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Great Gymnasts...RHAM gymnasts placed second in the Class S State Championships Feb. 22 at Pomperaug High School in Southbury. Stephanie Mager (freshman), Jess Rivard (sophomore) and Emma Hartan (senior/captain) have qualified and will compete for the Individual Open Championships on Saturday, March 3, at New Milford High School. Pictured, top row from left, are Mackenzie Cooke, Allie Cahill, Tamer Nichols, Stephanie Mager, Kahler Buckley and Cailyn Pandolfi; middle row from left, Jessica Rivard, Kailee Chanski, Caitlin Assis, Brianna Grant and Rebecca Rumley; and, bottom from left, Lori Mayes and Emma Hartan.

Residents Ask For New Colchester ACO

by Katelyn Kelleher

A Feb. 23 public forum designed to gather suggestions to improve animal control operations at the Colchester Dog Pound attracted a crowd of approximately 80 concerned area residents with a list of requests – including hiring a new animal control officer.

Attendees also asked for adoption hours and increased advertising, a town committee and the opportunity to volunteer to oversee the dogs' care.

The meeting, facilitated by Colchester First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Colchester Resident State Trooper Marc Petruzzi, State Animal Control Officer Linda Wenner and State Animal Control Supervisor Raymond Connors, aimed to improve animal control operations.

Schuster attempted to focus the conversation on ideas to improve the operation, noting that, for liability reasons he could only openly discuss policy, not personnel, specifically the town's animal control officer, Don Favry. Favry, who is the animal control officer for Marlborough as well, has been the focal point of much criticism from area residents over the past month, following a *RiverEast* story highlighting a state animal activist's complaints about the Colchester pound.

However, Marlborough resident Christine Duffy balked at Schuster's request.

"Personnel is important here. This is the crux of why these people have turned out," she said. "We need to be heard. The issue here is not what

the procedures are. The issue here is the actions of one man. We need to get someone in here with some integrity and principal. Someone who can give voice to the animals, who do not have a voice."

Gordon Isleib, of Marlborough, also said the town needs a new animal control officer. "The right person will follow the procedures," he said.

Favry was not present at the forum, and, because of that, declined to comment for this story, deferring questions to Petruzzi.

At the forum, Petruzzi said the animal control officer works on an on-call basis, with no certain number of set hours, but goes at least once per day to feed the dogs. He explained that after a dog has been found, it is held for seven days to give the owner an opportunity to claim it, and is then advertised on the Colchester town website.

A limited staff means anyone looking to adopt must first call the animal control officer, Petruzzi said. "It's not our policy to let people in there at any given time to browse around because of our staffing levels," he said.

Petruzzi, who is the direct supervisor of the animal control officer, said he visits the pound once per month.

Connors said the state is looking to mandate adoption hours at animal shelters. "Every town in Connecticut should have adoption hours,"

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Colchester Native Honored With Purple Heart

by Katelyn Kelleher

After more than five years of waiting and with injuries still healing, a local Marine was awarded a Purple Heart last weekend for his service.

Colchester native Derek Farrington was awarded a Purple Heart for being hit by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) in September 2005, during his first, 6.5-month tour in Ramadi, Iraq. The blast knocked him unconscious. He received a Meritorious Mast for his actions during an ambush on Oct. 31 during that tour.

On a second, 8.5-month tour in Ramadi in 2006, Farrington was hit by two separate improvised explosive device (IED) blasts, on consecutive days. He suffered back and shoulder injuries.

His wife, Megan, said he volunteered for a third tour in the Garmsir District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

"He was deemed 'undeployable' so he had to sign a waiver," she said. "He applied his Marine mentality. Nothing stops him."

Derek was honored Saturday for his service at a ceremony in the gymnasium of the Motor Transport Battalion Marine Logistics Group in New Haven. His unit's two commanding officers, the captain and first sergeant, attended. The first sergeant called attention to the unit, Megan

said. Derek's was the unit's first Purple Heart presentation.

Although he applied for the award in 2006, Derek found out just two weeks ago that he would receive it. Megan said her husband had only two days to come up with the required paperwork, but was able to come up with affidavits from members of his unit. Megan said Facebook was to thank for enabling them to get the paperwork on such short notice.

"We got one friend via Facebook," she said. "He had just gotten home from Afghanistan. He might have even been in Germany still."

They had even less time to gather friends and family for the ceremony.

"They called us on Friday afternoon to let us know about the ceremony and we went up on Saturday morning," Megan said. In attendance to see Derek receive the Purple Heart were his wife, son, sister, mother and mother's boyfriend.

"It's very gratifying for him to know that he's appreciated," Megan said. "He sacrificed so much."

Megan's grandmother, Marge Scholl, of Colchester, wasn't able to attend the ceremony on such short notice, but said she was glad Derek got his Purple Heart after so many years. "We're awful proud of him," she said. "He

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Veteran Derek Farrington's family and fellow Marines joined him at the Motor Transport Battalion Marine Logistics Group in New Haven at a ceremony honoring him with a Purple Heart for his services in Iraq.



Resident State Trooper Marc Petruzzi, First Selectman Gregg Schuster, State Animal Control Officer Linda Wenner and State Animal Control Supervisor Raymond Connors (pictured from left) addressed the public during last week's forum.

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he said.

Jessica McComiskey, who has been a veterinary technician at Colchester Veterinary Hospital and a volunteer at the pound, said she had never witnessed mistreatment by Favry or any kennel personnel.

"I do walk the dogs, I do feed them, I do water them, so Don goes there to check on them and so do I," she said. "It's not like no one's there... There are people there who are taking care of these dogs."

McComiskey said she supported the idea of a volunteer program, but warned of liability issues with aggressive dogs and protecting "not only the dogs' safety, but [volunteer] safety."

When one attendee asked which members of the crowd would be willing to volunteer their time to take care of the dogs impounded at Colchester's animal control facility, nearly every hand in the room shot up.

While several residents suggested the town form a committee to oversee volunteers, Colchester resident Westerly Donohue said the state Office of Animal Welfare should do the overseeing.

"I don't think a mass of volunteers not coordinated by anybody is really going to amount to much," she said.

A fact sheet distributed at the meeting stated dogs remain in the shelter ranging from four days to three months. Colchester resident Lauren Kupper said the animals remain in the shelter much longer.

"I happen to know there was a pit bull there for over four months. Once it was advertised it was gone within days," she said. "The last time

the dogs were listed online was after the last [Rivereast article]. Before that it was many months before any was listed online. I care about these animals and don't want them to sit in the pound."

Connecticut Animal House President Chris Lamb – whose complaints to the *Rivereast* sparked the initial story – said she was notified of the pit bull's four-month stay in the shelter, which is why her organization got involved.

"Our mission is to help municipal pounds with hard-to-place animals and animals with medical issues," she said. "I went to look at the pit, did a quick evaluation on it; it was perfectly adoptable so I put it on the Facebook page and it was gone the next weekend."

"That just proves that promoting the animals is a no-brainer," she said. "The town website is not the same as Petfinder if your goal is to adopt the animal out... you're really going to increase the animals moving through in a much quicker fashion."

Lamb offered the organization's assistance to improve the pound's dog adoption process.

Jody Macrina, president of Protectors of Animals Inc., also offered to share the program she has in place with the pound she works out of in Wethersfield. "We've placed 69 dogs this year," she said.

Schuster said he could not immediately commit to every suggestion at the meeting, but would look into each.

"Give us some time to research it, look at it, and provide a good solution," he said. "Let's face it, something is broken here. I will fix it."

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should've gotten it a long time ago."

Megan and Derek were married in December of 2007, and he was deployed for the third tour in February of 2008. Megan said for the first three months of his third tour, they were not able to communicate, so for three of their first six months of marriage, they were out of touch.

Derek was honorably discharged in January 2009, but still suffered back pain and could not stand up straight. Megan said dealing with the Department of Veterans Affairs for his treatment was difficult.

"Everything drags on. It was pretty much she said they went to a civilian hospital, where he was diagnosed with two bulging discs and a ruptured disc in his spine. "His lower extremities were cold," she said. Derek had surgery on Feb. 21, just four days before the Purple Heart ceremony.

"They went in and took the pressure off the nerves," Megan said. "He will have nerve pain for six to eight months, but should be walking without a cane in six to eight weeks."

Derek attended his Purple Heart ceremony using a cane for support. Megan said it is possible he will require additional surgery.

She said healing from the surgery is difficult

for her husband because he cannot pick up his son, 3-month old Cash. But she kept positive, particularly on his 26th birthday in January. "I told him 'It's a good birthday. You're getting a new back for your birthday,'" she said.

The Farringtons recently moved back to Colchester from Preston. Derek is a 2004 graduate of Bacon Academy, and the two bought his mother's house.

"We get to raise a family in his childhood home," Megan said.

Derek said he didn't know how to explain his feelings, but the award was an honor. "'I'm lucky enough just to be here," he said. "Far greater people have gone through more to get this award."

Scholl said she wanted to make sure Derek got the recognition he deserved. "He's been through so much. He is such a hero. I wanted to let the people of Colchester know he's living here right among us," she said.

Megan said a stranger showed their appreciation immediately after the ceremony.

"We went to brunch and he was wearing his Purple Heart. Someone left a gift card at the front that said 'Thank you for your service, from a veteran,'" she said. "We didn't even get a chance to thank them."

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

As an admitted connoisseur of old-time TV, I got a kick out of seeing the announcement this week from the East Hampton Old Home Days Committee that the theme for this year's annual three-day "glorious celebration" is "The Golden Age of TV."

Folks participating in the Old Home Days Parade – the centerpiece of the July extravaganza – are encouraged to design floats based on classic TV shows. It'll be fun to see what they come up with. Perhaps a reproduction of the S.S. Minnow from *Gilligan's Island*? Or some jukeboxes and leather jackets for a *Happy Days* motif? Or maybe just construct a giant shoe phone and salute *Get Smart*?

Organizers stress you don't necessarily have to think Nick at Nite when designing your floats; you can construct one based on a more contemporary show that's "golden" to you. So, if you want to build a parade-ready homage to *Parks and Recreation* or *The Big Bang Theory*, now's your chance.

Old Home Days will arrive in Belltown in July. More information about the event is available at easthamptonoldhomedays.org.

* * *

Gas has gotten expensive again. (And in other news, the sky is blue.) The way prices have been skyrocketing, I'm sure by this time next week we'll be up over \$4 per gallon – prices we haven't seen since 2008. So I wasn't surprised to see on the news Tuesday that, in Plainville last week, a man stole a bunch of gas from a Citgo station on New Britain Avenue. But I was surprised by what happened next.

According to Plainville Police, a customer broke into one of the gas pumps in the middle of the day. The man must've done this before, as he knew exactly how to rig the pump so as he could get a free tank of gas in his Cadillac Deville.

Like I said, so far, no big shock. However, the gas pump was apparently still set on "free" after the man sped off in his Cadillac. Customer after customer came and was able to magically get gas without paying for it, and not one of them thought to tell the gas station's owner, Mahbub Ahmed, that something seemed amiss. In fact, Ahmed had no idea anything was wrong until the end of the night,

when he went to fill up his *own* car, and noticed just how cheaply the gas was flowing.

Ahmed told NBC Connecticut he wound up taking a \$400 hit the day of the rigging, due to so many people filling up and not having to pay for it.

I was just kind of appalled when I read that. The whole day, there was not one Good Samaritan who thought to tell Ahmed about the gas windfall? It's painful at the pump for everybody these days, but does that mean basic human decency goes out the window? In situations like this, you're not really sticking it to the Citgo corporation; you're mainly sticking it to guys like Ahmed.

* * *

I recently came across a website where the blogger is, day by day, counting down what he considers to be the 100 best sitcom episodes of all time. I don't agree with all his choices so far – he seems to show something of a disdain for the American version of *The Office*, which right away makes him a little suspect in my book – but I enjoyed reading a recent entry where he wrote about an episode of *Mary Tyler Moore* in which pompous TV anchorman Ted Baxter has an on-air heart attack.

The experience leaves Ted a changed man, and he's now thoughtful toward his coworkers, generous with money, and appreciative of things he never seemed to notice before, like sunsets and spiderwebs. But, the further removed from the heart attack he gets (i.e., the longer the episode continues), the more Ted starts to go back to his old self.

While the rest of Ted's coworkers were befuddled by his return to form, his producer, gruff old Lou Grant, figured it out. And while I don't always laugh out loud when reading scripts (a testament to how writing, no matter how good it is, is elevated by good acting), I did when reading this line from Lou:

"I just remembered. The same thing happened in the war. During combat, I never held life more dearly. But the feeling started to go away the minute the Germans stopped shooting at me. (Pause) I never forgave them for that."

* * *

See you next week.



A Purple Heart is pinned to Colchester veteran Derek Farrington's shirt Saturday.

Siminski Proposes \$25.11 Million RHAM Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

At Monday's meeting of the RHAM Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski presented a proposed 2012-13 budget of \$25,114,271 to the board – an increase of 2.17 percent over the current year.

Siminski provided the board with an overview of the budget, including a number of savings, revenue changes and various increases.

The budget is for the RHAM middle and high schools, which serve students in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

Siminski noted there would be electricity savings due to re-negotiation of the electrical rate, savings from bond refinancing and reductions in special education tuition. Utilities were listed as decreasing \$67,000, from \$760,229 to \$693,229. Siminski mentioned refinancing the 2004 bonds would provide an initial savings of \$169,000, and special education tuition was shown reducing \$252,194 from \$905,164 to \$652,970.

Siminski said Wednesday the special education reductions were due to a combination of things, such as the clinical day treatment program and providing programming in-district.

In his budget presentation, Siminski noted administration is due to receive a 1.5 percent salary increase per its contract, and certified staff is due to receive a zero percent increase. The contract for non-certified staff is still in negotiations. But there would be various salary reductions as well, including \$137,912 for teachers' salaries and \$34,989 in aide salaries, due to events such as retirements and non-renewals.

But a \$326,880 increase would be felt from the loss of the Education Jobs Funding, along with significant increases in heating and oil costs, transportation costs and insurance.

The price of heating and fuel oil was shown at \$3.01 per gallon, while Siminski stated the price of gas for the buses would be \$3.07 per gallon with about 29,000 gallons used each year.

Heating oil was listed at an increase for the 2012-13 year of \$40,959, while transportation was shown increasing \$141,071, from \$1,106,865 to \$1,227,936.

A 17 percent increase in health insurance caused the highest expense. The budgeted amount went from \$2,272,017 in the current year to \$2,610,495 – an increase of \$338,478.

Tuition costs for magnet schools and vocational schools also increased, up \$46,139 and \$15,984, respectively. Siminski explained the number of students utilizing school choice and attending magnet and vocational schools for the 2012-13 school year was estimated at 118, up from 107 during the current year.

The purchase of new textbooks added \$50,144, while other instructional supplies added \$26,231. Professional and technology services increased \$44,684 over the current year

due to increased software costs and Hebron's decision to no longer participate in RHAM's technology program, and contracted services went up \$12,345.

Some smaller increases could be found throughout the budget, from \$2,000 for postage to \$1,910 for pensions, \$1,000 for office supplies, \$800 for library books and \$600 for field trips.

However Siminski noted the increase over the current year's budget was really only \$130,210 – from \$24,912,091 to \$25,043,305. But the loss of the Education Jobs Funding, which took away the stated \$326,880, caused the percent increase to be the 2.17 percent as opposed to .52 percent, which it would have been had the funding continued.

Additionally, \$76,966 worth of recommended decision packages were included in the budget, such as the addition of a special education teacher to meet statutory requirements, an architectural study, and curriculum writing.

Siminski explained Wednesday the curriculum needed to be examined, due to changing state standards.

"We have to do some edits in curriculum to be sure what we're teaching matches the Common Core [State Standards]," he said.

During his presentation, Siminski offered two different breakdowns of just where the money goes. The first showed support services accounted for the highest percentage of the budget – 44 percent, followed by regular education at 33 percent, special education at 13 percent and debt at 10 percent.

Another breakdown showed 56.27 percent of the budget is going to salaries, 12.5 percent to benefits, 2.5 percent to utilities, and 10 percent being accounted for by bonds. Additionally, transportation accounted for 4.9 percent, tuition for 4.0 percent and 8.5 percent went to other items including audit services and supplies.

Based on its strategic school profile, it was also noted RHAM has an average cost per pupil that's lower than the state average, at \$12,326 during the 2009-10 year compared to \$13,780.

The levy for Andover decreased slightly this year, from 16.60 percent in 2011-12 to 16.10 percent. Marlborough's levy went to 29.16 percent from 29.18 percent, while Hebron increased from 54.22 percent to 54.74 percent. The levies would translate into \$4,043,398 for Andover, \$7,323,321 for Marlborough and \$13,747,552 for Hebron.

The levies are determined based on how many students from each particular town are attending the two schools.

The board is set to discuss the budget proposal at a special Board of Education meeting Monday, March 5, at 6:30 p.m., in the chorus room at RHAM High School.

East Hampton School Board Approves \$27.24 Million Budget

by Joshua Anusewicz

After being presented with a budget proposal by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden at its last meeting, the Board of Education approved the \$27.24 million spending package at its regular meeting Monday night.

The budget passed 7-2, with board members Josh Piteo and Don Coolican casting the dissenting votes.

The approved spending budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year is \$27,238,340, an increase of \$1,026,338, or 3.92 percent, from last year's budget. Golden said the budget she originally proposed before multiple budget workshops was a 6.2 percent increase, which was worked down to a 4.5 percent increase before reaching its current level.

"I believe this is the lowest comfortable level," Golden said. "I understand that it's high for some people, but it's necessary to maintain our high quality of programs and services."

The use of "maintain" rather than "improve" was a point of contention among some members of the board, who were not satisfied with Golden's assertion that this was "not a forward-moving budget."

Piteo said he felt the budget increase was too high, and specifically pointed out the lack of funding for newer technology.

"The students have to move forward," Piteo said. "We're focusing on employees, salaries and benefits, which are getting fed first, and the crumbs are left over for the students."

Piteo pointed out that some students don't have the ability to use updated technology at home, and that school could be the only place where they can utilize those tools.

Carol Lane, the board's finance committee chair, contested Piteo's point, stating that you "can't contrast the two [salaries and technology] and say that the kids aren't being fed."

"The teachers are what is most important to the students," Lane said.

Golden added that she requested \$50,000 from the town's capital budget for technologi-

cal improvements, but that request was denied. She agreed with Piteo's main point that not upgrading the district's technology was not ideal, but stated that the board was "committed to maintaining class size and electives" for students, a luxury they would not be afforded if any positions were cut.

"Teachers have to utilize the technology they have in the best way they can," she digressed.

Coolican simply stated that he "can't support a 3.9 percent increase," adding that if the board were committed to saving money, it would have to go to "the heart of the matter" - employees and their benefits.

"We have more FTEs [full-time equivalent positions] than we did eight years ago and eight percent less students," Coolican said.

The rest of the board, however, supported the budget. Scott Minnick called the budget "reasonable and fair," adding that it kept the district basically at "status quo."

"It's the biggest public service we [the town] provide," Minnick said.

Board of Education Vice Chairwoman Joanne Barmasse added that the budget was "basically at bare bones" in its current state, and that any cuts would "be hitting the kids and that's something we don't want to do."

Golden also announced that the budget could be reduced on its own, as three employees recently announced they would be retiring at the end of the year, which would have an impact on salaries and benefits. However, Golden said that the district's health insurance benefits have yet to be resolved due to recent complications with combining the town and school district's insurance, so a solid number has yet to be reached on the cost of insurance.

"The administration did not believe it was fiscally responsible to reduce the recommended budget at this time," Golden stated. "We should let it play out."

The budget will now be presented to the Board of Finance at a budget workshop Friday, March 9, at 5 p.m. at Town Hall.

Bransfield Submits Budget Increase to Portland Selectmen

by Joshua Anusewicz

With the Board of Education budget already approved, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield submitted the town's general government budget to the Board of Selectmen this week, requesting a 2.9 percent increase from this fiscal year.

Combined with the Board of Education budget, the proposed town budget is \$30.51 million, with \$12.06 million going to general government and \$18.45 million going to the school board. Altogether, this represents a 2.3 percent increase from the 2011-12 fiscal year.

The 2011-12 budget was approved by referendum last year at \$29.82 million — \$11.73 million for general government and \$18.10 million for education.

Bransfield said Tuesday that most of the increase can be found in the public safety and public works line items, including a brush/leaf bucket for the highway department and a new sport-utility vehicle for the police department. There are also projects at the senior center, the high school building and athletic grounds and for the town's computer system that are included in the increase.

"It's not exciting," Bransfield said of the

items fueling the increase, "but it's what it takes to run a town."

Bransfield also pointed out that the town had to utilize money from its capital fund to pay for town-wide cleanup after last year's series of storms. The cost of the cleanup, however, did not have as large an impact as originally thought, which Bransfield commended the public works department for.

"That was a huge accomplishment for this year," she said. "Residents should be very proud of the town crew for cleaning up the town. It took a little longer than expected, but they did a great job and were cost-conscious."

The list of goals and objectives for the 2012-13 fiscal year that Bransfield laid out is a long and hopeful one, to be certain. But the main objective is something Bransfield has always preached – to continue carefully using town funds while maintaining services and infrastructure. To do that, Bransfield said many requests from departments for additional funds were denied.

"Not all of the departments got what they wanted," she said.

High on the list of objectives is education;

Bransfield said that the Board of Education does "an excellent job asking for what they need to provide and maintain a good education system...it's the most important service a town provides." She added that the continued success and accomplishments of the students and faculty in the district is proof that the "quality of education is high."

Also on the list is continued economic development, improvement of parks, improvements to the town's roads, sewers and water systems, and support for other town services.

"We want to provide these quality services at a reasonable price to residents, and I believe we've done that," Bransfield said, adding that she believed that was one of reasons the town was ranked one of the 100 best small towns in America by *Money* magazine.

But with the goals and accomplishments aside, the reality is that the mill rate is expected to increase for residents. At the proposed level of spending, the mill rate is expected to go up about 0.6 mills, which Bransfield said is "similar to other years." The exact number for the mill rate will not be

known until all pending appeals on property values are finalized, a particularly arduous task due to this year's revaluation.

Currently, the mill rate in Portland is at 28.15. A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. So, for example, using the current mill rate a person with a house assessed at \$200,000 pays \$5,630 in taxes on it.

Bransfield admitted that the budget was not set in stone and that the figures could easily go down, much like they did last year during budget deliberations with the selectmen.

"I'm looking forward to working with the selectmen over the next month on fine-tuning the budget," she said.

The next step in the budget process will be a public hearing next Tuesday, March 6, at 7 p.m. at the Portland High School auditorium. This will give residents an opportunity to view and make comments on both the general government and education budgets. According to the town, the budget must be adopted by at least Wednesday, April 4, to achieve a referendum on either May 7 or May 14.

Barton Hill Residents Seek Legal Help for Sewage Issue

by Joshua Anusewicz

A group of residents on Barton Hill Road announced at Tuesday's Town Council meeting they will be pursuing legal measures against the town to resolve persisting sewage issues that have occurred over the past several years in their neighborhood.

With the residents of the five Barton Hill homes in attendance, attorney Melissa Harris of Michael F. Dowley and Associates of Middletown informed the council the residents were seeking the help of an independent engineering firm to review the system of grinder pumps that serves six homes on the road. According to the residents, since the development went online in 2006, over 10 grinder pumps have burnt out between the five homes.

"It's not just the pumps, but the system as a whole," Harris described as the issue. "Something doesn't quite add up. They are caring for their pumps, so this is a bigger issue than just maintaining their pumps."

The residents of Barton Hill said that they have brought this issue to the town multiple times over the past few months, meeting with Interim Town Manager John Weichsel and Vincent Susco, the town's public utilities administrator. But the concerns have gained little traction with the town, as the residents signed agreements when they purchased their homes to repair and maintain their grinder pumps, meaning the town is not responsible.

According to Ed Sawyers, a resident on Barton Hill, when the development was being built, a proposal was made to install a pump station at the bottom of Barton Hill Road. That pump station would pump the waste over 1,000 feet uphill to another system that would shuttle the waste to the Water Pollution Control Au-

thority (WPCA) facility on Route 66. Sawyers said that instead, the town balked on an \$85,000 price tag and installed the grinder pump system, which was intended for 12 homes to hook up.

Susco, who spoke at Tuesday's meeting, defended the system.

"The system works," he stated. "If the system didn't work, we'd have waste everywhere. We can't find a specific problem to any one of them."

According to Susco, there are about 400 properties in East Hampton that are served by grinder pumps, 94 of which are owned and maintained by the town. Susco said that he looked at the failure rates of these pumps, and that about 20 percent of them have broken or need to be repaired. Barton Hill, he said, is at "about that" number and that the situation was "unfortunate, but not unusual."

Susco also explained that initial cost estimates for the pump station were actually closer to \$170,000, and that the WPCA's resources, at the time, were tied up in projects in Marlborough.

Town Council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub, after looking over the schematics of the system that Susco provided the council, admitted that "although I'm not an engineer, it looks like something could go wrong." She also questioned why no field work has been done to check the system since the sewage issues came to the forefront.

"It's an unusually high number of pumps," Weintraub added.

Councilor Derek Johnson agreed with Weintraub, wondering if Susco had the failure numbers of other towns – Susco said he did not

– and if the failure rates in the Barton Hill area were higher than Susco believed.

"It does seem higher, even 20 percent seems extraordinarily high," Johnson added.

The independent engineering study is expected to be completed within the next several weeks, after which a report will be presented to the town of the findings. The issue is expected to be discussed at the next scheduled Town Council meeting.

In other legal matters, Weichsel announced that the third-party report into clear-cutting at a property on Spellman Point Road showed that all of the proper procedures were followed in the development of the lot.

The lot in question - 68 Spellman Point Rd., owned by Mary Ann and James Hubert - was brought to the attention of the council in December by resident Judson Landon, who lives across the street from the lot. Landon, a former member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, believed the lot violated zoning regulations and that the clearing of the lot would cause harmful runoff to run into Lake Pocotopaug, which sits less than 100 feet from the foundation of the new home.

Although the plans for the property were approved by the Inland/Wetlands Commission, which has the authority over planning and zoning for properties on the lake, some members of the council felt it would be appropriate to seek an independent investigation to see if the proper channels were followed and to make sure similar incidents wouldn't occur in the future. Weintraub enlisted the help of John Pagini, a land-use consultant, who reviewed the property

over the past several weeks.

According to Weichsel, "nothing dramatic needed" to be done on the property. The comprehensive document, which consists of over 40 pages, outlines the project to clear the lot and build the home, as well as both the zoning and wetlands regulations of the town. It also contains recommendations for avoiding issues like this from occurring and tightening up the approval process.

With the investigation completed, Weichsel recommended the council should turn the report over to the appropriate boards, as the "council has gone as far as it can" on the issue. But Weintraub and councilor Kyle Dostaler said that there were other concerns in the report, including applications that were improperly filled out, that should be addressed in some capacity by the council.

"We've spent a lot of money on the lake," Dostaler said. "And in this report, I see words like 'ambiguity' and 'lack of clarity.' My concern is if this is not properly addressed, each penny that we put into the lake is just wasted money."

To that extent, Johnson recommended that Weichsel direct the members of the land-use boards to review the report and "provide an appropriate response" to the recommendations. This idea drew the support of the council, and Weichsel is expected to make that request.

The next Town Council regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, at 6:30 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

New Pastor Happy to Be at Hope Church in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

With a new facility on the horizon, East Hampton's Hope Church has ushered in a new leader to achieve the church's vision of creating a center for the entire community.

On Jan. 15, Jermaine Keller became the new senior pastor at Hope Church, moving to East Hampton from Napa, CA, where he served as the "teaching pastor" at First Christian Church for nine years. Keller, who is originally from New Jersey, has traveled throughout the country as a pastor and brings that experience to the welcoming church community.

"It's been excellent," Keller said of his transition into Hope Church. "I'm like a new car, and everyone loves a new car."

Hope Church, which went by the name East Hampton Bible Church until 2009, sought a new pastor after the man who formerly held the position, Roger Martin, departed late last year. According to Tom Ingala, the church's administrative pastor, Martin left for "a multitude of reasons," but mostly to be closer to his family in the South, where Ingala expects he will continue as a pastor.

"We've had a good transition over the past few months," Ingala said of the church's "new chapter." Ingala said the search began over the summer, and the church received over 250 ap-

plicants for the position, from across the world.

"We were trying to fit someone with our church personality," Ingala said of the hiring process, which was led by the church elders. Ingala said that after whittling the search down to six candidates, "God led" the elders to chose Keller for the position.

"I felt that it was the time for a change," Keller said of his decision to move back east. Keller said there were particular aspects he was looking for in a church, including community involvement, "progressive style of worship," a wide age range, and a "heart for families."

Keller said he also looked for a church that had "healthy leadership" so he could "join a team" that was looking to forward the church's vision.

"There are not a lot of healthy churches out there looking for pastors," he said. "They are looking for you to come fix a problem."

Feeling that Hope Church was calling to him, Keller accepted and moved his wife and three children to East Hampton, where he said his family has been quickly welcomed. And while he's slowly learning about the schools, the town news and the best places to grab a bite to eat, he's getting acclimated to his new role as a leader of his church.

"I'm listening to our members now, hear-

ing their stories and building that trust factor," Keller said. "Time will help with that trust factor."

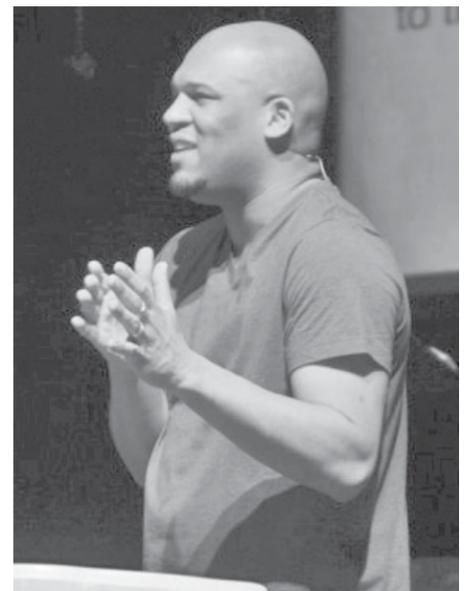
Keller's arrival isn't the only thing that has drawn more attention to Hope Church; so has the building of a new facility for the church on Route 66. The foundation was recently poured for the building and the shell of the structure is expected to be up in the next few months, Ingala said. Keller said that since he's arrived, he has noticed "an excitement in the town" about the new 12,000-sq.-ft. building, which the church hopes will serve as a community center, as well.

Keller said it hasn't been uncommon for residents to come up to him and express interest in the church because of the new building.

"It's something fresh and new, and they want to come check it out," he said. "We're happy to welcome in new members."

For now, the church holds its Sunday services at the East Hampton High School auditorium, and its main office is located on Sinco Place, where it holds its everyday operations, youth meetings, band practice and Lydia's Closet, which donates new and used items to needy families.

For more information about Hope Church, visit thehope.com or call 860-267-9607.



Since taking over the post in January, Jermaine Keller has quickly acclimated himself to his new position as senior pastor of East Hampton's Hope Church.

Reval Blamed for 10 Percent Grand List Decrease in Marlborough

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A nearly 10 percent decrease in the 2011 Grand List net total from the 2010 list may be attributed to the revaluation.

Town Assessor Marie Hall said the 9.84 percent decrease was likely a result of 2011 being a revaluation year and a drop in market value. A revaluation is the process of conducting data collection and market analysis to equalize the value of all properties within a municipality for the purpose of a fair distribution of the tax burden. Marlborough's last revaluation year was 2007.

The Grand List represents Marlborough's net value of assessed property. The total decrease was \$61.7 million over the 2010 list. First Selectwoman Catherine Gaudinski said she was not sure yet how many tax dollars that equates to, but generally the percentage decrease represents the percentage of tax money that needs to be collected.

Gaudinski could not yet say what effect the decrease will have on the town's budget, but

said she is working on an information piece for residents.

The Board of Selectmen will adopt a budget March 6 to send to the Board of Finance.

"The goal is to educate people that when assessments go down it does not necessarily mean taxes will go down," a press release from the Board of Selectmen stated.

Gaudinski said Marlborough's decrease "is not as dramatic as in other towns."

Marlborough is in the bottom third of a list compiled of areas that recently went through revaluations. "The trend that we have here in town is similar to other towns that have gone through revaluations," she said.

The list's three categories, real estate, personal property and motor vehicle, saw different results. Personal property and motor vehicle totals actually increased. Personal property's total was \$9,022,660, or an increase of 5.42 percent. Motor vehicle was \$50,380,070, or a 6.66 percent increase, which Hall said prob-

ably means people are trading in their vehicles. She added the increase in these two categories is a good thing. "Maybe the economy's getting a little better," she said. Hall also cited Connecticut Light and Power going up in value as a factor.

Real estate's total was \$506,170,130, or an 11.39 percent decrease from 2010. Gaudinski said most of the properties in town had decreased in value. "Overall, in real estate in the area, we see that throughout the state it has been decreased due to the economy," she said. "Home prices are down."

Gaudinski reiterated that just because an assessment decreased, it does not necessarily mean an individual's taxes will drop. "If you take the mill rate and multiply it by your total [assessment value] it doesn't mean it'll show a decrease," she said.

The mill rate, which is the amount of tax payable per dollar of an assessed property value,

is determined by dividing the town's budget by the Grand List total. A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Using the town's current mill rate of 27.2 as an example, a person with a house assessed at \$200,000 pays \$5,440 in taxes on it.

The 2010 Grand List showed an increase of 0.6 percent, or \$3.7 million.

The top 10 real estate taxpayers, which includes real estate and personal property, are: Elliot Enterprises at \$3.98 million, Connecticut Light & Power at \$3.67 million, Both at \$3.31 million, Milborough Health Care Realty at 3.08 million, Robert and Mary Soleau at \$1.72 million, C & B Marlborough Association at \$1.33 million, 369 North Main Street at \$1.10 million, Douglas and Nathalie Thibodeau at \$855,120 and Edward and Nancy Bader at \$786,250.

Hall said the BAA will complete appeals assessments by the end of March.

Hebron Reconsidering Leaving Dispatch Contract

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

After initially serving notice it intended to leave a multi-town contract with its current emergency dispatch provider, Hebron officials said that, in an effort to remain good neighbors, they are now considering a one-year contract with the company.

Colchester Emergency Communications Inc. (also known as KX Dispatch) currently provides emergency communication services by contract for Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron and Marlborough, as well as East Haddam, Bozrah, Haddam, Lebanon and Salem.

On Dec. 29, Hebron's then-town manager, Bonnie Therrien, served notice the town intended to leave for another dispatch company in Tolland, Marlborough First Selectwoman Catherine Gaudinski said. Any town in the contract with KX can opt to leave, as long as it provides 180 days notice and pays for the entirety of the contract.

Hebron Interim Town Manager Andy Tierney said the town's fire chief had spoken with other dispatch centers and said the per capita rate of Tolland County Mutual Aid Fire Service, also known as "TN", was much cheaper than what Hebron currently pays KX.

TN currently covers Andover, Tolland, Columbia, Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, Vernon,

Willington, Ashford, Ellington, East Windsor, Somers, Stafford and Union.

"We are going to go out to see if they are, in fact, cheaper," Tierney said this week. He said the fire chief estimated the savings at approximately \$20,000 from the \$52,000 Hebron pays KX annually, but anticipated getting the request for quotation of the exact number in April.

Hebron's location was also a factor in considering a new company.

"Hebron is on the outskirts of a lot of the towns that belong to the [Tolland] dispatch center," Tierney said. "We border Columbia and Andover and that area."

Tierney said town officials will do what is in the best interest for Hebron, but are considering a one-year contract renewal in an effort to be courteous to other towns in contract with KX.

"If we were to leave, we would have left some of the other eight towns hanging to pick up the rest of the cost that Hebron would be paying if we were [still] there," he said.

"We're not looking to upset our neighbors. We're going to share our [request for quotation results] with the KX dispatch center," he added. "Our goal is not to affect the dispatch center as it runs today and give everyone a little more time to plan for budget season."

Tierney added that if Hebron ended its con-

tract with KX, if any other town followed suit or if another town didn't join to take Hebron's place, it would leave the remaining towns vulnerable to picking up the costs.

Hebron Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeffrey Watt said the town asked for the one-year renewal in order to review the clauses of the contract. He said he wanted to be clear that Hebron is still with the Colchester organization at the present time.

"With the continual rising costs with Colchester, we want to take the time to review," he said. "Everything is premature."

The Marlborough Board of Selectmen discussed a one-year contract request from Hebron with KX Dispatch at its Feb. 21 meeting.

Marlborough's emergency communication budget would increase by \$10,000 annually if Hebron were to leave, Gaudinski said.

East Hampton Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said the town's \$122,000 emergency communication budget assessment would increase by \$31,000 if Hebron left KX. East Hampton uses KX for fire dispatch communications as well as medical.

Colchester First Selectman Gregg Schuster said Hebron leaving would make a significant impact on Colchester's emergency communication budget. Although he was not sure of the

exact number, he estimated Colchester's increase would fall between \$20,000 and \$40,000.

The other eight towns have agreed to one-year contracts.

"All towns have responded to go along with a one-year contract with Hebron as long as they rescind their commitment to leave as of June 30 this year," Gaudinski said at the Feb. 21 meeting.

Gaudinski said there is an issue with negotiating with Hebron because of a \$600,000 loan the towns took out together for capital communication equipment.

"We're in the process of paying that back as part of an upgrade for emergency communication," she said. "I did say for a one-year contract, but as long as some financial payment for that long-term loan can be given back to us."

If Hebron were to leave, KX would lose the town's share of state grant funding. Tierney said the approximately \$50,000 would follow the town to whichever organization its contract is with.

Tierney said nothing is off the table yet, and Hebron can renew a one-year contract, sign the original five-year contract, or leave, as the notice to leave is still in effect.

Andover Resident Charged with Animal Cruelty

by **Geeta Schrayter**

Exactly five months after six horses were seized from his Andover home, James Hemond turned himself in last week on animal cruelty charges.

On Sept. 23, 2011, the state Department of Agriculture (DOAG) and the Connecticut State Police executed a warrant at Hemond's 330 Hebron Rd. home after it was discovered by DOAG's Animal Control Division that Hemond's six horses weren't properly cared for.

Officials said last fall the animals were lacking proper feed, water, and shelter and were being kept in debris-filled paddocks and pastures. The horses – two miniatures, two pertrons, one thoroughbred and one paint stallion – were taken to DOAG's Second Chance large animal facility in Niantic, where they were treated by a veterinarian for various ailments including lice, dental issues and hoof issues. The horses were also extremely emaciated, DOAG officials said at the time.

Hemond turned himself in on Feb. 23 on six counts of animal cruelty.

Raymond Connors, supervisor of the Animal Control Division with DOAG, was unavailable for an update on the horses' conditions, but in September he said it was expected the horses would remain at the facility until spring.

If they have been successfully rehabilitated, the horses may just find themselves new homes next month. Each year DOAG partners with the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture "to find homes for animals who have taken advantage of the agency's facilities" through a horse auction, it's explained on the state website.

Anyone interested in this year's horse auction, which will be held on April 28, can visit animalscience.uconn.edu/equine/horse_sale.php.

Individuals who'd like to help support the department's ongoing rescue work can send a check to: The Animal Abuse Cost Recovery Account, c/o Connecticut Department of Agriculture, 165 Capitol Ave., Room G-8A, Hartford, CT 06106.

West Hartford Man Charged With Robbing Hebron Bank

by **Geeta Schrayter**

A West Hartford man was charged Monday with robbing the First Niagara Bank in the center of town at knifepoint and leading police on a brief chase before being apprehended, State Police said.

The alleged robbery took place at around 2:15 p.m. on Feb. 27, police said. West Hartford resident Paul Albert entered the bank, located at 31 Main St., and threatened the teller with a knife, police said.

After Albert was given the money, he left the building and drove off in his vehicle, which was then seen by state troopers who initiated pursuit. After troopers deployed stop sticks – a tool used to deflate tires when police are chasing felony suspects – Albert's vehicle drove off the road in Marlborough, at which point he was taken into custody without incident, said police.

The knife allegedly used in the robbery and the stolen cash was discovered in Albert's car. Some of the cash was thrown out the window by Albert during the chase, but State Police Lt. J. Paul Vance said police were able to retrieve "most if not all" of the money. Vance would not disclose how much was stolen from the bank.

Albert was charged with first-degree robbery with a dangerous weapon, fourth-degree larceny, engaging police in pursuit, driving under suspension and reckless driving, according to the state judicial website. State police initially set his bond at \$100,000. He was arraigned Tuesday in Tolland Superior Court and released from custody with a promise to appear on March 9, according to the judicial website. He has yet to enter a plea.

Colchester School Board Approves \$37.88 Million Budget

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

The Board of Education Tuesday adopted the superintendent's \$37.88 million budget proposal – which includes cutting 12.7 positions and three student programs.

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle-Goodwin's proposed spending package for the 2012-13 year would reduce 7.7 teaching positions, from a combination of attritions due to retirements, teachers hired for one-year contracts and laying off one grade eight science teacher.

Loiselle-Goodwin justified the cuts because of anticipated enrollment declines. "The reason that reduction came forth is because next year there will be 37 less students than the last two years," she said.

The proposed increase of 2.92 percent over the 2011-12 budget is not much higher than the average state school district increase of 2.62 percent, Loiselle-Goodwin said.

Board members focused on the difficulty in letting go of Project Oceanology, one of the programs cut, along with non-mandated summer school programs for at-risk students and the William J. Johnston Middle School enrichment teacher for gifted and talented students. Project Oceanology, a Groton-based nonprofit, offers marine science studies to schools and colleges.

Loiselle-Goodwin said the district gave no-

tion to Project Oceanology last year that it was contemplating ending the relationship. A letter from Project Oceanology Director Thaxter Tewksbury stated the district could "request up to a 50 percent reduction in their full membership in case of financial distress."

Loiselle-Goodwin pointed out that the services offered would be reduced accordingly, and the cost reduction does not account for transportation for related field trips.

Board of Education Chairman Ronald Goldstein said hundreds of students are part of the program, which costs \$40,000 per year.

Bacon Academy Principal Jeff Mathieu said eliminating the program would cause a change in the school's curriculum.

"It is one of the things that makes the curriculum come alive," he said. "It is integrated throughout our entire curriculum."

Vice Principal Mark Ambruso said the program is an enrichment, but doesn't fit with this year's budget.

"You can still run a typical field trip where students would pay a small amount of money," he said. "But the burden would be on the family to pay for that, not the district."

The Board of Education unanimously passed a motion to direct the Budget Committee to communicate with the Board of Finance over

allocating funds to reinstate 0.2 of the 0.6 math teachers eliminated, in order to give all sophomores the opportunity to take geometry before taking the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). It would cost \$9,702.

Goldstein cautioned the board against adding the 0.2 positions back to the proposal. "We need to send the message [to the Board of Finance] that this is the proposal," he said. He suggested they might be willing to fund the "small part of the whole" with federal funds.

Colchester Elementary School Principal Jackie Somberg presented kindergarten placement procedure changes. Changes included allowing parents to use daycare addresses instead of home, as placement was previously determined based on home addresses, and moving the lottery drawing for full-day kindergarten from June to March 1.

Somberg anticipated two full-day and six half-day kindergarten sessions. She said there are currently 144 children registered, and 159 are projected.

Requests for section changes would be considered in cases of hardship, including loss of income or job. "Telling families much earlier than ever before, we hope they will be able to make arrangements if they need that," she said.

In the past, Somberg said, requests to change sessions has resulted in imbalanced class sizes and these changes would act to deter that. Additionally, the students are placed based on bus routes, and requests to change disrupt that.

"We want to be as collaborative as we can with families. It's the first time they're coming to school and we're already saying 'no'?" she said. "We've had lots of meetings with families and they all come in and plead their cases. We do our best to explain why we cannot honor it."

Loiselle-Goodwin suggested it would be helpful to get data without calling each parent. "Send out a survey to the daycares asking 'does it matter to you a.m. or p.m. and would you be willing to share that with the school system?'"

Board of Education member John Reever said he hopes the earlier placement could help diminish the problem. "I don't like the idea of everybody being able to change that easily," he said. "Do we sour the milk? Do we make it more difficult to process or put in a request to change? Sometimes that's enough of a deterrent."

The Board of Education will present the adopted budget to the Board of Finance March 5.

Soby to Run for State Representative

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

In a surprise announcement to kick off Tuesday's Republican Town Committee meeting, selectman Stan Soby announced his candidacy for state representative for the 48th District.

The district includes Colchester and East Haddam. The position in the Connecticut House of Representatives has been held by Democrat Linda Orange since 1997.

Despite Orange holding the seat for the past 15 years, Soby said he was confident the Republican Party could take over the position.

"We've had an incumbent who's been a more reliable vote for Democratic Party leadership than for the 48th District," he said. "I want to offer ... the residents of the 48th district an alternative to that. Someone who will take a thoughtful and rational approach and look at how we can invest, not spend, your tax dollars to grow our economy."

Soby already had several campaign goals.

"I'm going to look at how we can lessen the burden on employers so that they can grow jobs, how we can reduce the size and cost of government, because I deal with that on a daily basis in my employment, and how we can give people the opportunity themselves to grow in their

employment and their lives and really make a difference," he said. "I am willing to do that and I hope [the Republican Town Committee] will be willing to do that because it really is about we, the people."

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said at Tuesday's meeting he was thrilled to support Soby.

"One of the things I've realized in my two years in office is that a lot of things happen outside of Colchester that affect Colchester," he said. "Things happen in Hartford all the time. Decisions get made and all of a sudden we bear the brunt of it. It's the same thing in Washington, so we have to start looking outside of Colchester."

Schuster said there is a lot of room for improvement in Hartford, and the Republican Town Committee has done a good job of bringing the Republican message.

"They've put us in a big fiscal mess," he said. "There are all kinds of things that I'm not happy about that are going around in Hartford."

He added that the Republican Town Committee in Colchester has "had a good trip over the last couple of years."

"We started out a couple of years ago when we took the Board of Selectmen, tied on the

Board of Finance, and we pretty much finished the job this past election and now all elected boards are controlled by Republicans," he said.

"We've been able, in the past, to elect our party's candidate in the 48th District," Soby said.

Soby said he would like to provide a better balance in Hartford between the parties to operate as a "checks and balances" system.

"Right now, with one party the majority in the executive branch and both houses of the legislature, there really isn't a balance there," he said.

Soby said running for the position was something he had thought about, on and off, in the past, but this year the circumstances were right for him to consider it.

"I'm going to try to meet as many people as I can in the district to hear what their concerns are and try as much as possible to reflect the needs of the constituent," he said.

Soby said he plans to remain on the Board of Selectmen in Colchester and will do his best not to let his campaign interfere.

"There will be some inevitable conflicts, but the meetings are a pre-set schedule," he said. "I have to plan my time as much as possible."



Stan Soby

Hayn Resigns from Colchester Finance Board

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

Board of Finance member Bruce Hayn resigned Sunday, following two letters sent during the past several weeks formally requesting he do so.

In a letter addressed to the town clerk's office, Hayn cited the notoriety and publicity surrounding his recent arrest as reason for his resignation. Hayn was arrested Jan. 16 on charges that he set fire to his Norwich business and filed a fraudulent insurance claim.

He also stated that his legal obligations will not end soon.

"In my discussions with lawyers and friends, it does not appear that these charges will be resolved in the near future," the letter said. "As a result, I believe the Town of Colchester will be better served if I step down at this time."

In January, First Selectman Gregg Schuster requested Hayn step down from his position. After that failed to prompt a resignation, the entire Board of Selectmen unanimously requested he resign in a letter addressed Feb. 3.

Hayn, as an elected official, could not be forcibly removed from his seat on the Board of Finance.

"Let me state clearly that I am not guilty of these charges, and I am confident that I will eventually be exonerated when this matter is finally resolved," the letter said.

Hayn did not return calls for comment for this story.

The Board of Finance voted to remove Hayn from his position as vice chair at their Feb. 15 meeting. At the meeting, Chairman Robert Tarlov said the decision was made because Hayn had not been attending meetings during the busy budget season. The board instated Robert Esteve as the new vice chair.

According to Colchester's town charter, the remaining members of the Board of Finance must elect a successor of the same political party as the prior member within 60 days of the vacancy. The successor will hold membership until the next municipal election. This means the board must elect a Democrat to the vacant seat by April 2.

Hayn's letter stated his intent to work in the community again.

"I have been honored to work with and serve this community for many years," he wrote. "Once this pending matter is successfully finalized, I intend to again offer my assistance to this great town."



Bruce Hayn

Linwood Avenue in Colchester Traffic Island to Go?

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

A proposal to remove a traffic island causing a nuisance to business owners and drivers on Linwood Avenue was approved by the town's Planning and Zoning Commission in January, and is now awaiting approval from the state Department of Transportation.

The applicant, Dunkin' Donuts franchise owner George Veneziano, proposed to remove the island and widen the part of the road in front of his Dunkin' Donuts on 164 Linwood Ave. It would also include a left-turn lane in the center of the road into the store, which would act as a bypass lane to allow motorists heading toward town to get by.

Currently the brick island, which stretches past several businesses on Route 16, prevents drivers from making left turns in or out of parking lots.

Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Joseph Mathieu said Veneziano proposed a plan designed by a traffic engineer to improve the flow of the road to the commission.

Veneziano submitted the plan to the DOT in Newington.

Town Planner Adam Turner said the DOT is expected to make a decision whether to approve the plan within the next month or two. He said the process usually takes approximately 60 days.

Veneziano proposed to get rid of the island because it causes drivers to turn around in the parking lot of his business. The Planning and Zoning Commission approved the plan Jan. 18.

Mathieu said Veneziano demonstrated to the board that the town had observed difficulties with the arrangement of the road.

"The traffic island limits turns out of the Dunkin' Donuts and forces you to go right. There have been accidents there from people taking a right turn and turning around in the adjoining parking lot, which is [St. Mary's] Ukrainian Church," Mathieu said. "There were a lot of messy traffic patterns."

Drug Search at Bacon Turns Up Illegal Substances

by **Katelyn Kelleher**

K-9 units searching the halls, lavatories and parking lots of Bacon Academy for illegal substances during a pre-planned lockdown last Thursday, Feb. 23, resulted in infractions for four students.

Six K-9 units from the Connecticut State Police, accompanied by officers from the Colchester Resident Trooper's office, discovered the substances in both lockers and vehicles in the student parking lot, a press release said. Police issued one student an infraction for possession of drug paraphernalia related to less than half an ounce of marijuana, two students infractions for possession of drug paraphernalia related to less than half an ounce of marijuana and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, and one student infractions for possession of drug paraphernalia related to less than half an ounce of marijuana, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and possession of alcohol by a minor.

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle-Goodwin said the four students were given citations and received suspensions from the school. She added this is the first narcotics search Bacon Academy has conducted, but the district's search and seizure policy allows for future searches, as directed by administration.

Board of Education Chairman Ronald Goldstein said no specific incident prompted the sweep, but the board started planning it several months ago after parents expressed concern over the possible presence of drugs in the high school.

"The Board of Education is committed to

safeguarding students and meeting the community's expectations that we provide a safe, positive, drug-free environment for teaching and learning," he said. "The goal of our policy is not to catch students. Rather, our goal, as always, is to be vigilant and to remain proactive in sending the message that we will not tolerate the presence of drugs in our schools and community."

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said the sweep was "one of the methods available to further [the Board of Education's] goal."

Additionally, Goldstein cited a student survey, in which 43 percent of those responding said they perceived drugs were available in school, as motive to conduct the sweep.

During the search, which took place between 9:20 and 11:30 a.m., students remained in classrooms and members of the public were not allowed to enter the property. Bacon Academy Principal Jeff Mathieu compared it to a medical lockdown, which just means there is no movement in the building. Teachers were instructed to continue with class as usual, but not allow students to visit the lavatory or use phones.

"Students were very cooperative," Mathieu said. "In some classes it was business as usual."

Board of Education student member Joshua Kvasnik said the drug search was reassuring and a relief to him.

"I think the general [student] population knows who they are; it's just that nobody wants to be the one to take the step to call them out on it," he said. "So this was a way for these

kids to be dealt with administratively and with the police force. They had it coming to them."

In addition to the four students whose belongings were found to contain drugs or drug paraphernalia, the dogs also "hit on" students' possessions with no illegal substances inside.

"In those cases, the parents were also notified to say that, at some point, somehow your child's backpack was in the vicinity of drugs," Mathieu said.

Loiselle-Goodwin said she was involved in the planning of the search, but remained in Bacon Academy's central office to coordinate communication with families during its execution.

"As always we are really committed to communicating with parents. We sent an email to parents at the same time we notified students [of the search]," she said.

Loiselle-Goodwin said there were a total of 22 calls from across the district responding to the drug sweep, only one of which was a call from a concerned parent who ultimately supported the action.

In accordance with policy, students were not searched, Loiselle-Goodwin said. Resident State Trooper Marc Petruzzi said the students never came in contact with any of the K-9s.

As this was the first search conducted, Loiselle-Goodwin could not say how finding four of 992 students in violation compared to the administration's expectations.

"We did not know what we would find, so we wanted to make sure that we had adequate force to be able to conduct a search that was comprehensive," she said.

"We can't always definitely say how many illegal substances are in any place at any given time," Petruzzi said.

The number of officers and K-9s involved reflected the size of the search area and the amount of time the search would take, Petruzzi said. "Part of the planning process deals with moving through the operations as quickly as possible in order to get the students back into their regular day," he said.

Statewide, Petruzzi listed Naugatuck and Canton as school districts that have conducted drug searches in the past. He said it can work as an educational tool.

"If we can show that 43 percent of students think it's going on, if we can show that it might actually be less than that, maybe they'll be less apt to think that their friend is doing drugs and they can actually see that the minority of people in the school are doing drugs as opposed to the majority," he said. "We'd have peer pressure working in our favor for once."

Bacon Academy Vice Principal Mark Ambruso said that, in addition to the steps the school takes to keep drugs out, educating students against drug use is part of the curriculum.

At Tuesday's Board of Education meeting, board member John Reeve commended those involved for executing the search well and for being proactive.

"I'd find it very hard to sit in this meeting if we were doing this after something bad happened and we were trying to play catch up," he said.

Colchester Police News

2/24: Robert McGoff, 53, of 367 Norwich Ave., was charged with violating controlled drug prescription requirements, second-degree forgery and attempting to commit a crime, State Police said.

2/25: Brittany Rondeau, 25, of 18 High Meadow Rd., Marlborough, was issued a misdemeanor summons and complaint for avoiding responsibility/property damage and failure to drive in the proper lane after leaving her vehicle unoccupied after striking a guard rail head-on eastbound on Route 2, State Police said.

2/26: Joseph Murphy, 42, was charged with DUI and failure to maintain a proper lane, State Police said.

2/27: David Mota, 35, of 410 Plains Rd., Greenfield, MA, was charged with speeding and DUI, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

2/24: Steven Christopher Bertelsen, 18, of 122 Cheney Rd., was charged with attempting to commit a crime, second-degree burglary and second-degree criminal mischief after committing a burglary at a residence on Coates Farm Road, State Police said.

2/25: Police are investigating a red 1998 four-door Volkswagen Jetta stolen from a residence on South Main Street. Anyone with information is asked to contact Officer Randy Ransom at Troop K at 860-537-7500.

Hebron Police News

2/26: Suzanne Karrenberg, 60, of 12 Sachem Dr., Marlborough, was charged with DUI and making an improper turn, State Police said.

Portland Police News

2/18: Jerry Savillo, 49, of 47 South Fair St., Guilford, was charged with DUI, evading responsibility, improper use of market plate, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and traveling too fast for conditions, Portland Police said.

2/18: Lisa Keleher, 51, of 206 Main St., was charged with third-degree mischief, police said.

2/25: Jeannette Gonzalez, 19, of 6 Rising Trail Dr., Middletown, was charged with operating motor vehicle without a license, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, insufficient insurance and improper use of market plate, police said.

2/25: Michael Brutto, 22, of 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., was charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

East Hampton Police News

2/18: Savannah Begin, 18, of 9 Fairlawn Ave., was issued a summons for second-degree providing a false statement, East Hampton Police said.

2/18: Michael Poe, 37, of 18 Wells Ave., was arrested for first-degree criminal mischief, second-degree reckless endangerment, fourth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fourth-degree larceny, police said.

2/21: Todd Bower, 23, of 230 Old West High St., was arrested for a probation violation, police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

George Kendzior Jr.

George (Raymond) Kendzior Jr., 73, of Colchester, passed away Friday, Feb. 17, at his residence.

He was born May 3, 1938, in Norwich, son of George R. Kendzior Sr. and Olga Dachuck Kendzior.

Raymond worked for several former clothing companies: John Myers of Norwich and Dana Fashions of Colchester. Then he worked for S&S Worldwide Corporation of Colchester.

Surviving are his brother Richard Kendzior of Florida and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral service and burial are private; there are no calling hours.

Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home of Colchester is in care of arrangements.

Colchester

Lisa Joy Graves

Lisa Joy Graves, of Colchester and Hartford, died at Hartford Hospital Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2011.

Lisa died a week before her 55th birthday. She was born in Bar Harbor, ME, Dec. 15, 1956, and moved with her family to Colchester when she was two years old. She graduated from Bacon Academy in 1974. She was very artistic and much enjoyed making music and drawing.

She is survived by her daughter, Rachael Joy McQuarrie, and granddaughter, Resa J. McQuarrie; also by her son, Leigh Daniel McQuarrie, and grandson, Daniel J. McQuarrie.

She is dearly missed by her mother, Mary Jane Graves; her sisters Wendy Babcock, Kelly Rozanski and her brother, Mark Graves. God Bless.



Portland

Catherine Mills-Martens

Catherine "Kay" Mills-Martens, 75, of Portland, went peacefully to be with her Lord and savior, Jesus Christ, on Tuesday, Feb. 21, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown.

Born Oct. 15, 1936, in Bronx, NY, she was the daughter of the late Cornelius and Anne (Fitzpatrick) O'Neill of Wexford, Ireland.

She is survived by a sister, Ann Pennallo of Hobe Sound, FL, a daughter, Barbara Mills of Nesconset, NY, a son, Jim Mills of Plainville, three grandchildren, Tyler and Alyssa Mills and Erin McWilliams, and a nephew, Daniel Walsh.

She was predeceased by her younger sister, Theresa Walsh.

Kay worked for General Electric in New York before relocating to Connecticut, where she would become the owner of Quality Maids, a cleaning company in Berlin, with her late husband, Joseph Martens. Throughout her life she enjoyed many things, none more so than helping the people who crossed her path, with kind words or a simple smile. Prior to her stroke, she volunteered her time with the Department of Corrections' reading program, Boys and Girls Scouts of America and the Archdiocese of Norwich's Spiritual Renewal Services.

Please come celebrate Kay's life with us at her memorial Mass Friday, March 9, at 11 a.m., at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family. Flowers gratefully declined.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Kay's favorite charity can be sent to: Spiritual Renewal Services, 11 Bath St., P.O. Box 6, Norwich, CT 06360-5836.

Portland Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, has care of arrangements. To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

East Hampton

Alice Josephine Forbes

Alice Josephine (Banning) Forbes, 50, of East Hampton, beloved wife of John R. Forbes III, died Thursday, Feb. 23, after a courageous battle with cancer. Born March 27, 1961 in Middletown she was the daughter of the late Robert and Judith (Staplins) Banning.

Alice grew up in East Hampton and was a life-long resident. Alice's first love was her family. She adored her children and her grandkids meant the world to her. She enjoyed holiday and birthday gatherings and getting the entire family together. When the whole family wasn't available, Alice lived to ride on the back of a Harley Davidson motorcycle with her husband, Jack.

She was known by all for her love of Disney's Tinker Bell and her sassy, never back down attitude. You could always find Alice holding a bottle of Pepsi. She lived life to the fullest and never had any regrets.

Besides her husband John, she is survived by her son, John R. Forbes IV of Vernon; her daughter, Jamie Urban and her husband Scott of Vernon; two stepdaughters, Janice Beardsley and Elise Forbes; four brothers, Robert Banning of Marlborough, John Banning of East Hampton, Paul Banning of East Hampton, Edwin Banning of Portland; three cherished grandchildren Melissa, Autumn, and William; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her brother, Frank Banning.

Funeral services were held Monday, Feb. 27, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial was in Lakeview Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Masonicare of Wallingford, 110 S. Turnpike Rd., Wallingford, CT 06492.

The Spencer Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

East Hampton

Sebastian F. Tuccitto Sr.

Sebastian F. Tuccitto Sr., 78, of East Hampton, husband of Annette, died unexpectedly Tuesday morning, Feb. 28, at the Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. Born July 18, 1933 in Portland, he was a son of the late Joseph and Frances (Macklin) Tuccitto.

Mr. Tuccitto was a proud veteran of the Korean War. He worked at Standard-Kanpp and most recently for NAPA. He was an avid outdoorsman and basketball fan.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by six children, Kathleen Fletcher-Gocka, Sebastian Jr., Thomas Sr., Michael Sr., Karen Tuccitto and Kristine Guillory; three stepchildren, Charlotte Cirillo, Judy Edwards and Mary Lane; 21 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; five siblings, Lucille Tuccitto, Trisha Fields, Angelina Santostefano and William and John Tuccitto; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by a brother, Joseph, a stepson, Joey, and a great granddaughter, Elizabeth.

A Celebration of his Life will be observed and announced this summer.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

John Joseph Morgan

John Joseph Morgan, 80, of Hebron, died Tuesday, Feb. 21, after a short illness. He was born June 25, 1931, to the late James and Helen Morgan of Newark, NJ.

John was the oldest of five children in a large Irish Catholic family and grew up in Bloomfield, NJ. He graduated from Immaculata High School in 1948 and went on to obtain a B.S. in mechanical engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, NJ, in 1952.

Shortly after receiving a commission in the Navy, he married the beautiful love of his life, Mary Geraldine Morgan on June 5, 1954. Soon after, John and his bride relocated to Monterey, CA, to John's first duty station at the Naval Post Graduate School there where he graduated from OCS in 1955. John returned to the east coast with his new growing family living in Bethesda where he was stationed with the Navy. John worked for Sperry Gyroscope on Long Island where he worked on the inertial navigation system for the Apollo program, later receiving additional post graduate training at M.I.T in Boston.

He was an avid gardener, cook and photographer, a Celtic and Notre Dame Fan and a staunch conservative Republican who loved Ronald Regan. Mary and John lived in Old Lyme for 31 years before relocating to Hebron in 2009. John valued his family, his beloved dogs, his faith and his country most, and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife, Mary; his five children, Geraldine, James, Jennifer, Christopher and Bill; his eight grandchildren, Justin, Ryan, Katherine, Madeline, Charlie, Colin, Audrey and Lauren; and three great-grandchildren, Shane, Ryan and Kiley. He is also survived by his brothers Kevin and Brendan and his sisters Shiela and Maureen.

Calling hours were held at Fulton-Theroux Funeral Home in Old Lyme Monday, Feb. 27. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Tuesday, Feb. 28, at Christ the King Church in Old Lyme.

Memorial donations may be made in his memory to The Melanoma Foundation or to Masonicare Partners Home Health and Hospice.

Colchester

Sue Ellen Moriarty

Sue Ellen Moriarty, 68, of 136 Hunters Rd., died early Wednesday morning, Feb. 22, at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was born in Norwich Dec. 31, 1943, the daughter of the late Raymond and Mary (Dougherty) Meier. Sue Ellen was last employed as an income auditor at Foxwoods Casino before retiring.

She is survived by her husband, David F. Moriarty of Norwich; one son, David S. Moriarty of Baltic; two grandchildren, Matthew and Sean Moriarty; two brothers, Raymond Meier of Norwich and Richard Meier; three sisters, Rae Ann Zercie and Mary Beth Running both of Norwich, and Abby Jane Olson of Putnam.

She was predeceased by one son, Kevin Moriarty, and one brother, James Meier.

Funeral services and burial will be private. There are no calling hours.

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

Colchester

Cecile Hamel

Cecile Hamel, 69, of Colchester, passed away Monday, Feb. 27, at Apple Rehab of Colchester. Funeral service and burial are private.

Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home is in care of arrangements.

Colchester

Judy Beth Wall

Judy Beth (Falbowski) Wall, beloved wife, mother, daughter, sister and BFF, passed away unexpectedly after a period of declining health Tuesday morning, Feb. 28, at her home.

During her 10-year struggle with declining health, Judy never lost her faith. She faced each new day with a smile. Judy was diagnosed with mouth cancer three years ago.

Judy was born on Nov. 5, 1963. She was the third beloved daughter of Robert C. Falbowski of Colchester and the late Geraldine (Roska) Falbowski of Colchester. Judy was a 1981 graduate of St. Bernard's High School in Uncasville. She later studied at Roger Williams College and Manchester Community College. She held a variety of jobs throughout her career. She worked for SBLI in Hartford, and that is where she met the man that would become husband, Russell M. Wall. She and Russ were married Jan. 26, 1991.

Besides her grieving husband, Russell, and her daddy, Robert C. Falbowski, Judy is survived by her loving daughter, Kathryn and her much loved son, Jason, both of Amston; and foster son, Marq Davenport of Colorado. Judy is also survived by her sister Virginia and husband Terence Dominick of Colchester, and their sons, TJ, Henry and Joseph; her sister Bonnie Falbowski-Suh of Colchester and her sons Robert, Edward, and her godson Andrew. She is also survived by brother-in-law Mark Taranto of Colchester and his two children, Thomas and Geraldine. Judy is further survived by the Wall family; mother-in-law Mary Lou and brothers-in-law Ricky, Ron and Randy and their families, all of East Hampton. Judy leaves behind her best friend from Nursery School, Elizabeth Mansfield of Colchester and her daughter Jessica.

Judy was met in heaven by her beloved mother and sister, Geraldine and Robin, father-in-law Richard Wall and Matthew James.

Judy loved to travel and spent many fun filled days on the beaches of St. Thomas.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held Monday, March 5, at 11 a.m. at the Church of the Holy Family on Church Street, Hebron. Burial to follow in St. Patrick's Cemetery, East Hampton. Visitation will be held on Sunday from 4-6 p.m. at the Belmont Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester.

Those who wish may make donations to the American Cancer Society in her memory.

East Hampton

Jamie L. Wallace

Jamie L. Wallace, 30, of 39 Chatham Fields Rd., East Hampton, died Wednesday evening, Feb. 29, at the John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington. She was born in Norwich Oct. 12, 1981. She is the daughter of Tina (Tessier) Cross and stepfather Warren S. Cross, of East Hampton and father George W. Wallace and stepmother Sue of Versailles.

Jamie was currently employed as a veterinary technician at the Pieper Olson Veterinary Hospital in Middletown.

Besides her mother, stepfather, father and stepmother, she is survived by a son, William Patrick Dunn and a daughter, Alexis M. Fisher, both at home. She is survived by one brother, Joshua Wallace and his wife, Sarah, of Plainfield; one sister, Brandi Cross, of East Hampton; her loving boyfriend, Brian Hurlock, of Bristol; her maternal grandmother, Irene Birdsey, of Preston; her step-grandparents, Warren and Ann Cross, of Iliion, NY; and aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

A celebration of her life will be held Saturday, March 3, from noon-10 p.m., at the St. Joseph Polish Society, 395 South Main St., Colchester. Burial will be private. There are no calling hours. The Guillot Funeral Home, 75 So. B St., Taftville, is in charge of arrangements.

Donations may be made to the Jamie Wallace Childrens Memorial Fund, c/o Savings Institute Bank and Trust, P.O. Box 400, Brooklyn, CT 06234.