

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Hebron and Columbia residents gathered last week and shared their experiences on the homefront during World War II. Their stories were supported by an array of memorabilia that was on display, including photos, journal entries, ration stamps and vintage posters.

Hebron Residents Share Wartime Memories

by Geeta Schrayter

Tales from local residents of keeping watch for enemy aircraft in town highlighted a Feb. 10 forum about life on the Hebron homefront during World War II.

The event, held in conjunction with the restoration of the Observation Post in town, was put together by the Hebron Historic Properties Commission in an effort to gather information about World War II involvement on American soil.

"The Hebron Historic Properties Commission has been working on many fronts over the last few years to preserve historic culture in the town of Hebron," said commission chair Deena Watson.

She went on to say this is just one way the commission is working toward that preservation.

Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz moderated the event, and said the forum provided the opportunity to talk about what was going on at the time on the homefront, "specifically regarding the observation post," which is "in the process of being preserved for future generations, as will this story," she said.

Over a dozen residents from Hebron and Columbia attended, and personal experiences were shared for nearly two hours.

While the stories covered various aspects such as blackouts, rationing, war bonds and the collection of scrap metal, many present had collective memories of volunteering in the Obser-

vation Post as an aircraft observer.

Civilian Observation Posts were utilized during the war on both coasts to keep tabs on aircrafts that flew overhead.

Hebron's Observation Post was built in 1942 and located at "Post Hill" on Robinson Farm in the far eastern side of town, on the Columbia line. The post was moved late last year to the Town Hall property near the center of town.

Columbia resident Mertin Wolff said he volunteered many times, and described what you had to do to become an observer.

"You had to be fingerprinted" and given an identification badge saying you were a "volunteer observer," he said, as he pulled out his own badge.

"I went there many times with two, three other people from Columbia," he continued, adding the shifts were for two hours.

But if no one came to relieve those on duty, "you just stayed," said Hebron local Bell Robinson.

Columbia resident Olive Shea shared her sister had been a volunteer at the post, and one time she stayed throughout the night because no one came to take her place.

Jean Isham Peters, another resident of Columbia, said she too had volunteered to be an observer, and said their job was to report "everything that went over."

There was a phone set up in the post, and

See Memories Page 2

Classic Musical Comes to Colchester This Weekend

by Katelyn Kelleher

At first glance, nothing seemed amiss as men wielding mops and others in suits walked Bacon Academy's hallways Tuesday night. That is, until they broke out into song and dance to reveal they play sailors and passengers in Colchester Community Theater's upcoming production of *Anything Goes*.

At a dress rehearsal just three days before tonight's opening performance, the cast and crew practiced their lines, tweaked the lights and, something different for the theater group, rehearsed tap dance routines with a choreographer.

CCT Vice President of Production Wallis Johnson said *Anything Goes* is largely a tap show, and everyone in the cast had to learn the steps.

Between actors, dancers, musicians and set crew, over 70 volunteers put together the musical comedy. Johnson said many have been in CCT's previous productions, including *Titanic: The Musical* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. However, Johnson said new faces joined the group because of this show's emphasis on tap. "We had some dancers join this show because of that," she said.

Preparation for the show demanded a serious commitment from its participants, with

three-hour rehearsals three to four times per week – and not everyone is local.

"We have someone who lives in Oxford and drives over three hours to be here," Johnson said.

Last year's production of *Titanic* completely sold out, causing CCT to add a fourth performance of *Anything Goes*. Johnson said she expects a full house at this year's performances.

Johnson said CCT directors chose *Anything Goes* as this year's performance because they wanted to switch from the dark, depressing theme of *Titanic*.

"When we started reading scripts last spring and summer, we knew we wanted to do a more lighthearted show," she said.

Anything Goes is exactly that, a romantic comedy featuring the antics of a colorful cast of characters aboard an ocean liner. The Cole Porter classic also features such familiar songs as "I Get a Kick Out of You" and "Friendship."

Although the cast traded in the dark, heavy *Titanic* costumes for bright white sailor uniforms and floral dresses, CCT was able to reuse the ship, a massive piece of set design with a second level that performers dance on. Johnson said the set crew just had to make some adjustments so it wouldn't resemble the *Titanic*.

See Musical Page 2



Members of Colchester Community Theater put in their final rehearsals this week for *Anything Goes*, which will be performed at Bacon Academy this weekend. Here, Michelle Rocheford Johnson's character, Reno, is swarmed by reporters, played by Jeff Fiducia, Rick Bennett and Peter Solari.



Joseph Zachmann, Rena Borsotti Zachmann and Mary Hooker Porter were among those that shared their experiences at last week's forum, which was moderated by Carla Pomproicz (kneeling).

Memories cont. from Front Page

anytime something needed to be reported "you didn't have to dial – just picked up the receiver and said 'code red'" followed by the details, explained Hebron native Dorothy Taggart.

"It went directly into... wherever," laughed Peters, adding "any plane or anything that you saw, you would describe what you were seeing, how many [and] what direction it was flying," she said.

Peters explained both her father and brother had shifts at the post and "one night, Mom was ill and Dad didn't want to leave her so I went over there... It was always dark, and you were supposed to go out and observe a plane. You might see a light or something fly over... that was all," she said, but added the mentality was "if this is what they want, I'll do the best I can."

Shea then shared another story about her sister, Sally, saying after her shift she would walk the three miles to their home in Columbia. One time, Shea continued, Sally was walking home with the girl she'd had her shift with, when she walked across a frozen pond and fell through the ice. She was pulled out, and then continued on home.

"That was her experience at the lookout post," said Shea. "She's not forgotten *that*."

While some of the individual experiences surrounding the post could be seen as comedic, those present asserted the situation as a whole had been no laughing matter.

"The feeling to do that – it was frightening," said Hebron resident Mary Hooker Porter. "This was a very frightening time in our life. We were made to be aware that we might be attacked, so we went with trepidation and it was very, very serious. It was not a fun thing."

Porter went on to say you did it because "they had pressed upon you how important it was," and there was a feeling of "great responsibility" around the duty.

"There was one telephone, and it was up to you to call it in if you saw it," she said.

Hebron resident Alberta Hilding echoed Porter's thoughts, and recounted the day she learned about Pearl Harbor.

"I heard a radio message that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I had no knowledge of where that was – it was a scary time," she said. "I remember going back to work either the next day or the day following, and we're walking at lunchtime and peering at the sky – it was a dark and dreary day."

As the forum progressed, other aspects of life at home during the war were discussed, such as the need to cover your windows with black drapes, so as to prevent light from escaping and

aiding enemy aircraft during bombing raids.

"Mom was a regular up at the observation house," said Hilding. "Then she came home and made sure black drapes were over the windows for safety's sake... you'd put them on so the light wouldn't shine through."

"All the headlights had to be half black too so that the headlights were shadowed," added Hebron resident Bea Stokes, who also mentioned how everything was rationed.

"You couldn't find nylons – of course, that was a girl's dream. You wore these rayon things that took a week and a day to dry," she said.

The nylon, she explained, was instead used to make parachutes for the military.

Cigarettes were also hard to come by, said Stokes, saying even though she didn't smoke, she had a friend who'd have her go into town and stand in line with her "so I could get one pack and she could get another."

People were only allowed one pack each, and Stokes would then give the pack she'd gotten to her friend.

Along with cigarettes, those present explained items like shoes, gasoline, meat, butter, sugar and stamps were all rationed.

"Everything was going to the military," said Robinson, explaining "you got booklets with little coupons in them" then went to a ration board and pled your case.

"You could only get so much – there was a certain quantity that you were allowed," said Taggart.

Stokes added "you couldn't get decent shoes," either.

"If you had shoes and they wore out, my father and every other put [new ones on]," said Porter, but she added "I did not have that feeling of sacrifice that there is now... we were asked to give and we gave... I was scared, scared silly. It's too bad. I wish we could get our kids to understand how much we have [now]," she said.

"We didn't have much but what we had was so precious – they don't seem to know what's been given to them [these days]," she continued.

Once those present had their fill of reminiscing – which went right up to include the day they learned the war was over; "a bright, beautiful day" when Porter explained the bell at Gilead Hill Church was rung "something fierce" – the event came to an end. But their memories were recorded, successfully preserving more of Hebron's historic culture, and an important part of America's history.

Musical cont. from Front Page

"This one doesn't sink. Last year the ship actually sank," she said.

CCT veteran Martin Lane, playing the role of bartender Fred in his eighth production, said a producer at CCT asked him to audition. "I hadn't done theater in 20 years so I auditioned," he said. "And now I've done the past eight productions, from *Wizard of Oz*, *Fiddler*, *Titanic*, *Joseph*, all that."

Lane, of Salem, said this show was one of the toughest.

"The tap dancing and choreography is a lot harder," he said. "There were a lot more rehearsals for this show, a lot more than other shows, because of the tap dancing aspect of it."

Performer Jenna Solari, of Lebanon, plays one of the female leads. "I play Hope Harcourt, a girl who falls in love with a gentleman, is engaged but decides she really loves this other guy," she said. "It ends up working out in the end that she ends up marrying her true love."

Solari, a fourth-year CCT performer, said this is her first lead role. She said she did theater performance in high school and college and came back to it as an outlet from her job as a pre-school teacher.

Lebanon resident John Neal, who plays a sailor in *Anything Goes*, said joining CCT three years ago was an afterthought. "My daughter had planned on auditioning and I was going to be here every day anyway and they needed some more men in the show, so I got involved," he said. "It is a big commitment but is definitely worth it. It's very rewarding."

Among the younger of the volunteers, East Lyme High School junior Lizii Gelinias said deadly stage fright keeps her behind the scenes, but she has the same dedication to the show as those on stage. This is Gelinias' second year assisting with stage lighting and said she plans to continue to volunteer for the group. "The cast and crew is like a family," she said.

Performance dates are Friday, Feb. 17, at 7 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18, at 2 and 7 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 19, at 2 p.m. at the Bacon Academy auditorium. Ticket prices are \$12 for adults and \$10 for seniors and children age 10 and under. Preferred seating tickets will be offered this year for \$20 each and ticket-holders will be asked to arrive at least a half hour before performance time. Seating before the general



Kathleen Narowski (right) helps Marisa Sullivan, both members of the ensemble, adjust her costume during a break behind the scenes.

audience will take place 20-30 minutes before the performance time.

Tickets are available at the Colchester Parks and Recreation Department in Town Hall or at Wild Geese Gift Shop, 191 Broadway. Credit card sales are available in person at either location or by calling Wild Geese at 860-537-4010. Tickets will also be available at the door on performance days. However, audience members are encouraged to purchase tickets ahead of time.

In case of inclement weather, call 860-537-7297 for updated show information.

Hebron Appoints Special Education Director

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Education voted unanimously to appoint a special education director at its Feb. 9 meeting.

The motion to hire Judith Richard passed 4-0, with one abstention.

"It's my honor this evening to have Judy here," said Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz. She added Richard had 18 years experience as a special education coordinator, nine years experience in Coventry as the director of special education, and had additionally been a classroom teacher.

"We're fortunate to have someone with her expertise and experience and careful and steady eye in making sure that we meet the needs of students but at the same time are being fiscally responsible," Cruz said.

Richard was hired part-time, and will be spending an average of 2-2 1/2 days a week working as the director.

"She has a certain number of days she will fulfill between now and the end of the year," said Cruz.

In addition to Richard, there is also a facilitator in each building to help meet student needs.

"A factor for us is cost savings as well, but that's not a major goal – a major goal is to make sure our family of special education students are well taken care of," Cruz said.

"We're happy to have her as a part of the team," Cruz said.

Also at the meeting, the board discussed the 2012-13 academic calendar – which is proposed to not have the standard week-long February vacation.

Cruz explained one of the board's responsibilities is to set the calendar for the subsequent year. She went on to say the process, which is usually started in the fall, involves meeting with regional superintendents to try and come to an agreement as to what the calendar

should look like.

"We spend a couple of months having conversations around" the calendar, she said. Cruz explained there were some factors that had to be worked around, like the fact that Marlborough and Andover have 183 school days to Hebron's 180.

"We have some compromising and some give and take," she said, continuing on to remind the board the last two years had proven challenging due to the weather, prompting superintendents in the region to try and look at the calendar differently and find ways "to make up these days we've been losing."

Cruz said EASTCONN – a nonprofit agency that works with various school districts in northeastern Connecticut to provide a range of educational services – put forward a regional calendar with a shortened February break.

"This is something new," Cruz said. "This is a change for Hebron schools."

But she said the region's superintendents felt it was important to align with EASTCONN and also agreed a shortened February vacation "would allow us to get out on June 10."

Under the new calendar, families would have a four-day weekend, then students would return to school on Wednesday.

"I think that's a great proposal," said board member Tina Marie Blinn. She mentioned there are days off in January, along with December recess and said, "why do we need days [off] in February?"

The new calendar also places the start of school on Aug. 27. Cruz explained the reason for the decision, saying when the start date is after Labor Day it "pushes the whole calendar to the middle of June, so we decided as a group that a full week at the end of August still affords families enough time together," and would hopefully allow for the earlier end to the school year.

"I have to say it's about time," said Board of

Education Chairwoman Kathy Shea.

Shea added she was "pleased Andover has voted" on the same calendar and approved it, but went on to say she'd prefer to hold off on the adoption until parents and community members were informed on the calendar changes and why they were made.

The motion to table the issue until the next board meeting passed unanimously.

The next Board of Education meeting will be held Thursday, March 8, at 7 p.m., in the Gilead Hill School library.

Another Water Advisory Issued – Briefly – in Town

by Geeta Schrayter

On Monday, the Connecticut Water Company issued its second water advisory in the same amount of months for the Hebron area.

Last month a "Do Not Drink" advisory was in effect for nearly two weeks due to elevated levels of copper in the Amston Lake water system. The cause of the elevations is still undetermined, and community health concerns linger.

But the duration of Monday's advisory was much shorter – it was lifted Tuesday evening after sample results collected the day before came back sooner than expected.

"The water tested fine," Dan Meaney, director of corporate communications for Connecticut Water, said Tuesday night.

The reason for, and area affected by the advisory, were also different from January's advisory, Meaney explained.

Hebron residents who are a part of the London Park water system on Carolyn Drive, Jan Drive, Laura Drive and London Road were asked to boil their tap water "before using it for drinking, cooking, food preparation, reconstituting baby formula" or any other purpose where it would be consumed, an informational notice on the company's website explained. Alternately, "customers may use bottled wa-

ter for these purposes."

"We are issuing this advisory as a precaution because of an equipment failure," the notice continued.

Meaney explained there was a broken fitting at the system's well "that allowed the water system to lose pressure, and the pressure dropped below 20 pounds per square inch (psi)."

He went on to say when things are running normal, the high pressure in the pipes typically keeps things from getting into the water, but when it drops to 20 psi or lower, it's "not necessarily likely but it is possible things can get in [the water] from the surrounding soil."

It was "a precautionary boil water advisory," he said, adding the company hadn't found any indications of bacteria.

On a new notice on the Connecticut Water website Wednesday, it read "your water is safe to drink," and the company "appreciates your patience" while work was done to "restore service and then to test the water to confirm its quality."

Customers with any questions are asked to call customer service staff at 1-800-286-5700.

Council Approves EHHS Building Committee Resolution

by Joshua Anusewicz

At a meeting on Tuesday, the Town Council took the next step toward a renovation of East Hampton High School by unanimously approving a resolution to form a state-mandated high school building committee.

The request for the council to form the committee was presented last month by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden after it was approved by the Board of Education. Through conversations between Golden, Board of Education Chairman Mark Laraia, Town Council members Sue Weintraub and Kyle Dostaler and Interim Town Manager John Weichsel, Golden said the plan was arrived at to have a seven-member committee that consisted of residents with "professional" backgrounds in fields like engineering, construction or education. (Golden and Weichsel would also serve as "ex-officio" members in the committee).

The request spurred the council to draft a resolution that would form the committee, a matter that has been bandied about at recent council meetings. But as Dostaler reminded the council on Tuesday, approving the resolution and forming the committee was "absolutely necessary" to secure available grant money from the state for the project.

"At this point, hopefully we're all ready to move forward," Dostaler said of the resolution.

The matter of the renovation is particularly time-sensitive because of the looming accreditation process that the high school will go

through in five years. An initial analysis of the school by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in 2007 found that certain areas of the school facility were not up to par, particularly in the school's science laboratories.

Since that 2007 analysis, the project has stalled, however. By March, EHHS Principal John Fidler will need to submit a report to NEASC showing that "significant progress" is being made to meet the requirements that have been set forth.

The purpose of the committee, according to the resolution, is to "plan and provide the necessary oversight" for the project, which includes determining the scope of work, requesting the appropriation of necessary funds, hiring an architect to draft plans, approving preliminary plans and specifications, awarding construction contracts and other various tasks.

Dostaler drafted the resolution, and he said it was distributed via email to the other members of the council for recommendations and ideas. The agreed-upon changes were reflected in the resolution that was voted upon, but a few changes were made before the vote was taken.

Councilor George Pfaffenbach, who supported what he called "a great document," said that the committee should include two alternates. The idea of having alternates was included in the original draft, but was removed; the council approved including the alternates in the committee.

Pfaffenbach also included two other recommendations that will be decided upon by the building committee: retaining a "clerk of the works" to oversee the work being done on the construction site, and adding the town's facilities manager Frank Grzyb as an ex-officio member of the committee.

After the council approved the resolution, it was decided that each councilor would review the resumes of interested candidates and meet with each candidate for roughly 10 minutes before the appointments are made in the upcoming weeks. Weintraub said she has received 15 resumes to this point, and the council said they were impressed by the quality of the candidates to this point.

"We've got some great people here," Pfaffenbach said. Weintraub added that meeting with each candidate individually would be beneficial "given the scope of the project."

A considerable portion of the meeting was also spent discussing a proposed policy that would require council members to get approval from Weichsel before speaking with the town's attorney or labor attorney. The council voted 4-2 in favor of the policy, with Pfaffenbach and Ted Hintz Jr. opposed. (Councilor Barbara Moore was not present).

The policy would also require the legal query to be looked at by each council member to inform them of the matter or for additional questions.

Weintraub proposed the idea, stating that having this policy would save money and prevent "a lack of information" for other members of the council. Councilor Derek Johnson piggybacked on the idea, stating that if he were asking the attorney a question, he would be "asking for the knowledge of the entire council."

Weintraub also said that sending the matter to Weichsel might prevent a call to an attorney, as he may be able to resolve the issue on his own.

Pfaffenbach said having the question go through the entire council would take "too much time," and called the policy "cumbersome" and "impractical."

"Other things could happen before we get an opinion," he added.

Vice Chairman Glenn Suprono disagreed, stating that "the system has been abused" in the past and this would prevent an overrun of legal fees for the town.

"It's unfortunate that we have to draft a document like this," Suprono said, adding that everything should be handled "above board and shared with the rest of the council."

Johnson also pointed out that the policy is not set in stone and that the policy could be dropped or changed "if it was too burdensome."

The next Town Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

Local 'Icon' Leaves Lasting Impression on Family, Community

by Joshua Anusewicz

In the early morning hours of Saturday, Jan. 28, the sun broke slowly over the horizon, casting its brilliant red-orange glow over the Long Island Sound, onto the Thimble Islands, and slowly to the Connecticut shore. On the shore, in Branford, the Shephard family stood looking out the window of the Connecticut Hospice as the orb climbed higher into the sky, bathing the room in warm sunlight.

It was in this peaceful setting, surrounded by her family, that an East Hampton "pioneer" and "icon" passed away, leaving behind a legacy that has touched many in the community and will continue to do so for years to come.

Barbara Phelps Shephard passed away that day at the age of 82. She is survived by her husband of 57 years, Bruce, three children – Scott, Ethan and Elizabeth – and numerous family and friends who have been touched by her.

"She was the most wonderful person you could have for a mother," said Elizabeth this week. "She was so devoted to her family and to caring for others."

And it was that devotion to family and community that locals will remember the most. Barbara was born in Springfield, MA, in 1929, and began her journey of helping others when she graduated from Connecticut College in New London at the ripe age of 18. From there, she attended Willimantic State Teachers College (now Eastern Connecticut State University) to learn to become a teacher.

After beginning her teaching career in Essex, Barbara and Bruce – who were introduced through family members – moved to East Hampton to settle and start their family. Bruce said that around that time, Barbara decided to leave teaching to stay home and raise their children.

"But she couldn't stay away," Bruce said, laughing.

That was when Barbara made her first mark on the East Hampton community. Seeing a need to educate the youngest members of the town, residents started to look into the possibility of forming a nursery school. Barbara stepped up to the plate, and in 1968, the East Hampton Nursery School was founded and is still in op-

eration today.

Elizabeth and Ethan both recall memories of their childhood spent with their mother, mostly in the outdoors, where she spent most of her free time. Barbara and Bruce would take their children clamming and crabbing at Pleasure Beach in Waterford or exploring the woods and fields of East Hampton, all activities her children remember to this day.

As her children grew, Barbara grew to become more involved in the community. She worked closely with the town's churches and social services department, lending a hand wherever there was a need for one. "She used every resource available to accommodate whatever they needed," Elizabeth said of her work.

But as time wore on, the town realized the need for additional support for its residents, in the shape of food and clothing. Seeing all of the work she was already involved in, a representative from the Congregational Church of East Hampton recommended she be assigned to team up and form a food pantry that would help serve the less-fortunate in town.

She was paired with Sandy Fries, who the churches felt would create "a good team," Fries recalled this week. And almost 30 years later, the East Hampton Food Bank has grown from a filing cabinet filled with food into an institution in the town, serving hundreds of residents with food, clothing and fuel assistance.

"She was a mentor to me," said Fries, who is the director of the food bank to this day. "She was very wise. I loved that she didn't react; she was always very thoughtful in her decisions."

Fries recalled the time when bracelets adorned with "W.W.J.D." – "What Would Jesus Do?" – became popular. But instead, Fries would say, "What Would Barbara Do?"

"I still say that sometimes," Fries said happily. Her calm demeanor and caring attitude to-



Barbara Shephard

ward the citizens that used the food bank left an indelible mark on many people, particularly those who have worked closely with the food bank.

"She was a patient, understanding and warm person," said Wendy Regan, the town's director of Youth and Family Services. "She was an icon in this town. The amount of work she has done for this town is incredible."

"She was the epitome of a volunteer," said Police Chief Matthew Reimondo, who worked closely, both professionally and personally, with Barbara. "She touched a lot of lives, more than she ever realized. The world needs more Barbara Shephards."

"While other food banks say they need help, nobody goes hungry in East Hampton," said Social Services Director Jane Leary.

Shortly after the formation of the food bank, Barbara also organized the first annual Crop Walk, a six-mile walk to support the alleviation of hunger. That, too, is still in existence.

As time wore on, however, Barbara's health began to deteriorate. Already a petite, frail woman, Barbara experienced several bone problems that limited - but didn't quite stop - her ability to continue her volunteer work. In recent years, Barbara was plagued with internal complications that caused her to lose weight. She was fortunate enough to live at home for most of the past two years, but was eventually brought to Connecticut Hospice, where she remained until her death.

Since her passing, the grieving process has been difficult for the Shephard family and those close to them. But Elizabeth, who has lived with her parents to care for her mother, said many friends and family have reached out to help any way they can, something she said was "overwhelming."

East Hampton Man Brings Government Expertise to Mexico City

by Joshua Anusewicz

In an ever-changing global community, foreign relations have reached a pinnacle of importance for the United States. Countries that were once thought of as third-world are slowly shifting into developing nations, which our country is building or strengthening its relationship with.



Heath Fahle

And perhaps no country fits these criteria more than our neighbors to the south: Mexico.

One local man recently learned a lot about the challenges that Mexico is facing, and the way the Mexican government is handling them. Heath Fahle, the policy director at The Yankee Institute in East Hartford, recently went on a four-day democracy-building mission in Mexico City that was organized by the International Republican Institute (IRI), a nonparti-

san, nonprofit group based in Washington.

Fahle, a resident of East Hampton and a graduate of the University of Connecticut, said he has always had an interest in international affairs and saw this opportunity as a perfect way to gain some hands-on experience.

"These countries have similar issues [to the United States]," Fahle said, "but they might have a different way of handling them."

Often, the strategies a government uses, whether at home or abroad, are not the most effective. That's where groups like The Yankee Institute come in, Fahle said. The four-person outfit is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank that Fahle said is focused on issues within Connecticut government, particularly "fiscal issues" like state and local taxes and budgets.

Fahle said what his group does is "assess the particular program or issue, and come up with alternatives that are cheaper or more efficient." He said this research is done through various avenues; the best way to see the work of The Yankee Institute is the popular CT Sunlight website, CTsunlight.org, which the group launched several years ago to provide govern-

ment transparency for residents.

This experience made Fahle a suitable candidate for the trip to Mexico City, which took place from Jan. 20-24. Fahle said the group sent through IRI helped organizations that are similar to The Yankee Institute, but are state-funded and politically affiliated. He said that these groups were taught "skills sets" that will help turn their policy research into useful information for elections and campaigns.

"It's ultimately good for the country," Fahle said of the workshops with the organizations, which he added were well-received. He also stressed that these countries that are being aided - there are roughly 40 countries utilizing IRI groups, Fahle said - ask for the help. "We just want to help them address the problems themselves," he said.

Mexico's past and current issues have been well-documented, with matters of public safety and drug trafficking being at the forefront. Fahle said some of these issues relate closely to how government has run in the past, where political groups have bribed and compensated citizens

"She's inspired so many residents," Elizabeth said, tearfully. "There aren't too many people who won't remember my mother."

Some might be surprised to hear of all the work Barbara did for the town. Anybody you speak with about her volunteer work is quick to point out how humble she was, never publicizing or broadcasting the efforts of the organizations she helped create.

"She didn't look for any publicity, didn't want any thanks," said Bruce, proudly.

"She did not want what she did run up the flagpole," said Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Plummer, who worked closely with Barbara at the food bank and the East Hampton Nursery School. "And she has had a huge impact on this community."

"It was never, ever about Barbara," said Fries. "She always said the people in the town were the good ones. It was run totally on town donations, and that's because people in town respected her and her abilities. She would say, 'we are so lucky for these generous people.' But without her, I don't even know if we'd have a food bank today."

But it was Barbara's caring and generous nature that will be missed the most, although her most important accomplishments will live on. Amazingly, even after her passing, she has still found a way to support her community. In lieu of flowers, Barbara asked that donations in her memory be made to the East Hampton Food Bank or to the Connecticut Hospice, ensuring that another generation will feel her warmth and love.

"She was the matriarch who brought the family together and held it there through 57 years of marriage and raising children," stated Ethan at a service for his mother. "She was an educator, a volunteer, a champion of those less fortunate and in need. She gave from her heart without reserve and set an example for all to follow."

Donations in Barbara's honor can be made to the East Hampton Food Bank, 20 East High St, or to the Connecticut Hospice, 100 Double Beach Rd., Branford. To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

in exchange for votes. Over the past decade, Fahle said that government has become "more robust and policy-oriented," which has allowed for more fair elections and campaigns. Fahle said that this change was visible, too, as residents were able to interact through social media and town hall meetings so their voices could be heard.

And the information Fahle and the IRI group brought to Mexico will quickly be put to the test. Fahle said candidates have been chosen and campaigns are underway for the upcoming elections on July 1. "Hopefully, they will be putting what they learned into practice," he said.

Fahle said that he "enjoyed the experience" and hopes to get involved again. He said that the work that is done by IRI is "closely monitored and measured" and it appears to be working well. "These countries are very eager to get this helpful information," he said.

For more information on the International Republican Institute, visit iri.org; for more information on The Yankee Institute, visit yankeeinstitute.org.

Early Portland Grand List Numbers Show Over 6 Percent Drop

by Joshua Anusewicz

A preliminary calculation of Portland's Grand List of assessable properties for the year ending Oct. 1, 2011, showed 6.64 percent decrease from the previous year.

The list put the total value of taxable properties in Portland at \$799,052,514, a decrease of \$56.82 million from the 2010 list. After increasing 0.61 percent last year - a \$5.21 million increase from the 2009 list - Town Assessor Nicole Lintereur said she was expecting what she called this "rather moderate" decrease.

"Absolutely" due to the recent revaluation, Lintereur said Wednesday, adding that the housing market in Portland has declined over the past year.

That housing decline is reflected in the Grand List, as real estate properties are down 8.39 percent, from \$760,169,141 to \$696,390,654. The other two categories in the list, however, saw moderate increases: personal property went up 9.93 percent, from \$29,416,780 to \$32,337,210, and motor vehicles increased 6.10 percent, from \$66,283,598 to \$70,324,650.

Lintereur stressed these figures aren't set in stone. Connecticut law requires that a revaluation be performed every five years to reflect the change in property values, either up or down. Overall, the amount of taxes that the town needs does not change due to the revaluation; however, the amount of each individual tax bill, whether for real estate, motor vehicle or per-

sonal property, does change based on the revaluation of the individual properties.

"It's a rebalancing of the tax burden," Lintereur explained. "Some will go up, some will go down, and some will stay the same."

Residents who disagree with their assessment, however, are afforded the ability to dispute the numbers through the town's Board of Assessment Appeals. Because this hasn't been completed, Lintereur said that these numbers are "preliminary."

The Grand List represents the net value of assessed property in town, and is used to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The rate is determined by dividing the town's budget by the Grand List total. Residents can calculate their taxes by multiplying their total assessments by the mill rate. Currently, the mill rate in Portland is at 28.15, Tyler said. (A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So, for example, a person with a house assessed at \$200,000 pays \$5,630 in taxes on it.) These taxes are used by the town to cover expenses in their budget.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she was not surprised to see the Grand List shrink, either.

"It reflects the general economy of the state," she said Wednesday. "But I think we're actually doing a little better than some towns across the state."

Bransfield added that over recent years, the Grand List has remained fairly "steady," not increasing or decreasing dramatically.

During last November's municipal elections, a major concern in most candidates' campaigns was broadening the commercial tax base in Portland to lessen the tax burden on residents. While some measures have been taken to attract businesses into the community, some residents have pointed to stalled projects and closing businesses as a sign that the town needs to do more.

Wednesday, however, Bransfield did say that some substantial projects could be on the horizon. The Portland TownPlace project, located on the Elmcrest Hospital property, is close to securing an anchor tenant that would provide a sizeable shopping center at the corner of routes 66 and 17, Bransfield said. She also announced that there have been preliminary conversations about adding a large hotel to the St. Clements property on Route 66. There have also been some talks of filling vacancies within the Portland Industrial Parks, as well, Bransfield said.

"We look forward to growing the Grand List over the next few years," Bransfield added. "We're hopeful."

According to the preliminary list, the top 10 property owners in Portland are Connecticut Light and Power, with property valued at \$12.85 million; St. Clements Foundation, at \$4.71 mil-

lion; Perry Portland Associates (owners of the Elmcrest Hospital/Portland TownPlace property), at \$4.34 million; Jarvis Airfoil, at \$2.64 million; Buckeye Cattle Company (Quarry Ridge Golf Course), at \$2.63 million; Portland Care and Rehabilitation, at \$2.24 million; Safety-Kleen Systems, at \$1.97 million; Woodgreen Portland, at \$1.83 million; Chatham Ridge Associates, at \$1.79 million; and Pharmagraphics, at \$1.74 million.

Combined, the top 10 taxpayers own \$36.74 million of taxable property in Portland.

Currently, the town operations budget is being worked on by Bransfield and the town's Finance Director Tom Robinson; the Board of Education proposed 2012-13 budget has already been submitted, coming in at \$18.46 million, a 1.98 percent increase over current year spending.

The decrease in the Grand List "doesn't change the fact that our town has many needs," Bransfield said of the budget process.

The town operations budget is scheduled to be submitted to the Board of Selectmen by Tuesday, Feb. 28. Following the submission, a public hearing will be held on Tuesday, March 26, at 7 p.m. at Portland High School to discuss the budget. The Board of Selectmen will then hold several budget workshops throughout March to deliberate on the budget.

Portland Committee Moving Forward with Property Maintenance Ordinance

by Joshua Anusewicz

A newly-formed committee to research an "ordinance of property maintenance" met Wednesday to review a similar ordinance from the town of Bristol, bringing the possibility of a blight ordinance in Portland closer.

The committee was formed in January by the Board of Selectmen, and consists of First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and Selectmen Fred Knous and Ryan Curley. The purpose of the committee was to revisit the possibility of what the board calls "property maintenance" rather than "blight," which would be a tool to deal with unsightly, dilapidated or abandoned property in town.

Wednesday's meeting, which was held prior

to the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen, also included Zoning Enforcement Officer Bob Spencer and Town Planner Deanna Rhodes. Both weighed in and gave recommendations on a proposed ordinance; so far, the committee has reviewed existing ordinances from Bristol and Windsor Locks to use as templates for a proposed ordinance in Portland.

When the ordinance was proposed in the past, it was not supported, mostly due to the fact that the town had no way of enforcing it. Now that the town has a zoning enforcement officer, and is looking to attract businesses to the downtown area, the selectmen felt that the time was right to revisit the matter.

"This is necessary," Spencer said, after reviewing the Bristol ordinance. "This would put teeth into the matters we're dealing with. Right now, there are little repercussions for someone who doesn't follow zoning regulations. This allows for more tools to get the job done."

Bransfield said the property maintenance ordinance could be "more encompassing" than a blight ordinance, possibly including abandoned vehicles, length of grass and vacant properties. But the committee agreed that the focus of the ordinance should be straight-forward.

"We're looking at the big stuff," Curley said, "what everyone would consider blight."

"Most folks are responsible," Knous added. "I think we're dealing with a very small number. So we have to balance between the rights and responsibilities [of the property owners]."

The committee is currently reviewing the two ordinances to utilize the parts that best apply to the situation in Portland, and will also look into what punitive measures can be taken for those that violate the ordinance. The committee has discussed possible fines, an appeals board, and possible exemptions, but nothing is set in stone. A committee meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday, Feb. 22, at 6 p.m. at Town Hall for further discussion on the matter.

Andover Grand List Drops 6.9 Percent

by Geeta Schrayter

The results of the Grand List for the year ending Oct. 1, 2011, are quite different from the year previous, where a 1 percent increase was shown.

This year, the Grand List, which represents the assessed value of all taxable property in town, decreased 6.9 percent.

Motor vehicle assessments rose from \$23,363,340 to \$24,060,780, while personal property assessments increased from \$5,705,270 to \$5,860,780. However, those increases weren't enough to offset the real estate decrease. Real estate assessments dropped \$20,547,760, from \$248,760,670 to \$228,212,910.

Overall, the Grand List total was down nearly \$19,644,810, from \$280,379,280 to \$260,934,470.

Selectwoman Elaine Bucharth said she wasn't surprised about the decrease.

"I'm a real estate agent so I know values went down, so it's no surprise," she said. She added that since expenses were up in town, both the

local and RHAM school budgets were going to increase and in the town offices "we're hoping for a minor raise for the people who haven't gotten a raise in a few years," taxes in town will likely increase.

"Everyone's expenses go up, so taxes go up," she said. "It's a miracle really that we've been able to keep taxes at the same level for so many years."

The top taxpayers for real estate were: Whispering Hills LLC at \$905,200, Martin Marshall at \$790,200, B&B Realty Co. at \$765,800, Gudz Irene & Myron E at \$680,900, Hillside Self Storage Center LLC at \$648,700, Hatem, Pamela B at \$569,700, Maier, Allen L at \$562,900, Andover Plaza LLC at \$524,700, Rosewood Enterprises LLC at \$469,200 and Marcia, Kenneth R & Katherine at \$463,100.

In regards to personal property, Connecticut Light & Power Co remained the highest taxpayer at \$3,151,650, followed by Algonquin Gas Transmission LLC at \$484,520, Scott Electrocrafts Inc at \$457,070, MTM Corpora-

tion at \$138,510, 7-Eleven Inc at \$131,780, Andover Septic Tank Company Inc. at \$123,380, AT&T Mobility LLC at \$112,180, Cellco Partnership at \$98,140, Andover Landscaping LLC at 78,800 and ICA Donuts LLC at \$53,930.

The Grand List is used by the Board of Finance to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year, by dividing the town's budget by the Grand List total.

Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad said this week it's difficult to say how the Grand List will affect the mill rate until the budget is set and revenues are determined. But she said she wouldn't be surprised if, even without knowing the budget, it increased to 30 mills "right off the bat."

Selectman Jay Linddy expressed similar thoughts.

"It doesn't matter how your assessments are coming down," he said. "The bottom line is there's got to be so many dollars to make the mill rate work - a minimum 2-2.5 mill increase

[will occur] just from the Grand List change," he said.

Residents' taxes can be determined by multiplying the mill rate by their total assessments. One mill is equal to \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the current mill rate of 27.6 a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$6,900 in taxes.

"I suspect taxes will go up a little," said Conrad. "I mean, they're going to have to... we'll do the best we can to keep it as low as possible."

But the Grand List mill rate, and consequently residents' taxes, won't be certified until after the budget is approved and all residents who applied for a hearing with the Board of Assessment Appeals have been seen. The deadline to apply for a hearing is Feb. 20; however, due to the town office being closed Friday and Presidents Day on Monday, applications had to have been submitted by the end of the day Thursday. As of press time Thursday morning, 10 applications had been received.

Prague Ready for Legislative Session

by **Geeta Schrayter**

The Connecticut General Assembly's regular session convened on Feb. 8, and despite the minor stroke she experienced Christmas Day, state Sen. Edith Prague was there for opening day.



Edith Prague

Prague is the long-time senator for the 19th District, which includes Hebron and Andover.

"I'm so happy to be back," Prague said Wednesday, but added, "I'm not there five days a week. My daughter is willing to drive me in on Tuesdays and Thursdays."

As a result of the stroke, Prague explained she's not yet able to drive.

"I went to my doctor's on Monday for a check-up and she said, you know, I could drive

right down to the center of town and back but not any distance," Prague said.

Prague went on to say she needs to be tested by the Department of Motor Vehicles before she was cleared to drive again, something she was fine doing.

"I don't want to take any chances driving my car – Heaven forbid I hit someone else. I've got to make absolutely sure that I pass that driving test," she said.

It was found Prague had suffered a stroke on Christmas morning, when her daughter noticed the left side of Prague's mouth "didn't look quite right," Prague explained.

"So we went right down to Windham Hospital and they discovered that I had had a minor stroke," she said.

"Some people have strokes and they're paralyzed, and it's devastating," she added. "I really feel very lucky."

Prague received special care in the hospital for a week, after which she came home and has since been receiving therapy on an outpatient

basis.

"I had physical therapy and speech therapy – as a matter of fact I have speech therapy today," Prague noted, adding she also goes up to the University of Connecticut to take part in its speech and hearing clinics.

"Not that there's anything wrong with my speech, but they work with the part of my brain where I had the stroke, just to make sure everything's alright," she said.

Highlighting her dedication, Prague went on to say there are some meetings coming up "and even though they're not on Tuesday and Thursday I must go – and I will."

Additionally, as chair of the Committee on Aging, she mentioned there are lots of elderly issues to deal with during the session, "like keeping people out of nursing homes and keeping them in the community and in their homes where they really want to be, and where they get better faster."

"Actually," she continued, "we're having a big forum to discuss this" at a federal level. She

mentioned Sen. Richard Blumenthal had called to check on her while she was recovering. He mentioned he was on the Senate Committee on Aging and would be "very happy to work with us," she said.

Prague said the committee is going to meet to discuss the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program that takes people out of a nursing home after being there for three months.

"We want them to change that to keep people out of the nursing homes to begin with – that's got to be a change in the federal regulations," she said.

But Prague has to be cautious, as there are still concerns about her health.

"My daughter is telling me [to take it easy] all the time. She's very nervous about my doing too much," Prague said, but added she planned to run for reelection in the fall if her health maintained.

"As long as my health holds up – and I'm fine at this point – I'm planning on running for reelection," she said.

Proposed Charter Changes Headed to Referendum in Andover

by **Geeta Schrayter**

The Board of Selectmen has decided to hold a special referendum next month on the proposed revisions to the town charter.

The selectmen agreed at their Feb. 1 meeting to hold the referendum Tuesday, March 13.

Before they reached an agreement, though, there was discussion as to whether to hold off until November elections to handle the charter, or hold a special referendum date.

Selectman Jay Linddy felt residents would forget about the issue if it were pushed to November.

The Charter Revision Commission "has been working on this for one year, six months," he said, explaining under the law residents have to be notified of the proposed changes through a notice in the local paper – something that had already been done.

"Then, the way some of [the selectmen] wanted to do it is to have the vote on it a year after everyone's done talking about it. I just want it to be fresh in people's minds," he said.

But First Selectman Bob Burbank and Selectwoman Elaine Buchardt expressed concern there wouldn't be a high enough turnout for the charter to pass if the vote were held sooner. Per state statute, a majority of the town's voters need to approve the changes to the charter. "provided such majority shall be no less than 15 percent of the electors as determined by the last completed registry list of such town."

"Bob and I both thought it's just going to be a lost cause and cost us money, and no way are we going to get enough votes," Buchardt said this week. However, Buchardt noted Linddy and selectmen Julia Haverl and Cathy Desrosiers had already indicated their preference for the special referendum. So, she continued, "I personally said 'Look, that vote already passed. We're already having the referendum.'"

While Buchardt ultimately opted to vote in favor of the measure, she still doesn't necessarily have confidence in the changes' adoption.

"I don't think we should have a referendum, but you know, it's a democracy, and the majority voted" to have one, she said.

The decision to hold the special referendum passed 4-1 with Burbank opposed, and three questions will be on the ballot on March 13.

The wording of the questions, which the selectmen decided at the Feb. 1 meeting to have revised by the attorney for clarification, was unanimously approved at a special meeting on Feb. 6.

Along with a general question asking whether the revisions recommended by the Charter Revision Commission including "streamlining and plainer language of the Charter" should be adopted, two questions will be posed about specific changes.

The first addresses the biennial municipal election which is currently held in May. The proposed change moves elections to November, and Linddy expressed his concern the change didn't reflect voter's preferences.

"Not that many people came to the public hearings, but the people that came... voiced their opinion about not changing the municipal elections to November" but the commission did anyways, he said. Still, Linddy added, the Charter Revision Commission "did a fine job and that's all we can ask for."

The second question is in regard to ordinances, and authorizes the Board of Selectmen to "enact, amend or repeal" an ordinance. However, voters have the right "to petition any such action to referendum."

Voting will take place in the community room on March 13 and the polls will be open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. Absentee ballots are available in the town clerk's office at Town Hall.

East Hampton Police News

2/8: Charles W. Curtis, 27, of 17 South Main St., was arrested for second-degree failure to appear, East Hampton Police said.

Hebron Police News

2/7: Police are investigating the death of a dog at a residence on Sentinel Woods Drive. The dog's owner found it deceased at the end of the driveway and Hebron Animal Hospital confirmed the dog suffered injuries consistent with being struck by a vehicle, State Police said.

2/10: A resident reported receiving obscene text messages from another party, State Police said.

LifeStar Responds to Route 2 Crash in Marlborough

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

LifeStar helicopter transported a woman to St. Francis Hospital after a crash that shut down Route 2 last Friday.

State Police said Jayne Sisco, 46, of 22 Dellwood Rd., Norwich, struck a tree while heading eastbound on Route 2 near exit 12 at 11:35 a.m. Feb. 10.

Marlborough Fire Captain Mark Merritt said Sisco crashed into a tree well off the side of the highway in a ditch. He said when medical personnel arrived she was unresponsive. "We're not sure if it was the result of the accident or some other cause," he said.

Merritt said three Marlborough paramedic

units responded to the crash and a Middlesex unit responded as backup.

Merritt said the woman was transported by ambulance to the Marlborough Clinic landing zone, where she was then taken by LifeStar to St. Francis Hospital in Hartford.

Sisco was treated for minor, non-life threatening injuries, State Police said.

Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said the eastbound side of Route 2 was shut down near the crash scene, to protect first responders.

Merritt said the road was only shut down for a short while. "I think we got her out of there pretty quick," he said.

Fire Damages Slocum Road Home in Hebron

by **Geeta Schrayter**

No injuries were reported in a fire early Sunday morning at a Slocum Road home.

The fire, which broke out inside a single-family home at 143 Slocum Rd., began between the wall of the basement and first floor, Fire Marshal Randy Blais said.

Family members reported the fire around 1 a.m. and the two individuals were able to escape unharmed along with their three pets.

Blais said Wednesday the cause was undetermined as of yet but the investigation would

probably remain open.

"We eliminated electrical," he had said earlier, adding, "we're just looking at a couple of other things. It's not intentional or anything like that."

Blais said firefighters used around 30 gallons of water to extinguish the fire – "they did a good job at stopping it."

The house was turned back over to the homeowners Sunday morning, with damage sustained to the basement and first-floor areas.

Colchester Police News

2/7: Anthony Tullis, 34, was charged with DUI and reckless driving on Route 2, State Police said.

2/8: Brian Gustafson, 22, of 151 Taylor Rd., lost control of his vehicle on Pinebrook Road and struck a tree before the vehicle overturned on its roof. No injuries were reported for Gustafson or two passengers, State Police said.

2/10: Mattio Ingenito, 30, of 95 Stanavage Rd., turned himself in on an outstanding arrest warrant for violation of probation, State Police said.

2/10: A 13-year-old was charged with sixth-

degree larceny for stealing electronics from Radio Shack on South Main Street, State Police said.

2/10: James Farr, 47, of 75 Cemetery Rd., was charged with third-degree burglary and second-degree breach of peace for attempting to break into a residence on Goldberg Road, State Police said.

2/12: Grant Neuendorf, 21, of 6 Old Tavern Rd., Norwich, was charged with DUI and driving the wrong way on a divided highway on Route 2, State Police said.

Portland Police News

2/3: Ashley Serra, 22, of 50 High St., was charged with possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, Portland Police said.

2/8: Benjamin Ramcke, 18, of 970 Randolph Rd., Middletown, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia associated with less than half an ounce of marijuana, police said.

2/8: Howard Ray, 18, of 22 Summer Hill Rd., Middletown, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia associated with less than half an ounce of marijuana, police said.

2/11: Robert McLellan, 29, of 63 Freestone Ave., was charged with driving with suspended license and driving unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

2/11: Randi Wilson, 29, of 39 Seminole Rd., Middlefield, was charged with failure to respond to an infraction, police said.

Marlborough Police News

2/8: Brian Levy, 63, of 20 Sherwin Ln., Windsor Locks, was charged with DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane after an accident on Route 2. Troopers brought Levy to Troop K, before he was transported to Backus Hospital for reported back pains. He was released to Backus Hospital's care on a \$500 non-surety bond, State Police said.

Requests for Road Repair, New Fire Equipment Come Forth in Colchester

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

Representatives from Public Works and Colchester Hayward Fire Department presented requests for bonding for road repair and new fire equipment in a budget discussion before Wednesday's Board of Finance meeting.

Public Works Director Jim Paggioli presented a 10-year plan to bring Colchester's 105 miles of road back up to speed.

Paggioli said \$3.6 million worth of road work needs to be done or had been deferred in the past to the 2012-13 year. He proposed bonding \$3.2 million of that work and covering the remainder with an annual maintenance budget that will increase steadily for the next 10 years, starting at \$443,000 for this fiscal year and maxing out at approximately \$650,000.

The increasing maintenance budget would account for 2.5 percent per year inflation. Paggioli said the cost of pavement per ton has increased 71 percent since 2004.

According to Paggioli, the lifespan of pavement is between 14 and 18 years and the average age of pavement in town is 9.3 years.

The plan proposes to bring the roads in disrepair back to a maintenance standpoint, which will help extend the life expectancy of the roads.

"So we're not coming back in five years asking for money over the million dollar mark," Paggioli said.

Paggioli listed some of the roads in poor condition with the costs to repair them and compared their Pavement Condition Index (PCI) to the town's average of 7.1. The roads included Cabin Road, with a PCI of 4 and \$199,000 repair cost; River Road, with a PCI of 5 and \$281,000 repair cost; and Marvin Road, with a PCI of 5 and \$295,000 repair cost. He proposed reclaiming these roads, which involves grinding the pavement back into itself to create a new base. However, Paggioli said the Public Works department evaluates the roads "based on the failures of the road itself, not the PCI."

Resident Jim Kelly supported the plan and commended Paggioli's expertise.

"As much as I hate to go to bonding for the money, if you drive around the roads in this town it's really time the money gets put back in," he said. "It's what we have to do to get the roads back up, but also have a comprehensive maintenance plan, so we keep money that he needs to keep the roads up so they don't deteriorate after seven or eight years."

Paggioli stressed the importance of sticking with the proposed maintenance plan, as former Board of Finance member Mike Ryan said there have been budget issues in the past that have prevented the town from keeping up with road maintenance.

Fire Chief Walter Cox and Deputy Chief Don Lee proposed bonding \$1.5 million for three new fire apparatus in efforts to eliminate their older vehicles.

The fire department's seven apparatus and one reserve piece have an average age of 16.9 years, with the average lifespan of a vehicle only 20 years, Cox said. "We're at a point where our vehicles are 20, 25 and 30 years old," he said. "So the 1.5 million eliminates three 20- to 30-year old vehicles." With the proposed bonding money, the average age of the vehicles would drop to 7.5 years.

The proposal would put \$650,000 toward a new engine tank, \$475,000 to refurbish and re-chassis a rescue module and \$400,000 for a new water supply tanker.

Cox said the new tanker would have a 1,000-gallon tank and 2,000-gallon-per-minute pump, which would replace the old tanker with just a

1,800 gallon tank. Cox said Colchester's water distribution center covers only 10 percent of town, so the department would draft water from ponds and lakes for the remaining 90 percent. He said this would improve Insurance Service Organization ratings for homeowners and commercial properties near bodies of water.

Kelly expressed concern for spending \$475,000 to refurbish and re-chassis the rescue module when a new one costs \$875,000.

Lee said the module was purchased in 1991 as a money-saving piece of equipment in the future because of its heavy-gage stainless steel construction. "The steel construction of this rescue body is just like the day we got it. No rust, no cracks," he said.

Board of Finance Chairman Robert Tarlov said the road and fire apparatus will likely make it onto the May 8 budget referendum, but not the open space acquisition. "We have a second referendum coming later in the year," he said. "We'll probably have a discussion after the budget period but I don't want to create any false expectations that we'll be able to get that on [the May referendum]."

Colchester School Officials Detail Plan to Cut Teachers

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

School officials last week explained the proposal to reduce 7.7 teachers for the coming school year and its impact on instruction at Colchester's public schools.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Barb Gilbert and Pupil Services Director Kathie Shaughnessy spoke to the Board of Education about the proposal, part of the 12.7 full-time positions that have been proposed to be cut at Colchester's public schools.

The proposed position eliminations were included in Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle's \$37.88 million budget proposal for the 2012-13 fiscal year, which she presented last month. The teacher eliminations would come from a combination of attritions due to retirements, teachers hired for one-year contracts and one layoff.

Loiselle said the lone full-time teacher layoff would be in the science department at William J. Johnston Middle School.

"Enrollment in our district is dropping and one area of focus as we worked to develop the budget was keeping the same student-to-teacher ratio as we moved forward," Gilbert said.

The budget proposed eliminating two grade eight classroom teachers at WJJMS. The class size would increase from 20 to 22.5 students in

grade eight and 22 to 24 in grade seven. The cut means a reduction of an entire team in grade eight, dividing the class into two teams.

The budget also showed an elimination of two special educators, one at WJJMS and one at Bacon Academy, increasing the special education student-to-teacher ratio from 12.3 to 14.8 at the middle school and 13.4 to 15.7 at Bacon.

Class size would not be impacted at Colchester Elementary School.

"Changes in class size between 18 and 25 do not affect academic performance," Gilbert said.

The budget also proposed cutting the behavioral assistant in Bacon Academy's SOAR program, which works with students with emotional disturbances. A board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA) for the entire district would replace the behavioral assistant.

"Any parent of a child with autism knows they need BCBA services," Shaughnessy said. "It is important to have someone on board in our district that can help us with our children that have significant behavioral issues pre-K through 12."

The plan would save \$124,000 by cutting three programs from the middle school: Project Oceanology, non-mandated summer school and

a specialist providing resources for gifted and talented students.

Gilbert said allocating state-mandated school climate specialists to staff already at the schools will save money. "It doesn't need to be a full-time position," she said. "It's just a person mandated to report about incidences of suspected bullying. A go-to person to investigate the situation."

Bacon Academy Assistant Principal Linda Iacobellis and WJJMS Assistant Principal Jennifer Olsen presented Colchester's plans to meet the requirements of the state's Student Success Plans (SSP). Iacobellis described the program as an individualized, student-driven success plan helping students achieve post-secondary and career goals. The board unanimously passed the motion.

The board passed Bacon Academy Principal Jeffrey Mathieu's proposed adding of a summer art course and two Microsoft Office courses and eliminating the multiple levels of year one and two world language courses.

* * *

Also at last week's meeting, the board unanimously passed a motion to approve a donation to Jack Jackter Intermediate School's afterschool program from S&S Worldwide, a

resignation request from special education teacher Augusta Gilberti, field trip requests for Bacon Academy and JJIS students to Boston and Sturbridge, MA, and a request to dispose of outdated textbooks at the intermediate school.

Several groups of students and faculty were honored at last week's meeting, beginning with 10 students from the middle school's Lego robotics club's strong performance in a state robotics competition.

The board honored Bacon Academy student Jeline Buchwald, who won a logo design contest for the school's Digital Backpack media program.

"This young lady was certainly a graphic design profession," Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said. "We wanted that branding and we're so proud that it was designed by one of our students."

Office professional Debbie Mientus was recognized for her leadership in the intermediate school's afterschool clubs for a record-breaking 356 students involved.

The Board of Education's next meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 28, in Jackter Intermediate School, Room 120.

Hayn's Wife Says Pistol Permit Denied in Colchester

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

The wife of a town official claimed this week her pistol permit application was denied due to an ongoing matter between her husband and the first selectman.

Patricia Hayn said First Selectman Gregg Schuster did not approve the permit application because "he has an issue going on" with her husband, Board of Finance member Bruce Hayn.

Schuster, and later the entire Board of Selectmen, have issued letters requesting Bruce Hayn resign from his position on the Board of Finance because of arson charges for allegedly setting fire to his Norwich business last fall. When Schuster's Jan. 23 letter failed to provoke Bruce Hayn's resignation, the selectmen voted unanimously Feb. 2 to send Hayn a letter that stated the selectmen voted unanimously to request he give up his seat.

Bruce Hayn has not resigned and Patricia Hayn indicated he will not step down from the

Board of Finance, which he has served on for 28 years.

In a Feb. 6 letter to Hayn, Schuster wrote that, based on the circumstances between her husband and the Board of Selectmen, he did not believe he was "in an objective position to render a decision on [Patricia Hayn's] pistol permit and therefore not approving it." He welcomed Patricia Hayn to appeal the decision.

Hayn said Schuster's letter was political, not an effort to stay objective. Bruce Hayn's "legal standing should have no bearing on my right to bear arms," she said. "The fact that [Schuster] brings my husband into this issue is wrong."

Hayn said, in her opinion, Schuster's decision not to approve the permit application is a decision to deny it.

"Any way you want to twist the words," she said. "In order to get it approved it has to go through him, unless it goes through an appeal board and the only reason you need to appeal

something is because it's not been approved or it's been denied."

Hayn said she did everything by the book, so she should have been approved.

"I applied for my pistol permit in December; I took the course and everything I was supposed to do," she said.

Schuster said his letter speaks for itself and it is not uncommon for public officials to recuse themselves in a situation like this.

He also stood by his choice. "I felt I was too close to the situation to make an objective decision," he said. "I recused myself because it was the responsible thing to do."

Schuster said his decision was to simply not make the decision himself. He said Hayn can still get her pistol permit; she just has to do so through the State Board of Firearms Permit Examiners, as defined by law.

Hayn posted Schuster's letter on a Facebook

page dedicated to supporting her husband.

Hayn said this is the first firearm permit she has applied for, although she was already a member of the National Rifle Association. She said her attorney has contacted the NRA and is working to appeal the alleged denial.

Hayn said representatives from Connecticut Carry, a nonprofit organization promoting Connecticut residents' second amendment rights, have contacted her, but she has not yet returned their call.

* * *

Meanwhile, the Board of Finance voted at a Wednesday meeting to remove Hayn as vice chairman of the board, due to his lack of attendance during the budget season.

"I don't see him attending in the near future," Board of Finance Chairman Robert Tarlov said.

The board unanimously voted to instate Robert Esteve as the new vice chair.

Sklarz Proposes Cutting Spanish in Marlborough

by Katelyn Kelleher

At Thursday's Board of Education meeting members supported eliminating Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School's Spanish program to reduce the 2012-2013 fiscal year budget increase.

Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz's proposed \$7,137,154 budget includes dropping the Spanish program and reinstating only 50 percent of the more than \$100,000 in discretionary items (instructional supplies, textbooks, professional development, etc.) from the 2011-12 fiscal year funds.

The budget also proposed eliminating 3.4 full-time staff. Ratifying these budget reductions would bring the budget from a 6.78 percent increase – a \$7,380,217 spending plan Sklarz said would be needed to simply bringing everything in the current budget forward to the 2012-13 year – to the 3.28 percent.

Sklarz said reducing the budget increase below the 3.28 percent would require cutting additional discretionary expenses or another whole faculty.

"Ninety-three percent of the budget pays for salaries, employee benefits, utilities and transportation. That leaves seven percent wiggle room," he said. "If we wanted to go lower [with the budget increase] they are going to be staff positions."

Board of Education members supported eliminating the Spanish program for grades one

through six with intentions to revise and reinstate it when financially feasible.

Member Corinne Chappelle said although she recognizes the benefit of a foreign language program, other expenses take priority.

"As someone who's bilingual, a French major and having studied abroad, to even suggest eliminating the Spanish program I can't imagine," she said. "But not if it's taking away from what we need."

Member Carole Shea supported eliminating the program – which currently is only for students in grades three through six – and eventually reinstating it with proper funding.

"The program is not what it should be because we can't afford it," she said. "To have a partial program is not worth it."

Sklarz said the program would come back stronger. "When we have good financial times we will reinstate it in a grander fashion for grades one through six," he said. "We'll do what we need to do, start in kindergarten or first grade."

Member Robert Clarke said the program is most beneficial to children of the elementary school age and, as someone who works in a multi-lingual environment, still uses the Spanish skills he learned in high school.

"Language skills develop in the brain differently than math, science or reading," he said. "But there is a timeframe. I would have a harder

time [learning a language] now than my 9-year-old daughter."

Resident Christie Moraga said cutting the Spanish program would put Marlborough students behind other towns, such as Glastonbury and West Hartford.

"We're doing our children a great disservice if we cut Spanish," she said. "They'll have a better grasp of sounds and understanding of culture. When it's cut it will take a long time to get it back."

As a result of declining enrollments, Sklarz asked the board to consider reducing pupil services staff, which includes school psychologists, social workers and special educators, by 0.4 and reducing two full-time paraprofessionals and one full-time custodial staff.

Board of Education Chairwoman Betty O'Brien asked the members to state a range within which they would like to see the budget increase. O'Brien said she was comfortable with the proposed 3.28 percent.

"One or two percent, you can forget about," she said. "Three percent I'm good with."

Shea said she would like to see a range of options, specifically what the budget would look like if it were a 1, 2 or 3 percent increase. Clarke reminded the board the budget is reduced by whole positions or programs, not percents.

Ultimately, every member stated they were

comfortable with a 3 percent increase, with the exception of Clarke, who requested more information regarding further cuts.

Sklarz said a budget increase is inevitable.

"In previous years, we spent one-time money on ongoing expenses. This is not a one-year budget," he said. "I never went into education to be cutting a budget. I've always been advocating for things that are important."

Once the members of the Board of Education finalize the budget proposal it will be presented to the Board of Finance for approval. The school board was to discuss the budget further Thursday, after press time.

Also at the meeting, resident Karen Tyler stated her intent to join the Board of Education, following the resignation of member Karen McKinney earlier this month.

According to O'Brien, the Republican Town Committee would need to nominate someone to take McKinney's slot, and then the Board of Selectmen would make an appointment. Republican Town Committee Chairman Ken Hjulstrom said the committee is not meeting again until March 7, at which time all of the applicants for McKinney's seat will be reviewed. Hjulstrom said that, at the moment, Tyler is the only person who has expressed interest in the position.

Measures Being Considered to Help Curb Vandalism in Marlborough

by Katelyn Kelleher

The discovery of vandalism on town property prompted Parks and Recreation Commission members this week to discuss lights and cameras at Blish Park as additional security measures.

Police are investigating graffiti on the back wall of the bath house at Blish Park that reads "smoke treez," and paint on the roof of the pavilion.

The graffiti and the paint are just the latest acts of vandalism in town. In September, spray paint on the playscape in Blish Park cost the town approximately \$2,000 to clean up. A 17-year-old turned himself in to Troop K in Colchester Nov. 15 for the graffiti and was charged with second-degree criminal mischief.

The bath house graffiti's location on the less visible rear wall of the building made it difficult to determine when it was done. Parks and Recreation Commission Chairwoman Barbara Lazzari and Vice Chairwoman Louise Concodello both agreed it could not be from the 2011 incident and Concodello called it "rather new."

Concodello said she went to the pavilion Saturday and found mushrooms painted on the floor and several black markings, both of which she said are new.

"Every time we clean it up, they go back and do something else," she said.

Lazzari said the town will power wash to clean up the mess, but has to wait for warmer temperatures in the spring.

First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski said the weather might even take care of the removal.

Gaudinski said the vandalism on the bath house lacks the same profane language of the playscape graffiti.

"At least it's not swears, but it's still disheartening for the community," she said. "It seems to be that age group of 14- to 16-year olds."

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom called the damages costly. "It is a shame that kids damage town property like this. Other damage, including vandalized traffic signs, costs the taxpayers," he said.

At Monday's Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, board member Maggie Hannon said she noticed the gate to the park open several times. She said the public works department has been cutting down trees and may have left the gates unlocked.

"When we see the gates open, we all cringe and have a fit," Lazzari said. "We need to let Chris [Corsa, grounds and building maintenance foreman for Marlborough Public Works] know when the gates are unlocked."

The commission discussed cameras and motion-sensor lights as possible solutions to the ongoing vandalism problem in town. Lazzari said neither is in the budget this year.

"We have to take into consideration purchasing and monitoring costs and how to protect [cameras and lights] from vandalism," Lazzari said.

Hannon said the commission should at least get a quote on the costs the security would entail. "Why spend \$95,000 on the playscape and \$12,000 on the bath house and let them get destroyed?" she said. "I'd rather spend money on cameras than on Band-Aids to fix it."

Hannon pointed out the possibility that cameras alone would not solve the problem because the video, if it doesn't get destroyed first by vandals, might come out too dark or grainy to identify a person.

Parks and Recreation office administrator Mandy Rocznik suggested solar-powered motion-detector lights as a less-expensive option and a potential quick fix.

Lazzari said lights might keep out anyone looking to damage property. "The police told me the kids like it because it's dark," she said. "So if we make it light it might keep them out."

Lazzari also said the playscape and bath house are far enough away from houses that lights shouldn't bother residents.

Hannon said the problem stems from a lack of supervision of area youths and failure to set an example with last year's playscape graffiti. "I just don't understand why parents aren't paying attention," she said. "It just got cleaned up and shoved under the carpet."



Grffiti was recently discovered on the back wall of the bath house at Blish Park. The Parks and Commission discussed the matter at a meeting this week, as well as steps to take to try to stop future vandalism at the park.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First off, congratulations are in order for Portland native Brian Vibberts Jr. For those of you who missed reporter Joshua Anusewicz's cover story in last week's *Rivereast*, Vibberts was up for his fourth Grammy last weekend. The album *Forever* by Corea, Clarke and White – an album that Vibberts was an engineer on – was nominated in the Best Jazz Instrumental category.

Well, the awards were handed out in a "pre-telecast" before Sunday night's ceremony, and I'm happy to say *Forever* won – adding another notch to Vibberts' already very-impressive resume.

As for the Sunday night show on CBS, I watched a fair amount of it. I was happy to see Adele win so many awards. Her songs were a little slow to grow on me, but once they did, I was hooked. There's no denying she has a tremendous voice.

Some of the performances during the show were pretty great (such as a nice little duet of "It Had to Be You" by Tony Bennett and Carrie Underwood, and an impressive close-out of the show by Paul McCartney), and some were just plain weird (like whatever that was Nicki Minaj did). One of the highlights was definitely Jennifer Hudson's tremendous performance of the Whitney Houston signature number "I Will Always Love You." She did a fantastic job with the song.

I was shocked but not altogether surprised – if that makes any sense – to hear of Houston's death Saturday night. Yes, she was still so young, but I was well aware of the problems she'd had with drug addiction over the years. The abuse took a toll on her physical appearance, and, from what I've heard, her voice as well.

Has the media overdone it a little bit in the days since Houston's death? Well, yes – but that was sort of to be expected. Not only did her death have the tawdry details gossip-hounds love – found dead in a hotel bathroom, prescription drugs may or may not have played a part – but let's not forget that when Houston was at her peak in the '80s and early '90s, churning out hit after hit after hit, her star shone very brightly. Her amazing voice proved influential to singers from Mariah Carey to Christina Aguilera, and it's been said her popularity (along with that of Michael Jackson) helped lead MTV to show more videos featuring black artists. She was definitely a big crossover hit.

So, with all her achievements, it's a shame that at the end of the day Houston's is a cautionary tale. She had an amazing gift that drug abuse ruined, and then she winds up dying at the age of 48. It's just very sad.

In case you've somehow missed it, the expansion of all-day kindergarten is back on the table in Hebron. As I wrote in my column last week, it's proving just as controversial this time around as it did in 2010 – in fact, I'd even say moreso. This time

around, the criticism – from both sides of the issue – seems to be getting a little out of hand.

This is evident just from looking at the letters to the editor in recent issues. The letter a few weeks ago from a Hebron woman suggesting that another resident who had spoken out against all-day kindergarten should move out of town was unnecessarily harsh, no question. But just as harsh was a rebuttal letter the following week, when another letter writer said the woman, if she wants all-day kindergarten so bad, should home-school her kids.

And one of the harshest of all was the letter that suggested the outright firing of Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz – which was completely unwarranted, and cruel.

People, this has to stop. I'm not saying there shouldn't be disagreement on the issue. That's part of what makes a democracy work. But it's possible to disagree civilly, without telling people to get out of town or simply pull their kids from school, and certainly without advocating people be fired. There have been several people already who have shown on the letters pages they can disagree on a mature level. Let's keep that attitude going.

Hopefully a lot of you can get out to Colchester this weekend for Colchester Community Theatre's production of *Anything Goes*. Reporter Katelyn Kelleher has a story about CCT's mounting of the musical comedy on the cover of this week's *Rivereast*, and I can tell you from first-hand experience, *Anything Goes* is one entertaining show.

I first became familiar with the Cole Porter classic in 2002 – interestingly, in another small-scale production of it. My brother was a senior at the time at Manchester High School, and was in the crew for the school musical that year which was, you guessed it, *Anything Goes*. Everyone involved did a terrific job. Up until that point, I was not familiar with *Anything Goes* at all – but I was surprised to learn that several of the play's songs I actually knew quite well. Songs like "Friendship" (which *I Love Lucy* aficionados – come on, surely I can't be the only one – may recall as the song Lucy and Ethel performed while they each ripped away pieces of the other's dress), "I Get a Kick Out of You" and "You're The Top." They all originated in *Anything Goes*.

Recent CCT shows, such as *Beauty and the Beast* and last year's *Titanic: The Musical*, have been big successes, and I'm sure the theater troupe will do a great job with *Anything Goes* as well. And if you do go see it, don't be surprised to find yourself humming some of those tunes all weekend.

See you next week.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Louise Wallace Lisitano

Louise McGrath Wallace Lisitano, 86, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully at Cobalt Lodge Health Care Center on Friday, Feb. 10.

Louise was born to the late Bernice "Nellie" and Frank Goodrich on March 8, 1925, in Middletown, and attended East Hampton High School. She was married to Sebastian "Mickey" Lisitano for 65 years.

Louise worked as an office manager/bookkeeper for A&P Supermarket and then Color Mart Inc. for many years, fully retiring at age 76. She enjoyed remodeling houses and her many trips to Vermont to attend antique auctions. She loved traveling out west, or taking bus trips with her husband. She was especially proud of her family and loved her role as mother to all.

She is survived by her husband, Mickey, and her two sons and daughter-in-laws, Ronald and Linda Wallace, of Cobalt, and Michael and Elaine Lisitano, of Waterford. She had three granddaughters: Kim Wallace Anderson (Phil), Heather Lisitano Warner (John), and Carrie Lisitano Rose (Ryan), and one grandson, Randy Wallace (Kendra); and she had five great-grandchildren whom she adored: Braden and Callen Wallace, Jordan Rose, and Margaret and Ryan Warner. She leaves one brother, Frank Goodrich, Jr., of Middletown. She also leaves behind two close nieces: Nan Terrio Kandolin (Rick) of Coventry and Jacqueline Standish Kitchen (Thomas) of Jacksonville, FL and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her natural father, Callistus Patrick McGrath; two sisters, Marguerite (Peggy) Terrio and Bernice (Bunny) Standish; and her lifelong friend, Ellen Casserino Webb.

There will be no calling hours. A private family memorial service will be held at Rose Hill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Alzheimer's Association or the American Cancer Society in her memory.

The family wishes to thank all the nurses and staff at Cobalt Lodge Health Care Center for their wonderful care of Louise. They made her comfortable and she felt at home.

East Hampton

Harry Barton Bailey

Harry Barton Bailey, 89, of East Hampton and Scarborough, ME, husband of the late Mary (Russell) Bailey, died Saturday, Feb. 11, at Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough, ME. Born Dec. 26, 1922, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Harry A. and Lura (Barton) Bailey, and was a lifelong resident of East Hampton.

Harry retired from the J.C. Barton Co. in 1988 after 47 years, of which three years and three months were in service to his country in the 3rd Marine Division during WWII. During his service he was in the Pacific Theatre in both Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima where he was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained in combat. He was a member of the 3rd Marine Div. Assoc., American Legion, VFW and Disabled American Veterans. Harry had his pilot's license and enjoyed flying his plane and he also enjoyed surf fishing.

He is survived by his son, H. Barton Bailey Jr. and his wife Astrid of Maine; two grandchildren, Chantal and Dana; and his sister, Anna Michelson of East Hampton.

He was predeceased by his brother, Frank E. Bailey, and his sister, Lois Sorensen.

A funeral service was held Thursday, Feb. 16, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial followed with military honors in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the East Hampton Congregational Church, P.O. Box 237, East Hampton CT 06424, or to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Janet E. Mitchell

Janet E. (Bates) Mitchell, formerly of Portland, wife of the late E. Stuart Mitchell, died at home Wednesday, Feb. 8. Jan was born in Waltham, MA, on Jan. 31, 1933, to Herbert Pratt Bates and Elizabeth Carr Bates.

As a young girl growing up in Cohasset, MA, Jan was proud to have represented her elementary school in the *Boston Globe* spelling bee. She was even prouder to be a Girl Scout, attending Camp Collier in Gardner, MA, for many years. When she was not studying her spelling, practicing her trumpet or sewing newly acquired patches on her scout uniform, she could be found in or on the water, swimming or sailing. During the winter she would take the train to Boston and practice her figure skating.

While attending the University of Massachusetts, studying home economics with an emphasis on tailoring, Jan met the love of her life, Stuart. They were married a short time later. Jan and Stuart began their married life in Newtown, where they made many lifelong friends. With three children and one on the way, they moved to Portland in 1961. A stay-at-home mom, Jan saw that her children were clean, fed, dressed and able to participate in their chosen extracurricular activities.

During these years she continued her figure skating with The Skating Club of Hartford at Colt Park. She later joined the Charter Oak Figure Skating Club and for many years designed and created the costumes for the annual ice show. Jan was also an annual volunteer at the Manomet Bird Observatory aiding research studies, ultimately acquiring her bird-banding license. For many years Jan was the area coordinator for the North American Breeding Bird Survey, the Christmas Bird Count and winter Eagle count. She co-authored a study, *The Time and Energy Budgets of Bald Eagles Along the Connecticut River*. Jan was an early observer for the New England Hawk Migration Study following hawks in a motorized glider.

As the children grew older, Jan found time to teach the family how to sail. Following Stuart's participation in the Newport to Bermuda race, Jan joined Stuart to sail their yawl from Bermuda home to Connecticut. Jan also introduced Stuart to birding. After aiding an injured bald eagle in need, Jan and Stuart obtained the necessary state and federal permits and began rehabilitating birds of prey. They closed the "Raptor Hilton" after 30 years, estimating they had released an average of 100 birds a year that would otherwise have died.

With the birds gone, Jan was able to pursue her other hobbies: painting, spinning, knitting woodcarving, genealogy and traveling. Jan and Stuart preferred camping in tents when traveling. They traversed the U.S. numerous times with varied routes, but preferred traveling through the northern climes of Canada, twice celebrating anniversaries at the Arctic Ocean. Jan would return from her travels with pencil landscapes she had drawn and collected bits of fur, feathers and driftwood. The collected bits would be spun into yarn and knit into meaningful sweaters or hooked into rugs. She would mount her fish carvings on the driftwood.

Jan's love of genealogy would often play a role during their travels. She rarely met a stranger she could not legitimately turn into a relative many times removed, either of hers or that of someone she knew. This love of genealogy and history led her to volunteer at the Connecticut Historical Society where she worked in the paper conservation lab. It was a job she thoroughly enjoyed. Jan was also a founding and lifelong member of The Puffin Patrol. When not traveling, Jan and Stuart spent summer and fall in Port au Persil, Quebec, Canada.

Jan is survived by her sons, Mark Stuart Mitchell and Keith Bates Mitchell; two daughters Suanne Mitchell-Jackson and her husband Albert; Lynne Mitchell; granddaughter, Chloe E. Jackson; granddogs Boo and Opie; and grandkitties Pancho, Fortuna and Eloise who gave Jan much comfort during her final days.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Cohasset Historical Society, 106 South Main Street, Cohasset, MA 02025.

Colchester

W. Steven Hungerford

W. Steven Hungerford, 57, of Lake Hayward, passed away Saturday, Feb. 11. Born May 20, 1954, in Middletown, he was a son of the late Leon Ransom and Elizabeth (O'Brien) Hungerford.

Steve was well-known for his strong work ethic, whether it be in his commercial printing career or around the two homes that he proudly built with his own hands. He loved the outdoors and the serenity of nature, especially exploring and traveling cross country with his family a number of times.

Mr. Hungerford was also proud of his family ancestry, as a descendant of early settlers with relatives who served during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, which he was an avid enthusiast. He also had a great interest in Freemasonry, which was shared and nurtured by his father.

In addition to his wife, Patricia (Zarate) Hungerford, he is survived by a son, Leon Robert Hungerford of Middletown; a stepson, Dennis Pellegrini of East Haddam; two granddaughters, Alison and Leah Pellegrini; three sisters, Ruth Hundt of Uncasville, Jean Pettay of Thomaston, GA, and Elizabeth Hicks of Middletown; his step-mother, Dorothy of Norwich; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a son, Richard Thomas Hungerford, and an infant brother, Robert.

Friends may call Saturday, Feb. 25, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A celebration of his life will be observed at 12:30 p.m. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Diabetes Assn., 306 Industrial Park Rd., Ste. 105, Middletown, CT 06457.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Evelyn May Harriott

Evelyn May Harriott, 80, of East Hampton, widow of William Harriott, died Wednesday, Feb. 15, at Middlesex Hospital. Born July 24, 1931, in Bristol, she was the daughter of the late Clarence N. and Dorothy (Griffin) Frazier.

She had lived in Meriden and Southington before moving to East Hampton five years ago. Evelyn had worked as a CNA for many years before her retirement.

She is survived by her three sons, Daniel Dorau of Southington, Richard Dorau of Meriden, Jody Harriott of Meriden; two daughters, Sandra Fries of East Hampton, Roxann Guiel of Meriden; several brothers and sisters; 19 grandchildren; and many great grandchildren.

Funeral services and burial will be private at the convenience of the family in Walnut Grove Cemetery in Meriden.

The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton has care of arrangements. To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Martin Allen Steckler

Martin Allen Steckler of Colchester passed away in his home Tuesday, Feb. 7.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, on Feb. 12, 1945, Martin worked around the world in the entertainment business for three decades as a promoter, manager, and technician, including; the ownership of Upswing Productions in New York City, and in the business management of the Grateful Dead, Rolling Stones, John Mayall's Blues Breakers, Richie Havens, and Johnny Winter Blues Band, among many other artists.

Marty was a devoted member of Congregation Ahavath Achim ("Brotherly Love") in Colchester. He had a profound appreciation of the arts, especially music, and loved to travel, read, swim, walk, and spend time with friends and family. Since 1996, Marty enthusiastically enjoyed his work and co-workers at Mohegan Sun.

Marty was a very kind and caring individual whose grace will be remembered by many friends and associates, especially by his sister Sheila Alexander and her husband Joel of Brooklyn, NY, his cousin Joe and Aunt Roz Mass of Sherman Oaks, CA, Rabbi Ken Alter of Colchester, Candice Brightman of Maui, HI, the Peterson family of Griswold, and his best friend Richard Smith of Jewett City.

Marlborough

Sandra Netto

Sandra (Tougas) Netto, 60, of Kissimmee, FL, went home to be with Jesus Saturday, Feb. 11, after a long illness. Born in Hartford Feb. 11, 1952, she was raised in East Hartford and resided in the Marlborough/Manchester area for many years prior to moving to Florida 10 years ago.

She was the beloved daughter of Leontine (Bouchard) Tougas of East Hartford and the late Rolland J. Tougas, and was a graduate of Glastonbury High School, Class of 1970. Sandra was employed recently as a deeding clerk for over five years by Orange Lake Resort in Florida.

Most of all, Sandra was a devoted mother to her two sons, Ryan Netto of Davenport, FL and Luke Netto of Kissimmee, FL. Along with her two sons and mother, Sandra also leaves three sisters, Monica Goodale of Hebron, Suzanne Hazard of Hudson, FL, Lucy Harrison of Colchester; six brothers, Marc Tougas of Tolland, Paul Tougas of Tolland, Bruce Tougas of East Harford, Gil Tougas of East Harford, Philip Tougas of Wethersfield, Vincent Tougas of Willington; many nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

Funeral services will be today, Feb. 17, with a celebration of Sandra's life at 11 a.m. at Crossroads Community Cathedral, East Hartford, with Pastor Sean Wiles officiating. Burial will follow at Silver Lane Cemetery, East Harford. Sandra's family will receive friends and relatives today from 10-11 a.m. at the Crossroads Community Cathedral.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Sandra's memory may be made to the C.C.C.-Lisa Barrows Scholarship Camp Fund, 1492 Silver Ln., East Hartford, CT 06118.

The D'Esopo-East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford, has been entrusted with the care of the funeral arrangements. For any online expressions of sympathy to the family, visit desopo.com.

Colchester

Edmund N. Leete

Edmund N. Leete of Lebanon, husband of Ann J. Sheedy, died Saturday, Feb. 11, at home. He was born Dec. 21, 1940, son of the late Edmund N. Leete and Carmella Beninato Leete Ruitenberg. He was raised by his mother and stepfather, Don and Carmella Ruitenberg.

Upon graduation from Bacon Academy in Colchester, he entered the Marine Corps where he achieved the rank of corporal. He was stationed in Hawaii and in Memphis, TN. He held a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education in 1970 and a Master's of Education degree in special physical education in 1972, both from the University of Connecticut.

He played football in the Marine Corps and at the University of Connecticut, and he founded and coached the semi-pro Willimantic Wreckers Football team for three seasons from 1966-68. He began the track and field program at Lyman Memorial High School in 1974.

He taught in several area schools before opening the Right Arm Gun Shop/Connecticut Yankee Muzzle Loading, a specialty gun shop which he operated for 24 years before retiring. He organized muzzle loading and high power rifle competitive shooting programs at the Fin Fur & Feather Club in Chaplin in the 1970s and '80s. Ed was also instrumental in organizing Liberty Hill Muzzle Loaders, a National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association Charter Club, where he held various offices for 16 years. He also organized the Connecticut Historical Firearms Safety Association, which became the umbrella organization of Liberty Hill Muzzleloaders and Ye Olde Lebanon Towne Militia.

He wrote extensively for *Heading Out* magazine and other articles on The Ohio Trail and Connecticut Federal Period Turnpikes in eastern Connecticut. He began the American Patriot Fund, which was designed to help the families of those killed in the failed Iran hostage rescue. He also named Lebanon's food pantry, Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two foster children, Richard Persico of Middletown, NJ, and Susan Provost Roberts of Moosup; a niece, Jennifer Morris of Dayton, TN; nephews Richard Leete of Hixson, TN, and Christopher Leete of Norfolk, VA; by his stepfather's daughter, Sherry Scholz of Sheldon, WI; and many cousins.

There will be a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church, West Town Street, Lebanon, on Saturday, Feb. 18, at 10 a.m. There are no calling hours. His remains will be interred at the Connecticut State Veteran's Cemetery in Middletown, CT, at the convenience of the family.

Memorial contributions may be made to the USMC Reserves Toys for Tots, or to the food pantry of your choice.

The Potter Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. For an online memorial guestbook, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Todd Michael Lavallee

Todd Michael Lavallee, 40, of Portland died Friday, Feb. 10, at Yale New Haven Hospital from complications due to kidney failure. Todd was born in Middletown, the son of Beverly (Mackenzie) Lavallee and the late Francis (Frank) Lavallee.

Todd was a graduate of Portland High School Class of 1991. Todd competed in many local and national wheelchair events with the Cruisers Wheelchair Sports Team of Newington Children's Hospital. He also worked as a volunteer at Middlesex Hospital for many years.

Besides his mother, Todd is survived by a sister, Mandy Weber, and her husband Scott of Middletown. He also leaves behind his several aunts and uncles: Theresa Wallace, Jan Lavallee, John and Hilda Mackenzie, Eugene Warmoth, Patricia and Jim Rand and Susan Pendergast.

The family expresses their deepest gratitude to Todd's caregivers for the last several years who took excellent care of him and were considered a part of his family, Portland Care and Rehabilitation and the DaVita Middlesex Dialysis Center.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Feb. 16, at First Congregational Church, 554 Main St., Portland. Those who wish called at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, on Wednesday, Feb. 15. Burial was in Calvary Cemetery.

Those who wish may make memorial contributions to The Spina Bifida Association, PO Box 2545, Hartford, CT 06146 or the Kidney Foundation, 2139 Silas Deane Hwy, Ste 208, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

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