from Dupuis' initial interview before the selectmen in November, where he said current members "do not have a clue" about what needs to be done on the project.

At last Thursday's meeting of the Board of Selectmen, resident James McNair told the board he felt Dupuis "seemed to be fairly qualified" to serve on the committee, and he pressed. McNair pressed the board for answers on whether they properly reviewed the circumstances surrounding Dupuis' comment.

"Some people have asked me to make some

inquiries here," McNair said. "All I'm trying to do is understand what's going on."

McNair said he has read meeting minutes online and articles in the media and wanted to know if the comment attributed to Dupuis was "fully vetted." Soby told McNair that he could make a comment to the board, but that selectmen typically do not answer questions during the public comments session.

McNair appeared frustrated by the response.

He went on to ask how to get his question answered and was told he could contact individual board members anytime with questions outside the meeting. McNair reiterated that since he could only ask a question he wanted to know if the comment by Dupuis was "fully vetted." Board members expressed confusion by McNair's use of the term "vetted." He clarified, saying he wondered if anyone had asked Dupuis how he came to the conclusion that people on the building committee "did not have a clue" about the project.

"That's the thing that seemed to be missing;

what vetting had occurred," McNair said.

McNair said he felt the board should have asked Dupuis to explain his comment and if there was any merit to it. McNair again expressed concern that the board would not answer his question.

"Just let me know what would be the proper form and procedure to [get my question answered]," McNair said. Schuster said McNair could listen to a recording of the meeting where the board voted against Dupuis' appointment and if he had any question for a specific board member he could ask them.

"You can reach out to them and they may or may not answer," Schuster said. "It is up to them."

"I do know, legally, you are not required to answer the question," McNair said.

Joseph DeLucia, the building committee's vice chairman, was also at the meeting, and invited McNair and anyone else to come to a meeting of his committee to "find out how many clues we actually are in possession of."

McNair thanked him, saying, "I do plan to start attending."

McNair is far from the only resident to voice objection to Dupuis' non-appointment. After the selectmen's vote last month, the board received a petition, signed by 40 residents, supporting Dupuis.

"It is true that Norm has strong opinions," the petition read, "but that on a committee of such importance, all opinions should be at the table, be recognized, and be dealt with."

Schuster said this week there is still an open position on the seven-member building committee. The selectmen interviewed candidates at their last two meetings and now have 12 candidates for the one vacancy. Schuster said the topic of filling that last position will be on the agenda for the selectmen's next meeting, which will be held Thursday, Jan. 19, at 7 p.m.

When asked if it was possible the selectmen might change their mind on Dupuis, Schuster simply replied, "Anything is possible until that position is filled."

East Hampton High School Renovation Project Takes Preliminary Step

by Joshua Anusewicz

This week, the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden began putting the gears in motion for the proposed renovation at East Hampton High School by presenting the Town Council with a drafted timeline and requesting that the council appoint a building committee to plan the project.

The school renovation timeline was first presented by Golden to the Board of Education at its meeting on Monday. School board members reviewed the timetable and discussed what characteristics the council should be looking for in committee members. Glenn Gemma, the chair of the Transportation, Buildings and Grounds Committee, reminded the board that the item was "not a motion for design... just for a committee to be formed."

According to Golden, a building committee is required by the state for a school renovation. Through conversations with Board of Education Chairman Mark Laraia, Town Council members Sue Weintraub and Kyle Dostaler and Interim Town Manager John Weichsel, Golden said the plan is to have a seven-member committee with two alternate members. This committee would consist of "professional" residents — such as engineers and contractors, for example — and not elected town officials. Golden and Weichsel would serve as "ex-officio" members.

When discussing the committee, Board of Education member Bill Marshall brought up an idea for the committee to present monthly reports to the board. He argued that although the Town Council appoints and oversees the build-

ing committee, the project would ultimately be under the guidance of the education board, which should be kept up to speed with the progress. Golden, however, felt that with her being an ex-officio member of the committee, she would be able to keep the board informed.

"The committee is already going to have a lot on their plate, and I think that it would just be too much," Golden said. The board voted on Marshall's amendment, rejecting the idea of having monthly reports 5-3-1.

While Marshall's first idea was rejected, most of the board supported his other amendment to include members of the high school faculty and parents of high school students. Marshall, who has overseen a school renovation as an administrator in the past, said that having input from those most invested in the school would be helpful.

"I just feel that having those involved that are here and see what the students need the most should be included," said Marshall. The board voted 7-2 to approve that amendment, and then unanimously approved the request to the Town Council for a building committee.

Golden and Laraia presented the request at Tuesday's meeting of the Town Council, which plans to begin requesting resumes from candidates in the coming weeks. Weintraub said that a draft resolution outlining the responsibilities of the building committee should be presented at the next council meeting on Jan. 24. From there, the councilors would be presented with a list of candidates at a subsequent council

meeting.

Weintraub also recommended that before diving headlong into the project, Golden should look at the facilities for the other three schools in town, as well. Councilor Ted Hintz took the matter one step further, adding that the town should look into all town facilities before making any decisions on the renovation project.

"Are we going to look into all of the facilities, or just go ahead and make this a done deal?" Hintz said. "This implies we're ignoring other facilities."

Golden explained that the high school would have to meet accreditation requirements with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) over the next five years, and that the high school renovation plan would help meet those requirements. By March, Golden added, Principal John Fidler would need to submit a report to NEASC that showed "significant progress" was being made toward the accreditation.

* * *

Also at Monday's Board of Education meeting, the issue of school uniforms resurfaced, as the board discussed whether to survey parents of students at East Hampton Middle School about the idea.

The board voted 8-1 against the survey, with the lone dissenting vote coming from Don Coolican, who has championed the concept of uniforms for several years.

"Obviously, I think the uniforms are a good idea," Coolican said before the vote. "But if we

don't have the support of the parents, it would be a terrible mistake to try and push this."

In the past, Coolican has said the matter is most pressing at the middle school because he believes that is where most dress code violations occur. He also feels that having uniforms would curb bullying and save parents money.

Laraia said he has spoken with Coolican "many, many times" about school uniforms, but does not support making it "a middle school issue." Laraia said that instead, the administration should be "buckling down" on dress code violations and the board should work on tightening up the middle and high school handbooks to develop a more succinct dress code.

Board member Joanne Barmasse looked at the issue as a matter of "responsibility" and "respect."

"As far as what's appropriate to wear, the kids need to be responsible," Barmasse said. She added that females, who are noted to be the most flagrant violators of the dress code, need to "learn how to have respect for themselves."

Board member Ken Barber, who announced that he has spent more of his life in uniforms than out, flatly disagreed with the idea, stating that it wasn't worth the cost of mailing the surveys out on "something that I don't think will be supported."

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 30, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

Copper Leads to Amston Lake Water Advisory

by Geeta Schrayter

Over 100 Hebron residents on the Amston Lake water system have been advised not to use the water for anything apart from cleaning and bathing amid the discovery of elevated levels of copper.

Amid the report of "blue water" by a customer at the end of November, Connecticut Water, which services the area, took a water sample and found copper levels were elevated, explained Connecticut Water Director of Corporate Communications Dan Meaney.

Another round of sampling was then conducted on customers who lived upstream and downstream from the original individual, and "many of those came back elevated as well," said Meaney.

"Typically what causes blue water — it's almost always copper," he said, but added it's "usually isolated to a house or two [and] usually due to a bad electrical ground."

However, as testing continued, it revealed other homes not near the original report also showed elevated levels, meaning it was more widespread.

Meaney said the situation was "very unusual, especially when you consider the water coming out of the ground from our wells — the levels of copper [in them] are extremely low." He went on to say the levels are usually undetectable.

Per regulations found in the Lead and Copper Rule set by the Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA) in 1991, concentrations of copper are not to exceed 1.3 parts per million (ppm) in drinking water. Results of the tests conducted by Connecticut Water showed copper levels in excess of 5 ppm.

The "Do Not Drink" advisory was issued on Jan. 6, and 147 customers in Hebron were advised "not to drink the water, use it for preparation, brushing teeth or any other purposes where they may consume the water," it read in a media advisory from the same day. The advisory also went out to two Colchester customers served by the lake, and 32 Lebanon customers.

On the EPA website it was explained that while copper is an essential nutrient required by the human body in small amounts, "long-term exposure to elevated levels of copper in drinking water may cause serious health problems."

The website stated short periods of exposure "can cause gastrointestinal disturbance, including nausea and vomiting," while "using water with elevated levels of copper over many years may cause liver or kidney damage."

Additionally, Meaney said, when copper hits 5 ppm it can be "an issue for small children and infants."

Since the advisory was first issued, Connecticut Water has been working with "utility partners serving the neighborhood, and a corrosion science consultant" to try to identify the source,

it was stated in an updated media advisory from Jan. 9.

Meaney added that an expert from Ohio arrived Wednesday afternoon, and the EPA and Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) have all been contacted.

"We've been in touch with CT DPH and have had people on site a couple of times since it's started," he said.

But so far, the exact cause has not been determined.

The EPA cites "corroding pipes and brass components of household piping systems" as the primary sources of copper in drinking water, and Meaney said it's "very likely coming from household plumbing" in this situation as well.

He also explained bad electrical wiring can be an issue — if the neutral wire, which takes stray electricity and sends it back to the grid, is grounded to a pipe, electricity could potentially go through the copper pipe rather than the neutral wire, because "electricity will follow the path of least resistance."

But this is why an issue where there are elevated levels of copper in the water is "usually isolated to a house or two," said Meaney, and why the cause of the issue at Amston Lake continues to go unknown.

"We continue to look at any possibility that might be causing this," Meaney stated, adding "we continue to think it's electrical ground but

we're not limiting to that," and other possibilities continue to be explored.

Hebron Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney said Wednesday "it's in the water company's hands, and they're working diligently along with CL&P, SNET and Comcast Cable" to find the source.

"We're just working with them in any way we can — they're supplying bottled water through Amston Lake Clubhouse for residents," he said, as well as providing a tanker with potable water that's available 24 hours a day.

"We hope that they can find the origin," said Tierney. "This is something that's not that common so they're having trouble locating the source."

At this point in time, no estimate as to when the advisory will be lifted has been given.

On Connecticut Water's service update from Wednesday, the company expressed appreciation to customers of the Amston Lake Water System for their "continued patience" and encouraged customers "to run the tap for a couple of minutes before using the water" as that has been shown to reduce copper levels.

It was also stated customers will not be charged for this water use, and affected year-round customers will have their accounts credited for water use accrued during the entire month of January.

Individuals with any questions can call 1-800-286-5700 or visit ctwater.com.

East Hampton Council Discusses Sears Park Fees, Clear Cutting

by Joshua Anusewicz

On Tuesday, at another meeting that lasted well over three hours, the Town Council discussed local matters big and small, engaging in lively debate over several ongoing issues around the community.

A substantial portion of the conversation centered around a complaint that was brought to the council at a recent meeting regarding the clear-cutting of a lot on Spellman Point Road on the shore of Lake Pocotopaug. Resident Judson Landon, who lives across the street from 68 Spellman Point Rd., brought the matter to the attention of the council believing that the lot violated zoning regulations.

Landon, a former member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said the lot was approved by the town's wetlands commission, but was never brought to the attention of the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Conservation Lake Commission. The lot was stripped of all trees and bushes, an issue that Landon said could cause harmful runoff into the lake that will cause more algae to grow.

According to Landon, the state has bestowed the authority on the wetlands commission to allow for building, but he added that the council can overrule the decision. The foundations for the home and a garage have already been built.

On Tuesday, Town Manager John Weichsel said he had spoken with the town's building administrator Jim Carey, who informed Weichsel that all of the proper permits had been issued for the building. But Town Council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub questioned whether the property owners needed to apply

for a special permit from the Planning and Zoning Commission because the home was within 100 feet of wetlands. Weintraub said obtaining that permit would require a public hearing, as well.

With that in mind, Weintraub presented the council with an idea to conduct a third-party investigation into the matter. "We need an independent review to see if due process was followed," Weintraub said.

This idea drew strong criticism from the minority members on the board, who felt that Weintraub was acting on her own in presenting the council with a motion to begin an investigation. Councilor Ted Hintz swiftly opposed the idea, stating that there had "been very little communication" on the matter from Weintraub.

"You moved ahead with no input from the rest of the council," said councilor George Pfaffenbach. Councilor Barbara Moore added that she had spoken with members of the planning and zoning and conservation lake commissions, and she felt that those groups should be brought in to handle the matter.

Weichsel, however, approved of Weintraub's call for an investigation, calling the matter "a unique circumstance" because the building was already so far along.

The council voted 4-3, with Moore, Pfaffenbach and Hintz opposed, to approve the investigation. Weintraub said the investigation will be conducted by attorney Mark Branse of Glastonbury, who is also the chairman of the planning and zoning section of the Connecticut Bar Association. No date has been set for the investigation.

Another agenda item that drew considerable discussion was the matter of Sears Park sticker fees. Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Plummer was on hand to discuss the matter with the council, and recommended that the fees remain the same as last year.

But Hintz didn't approve of the fees, which would be \$10 per vehicle, \$5 for children and seniors, and \$5 for a day pass. Hintz felt as though the fees should be dropped altogether, and the town should simply allow residents to use the park as they please. "It's a service I believe we should provide our residents," Hintz added.

Plummer said that the revenue from the sticker fees brings in roughly \$10,000 per year for the town, a figure that Hintz said could be "made up somewhere else." Plummer and the council agreed that the fees for boats would still remain, which is currently \$50.

Plummer also added that if the council were to drop the fees, the town should still administer stickers to residents who look to obtain, as it would easily verify that they were residents of East Hampton.

Hintz made a motion to drop the fees for the stickers, which drew support from Moore and Pfaffenbach. The other council members, however, were more reticent. Councilor Kyle Dostaler said that before any decision was made, the council should look for a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission and then vote based on its findings.

Weintraub agreed. "We need to engage and embrace [the commission and advisory board]

and have them do their job first," she stated. The council rejected the motion 4-3, with Moore, Pfaffenbach, and Hintz in favor. The proposal to drop the fees is expected to be revisited at the council's next meeting, after the Parks and Recreation has discussed the matter.

The council also announced Tuesday it would sponsor a series of public forums to give residents a chance to voice opinions and suggestions on various town issues. The first such forum will be held on Thursday, Jan. 19, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School to discuss what the town would be looking for in a new town manager.

The council stated there would be three main questions that will be asked during the forum: what professional and technical skills should the town manager possess; what are the personal qualities and character traits desired in the town manager; and what are the main issues the town manager will need to resolve.

The forum will be facilitated by Mark Pellegrini, the director of planning and economic development for the town of Manchester. Pellegrini will also record the ideas gathered at the meeting and present them to the council at its next meeting.

For those unable to attend, questionnaires will be available at the town manager's office and on the town website. For more information, call 860-267-4468.

The next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

HES Principal Moving On

by Geeta Schrayter

Students at Hebron Elementary School (HES) will be calling someone new "principal" in the coming weeks, after the resignation of Kevin Hanlon. But the new principal is far from unfamiliar.

Hanlon, who has been HES principal since September 2009, submitted a letter of resignation Dec. 18. Hanlon has been appointed principal of Canton Intermediate School in Canton, and will start there in early February.

Hanlon said Wednesday the decision to leave Hebron had a lot to do with family.

"Hebron El is a great building and great things will continue to happen there – this is really a decision so I could be closer to my family," the West Hartford resident said.

Hanlon said he could tell from the beginning HES was a school doing "extremely well," and he knows it will continue to do so.

"Coming in, it was very obvious that there was an extremely developed staff and supportive families and really fantastic students," he said.

Hanlon described the ability of HES teachers, staff and parents to work together as something he'd take with him to his new position.

"I think much of the work that I've done, or the building has done, has been around how teachers work together collaboratively to help

student achievement" he said, adding "that collaborative work with parents has been an important part," as well, and he looks forward to continuing such collaborative efforts in Canton.

As far as what he'll miss, Hanlon stated "it's hard not to miss the students the most."

He went on to add, "That's not to say I won't miss the teachers and staff, but we're there for the students. It's going to be very hard not to miss them."

In his column for this month's *Talon's Tales*, the HES monthly newsletter, Hanlon wrote "while I am excited to work in another wonderful school that will allow me to be closer to my family, I will miss working with each child, parent and staff member at HES."

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz thanked Hanlon at the Jan. 5 Board of Education meeting "for his years of service." She also wished him "the very best in his new endeavor" and said he'd be missed at HES.

Board member Tina Marie Blinn agreed, saying, "We're going to miss you, but we understand."

Board of Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea said this week the board was "sorry to lose him, and we wish him good luck in his new district."

Hanlon's last day was today, but there won't be any search for a new principal, because the

individual Hanlon will, as he wrote, "pass on the principalship" to is the current assistant principal, Amy Campbell.

The board voted unanimously to appoint Campbell at the Jan. 5 meeting, and Shea said Campbell is "very familiar with staff and the students and the parents." She explained the board interviewed her in executive session with Cruz's recommendation, then came out and voted to appoint her principal of HES.

Shea said Campbell has been "learning and growing" in her role as assistant principal, and the board supported promoting from within and thought the decision was "fabulous."

Cruz wrote in a letter to parents from Jan. 6 that Campbell was "a highly qualified and well-established administrator."

Campbell has been assistant principal for the past year and a half, prior to which "she was a classroom teacher and special education teacher in Preston," where she was named Teacher of the Year in 2008, Cruz said.

She went on to say "we are very fortunate to have a person of Ms. Campbell's caliber to carry on the important work we have at not only Hebron Elementary School, but district-wide."

Campbell will act as interim principal next week, then begin her work as official principal on Jan. 23.



Kevin Hanlon

Massachusetts Man Found with Stolen Car, Drugs

by Bailey Seddon

A Massachusetts man was arrested this week after an off-duty trooper discovered him with crack/cocaine in his car, State Police said.

At 4:30 p.m. Jan. 7, police said, the trooper approached a "suspicious vehicle" on Chesterfield Road, and found the driver, Christopher Ciechowski, 48, of 595 North Hampton St., Apt. 8C, Holyoke MA, with what appeared to be crack/cocaine in plain view. Other troopers arrived on the scene and a field test

proved the trooper's suspicion to be true, police said.

Police also ran a vehicle registration and found the car Ciechowski was driving was stolen from West Springfield, MA, police said.

Ciechowski was charged with use of drug paraphernalia, possession of a narcotic, third-degree larceny (motor vehicle theft), sixth-degree larceny and credit card theft, police said.

Andover Establishes New Energy Committee

The Andover Board of Selectmen recently established a new energy committee.

As one of its first goals, the committee is exploring the feasibility of creating an oil buyers group within the town. The group would represent all residents who wish to purchase oil under a group agreement from a single vendor with the goal being to save money through the pooling of individual household oil purchases into a large multi-household contract.

The committee also wishes to highlight to town residents that a similar type of arrangement for the purchase of electricity was recently

approved by the Board of Selectmen. Under this agreement that took effect in October, town residents and businesses that enroll in the program can purchase the generation service portion of their electricity for a fixed rate of \$0.0819 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) through the summer of 2012. (The delivery service portion of the electricity bill remains unchanged under this agreement.)

If you have questions about the agreement or are interested in a potential oil-buyers' group, call Rick Linden on the town energy committee at 860-729-5817.

Andover School Board Adopts \$4.23 Million School Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

At Wednesday's Board of Education meeting, Superintendent of Schools Andrew Maneggia presented – and the school board adopted – a 2012-13 budget of \$4,230,885 - a 3.67 percent increase over the previous year.

"It's been a while since I've come to the Board of Education with this kind of an increase," he said Wednesday, "but as I go through, you'll see why this kind of request is necessary."

Prior to discussing each item line by line, Maneggia explained the budget is based on various "assumptions and constraints," including student enrollment, which was discussed earlier in the meeting.

At present, the number of kindergarten students registered for next year is 19, a significant drop from the 35 students currently in kindergarten.

Maneggia said earlier in the meeting if the number were to remain at 19, the decision could be made to reduce the number of kindergarten sessions from three to two; however, he added he would prefer a decision "wait until February, because we could get a number of late registrations that could change this complete picture."

But he noted that "obviously the decision the board makes in February could have implications for the budget."

On Thursday, Board of Education Chairman Jay Linddy explained everything would change if the number of kindergarten classes dropped from three to two, as it would mean the budget increase would decrease from the stated 3.67 percent to 2.4 percent.

He added it looks like that will be the case, but the school board was waiting until February to be certain.

"We do everything legit," he said, adding "we don't hide anything."

Other assumptions made when preparing the 2012-13 budget were that there will be "no unanticipated or unbudgeted additional expenses,"

grants will be utilized "to offset expenses," the costs for heating oil, diesel and gas included in the budget may change, funding for staff requests will be "limited to essential items" and the special education excess cost grant is factored in the budget.

Maneggia also presented the board with a list of district expenditures per pupil based on Strategic School Profiles prepared by the State of Connecticut. He noted Andover Elementary School (AES) has consistently been below state average.

During the 2009-10 school year, AES expended \$12,262 per pupil compared to \$14,049 – a 14.6 percent difference. A year before that, \$11,790 was expended per pupil compared to \$13,721 – a 16 percent difference.

This is "good ammunition for the Board of Education," said Maneggia. "It speaks well to your expenditures and how you manage your money."

Significant increases for the 2012-13 budget include a \$23,724 difference over last year in 'Object 100' items, which include salaries, wages, contractual obligations and degree changes - \$2,747,577 up from \$2,723,853. It was noted it will be necessary to replace \$42,500 in federal job stabilization funds.

'Object 200' items, which include medical and dental insurance, will increase to \$672,626 from \$630,667, for a difference of \$41,959.

"Insurance has gone up dramatically," said Maneggia, who said they were basically talking about a 20 percent increase, but "rather than add 20 percent to [the budget], we took every individual who has insurance and figured how much it would cost the Board of Education."

He added the numbers could alter if someone marries or has a child and changes their insurance policy from one person to two, or a family plan.

'Object 500' items, which include tuitions and transportation, increased \$68,480 to \$302,895.

Maneggia explained this is "due primarily to added costs for buses and outplacement."

Outplacement increased to \$121,000 from \$60,000 in the current year due to another student outplacement, Maneggia said, calling the item a "major, major increase."

Regular transportation increased in the proposed budget to \$147,379 from \$142,397 during the 2012-13 year. Maneggia explained the costs of buses is shared 50/50 with RHAM, but there are three days where the school has to pay the contract in full.

The cost of fuel for heating and transportation was discussed as a major cause for the \$30,758 increase in the 'Object 600' items, which also includes textbooks and supplies.

The cost of heat energy was calculated using an estimated oil price of \$3.50 per gallon. During the current year, the cost is \$2.98 per gallon. The cost for the 2012-13 year was then estimated to be \$112,000, up from \$90,000.

The cost of gasoline was also calculated, and Maneggia stated the increase to \$7,458 from \$2,300 was because "we're going to be running a van to West Hartford every day round trip" for the student outplacement.

Maneggia said he researched how long the trip would take each day – about 102 miles – and, using an estimated gasoline price of \$3.70 and a vehicle that received 15 miles per gallon, calculated an added cost of \$5,158 worth of gasoline for the year.

"There's some rhyme or reason to everything that's in here," he said, adding that he did research to give the board the "best information" possible.

Some decreases were also present in the proposed budget. A decrease of \$6,301 was seen in 'Object 300' items, which include contracted services, and a decrease of \$3,650 could be found in 'Object 400' items, which include electricity, roof repairs and contracted maintenance services.

Maneggia noted in his budget packet each of the 'Object 400' items are "difficult to predict," and there were "no major reductions in any single account."

There was also a decrease of \$5,000 in 'Object 700' items, which includes equipment for staff, students and custodians as well as funding for the technology plan. The reduction was from the latter.

After Maneggia finished going over each item, Linddy said "we don't play the numbers game" by offering different versions of the budget for deliberation, like other towns. "We go line by line," he said, adding "we must acknowledge the people behind this – a lot of this work comes from Andy."

"We do appreciate [your work]," Linddy told Maneggia, joking, "we don't have any more money to give you – but we do appreciate it."

Other members expressed their appreciation for Maneggia's work as well.

Member Kim Hawes thanked Maneggia for his "hard work," while member Christina Tamburro said the budget was "very meticulously done."

A motion was then made by Whitney Covell to adopt the proposed budget, and while most votes are normally cast by voice, this time around, Linddy felt raising hands would be more appropriate.

"Hand vote," he said. "We don't spend four million dollars every night."

The budget was approved unanimously, and will be presented to the Board of Finance on Feb. 9, after which a public hearing will be scheduled.

"You have a commitment to offer that," Maneggia said of the public hearing, "so no one can say you're being secretive."

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting will be held Wednesday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. at the AES library.

Portland Police News

1/3: Douglas Wagner, 45, who police listed as no certain address, was charged with three counts of failure to appear and three counts of failure to respond to an infraction, Portland Police said.

1/7: Bryce Graskoski, 35, of 80 Stephen Tom Rd., was charged with DUI and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

East Hampton Police News

12/25: Samuel Ito Estrada Jr., 21, of Newport Rd., Sterling, was arrested for possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

12/29: Heather Jane McHugh, 24, of 7 Cedarbrook Ln., East Lyme, was arrested for DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

12/29: A 16-year-old juvenile of East Hampton was issued a summons for criminal trespass on school grounds, police said.

1/4: Dawn Olsen, 57, of 12 Middletown Ave., was arrested for third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Colchester Police News

1/4: Joseph Laduke, 28, of 82 James St., Torrington, was charged with sixth-degree larceny and second-degree forgery, State Police said.

1/4: Devin Shinkle, 23, of 112 Olenick Rd., Lebanon, was charged with two counts of failure to appear, State Police said.

1/6: A 17-year-old female juvenile was charged with possession of a controlled substance, State Police said.

1/8: Andrew Bates, 19, of 19 Gustafson Rd., was charged with failure to respond to an infraction, State Police said.

1/8: Keith J. Laferriene, 29, of 1530 Hartford Tpke., East Killingly, was charged with two counts of fourth-degree larceny, State Police said.

Andover Police News

1/4: Timothy McGuire, 40, of 35 Yorkshire Dr., was charged with evading, operating under suspension, having no insurance, failure to drive in the right lane and having an expired registration, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

1/6: Brian J. Burgess, 20, of 150 Wellswood Rd., Amston, was charged with illegal sale of a controlled substance, interfering with an officer and possession of a controlled substance, State Police said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I hope the most recent round of Friendly's closings over the weekend— which included the sudden shuttering of the Glastonbury store as well as the one I most frequented, the one on Spencer Street in Manchester — are the last ones for the restaurant chain. The company announced this week it has successfully emerged from the Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection it entered in October.

The company said that during the past three months, it has initiated a “comprehensive turnaround strategy designed to improve operations across all business segments.” Part of this strategy included attempting to restructure the lease agreements at “a number of” locations where the company said it believed rents were not reflecting current market conditions. Unfortunately, it couldn't strike new pacts with all of the locations, and thus 37 outlets — including the two I mentioned above — abruptly closed.

While it stinks those restaurants closed, I am heartened that Friendly's has come out of bankruptcy protection and I hope its changes can keep the chain afloat. I've always enjoyed Friendly's. Its food is not overly fancy, nor does it aim to be. It's basic, comfort-level food. It's rather soothing that you can walk in a Friendly's and everything — from the décor to the menu offerings — are roughly the same as they were 15 or 20 years ago.

But of course, where Friendly's really shines is its ice cream. The Reese's Peanut Butter Cup sundae has consistently been my favorite offering of theirs over the years. It has it all: vanilla ice cream, delicious peanut butter sauce, hot fudge, whipped cream and a cherry. Oh, and a peanut butter cup, just to push you over the top.

* * *

Speaking of food, there's a nice little mom-and-pop place in Glastonbury called the Commerce Eatery. It's got a homey feel, and inside, on its walls, is a list called something like “thoughts from old people.” It's a whimsical collection of “back in my day” thoughts, and when I see it I'm often reminded of an email I got once that was a similar collection of random thoughts — although this time, the thoughts were contributed by people between 25 and 35 years of age. It was funny — and a little eerie — how many of these thoughts struck a chord with me.

So, I thought I'd offer up some highlights. If you're in that same demographic, they might hit home with you too. Yes, these thoughts are really quite random but, whether you care to admit or not, many of them are thoughts you've probably had at least once or twice.

—I totally take back all those times I didn't want to nap when I was younger.

—Do you remember when you were a kid, playing Nintendo and it wouldn't work? You take the cartridge out, blow in it and that would magically fix the problem. Every kid in America did that, but how did we all know how to fix the problem? There was no Internet or message boards or FAQs. We just figured it out. Today's kids are soft.

—There is a great need for a sarcasm font.

—How the hell are you supposed to fold a fitted sheet?

—I would rather try to carry 10 plastic grocery bags in each hand than take two trips to bring my groceries in.

—“LOL” has gone from meaning “laugh out loud” to “I have nothing else to say.”

—I have a hard time deciphering the fine line between boredom and hunger.

— Answering the same letter three times or more in a row on a Scantron test is absolutely petrifying.

—MapQuest really needs to start their directions on No. 5. Pretty sure I know how to get out of my neighborhood.

—There's no worse feeling than that millisecond you're sure you are going to die after leaning your chair back a little too far.

—I hate being the one with the remote in a room full of people watching TV. There's so much pressure. ‘I love this show, but will they judge me if I keep it on? I bet everyone is wishing we weren't watching this. It's only a matter of time before they all get up and leave the room. Will we still be friends after this?’

— I hate when I just miss a call by the last ring (Hello? Hello? Dammit!), but when I immediately call back, it rings nine times and goes to voicemail. What'd you do after I didn't answer? Drop the phone and run away?

—I hate leaving my house confident and looking good and then not seeing anyone of importance the entire day. What a waste.

—It really bugs me when I want to read a story on [CNN.com](#) and the link takes me to a video instead of text.

—Even under ideal conditions people have trouble locating their car keys in a pocket or Pinning the Tail on the Donkey, but I bet everyone can find and push the snooze button from three feet away, in about 1.7 seconds, eyes closed, first time every time.

—I wonder if cops ever get pissed off at the fact that everyone they drive behind obeys the speed limit.

—I think the freezer deserves a light as well.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

Colchester

Hilkka Lehtinen Memorial Mass

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, second Catholic memorial service, will be offered for the repose of the soul of the late Hilkka Lehtinen (1921-2011) at the Cathedral of St. Patrick in Norwich on Sunday, Jan. 15, at 10:30 a.m., by longtime family friend Nancy (Barbarossa) DePietro of Norwich.

Lehtinen, a Lutheran, was honored by a funeral on March 5, 2011, at the Federated Congregational Church in Colchester, and a Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral on July 31.

Friends and family are invited by Merja Lehtinen for a coffee at home from 3-4 p.m. in Colchester.

Portland

Nicole Kathryn Horton

Nicole "Nikki" Kathryn Horton, 18, of Portland, beloved daughter of Robert L. Horton of Middletown and Katherine (King) Horton of Portland, passed away Sunday, Jan. 8, at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford.

Born on Dec. 31, 1993 in Middletown, she loved dancing, music, the Internet and hanging out with her friends.

Besides her parents, she leaves her maternal grandmother, Phyllis Bordonaro of Portland; step-grandfather, Ruberto Serrano of Cromwell; paternal grandparents, Dennis and Jane Horton of West Virginia; stepmother, Paula Horton of Middletown; godmother, Judy Berkley and her husband, Ray of Portland; a godson, Richard Smith III, lots of aunts, uncles and cousins who loved her and her close friends Sabrina, Kelsey, Mary and Brittany.

She was predeceased by her grandfather, Richard E. King.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Jan. 12, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in Trinity Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday morning at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to the Connecticut Children's Medical Center 282 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106.

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

East Hampton

Jack A. Wallis

Jack A. Wallis, 86, of Hendersonville, NC, formerly of East Hampton and Stafford Springs, went to be with the Lord, Saturday, Dec. 31, peacefully at Park Ridge Hospital.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Ellen Ann Wallis, his parents, State Representative Jack Samuel Wallis and Lillian Wallis of East Hampton, and three brothers, Carl G., George and Russell Wallis.

He is survived by his daughter, Jacki Lynn Tatsch and her husband Ed of Hendersonville, NC; his grandson, Bryan Edward Tatsch; a sister, Patricia Terry of New York and several nieces and nephews.

Jack was born in Brooklyn, NY, served in Burma in the U.S. Army in World War II and lived in Connecticut for most of his life. He retired from Pratt and Whitney Aircraft before moving to Henderson County, NC, in 2003. He was also an avid amateur radio operator.

A private memorial service for Jack was held with military honors conducted by the Henderson County Honor Guard.

Condolence cards may be sent to the family at jacksonfuneralservice.com or to PO Box 945, Hendersonville, NC 28793.

Marlborough/Hebron

George Joseph Olszewski Jr.

George Joseph Olszewski Jr., 72, of Wethersfield, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Jan. 3, at Hartford Hospital, after a courageous battle with lung cancer. George was born on Jan. 13, 1939, in Hartford to the late George and Nellie (Melnick) Olszewski.

He was predeceased by his newborn daughter, Elizabeth.

George proudly served his country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He was awarded a Vietnam Service Medal, a National Defense Service Medal and a Good Conduct Medal. George was a 42-year member of the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union No. 40. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, cooking, UConn basketball and NFL football. His children have fond memories of camping, fishing and attending horseshows with him. In his later years, he enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren who were his pride and joy. His family and friends will fondly remember his wry humor and pranks.

He leaves behind his former wife and dear friend, Doris Conway of Marlborough; his devoted and cherished daughters, Dorothea Blomquist of Skaneateles, NY, Laura Lessard and her husband Darren of Hebron, Gloria Tardif of Marlborough and Linda Romanowski and her husband Ryan of Darien; and his grandchildren, Christie, Tyler, Owen, Caitlynn, Ethan, Luke and Lillian. He also leaves his sister, Loretta Cassasanta and her husband Valentino of Enfield; a brother, Richard Olszewski of Hanover, NH; and nieces and nephews.

Funeral services and burial have already taken place. The D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, Wethersfield was in charge of arrangements.

Donations can be made in George's memory for General Scholarships at the University of Connecticut. Please make checks payable to The UConn Foundation, Inc., 2390 Alumni Dr., Unit 3206, Storrs, CT 06269 or to the Soldiers', Sailors' and Marines' Fund, 864 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford, CT 06114.

For online expressions of sympathy to the family, please visit desopo.com.

Portland

Ann M. Aurigemma

Ann M. Aurigemma, 71, of Perry Street, Portland, beloved wife of John A. Aurigemma, died Friday, Jan. 6, at her residence surrounded by her family. Born July 6, 1940, in Hartford, daughter of the late John and Pauline (Stein) Waslauski, Ann had been a resident of Portland most of her life. She was retired from the Carpenters Local 24.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her loving family: two sons, Richard Stebbins of Clinton, Raymond Stebbins of Portland; two daughters, Kathleen Daley of Middletown, Francine D'Amico of Portland; two brothers, Joseph Kozyra of FL, Edward Kozyra of Coventry; three sisters, Joan Waslauski of Bloomfield, Kathleen Anselmo of Enfield, Eileen Hoyt of Ellington; 12 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; also several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Jan. 11, in the Coughlin-Lastrina Funeral Home, 491 High St., Middletown. Burial was private. Friends called at the funeral home Wednesday before the service.

Those who wish may make memorial contributions to St. Francis of Assisi Church, 10 Elm St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Portland

Lois Angeline Eastman

Lois Angeline (Lowrey) Eastman, 91, of Cromwell, wife of the late Arnold E. Eastman, passed away Thursday, Jan. 5, at Pilgrim Manor in Cromwell. Born in Little Rock, AR, she was the daughter of the late Amos and Nettie (Dean) Lowrey.

Lois lived in Cromwell since 1991 moving from Portland and had founded the Homemaker Service in Middletown in the early 1960s and was its director until her retirement in 1983. She was a member of Hilltop Covenant Church in Cromwell and was a veteran of World War II, serving in the Army Nurse Corps earning the rank of second lieutenant.

Lois is survived by her son, John A. Eastman of Jefferson City, MO; her daughter, Martha D. Eastman of Lakewood, CO; and a grandson, Erik E. Baker of Lakewood, CO.

Along with her husband and parents, she was predeceased by her brother, A. C. Lowrey and sister, Martha Landrum.

A memorial service will be held in the spring and burial will be at the convenience of the family. There will be no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, friends may make donations in Lois' memory to CVOC Employee Christmas Fund and are asked to contact family for further details.

The Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown, is handling the arrangements. Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Portland

Celestino Mazzotta

Celestino "Sully" Mazzotta, 89, husband of the late Josephine (Fazzino) Mazzotta, of One McDonough Pl., Middletown, formerly of Portland, died Monday, Dec. 20, at Middlesex Hospital.

He was born Nov. 20, 1922, in Melilli, Sicily, son of the late Vincent and Vincenza (Alessi) Mazzotta. Prior to his retirement he was employed by Standard Knapp. He was a veteran of World War II, serving with the U.S. Army.

Sully was a great cook and loved to entertain his family and friends. His pizzas, pasta with meatballs and apple pie were his specialties. He was the ultimate host and loved cooking for his family every Sunday. He loved watching his favorite sports teams, which included the New York Giants, the New York Yankees and UConn women's basketball team. He always looked forward to his annual trip to Saratoga Springs for a fun day of horse racing. He loved to spend his summers tending to his manicured lawn and always received many compliments.

One of his wishes in life was to go back to Melilli, Sicily, where he was born and left at the age of 10. His wish came true in May 2006 when he returned to his hometown for a two-week visit. Sully's grandchildren adored him and loved to listen to his entertaining stories.

He was a great husband, father and friend and will be missed by all.

He is survived by a son, Vincent Mazzotta and daughter-in-law Susan Keane of East Hartford; two daughters, Janet Mazzotta and her partner Mark MacDonald of Avon, and Joan Koller and her husband Michael Koller of Portland; grandchildren Leisha Eckerlin and her husband Gregg of Colorado, Stephen Nocera and his wife Amanda of Simsbury, David and Jill Koller of Portland, Jeff Koller of New Britain, and Daniel and Kate Mazzotta of East Hartford; great-grandchildren Max, Mason, Miles and Matthew Eckerlin and Joshua Nocera; also, a special friend, Alice Marshall, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, Dec. 28, at the D'Angelo Funeral Home, 22 South Main St. Relatives and friends called at the funeral home Wednesday before the service.

Online condolences can be made at dangelofuneralhome.com.

