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# News Bulletin

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Retired Memorial School teacher Susan Rizzo Vincent, right, recently authored a book titled *Drea's Dream: An Unfinished Dance*, which chronicles her relationship with her late daughter Andrea Rizzo, right, and how she has been able to carry on after her tragic death at age 24.

## 'Remain Open to the Love That Surrounds You'

by Joshua Anusewicz

Having experienced the worst possible tragedy a parent can endure, a former East Hampton teacher has put her memories into words with her first book, titled *Drea's Dream: An Unfinished Dance - Lessons of Love, Loss, Hope and Healing*.

"It chronicles our journey and each chapter teaches a lesson I learned that got me through," said Susan Rizzo Vincent, a former Memorial School teacher for close to 30 years and author of *Drea's Dream*. "It's about how I opened my heart to the love around me."

That journey all began when her daughter – her only child – Andrea was born. At just 18 months old, Andrea was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a form of cancer, which required continued treatments at Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. Despite some learning disabilities, Andrea recovered and attended East Hampton schools, going on to Mercy High School in Middletown and Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I., graduating in 2000.

Like her mother, Andrea wanted to become a teacher, majoring in special education and taking a job at an elementary school in Narragansett, R.I. After teaching all week, Andrea would then travel to New York City on the weekends to take graduate classes at New York

University, specializing in dance therapy.

Dance was always Andrea's outlet, Susan said. Not only did it help her in her cancer recovery and combat her learning disabilities, it gave her "self-confidence," her mother said. Instructed by Sharon Mulcahy at Studio 62 in East Hampton, dancing became Andrea's passion, and helping those that struggled like she had through dance would become her life goal.

"She knew the impact that dance had on her life and she wanted to show how dance had impacted her own healing," Susan said. "Dance was her refuge and it made a huge difference in her life."

During this time, at Andrea's request, the mother and daughter team had begun writing a memoir of their life experiences together, in hopes of "inspiring people to never give up," Susan said, no matter what life throws your way. With busy schedules, the two worked on the book together when they could, moving through the process together slowly.

In May 2002, however, the book would get a very different ending. While traveling back from New York, Andrea, just 24 years old, was killed by a drunk driver while driving in the Bronx. The beautiful girl who had beaten the odds to become a college graduate, a success-

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## Chinese Students Pay Visit to Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

On Tuesday morning, students at Hebron Elementary School started their day by welcoming a group of Chinese students and teachers to both the town and country. At a special assembly, the group of seven students and four teachers walked into the auditorium to a round of applause as they offered up smiles and waves.

As the guests took their seats and the band played the national anthem, Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz asked the school to say "hello" to the newcomers quietly and calmly. She instructed them to turn to the guests and say "ni hao ma" which means "how are you?" When they did so, the visitors nodded their heads in response as their smiles widened.

Cruz explained the arrival of the Chinese group was years in the making. The partnership between Hebron and China began with a visit she took in 2007 as a result of Hebron's involvement in the Connecticut-Shandong Province Partnership. The state Department of Education said the partnership "called for the formation of sister schools to facilitate cultural exchange for students and educators." The goal is to prepare students for an international world, foster cultural understanding between the two countries and learn about different forms of classroom instruction.

In April, the relationship between Hebron and

the Shandong Province strengthened as a group of four teachers, six students and nine relatives and community members from Hebron went on their own adventure to Linyi Elementary School in China. At the assembly, Cruz said having a group visit from the school in return was a "wonderful, wonderful thing."

"We're fortunate to have been blessed with your friendship," she said, adding "we're delighted the day has finally come."

As the assembly progressed, the school welcomed their guests with a number of performances. The third-graders read a poem and depicted how interconnected the world is with a chain link. The fifth-graders used the alphabet to share special things from Hebron and the community that ranged from "caring" to the Douglas Library, friendship, learning new things and the Hebron Maple Fest. Then, the sixth graders presented some features of both America and China (written in both English and Chinese) like each country's flower: the rose in America and the plum blossom in China.

After the students finished sharing their performances, the Chinese students presented one of their own. After being introduced to the crowd, they sang "Jingle Bells" in both English and Chinese that received a roar of applause.

Shortly after, the assembly ended and stu-

See Chinese Students Page 2



At a special assembly on Tuesday, Dec. 4, a group of Chinese students and teachers were welcomed to Hebron Elementary School for the week. After Hebron students shared a number of performances with the visitors, they returned the gesture and sang "Jingle Bells" to the crowd in both English and Chinese.

**Holiday Shopping Guide Inside**



**Drea's Dream cont. from Front Page**

ful dancer, and a budding teacher was gone.

Susan said that after her daughter's death, the support she received was overwhelming: family, friends, colleagues, even friends of Andrea's, all reached out to console Susan and her family during the difficult time. Shortly after Andrea's death, in August 2002, the Andrea Rizzo Foundation was established to fund pediatric dance therapy research nationwide, in hopes of continuing Andrea's work and her dream.

Left in the lurch, understandably, was the book. Despite the unspeakable tragedy and not having her partner by her side, Susan felt it necessary to finish what they had started.

"It was really and truly something we wanted to do," she explained. "I felt that I could carry the torch and speak to those who are coping with tragedy."

So despite now being the only writer, and despite daily travel to East Hampton from her new home in Charlestown, R.I., Susan soldiered on, framing the book as a look back on her daughter and how she was able to get through unfortunate events in her life. The message of the book, Susan explained, was to "remain open to the love that surrounds you" and "find the silver lining" in every thing that happens to you, good or bad.

"I wanted to make a difference with this book," Susan said, "just like Andrea wanted to do."

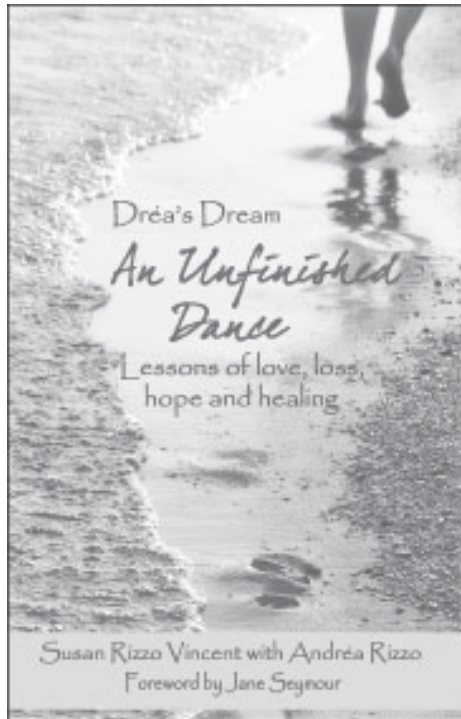
And despite her passing, Andrea continues to make an incredible difference in people's lives everyday. The Andrea Rizzo Foundation, known better as "Drea's Dream," has grown exponentially, helping fund dance therapy programs across the country and drawing the attention of countless people, including Carrie Ann Inaba, the national spokesperson for the foundation and judge on the hit ABC program *Dancing With The Stars*.

The foundation's relationship with the television program, Susan said, began in 2007, when Susan approached the show to see if four pediatric cancer patients with an interest in dance could attend the show. Those on the show that season were "touched by the cause," Susan said, including actress Jane Seymour, who has done various charitable works through her Open Hearts Foundation.

A few years later, while planning a charity auction for the Andrea Rizzo Foundation, Susan said a board member recommended reaching out to Seymour, who is also an accomplished artist, to see if she would be interested in donating a painting. Remembering the foundation, Seymour happily accepted.

But in the last year, it was Seymour's turn to contact Susan; in 2011, Susan was invited to the first annual Open Hearts Gala at Seymour's home in Malibu, Calif., where she was named one of the recipients of the Open Hearts Award, alongside former NFL running back Emmitt Smith and television personality Robin Roberts.

With the two seemingly returning good deeds to one another, Susan didn't hesitate to ask Seymour if she would be interested in writing a foreword for her book, which she completed after she retired from Memorial School last year. Seymour accepted, adding a glowing review for the memoir, as well.



**Part of the proceeds from *Drea's Dream* will go to the Andrea Rizzo Foundation, which helps raise funds for dance therapy programs for children diagnosed with cancer. The foreword of the book is written by actress and artist Jane Seymour.**

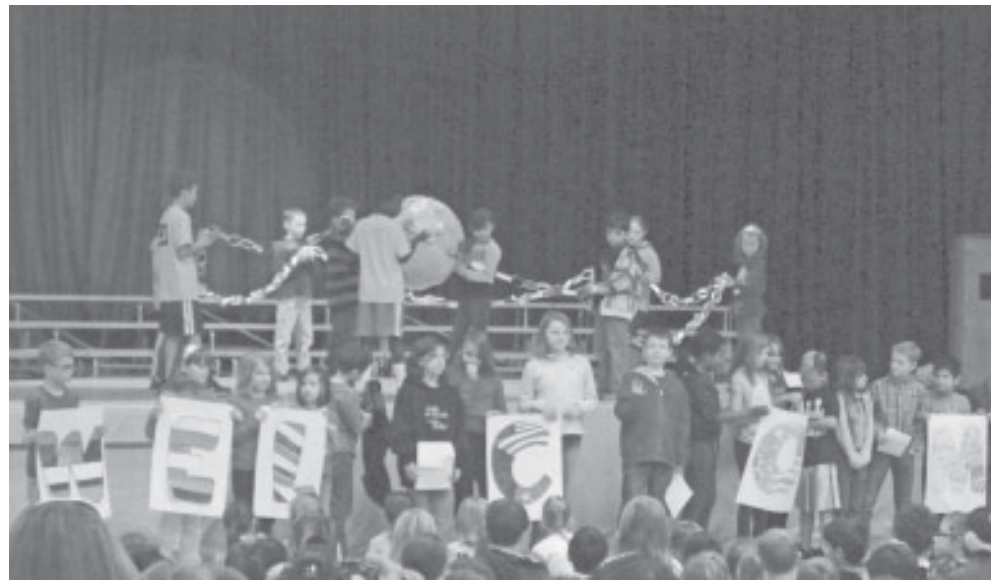
"*Drea's Dream: An Unfinished Dance* will empower parents facing the devastating news of their child's cancer diagnosis as well as parents of any child facing disabilities," Seymour stated. "In addition, it offers inspiration to dancers, who know firsthand the therapeutic value of dance as a healing modality and to anyone who is looking for an inspiring story of a mother's and daughter's everlasting bond. For parents who have actually lost a child, this book provides a guiding light and offers help to find a reason to go on when such tragedy strikes."

Part of the proceeds from the book, which has received rave reviews since its release in October, will go to the Andrea Rizzo Foundation, which continues to help young children heal through the art of dance. "It helps the people who read it and helps the foundation at the same time," Susan said.

But it's those who have experienced tragedy, who have reached a low they'd never imagined, and have the odds stacked against them that Susan – and Andrea – always wanted to reach.

"Even if this book helps just one person, my goal and Andrea's goal will have been achieved," Susan said.

"A wonderful gift" for the holiday season, Susan said, *Drea's Dream: An Unfinished Dance* can be found on both [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [bn.com](http://bn.com), as well as [susanrizzosusan.com](http://susanrizzosusan.com), where you can order an autographed copy from Susan. Autographed copies are also available at two locations in East Hampton: Red Door Boutique in the Village Center, 73 Main St., and Paul's and Sandy's Too, 93 E. High St.



**Third-graders at Hebron Elementary School welcomed a group of students and teachers from China on Tuesday by sharing a poem while, in the background, kids used a giant chain link to depict how interconnected the world is.**

**Chinese Students cont. from Front Page**

dents returned to their classrooms to start their day. During the week, the students will attend school while the teachers take part in classroom observations and discussions on different practices and methods in the two countries. The visitors will also experience different aspects of American culture by staying with host families.

Board of Education member Tina-Marie Blinn and her family are hosting a 10-year-old girl named Su Tianrain, and right from the beginning, Blinn said she and her husband became attached to Su, despite not knowing the same language.

"She's wonderful," said Blinn, who added her "conservative engineer" husband surprised her the most when he agreed to host Su, and said shortly after meeting her that he was amazed how much he wanted to take care of her and how quickly they had become attached.

"Americans have a tendency to be standoffish," said Blinn. "We don't talk to our neighbors as much as we used to." Su, though, was very welcoming, Blinn said.

During the week, Su has accompanied Blinn's daughter Meredith to school and has taken part in the family's regular routine which includes piano lessons and Tae Kwon Do classes.

"A lot of families have different plans [with their student] but a lot of it is surrounding home life," Blinn explained.

Blinn joked that her biggest anxiety was making sure Su ate, since the Chinese diet is very different from theirs. But with the help of Google Translate, Blinn's been able to discern, for instance, that Su likes her eggs hard-boiled not scrambled, and likes milk but not orange juice.

"My biggest anxiety is making sure she eats," said Blinn, but she added she hopes a relationship will be forged with her kids, and that the experience helps her children realize there's a big world outside of Hebron.

"We're hoping to establish a tight relationship," she said.

Karen Beard and her family are also hosting a student, 12-year-old Li Nuo (whose American name is Sunny). Beard explained she and her daughter Katie were two of the participants in April's trip to China, and when they learned a group would be coming to Hebron, they were "thrilled" and excited, and knew they wanted to host a child or teacher.

Then, in a twist of fate, it was discovered that Sunny wasn't a total stranger to the Beard family. During their trip to China, Katie and Sunny had actually played together.

"She is very sweet – she fit right into our family immediately," said Beard, sharing the very first night Nuo played Twister and ping-pong with Beard's three daughters and there

were "lots of giggles and smiles." Beard added Sunny was adventurous and willing to try anything.

"We have special tea from China, but she wanted to try hot cocoa," she said. "We decorated the tree [Tuesday] night and let her turn on the lights – her eyes just lit up."

On Wednesday, Sunny's day included decorating Christmas cookies, and today, the "American experience," includes going with the family to watch one of the Beard girls play soccer.

"It's also very American to shuttle your child around after school," Beard laughed.

For Beard, it didn't matter that Sunny and her family didn't understand the same language.

"The whole experience transcends language – it shows us the world is such a small place," she stated, adding although there were many differences "we are all the same at the core."

On Thursday, Cruz said the visit had "exceeded every expectation."

"Their visit to us signifies a relationship that will endure over time, and I think that the mutual understandings and reciprocal benefits are beyond our dreams," she said.

Throughout the day Thursday, Cruz said the students would be visiting classrooms at Gilead Hill School, and they'd already performed Christmas and Chinese songs that morning for a group of teachers. She said the Chinese instructors would sit in on data team meetings, and take part in a round table to discuss different teaching practices.

Cruz added the visit helps Hebron's children develop global understanding in light of the merge between the two cultures that is already occurring. In addition, it shows how language isn't a barrier.

"The children are [communicating through] playing and they're learning how to do high fives," Cruz laughed. And the parents of the students, she said, "feel their children are being given such a gift."

State Rep. Pam Sawyer was present at Tuesday's assembly to welcome the guests, and on Thursday, she called the visit "very special."

"Hebron has such a successful school that is located in one of the most beautiful parts of the world, and here is a group of students and teachers who come halfway around the world to be with them – it's just very special," Sawyer said.

"But also for Hebron's students, who live in a suburban area that is not heavily racially-mixed, it's an opportunity for them to broaden their horizons," she added. "And it's up close and personal, not from a book, not from a movie, not from just a pen pal letter."

"The visit couldn't be more meaningful," Cruz furthered, adding plans were already underway for another visit to China in April.



# Hartford Symphony Orchestra to Return to Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

For most people, the next few weeks provide more than enough to think about. The holiday season is usually packed with events to attend and plan for and plenty of festive tasks to keep one occupied. But for some, sights are set beyond Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, New Year's or any other holiday that falls during this time, focused instead on the return of The Hartford Symphony Orchestra (HSO) in March.

On Wednesday morning, members of the Hebron Women's Club, AHM Children's Trust Fund and the RHAM Education Foundation, who work together to make this event a reality, gathered with incoming state Sen. Cathy Osten and state Rep. Pam Sawyer to announce the return of the orchestra.

"Not only is this a huge cultural event," said Hebron Women's Club member Marsha Tecca, "but it's with three huge groups working together" who have formed a "lovely, lovely relationship."

Proceeds from the concert will help support the work of the three groups.

The performance, which will take place on March 23 in the RHAM High School auditorium, is entitled "the Genius of Mozart," and is an all-Mozart performance with a violin concerto and a clarinet concerto.

Tecca explained that at last year's event – which was nearly sold out and had an audience that represented 28 towns – the idea was to make the performance "huge," with a full orchestra. But this time, the concept is a bit smaller in scope.

"We're having an intimate concert this year," she said, sharing it would be more in line with the type of concert Mozart would have himself played at.

The performance will include the first symphony Mozart created at the age of 8, as well as the last piece he wrote. Susan Griffiths of the RHAM Education Foundation said that, for the children in attendance, realizing the piece they're listening to is something an 8-year old made could be an inspiring experience.

Tecca added the HSO had also been asked to come up with lesson plans that could be given to the local schools, thereby adding an educa-

tional component to the event.

"We want to enrich the life of our community," she said.

Prior to the performance and new this year, guests will have the opportunity to take part in a discussion with the HSO's concertmaster, conductor and violin soloist, Leonid Sigal.

Sigal, who was born in Russia, began his violin studies at the age of five. He attended the renowned Gnessin School in Moscow then went on to graduate with excellence from the Moscow Conservatory. He is the winner of several violin competitions and the 1993 Meadows Artistic Scholarship Award. In addition to Mozart, Sigal has performed concertos by Brahms and Sibelius with the HSO and has conducted the HSO in the works of such greats as Beethoven, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Glazunov and Prokofiev.

For individuals who are familiar with the above music this event offers the opportunity to experience the music provided by the HSO with ticket prices that, at \$20 general admission, are something Sawyer said you just "can't beat."

Then, for parents who have attended countless concerts with their own child musicians, this performance affords them the opportunity to experience what Sawyer called "the pinnacle of hopes for their kids and grandkids."

And for those for whom the above names are wholly unknown, the event is the perfect chance to change all that.

"Some kids may not hear classical at home but they're interested after this," said Osten. "It's good to see kids get involved because you never know what will pique their interest."

Osten added when budgets are tight, arts and music are usually the first things that get cut in schools. She called this "detrimental" but a reality, and said the concert is a way "to engage people in what could become a lost art."

Lynn Archambault, who is also with the RHAM Education Foundation, added the performance was perfect for individuals "east of the river" who don't like to go into Hartford, and Sawyer added the event had free parking, was easily accessible from four directions, meant guests wouldn't have to compete with



Area residents and state officials gathered Wednesday to announce the return of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra to RHAM next March. Pictured from left are Hebron Women's Club member Marsha Tecca, RHAM Education Foundation member Lynn Archambault, state Rep. Pam Sawyer, incoming state Sen. Cathy Osten, AHM Children's Trust Fund Chairwoman Kay Corl, RHAM Education Foundation member Susan Griffiths and AHM Board of Directors member Lynn Sansone.

rush hour traffic and boasted a venue with acoustic sound.

"The sound quality flows over you," said Griffiths, who said guests at last year's performance thought the sound was "fabulous."

"I've had tickets every year and it's the music highlight for this region," said Sawyer, adding it brought in professional musicians while also bringing together a "multi-town flavor."

"Bringing the symphony out of Hartford and into eastern Connecticut has put Hebron on the 'arts' map," she added. "The community and surrounding towns now look forward to the next performances! It has enriched our area."

Osten furthered area communities "greatly benefit" from the performance. She called it a

"wonderful event" and said it was "a great way to introduce this music to the families of the area."

The symphony returns to the RHAM High School Auditorium on March 23, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. The pre-concert discussion with Sigal begins at 6:30. Tickets are available now, and were touted Wednesday as the "perfect holiday gift."

Tickets cost is \$25 for premium/reserved seating, \$20 for general admission and \$15 for students and seniors. The pre-concert talk is an additional \$10 per person.

For more information or to order tickets, call Jackie Landrey at 860-228-8824. Ticket forms are also available at [rhameducationfoundation.org](http://rhameducationfoundation.org).

# Andover Selectmen Move Closer to Route 6 Development

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday made what selectwoman Julia Haverl said was "probably a historical moment" as they voted to join together with three area towns to work on the future development of Route 6.

Selectwoman Elaine Buchardt explained that, as a result of two studies done on the area, the most recent being a traffic study completed by the Capital Region Council of Governments (CROG) which examined an 11-mile stretch of Route 6 running through Bolton, Coventry, Andover and Columbia, the towns have "great plans" for development that now need implementing. Buchardt is a member of the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council, which formed four years ago with the purpose of coming up with – and now implementing – a development plan for the Route 6 corridor.

"We saw the need to get a staff person to put in the time to come up with a plan, develop projects and help us along with what we need to do," she said.

But for the towns involved, hiring a staff person to fill that position and working to make the development plans a reality becomes difficult – or near impossible – individually. However, by working together as a region and sharing costs and services it becomes more feasible.

Bolton Administrative Officer Joyce Stille, who is chairwoman of the Regional Economic Development Council, was present at the meeting to elaborate on the opportunity to apply for a grant meant for regional efforts between two or more towns. Like Buchardt, Stille explained the towns now had plans for Route 6, "but we all know budgets are tight. So therefore carry-

ing forward some of these opportunities are made possible by some of these grants."

If awarded, the grant would be used to fund a part-time staff person to work on these areas. The grant would also fund a "leakage study," which Buchardt said would examine how much money in the various towns is "leaking out" of the community due to services the towns don't offer, and ways to keep that money in the area by bringing in those services.

Lastly, the grant would be used to add proposed gateway signs along Route 6.

"So we're talking about proposing a grant that would cover all three of those areas and submitting it," said Buchardt.

Stille said she felt "very strongly" the towns had a good chance of receiving the grant, since they were a long-standing group.

"It's not we're just coming together; we have two studies behind us and grants behind us in the past," Stille said.

At the meeting, Stille was looking for a resolution of endorsement from the town saying they would work together with Bolton, which passed a similar motion at a meeting of that town's Board of Selectmen on Tuesday. Coventry selectmen are due to act on the issue later this month, while Columbia needs to have a town meeting before a resolution can be approved.

"This is the next logical step," she said. "We don't have the staff between us to share to make that next step... this is an opportunity for us to move forward."

Stille added at this point, the resolution was for the overall project – working together on plans of conservation and development for the

towns and sharing economic development services – not specifics, "but allowing the application to go forward."

Vice First Selectman Jay Lindy expressed some hesitation over the endorsement, and wondered if anyone knew how the public felt about the idea.

Stille said feedback received at public hearings, meetings and workshops had all been positive, but Lindy added "I've been to those workshops, but I don't see the bulk of people."

"We invite them all, Jay; we invite them all" but they don't show up, Buchardt responded.

But Haverl said the board was getting ahead of itself in wondering about public opinion, and called the resolution of endorsement a "straight-forward idea."

"We need planning. We stand to benefit the most," she said. "We don't have a planner. We don't pay a person to work on this and we're not attracting businesses. We've been spinning our wheels here."

Haverl furthered that since the changes were all a "vision" at this point, much public input shouldn't be expected. But when the vision turns into "concrete" plans they'll be taken to vote and the public will say whether they think the plans are "a lot better than the past or crazy."

"It's our job to take this forward or sit on our hands as we've done forever – and that's all [the Route 6 Regional Economic Development Council is] asking," Haverl stated.

Burbank added the plans for development that were presented in June as a result of the CROG study were only a suggestion, and would likely change as things moved forward.

"But we have to start somewhere and what they're trying to do is propose something that would be universal between the four towns," he said.

Selectwoman Cathy Desrosiers said simply having a "vision" for the town was something new – and a step in the right direction.

"I was born and raised in this town and it's never really had a vision, and the lack of business has crippled the growth in our taxes and makes it harder and harder for people to stay here and afford their homes," she said. "So we do need to start thinking about the next 50 years, not 10. I think if you put a vision together and each year chip away at it and let people see what's happening, I think that they will come to understand that it's a positive plan for the town."

"The important thing is that it's four towns together," said Haverl. "We're not that kind of town [that can do it on its own], we need to ban together with our neighbors."

Stille added she was a "strong proponent" in shared services, and working together would mean the towns get a "bigger bang for buck."

"What this does is, we both can benefit far more with the grant funding – and no funding out of our towns – than either one of us could do on our own," she said.

Two resolutions of endorsement: for the joint preparation of individual plans of conservation and development for the towns and for shared economic development services, passed unanimously.

"This doesn't seem like a lot," said Haverl, "but it's probably a historical moment."



# Portland's Trinity Church Preparing for Quasibicentennial

by Joshua Anusewicz

One of Portland's oldest institutions is getting ready for its quasibicentennial anniversary next year. Say what? Trinity Church will turn 225 on Sept. 24. And though the actual date is still a long way off, those at Trinity have plans to celebrate the historic occasion all year long.

Predating the town itself, Trinity Church, an Episcopal parish, was formed in 1788 by a group of 11 families in what was then Chatham; according to a written history that was developed during the church's 200th anniversary in 1988, the families were looking to form a church closer to home than the other parishes in not-so-nearby (at the time, anyway) Middletown, Wallingford and Norwich. With the help of the rector of Holy Trinity in Middletown, the parish was organized and Trinity Church took off in its own direction.

Made a formal organization in 1789, Trinity Church built its first structure in 1790. A second location was built in 1832 and stood until 1874, when it was demolished to make way for the existing structure, which was completed in 1882.

The current parish, located at 345 Main St., is considered one of the most visually-stunning buildings in Portland, with its towering turrets and brownstone exterior. The Gothic architecture on the outside is only rivaled by the ornate detail inside, with carved brownstone columns, hand-carved woodwork, stunning stained glass, and vaulted ceilings. Unique aspects are seen throughout, including colorful mosaic tiling leading up to a one-of-a-kind high altar fashioned from brownstone and marble, all installed during the church's original construction.

But although much has remained the same at Trinity, a fair amount has changed. What was once a chapel attached to the main church building is now a multi-use room that is used for such activities as coffee hour after Sunday Masses; a new front entryway, fashioned with similar accents as the rest of the church, and removed pews near the entrance to create a larger welcoming space; and a parish house that

is attached to the church building, replacing its original location in an adjacent building, which the parish sold years ago.

In the parish house is the office of Trinity's rector, Steve Ling, who came to the parish in December 2007. A historian by trade, Ling had an appreciation for history and architecture that made him immediately fall in love with Trinity Church.

"The ceilings, the windows, the architecture, the brownstone – it all makes us an incredible house of worship," Ling explained. "And with the brownstone, it makes us really the only church in Portland that represents Portland's history."

Ling said he has "immensely" enjoyed his time in Portland at Trinity, which he said, like most churches, has decreased in size in recent years. The parish still serves around 120 families and sees an average of 75 parishioners for Sunday Mass, Ling explained, but added that he would be happy to see more locals get involved.

Those that are involved, though, are great, Ling said. "We have really great parishioners," he stated. "Even though we're kind of an older congregation, we are seeing increases in our church school program, so we are growing a bit."

But what makes Trinity Church the parish that it is are the long-time members that have remained loyal to their church community over the years. Jeff Adams, 52, said he has been a member all of his life, but won't call himself a lifetime member "because I'm not dead yet," he said jokingly. Adams is a former senior warden of the parish and is now a member of the committee tasked with planning events to commemorate the 225th anniversary.

"We're very excited, it's a wonderful thing," Adams said of the historic mark. Adams said that while a lot of events are still in the planning stages, the big celebration will be on Sept. 29 to observe the church's true anniversary. Throughout the year, however, the church will host various events such as a concert with the New England Chamber Choir, the establish-



**Trinity Church will celebrate its quasibicentennial – its 225th anniversary – next fall, and plans are already being made to mark the historic occasion.**

ment of a memorial garden, and the installation of a new brownstone sign in front of the church.

According to Becky Robinson, another long-time member who was actually baptized at Trinity, the church will also feature various items to purchase, including a calendar of all of the churches in Portland, T-shirts, sweatshirts, tote bags, and a commemorative quilt. Robinson said that other events are in the works, including a possible float in the town's Memorial Day Parade and even a dinner cruise on the Lady Katherine on the Connecticut River.

Robinson said that she was also the chair of the same committee when the church celebrated

its 200th anniversary in 1988, which she said was "awesome" and included a large dinner, church service, and the burying of a time capsule that took close to two years to plan.

With another historic landmark in the church's history on the horizon, the Trinity Church community is undoubtedly excited about the coming year, but also years to come. Having a loyal group of parishioners and one of the most beautiful church buildings in the area is sure to keep the parish going, perhaps to a 250th anniversary and beyond.

"We hope to keep this place going for a very long time to come," said Adams.

# Portland Selectmen Discuss Free Prescriptions, Parks and Rec. Budget

by Joshua Anusewicz

At the Board of Selectmen meeting on Wednesday night, a proposal was unanimously approved for the town to participate in ProAct, a discount medical prescription program offered through the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM).

According to Gina Calabro, a representative from CCM that presented information to the board, the program provides uninsured and underinsured residents of Connecticut an opportunity to receive discounted medical prescriptions at no cost to the town or its citizens. Launched in July, Calabro said that ProAct now services 34 towns in the state. Calabro explained that the program originated in New York about four years ago, and now 85 percent of counties in the state participate in the program, with residents saving over \$1 million in prescriptions since the program's inception.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she had only heard positive feedback about the program. "Other towns I've spoken with have told me that it's working," she explained to the selectmen.

Calabro admitted that it sounded "too good to be true," but pointed to the program's suc-

cess in New York as an example of its effectiveness. She also explained how easy it was for residents to enroll, which can be done by requesting a card through mail, printing a card off the program's website [proactrx.com](http://proactrx.com), or possibly storing an allotted number at Town Hall that residents can acquire. The prescription cards are good at all major chains, groceries stores, and department stores, as well as local pharmacies like Bordonaro's.

The selectmen unanimously approved moving forward with the program; Bransfield will now work with CCM and the town's attorney Jean D'Aquila to review and sign the enrollment agreement to start the program. No date has been set for when the program will go into effect.

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Also at Wednesday's meeting, the board reviewed fourth quarter fund transfers, an agenda item that usually involves little discussion or controversy. At this meeting, however, a lengthy conversation took place regarding a \$40,000 fund transfer to the parks and recreation budget to cover a considerable shortfall.

According to finance director Tom Robinson,

the money transferred would come from the town's contingency fund, and would make up for a considerable decrease in parks and recreation revenue over the past year. Robinson explained that in recent years, the town has been able to cover any shortfalls in the parks and recreation budget with a fund balance, which has been slowly diminished during that time.

Parks and Recreation Director Sean Dwyer was on hand at the meeting to explain the reasons for the decrease in revenue, which include lower enrollment in various programs, unforeseen expenditures, and cheaper options at private institutions in the area. As an example, Dwyer explained that Zumba was "cranking" when Parks and Recreation first offered the exercise program, but now three to four other locations in the area offer Zumba at a cheaper cost with more class dates.

"It's tough," Dwyer stated. "We've tried reducing staff, tried condensing our summer camp, we've taken a look at trips, we've tried to run fundraisers. We've tried to raise fees on the summer camp, too, but we were getting too close to Camp Ingersoll and they have a great facility over there. We're really at a crossroads

and it's hard."

The selectmen all agreed that they support Parks and Recreation, but that the amount being transferred was a concern. "That's a sizable number," said selectman Mark Finkelstein. "I'd like some assurance that it's not going to continue to grow."

He continued, "The taxpayers did approve this budget. I think it's a big number, and we owe it to them to stay within that budget. And I'm certainly not trying to diminish what they [Parks and Recreation] do."

"We need to look at the programming and match it up with the revenues, that's all," said Bransfield, who called the programming "high quality" and added that she has received positive feedback about the offerings of the department. "Sean Dwyer does an outstanding job."

The selectmen ultimately approved the fund transfer, 6-0. (Selectwoman Kathy Richards was not in attendance.)

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The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 19, at 7:30 p.m. at Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Ave.



# Bacon Boys' Varsity Soccer Raises the Bar

by Melissa Roberto

After finishing the regular season undefeated, the Bacon Academy boys' varsity soccer team headed into the Class M state championship game as the top-seed but were defeated by Suffield, but that has not stopped the team from recognizing its accomplishments that will go down in Bacon Academy history.

Despite the loss, this was the first time a Bacon Academy soccer team has ever made it into the Class M state final. Not to mention the team maintained the number one spot with a regular season record of 16-0. "I was really proud, as a coach or player I had never gone a whole season undefeated," said head coach Andrew Storton. Until now that is.

This was Storton's first year at Bacon Academy, and the third coach the team has had in the last three years – perhaps bringing truth to the phrase "third time's a charm."

Captain Zach Slomski said the season was "way better" than he originally anticipated. "I was expecting to just have an okay season with a new coach and to just have fun with my friends but it turned out to be a success," he said.

Storton did not expect to lead the team into an undefeated season. Rather, the coach said he headed into his first year at Bacon with the idea of creating a soccer program that kids in town would want to play for in the future. And he managed to do just that.

The attendance of the Class M state final game on Nov. 23 in Middletown included over 2,000 fans, Storton said. "In a small town, if you do something well it's going to attract people to come and watch and that's what happened," he said.

Bacon lost to Suffield by a score of 3-2 in overtime but "put up a good fight," said Storton.

Bacon Academy was down 2-1 at the end of the first half with Brendan Quinn scoring the team's only goal. But the team came back strong in the second half and Danny Pinto scored the goal that tied the game.

"That was part of the team's chemistry, they were never going to give up on each other and

they just kept going," said Storton.

Suffield made a shot early in the first half of overtime and Storton said Bacon had enough time to come back and get a goal but the opposing team was "very defensive." This is the second year in a row Suffield has won the Class M state title.

Captain Chadd Ferro was proud of his team's effort in the final. "I think we played as hard as we could and we fought until the end." Ferro scored 31 goals this season, breaking the Bacon Academy record for the highest number of goals scored in soccer.

Storton described the team's reaction to the loss as an "interesting atmosphere." While seniors were saddened at the end of their last high school soccer game, Storton said players that will return to the team had a different mindset because they will have the opportunity to make it to the finals next year.

In a team huddle after the loss, Storton said he reminded the team to look back and think about what they achieved versus what any other soccer team at Bacon had accomplished in previous years. "I felt really proud at that moment," he said.

The Class M state championship game wasn't the only final Bacon lost this season. Heading up against Montville in the finals of the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) large division, the team suffered another 3-2 loss. Bacon Academy is placed in the large division only for the ECC tournament. The ECC takes place in between the end of the regular season and the state finals. But Storton said that is another title the team will aim for next year.

Connor McHugh, another of the team's captains, gave credit to the new head coach for such a remarkable season. "He was one of the best coaches I've ever had," said McHugh. "As long as he's head coach Bacon will have a good season."

Slomski explained that Storton placed the team in the right direction from the very first conditioning practice. "He told us exactly what he wanted and he was determined and believed



One of the team's captains, Zach Blomski, challenges for the ball during a game against Norwich Free Academy earlier this season.

in us," he said.

Storton's goal throughout the season was to maintain a "tough training environment that was disciplined" and he plans to do the same next year.

Originally from Oxford, England, Storton has been coaching soccer for the last ten years. In England, he previously coached the Reading Football Club youth team. He was also a semi-professional player in South England until he made his way to the U.S. in July 2009. In America, he said, he realized there is "more opportunities to coach at a high level and to gain more experience."

Storton has coached in the Fairfield County for teams in New Canaan, Wilton and Weston. Last fall Storton received his first high school coaching experience at The Williams School in New London coaching varsity girls. He also led the team into its first appearance at the semi-finals of the New England Prep School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) tournament.

He described the head coach position at Bacon as "far too good of an opportunity to turn down."

Aside from his head coach position at Bacon, Storton also works year-round for Youth Elite Soccer (YES) and the Connecticut Southeast Soccer Club, both organizations hire coaches for teams as needed along the east coast and in Connecticut. Two weeks before he landed the job at Bacon, Storton coached the U-14 boys' team in Colchester, giving him the advantage of coaching younger kids in town before they make their way to Bacon in the future.

While Storton led a memorable first season at Bacon Academy, he admitted it would be "pretty tough" to repeat an undefeated regular season next year. "You have to have the right

mix of talent, youth experience, skill and luck along the way."

Overall, the team's record was 20-2 with the losses of the ECC tournament and the Class M final.

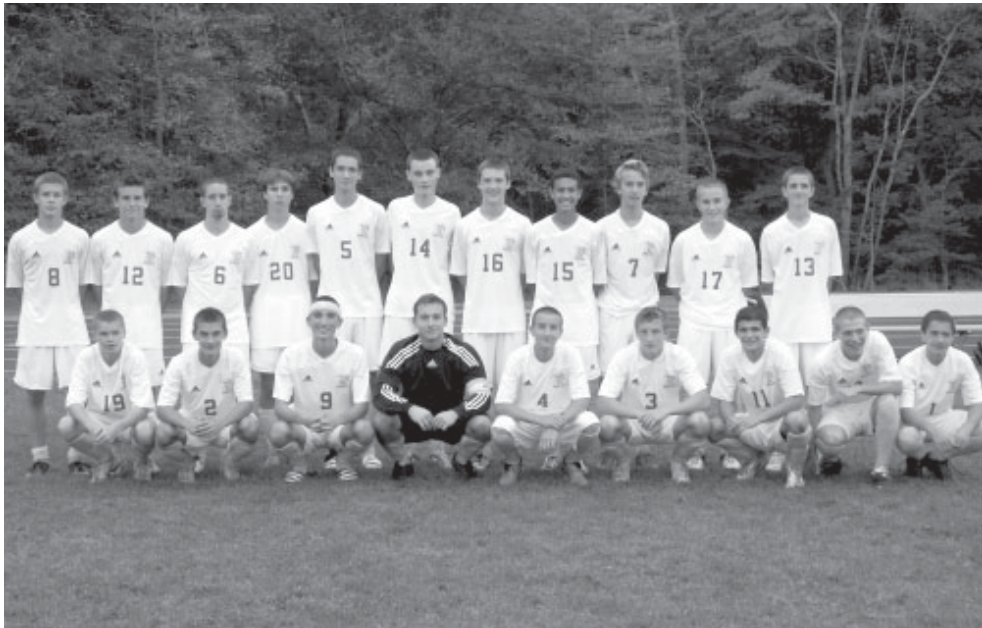
The team will lose eight seniors for next year and four of them were starters. "We're pretty lucky in that respect," said Storton, adding that four is a small number of starters to lose compared to other teams.

Storton has already started to think about next year's season. "I'm going to come back just as structured and just as disciplined because it's important to make sure the freshmen guys realize that there is a team philosophy and team expectations," he said.

The freshmen, junior varsity and varsity teams will all celebrate their seasons at a soccer banquet on Dec. 11 at Bacon Academy.

Overall, Storton believes the team had a "great" season in spite of the "tough loss."

"I'm excited for the future," he said. "We're going to give it a shot and be challenging every year."



The Bacon Academy boys' varsity soccer team entered the Class M final in the number one spot, after compiling a regular season record of 16-0.

## WJJMS/Senior Center Project Headed to Selectmen

by Melissa Roberto

The building committee behind the William J. Johnston Middle School/Senior Center/Community Center project met last Thursday, Nov. 29, to discuss previous public information sessions about the project, and to prepare for upcoming presentations of site plans to the boards of selectmen and finance.

Earlier this fall, the Board of Education saw a presentation about the project, and the committee has also held information sessions at each of the town's public schools, the 57 Fest, Pumpkin 'n Pooches, the senior center and, the most recent info session, on Nov. 15 at William J. Johnston Middle School.

A majority of the feedback from those information sessions contained a "fair amount of positives," committee chairman Thomas Tyler said. However, he noted, there were also negative comments about the project on Nov. 15, primarily concerning the senior center.

Many written comments have also been received from the public in the last few months suggesting an addition of a pool to the site plans, the committee said. Tyler explained in an October meeting that 17 of 20 written comments that the committee received after the 57 Fest suggested a pool, and the committee has received more since then.

There is not yet any cost estimate for the project, Tyler explained, because the committee wants to make sure its site plans don't need to be changed; this will be decided after the presentation to the Board of Selectmen, which will occur at the board's Dec. 20 meeting. According to Facilities Director Greg Plunkett, the Board of Selectmen has the authority to decide whether a pool addition would be necessary in the site plans. (The committee also made a brief presentation about the project to the Board of Finance Wednesday night.)

Once the site plans are definite, the building committee said it would be able to request a cost estimate from the architect, Marco Tommasini of Tectron Architects in Hartford.

The proposed project includes a renovation of the existing middle school and new additions. The existing building would house the sixth grade in the western wing and the new senior center would be located in the former cafeteria wing. The senior center would include a variety of services: a bistro/café, gift shop, lounge, counseling space, library, health room, hair salon, fitness room, offices, restroom and storage. It would also take advantage of the existing kitchen, cafeteria, classrooms and loading dock.

The existing building would also house a community center, which would include the Parks and Recreation, Social Services and Youth Services departments. The Parks and

Recreation Department would use the existing gym and the Youth Services Department would include a game room, counseling room, technology room, lounge and library.

The new three-story addition would include both seventh- and eighth-grades on the second and third floor. General facilities including offices, conference rooms and a dining/workroom will take place on the first floor of the addition as well as a new kitchen and cafeteria.

Construction for the project would include the removal of the 1954 eighth-grade wing, and new parking lots for WJJMS and the senior center will be added. The senior center and middle school would also have separate entrances.

The next building committee meeting will take place Thursday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m. at the WJJMS Media Center, 360 Norwich Ave.



# New Insurance Business in Marlborough All in the Family

by Melissa Roberto

"Small and personal" is how co-owners Jane and Don Foss of Foss Insurance in Marlborough like to describe their new business, which is located in the center of town at 6 Independence Dr.

Foss Insurance sells home, auto, health, commercial and life insurance to businesses and individuals of all ages. The business is open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and evenings and weekends by appointment.

"We work at the flexibility of the customers," said Jane.

The mother-and-son duo held a grand opening on Saturday, Dec. 1, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. with the help of First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski to cut the ribbon. Jane, who has been an insurance agent for 40 years, and her son Don, a newcomer to the industry, were welcomed by 31 people on Saturday, including Jane's former clients as well as some new faces in town.

While the opening brought attention to the new business, Jane and Don wanted it to be a time where they were able to meet with old and new clients on a personal level.

"I told them no insurance and no politics," said Jane. "It was just a nice day to enjoy each other."

The generation gap between Jane and Don helps them to relate to a range of clients, young and old, and those in between, said Jane. "Young people often get ripped off a lot with insurance and the older people need help with it," she said. "I love to help people."

Jane began in the industry as a secretary for Allstate Insurance in East Hartford. She said she enjoyed it so much that she advanced into an agent. She retired in October 2011 – but then realized it just wasn't for her.

"I like to be involved," she said, adding, "I don't like to sit around."

Although Don is new to the industry, he said the move is something he had considered making for the past 15 years. Don previously

worked in the construction industry for over 30 years at his own business, CVC Installs, out of Westerly, R.I., until shattering his heel "put an end to that," he said.

And so far Don is enjoying his work in the industry. "I love the agility it takes to take all these different companies and finagle them against each other to get a better rate," he said.

Don also said his past experience doing construction work in houses has given him an advantage when talking to clients about insurance, especially home insurance. "I know the ins and outs of the housing industry and I know where I can help a customer out," he said.

Jane agreed that her son's background is beneficial to the business. "He knows values and that's a nice lead in to insurance that you wouldn't usually think of."

Foss Insurance currently has about 25 clients. Due to a contractual agreement with Allstate, Jane said she was not able to contact her clients for one year after leaving the company. That agreement ended on Nov. 30, and Jane said she has already heard from some clients that they will return. According to Don, one business owner that was a client of Jane's for 25 years called Monday morning and said that once his current policy is up in May he will be returning to do insurance with Jane.

Jane also said she will send 800 letters out to former clients about the new business.

Jane and Don said that facilitating a smaller business is something they enjoy because they get to know their clients on a personal level. "You need to know something about your clients because you want the client to know you care," she said.

Don added that the small nature of the business also makes communication with clients easier. "When you pick up the phone, you're going to get a person talking to you instead of having to press numbers," he said.

Foss Insurance is also affiliated with ALLConnecticut Insurance Brokers of West Hartford, owned by Bud Schultz, which has



A ribbon-cutting ceremony for Foss Insurance was held last weekend. Pictured from left are employee Cindy Obst, Jane Foss, First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski, Don Foss, Don's fiancée Veronica Vernik and the business' secretary Joan Doughty.

been in operation for eight years. Like Jane, Schultz used to be an Allstate agent.

Jane and Don also shared that the business could not have been started without the help of Jane's husband, Mark Foss. Mark is also the president of the Greater Hartford Twilight Baseball League, an adult amateur baseball league in the Greater Hartford area. Foss Insurance sponsors the league and some players are also clients.

And although Don, who lives in East Hampton, and Jane, who lives in Bolton, aren't too familiar with Marlborough just yet, he said the

location is "fantastic."

Jane added that the two want to become involved in the town as well. They have joined the Marlborough Business Association and are planning to host a future meeting "to become familiar with other Marlborough businesses," she said.

"Marlborough is really up and coming as far as I can see with businesses and I think it's a really nice town," said Jane.

To reach Jane or Don at Foss Insurance, 6 Independence Dr., call 860-365-5452.

# Test Drilling in Marlborough Starts for Water Project

by Melissa Roberto

Though the town still hasn't heard whether it's getting the STEAP money it applied for, work on the possible Town Center Public Water System expansion project began this week with test drilling behind Marlborough Elementary School, First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski told the Board of Selectmen at its Tuesday meeting.

Gaudinski said Connecticut Water Company started drilling behind the school Monday and a "good supply of clear water" came from the first well.

The next step in the process is a 72-hour yield test, which is scheduled to take place during the school's winter break. The yield test is conducted to determine if a sufficient amount of water can run for that period of time and if it has an adverse impact on other wells in the area.

The proposed project is a 3,200-foot water system in the center of town. It would connect properties in the center of town, from Marlborough Elementary School to South Main Street and Route 66, and then continuing west on Route 66 back up to the school's property. Properties from North Main Street to Jones Hollow Road are also anticipated to be included in the project, Gaudinski said, "as long as there are sufficient funds to cover that."

Town officials have said a public water source would allow for increased development in the center of town, as there would be fewer building restrictions, and would provide a secure water source, providing consistent, clean water.

In July, residents voted to contribute \$50,000

toward the system, contingent on Marlborough receiving a \$500,000 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant it applied for this summer. Gaudinski said Tuesday the town has yet to hear whether it was getting the grant.

Without the STEAP grant, the estimated cost of the water system would be \$600,000. Gaudinski said if the town does not receive the grant, "we'll have to take a look at where we're at with Connecticut Water and have some discussion."

It was announced over the summer Connecticut Water would conduct test drills prior to receiving any grant money, to give the town a better idea of the water supply available beforehand. Monday's was the first such test drilling; the second drilling was conducted Thursday and should be completed by the end of the week, Gaudinski said. According to the Department of Public Health regulations, two wells need to produce sufficient water, and if the second one does not, a third well will be drilled.

Also at the meeting, Gaudinski reminded the board of the upcoming public information session for the Stage Harbor Healthcare Center/Town Sewer Expansion Project, scheduled for Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. at the senior center, 17 School Dr. The information session will be held for the public and for residents of "five or six houses" whose properties would be impacted by the project's construction, Gaudinski said. The meeting will include a PowerPoint presentation and an explanation of the design by engineering firm Weston and Samson.

The project would include the town extending its sewer lines to meet the new Healthcare Center sewer pump at the corner of Park and Cheney roads, and continue up Cheney Road, Beverly Lane and North Main Street.

The selectmen have said they hope to put the project to bid in mid- to late-January. The town has estimated the project cost to be between \$941,821 (when bonded at a 2 percent interest rate) and \$1,106,095 (when bonded at a 4 percent interest rate). Town Planner Peter Hughes told the selectmen last month that, generally speaking, bids for town construction projects are coming in 25-35 percent under engineers' estimates.

Gaudinski also suggested at the meeting that the time had come for the town to adopt an official building use policy. She said she's finding that "we do not have any formal policy in terms of the use of the senior center, town green or Firehouse No. 2, and we have people using buildings at times without Town Hall knowledge."

Gaudinski said this was first brought to her attention after receiving news that the Weight Watchers community group that usually meets at the Marlborough Congregational Church had decided to move their meetings to the senior center due to a lack of air conditioning at the church. Gaudinski said the group used to pay usage fees to the church, and she plans on enforcing a similar policy to be used at the senior center, and other town buildings.

Gaudinski shared a building use policy and fee schedule that MES uses with the board.

"I think we need a future meeting to go over this more and fine-tune a policy and any charges," she said.

Gaudinski said discussion of a future formal policy will take place at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Also at Tuesday's meeting, Gaudinski explained that, with the new year "right around the corner," she has begun preparation for the 2013-14 fiscal year budget.

She added she is "being conservative in terms of developing the budget."

After speaking with RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski, Gaudinski said the number of Marlborough residents that attend RHAM in the 2013-14 school year is expected to be lower, which would in turn decrease Marlborough's contribution to the RHAM budget. Gaudinski cautioned, however, she did not have the exact numbers yet.

Selectman Dick Shea asked if adding a generator for the Town Hall would be included in next year's budget, and Gaudinski confirmed it was a matter she is looking into.

Lastly, the board also appointed Marlborough resident Scott Welch as an alternate of the WPCA and as a member of the Building Appeals board, which are both current terms that end in January 2014. Gaudinski added that Welch filled a Republican slot on the WPCA and that there are two remaining alternate positions to fill.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 18, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.



## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

One day last week, as I was driving to work, I flipped on WTIC-AM 1080 to try to catch a weather forecast. I was a little too late, and instead found myself right in the middle of a conservative rant.

I'm 99 percent sure the rant belonged to Jim Vicevich, whose show normally airs during the 9 a.m.-noon timeslot, but I missed the beginning of the show; it could've been someone filling in for him. If he wasn't Vicevich, though, he was doing an awfully good impression, and sticking to what I've come to learn over the years are the Jim Vicevich Talking Points, which are mainly: Democrats are mean and their ideas suck. (Okay, he puts it a little bit more eloquently than that; Rush Limbaugh, whose comments are so often on the level of a cruel fifth-grade bully, could very well put it exactly that way.)

Anyway, in the midst of his rant (which included such gems as saying that Obama will go down as the worst president in our nation's history; really, our whole history? Do you want to think about that for a bit. And the sole reasoning was the deficit. Yes, the deficit's bad, but, geez, just one president ago we had somebody who, on the basis of faulty intelligence from his *own administration*, thrust us into a war we needn't have entered, which led to the deaths of thousands of Americans. And that was just one president ago), the host said that the Democrats are just utterly unwilling to compromise on anything. At which point I audibly proclaimed in my car, "Excuse me?"

The inability to compromise crosses both sides of the aisle, Jim (or Person I Think Was Jim). And the Republicans have been quite vocal in recent years about how, well, they hate that word. In 2010, John Boehner said, "This is not a time for compromise, and I can tell you that we will not compromise on our principles." On the Republicans' working with Obama, Boehner added, "To the extent the president wants to work with us, in terms of our goals, we'd welcome his involvement."

And let's not forget Mitch McConnell, who famously said, "The single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president."

Repeat: The single most important thing. Not do what's best for the country. Not help lower the deficit. Not try to reduce the unemployment rate. Get Obama out of office.

Doesn't really sound like a party willing to compromise on things, does it?

So yeah, have the Democrats failed at this whole compromise thing sometimes too? Sure. (Although I'd argue the Democrats have been better at compromising than Republicans in recent years.) But don't sit there and make it sound like the Republicans have been perpetually extending the olive branch only to have those mean old Democrats swat it away every time. Because that certainly hasn't been the case.

\* \* \*

I'm sure most of you are familiar with that tragic drowning at a pool at Manchester High School the day before Thanksgiving. It was all over the news, and some of the details, particularly that 14-year-old Malvrick Donkor was apparently underwater in the deep end of the pool for 17 minutes, as other students swam above him, are particularly shocking. A memorial has been planned for the teen at the high school for next weekend – and, as I was informed at the office Tuesday afternoon, that memorial may affect plans of some *Rivereast* readers.

The Connecticut Concert Ballet is performing its annual production of *The Nutcracker* this weekend and next, Dec. 8-9 and Dec. 15-16, at Manchester High School's Bailey Auditorium. The show – which features Andover, Hebron and Marlborough residents in lead roles, as well as several other area youth as dancers – was to run at 2 and 7 p.m. on Saturdays and just 2 p.m. on Sundays.

However, a memorial for Donkor is scheduled to be held at MHS the evening of Saturday, Dec. 15, so the *Nutcracker* performance slated for that night has been moved to Sunday, Dec. 16, at 6 p.m.

The Connecticut Concert Ballet contacted me Tuesday to ask me to spread the word about the time switch. The CCB has been selling tickets since October, and can't reach everyone they've sold tickets to. (Tickets are still available for the show, by the way; visit [connecticutnutcracker.com](http://connecticutnutcracker.com) for more information.)

I know at this time of year people's weekends tend to be planned weeks, even months, in advance, so this may result in fairly last-minute schedule-maneuvering for some. But, given the circumstances of that terrible drowning at MHS, I think everybody will be more than understanding.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

### Colchester Police News

11/27: Frank Shepard, 49, of 321 Bozrah St., Bozrah, was charged with third-degree sexual assault, second-degree unlawful restraint and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

11/28: Cynthia Langworthy-Wilson, 56, of 43 Chestnut Dr. was charged with sixth-degree larceny and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

11/29: Ashley Lynn Pare, 23, of 188 Alexander Rd., was charged with sixth-degree larceny and violation of probation, State Police said.

12/1: Michael W. Delisle, 22, of 127 Bull Hill Rd., was charged with DUI, failure to drive

in the right lane, failure to carry insurance card, reckless driving and distracted driving, State Police said.

12/1: Catrina Black, 23, of 1541 Highland Ave., Waterbury, was charged with failure to appear, State Police said.

12/1: Maria Lesniak, 55, of 97 Naomi Dr., East Hartford, was charged with DUI, failure to drive properly on multiple-lane highways and failure to obey signal of trooper, State Police said.

12/2: Paul L. Chasse, 43, of 83 Clark Ln., was charged with disorderly conduct and risk of injury, State Police said.

### Marlborough Police News

12/1: Eric M. Rovinetti, 27, of 192 Parkman St., Oakville, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane, State Police said.

12/2: Ryan Back, 27, of 15 W. Main St., Baltic, was charged with DUI, failure to carry license, failure to maintain lane, illegal possession and drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

### East Hampton Police News

11/22: Tyler John Vashalifski, 20, of 8 Jan Dr., Colchester, was arrested for second-degree failure to appear, East Hampton Police said.

11/24: John Marek, 49, of 505 Hills St., East Hartford, was arrested for violating a restraining order, poli

## Obituaries

### Portland

#### Wilma D. Johnson

Wilma D. Johnson, 74, of Middletown, formerly of Portland, former wife of the late Philip N. Johnson passed away Wednesday, Nov. 28, at Middlesex Hospital. She was the daughter of the late Armand Sr. and Wilma (Shepard) Mazzulli.



Born on March 20, 1938, in St. Clairsville, Ohio, she has lived in Portland for most of her life. She served in the U.S. Navy from 1956-61 and also volunteered at the Veterans of the Vietnam War in Middletown.

She leaves her sons, Brian A. Johnson of Middletown and Scott A. Johnson of Sedalia, Mo., a brother, Armand Mazzulli Jr. of Niantic; two grandchildren, Derek and Philip; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Monday, Dec. 3, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Relatives and friends called Monday before the service, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Connecticut American Parkinson Disease Association, 27 Allendale Dr., North Haven, CT 06473.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit [portlandmemorialfh.net](http://portlandmemorialfh.net).

### Andover

#### Brian A. Minalga

Brian A. Minalga, 97, of Andover, formerly of Westerly, R.I., and Bloomfield, passed away Thursday, Nov. 29, at Windham Hospital, leaving his beloved wife of 17 years, Jean Shepherd Gasper.



Brian was born in Gilbertville, Mass., on Feb. 16, 1915, son of Anthony and Benedicta Minalga. He studied at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. In 1939, he began his career in the plastics industry at Plax Corporation, a division of Hartford Empire. As the 13th hire at Plax he became instrumental in the development of the plastic bottle for commercial use and was involved in the making of parts for the Manhattan Project during World War II. Given his vast knowledge of the plastics manufacturing process, he was asked to form the standards committee of the Society of Plastics Industry in 1961 and served as chairman for six years. In 1983, after a 44-year career, Brian retired from Monsanto, which had bought out Plax.

Brian was a very active person with an enthusiastic spirit and an engaging personality, loved by all. He was a member of the Westerly Yacht Club and the Westerly Power Squadron, and served as Commander of the Power Squadron from 1975-76. He enjoyed sailing on his "Wind Song" out of Westerly for over 30 years, as well as golfing and hiking. He was a communicant at St. Maurice Church in Bolton.

Brian was predeceased by his beloved first wife of 52 yrs, Margaret, and his sisters, Anita Peltier and Lillian Smith. Besides his wife, Jean, he leaves his sister Phyllis (Francis) Butler of Hardwick, Mass.; a son, Michael A. Minalga and wife, Marie of Westfield, Mass.; a daughter, Patricia M. Walbam and husband, Carl of Westerly, R.I.; grandchildren Brian (Shari) Minalga, Christina (William) Berghoff, Anthony (Kathryn) Minalga, Julie Freer, Jennifer Sanders, and Katherine (Thomas) Churchill; 11 great grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He also leaves his wife Jean's family; sons Andrew (Patricia) Gasper and Robert (Peggy) Gasper, daughters Joanna Griswold and Marilyn (Thomas) Sylvester, and their children and grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at Andover Congregational Church, Route 6, Andover, on Saturday, Dec. 15, at 2 p.m. Interment will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Andover Public Library, P.O. Box 117, Andover, CT 06232-0117 or to the Andover Volunteer Fire Department, 11 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232.

For an online guestbook, visit [potterfuneralhome.com](http://potterfuneralhome.com).

### Hebron

#### Eileen Theresa McDonnell

Eileen Theresa McDonnell, 46, of Hebron passed away peacefully, with family members by her side, Saturday evening, Dec. 1.

Eileen was born on Long Island, N.Y., and was raised by her parents, James and Mary, in the Village of Babylon. She was salutatorian of the 1984 Babylon High School graduating class and received a full academic scholarship to attend American University in Washington, D.C.

She showed remarkable courage over the last 27 years while battling to overcome a continual, debilitating illness. This courage enabled her to share her wisdom, humor and love with family and friends over this period of time, for which all are eternally grateful.

In addition to her parents, Eileen is survived by her sister and brother-in-law, Maryanne and Tom; her brother and sister-in-law, Michael and Anne-Marie; her nieces, Alyssa and Christina; and her nephew, Ethan.

Eileen's life will be celebrated in a private gathering at a time and place to be determined.

In lieu of flowers or cards, donations may be made in Eileen's memory to Hungerthon 2012. You can donate online, at [whyhunger.org](http://whyhunger.org) or by phone, at 1-212-629-8850. To donate by check, write to WhyHunger, 505 Eighth Ave., Suite 2100, New York, NY 10018.

### Portland

#### Ermine Rose Brooks

Ermine Rose (Johnson) Brooks, of Meriden, died Tuesday, Nov. 27, peacefully at her home. She was born in Connecticut on Sept. 4, 1932, daughter of the late George and Lila Johnson. She graduated from Portland High School in 1950.

She worked at Home Bank, Hanover Insurance Company and retired from Yankee Gas. She took great pleasure in spending time with her children, grandchildren and their families, especially cooking and baking for them.

She leaves a daughter, Tamara Johnson (Brooks) of Meriden; a son, Marc Brooks (Antoinette) of North Carolina; a sister, Pamela Edwards (Sanford) of Hartford; 13 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by sons Donald Brooks and Kevin Brooks (Susan); brother John "Buck" Davis (Elsie); and sister Viola Seay.

A memorial service will be held today, Dec. 7, at 11 a.m., at First Congregational Church, 62 Colony St., Meriden. Family and friends called at the John J. Ferry & Sons Funeral Home, 88 E. Main St., Meriden, on Thursday, Dec. 6.

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

### Portland

#### Helen Anne Johnson

Helen Anne Johnson, 89, of Portland, was called home to be with the Lord Thursday, Nov. 29. She was the beloved wife of the late Gunner R. Johnson.

Born in Poland, she was a New Britain resident most of her life and lived in East Hampton for 15 years, moving to Portland a few years ago. Helen worked at Emhart Corp. for many years and was a member of Sacred Heart Church. Her favorite pastime was tending to her yard and garden.

Survivors include her daughter and son-in-law, Marcia and Louis Loffredo of East Hampton; four step-grandchildren; five step-great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Her funeral service was held Monday, Dec. 3, from Burritt Hill Funeral Home, 332 Burritt St., New Britain, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial later that morning at Sacred Heart Church. She was laid to rest in Sacred Heart Cemetery. Calling hours were Sunday, Dec. 2, at Burritt Hill.

Memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

To share a memory with her family, visit [burritthill.com](http://burritthill.com).